

SCCBA Management Committee Meeting 25th September 2026

Draft Minutes

Present: Sally Bugden Chair, Joanna Norcross Hon Sec, John Hardy Hon Treasurer, Alexa Baxter, Peter Clinch, Andrea Galpin, David Galpin, Jane Handley, Joy Mayall, Martin Pool, Mervyn Wotton

Apologies: Malcolm Wright

Key Takeaways

- The county is in a financial surplus of over £1,000 year-to-date, with £56,000 in the bank.
- Pianola has significantly increased entries for Green Point Swiss Pairs and Midweek Pairs events.
- A Tournament Development Review meeting was held.
- A conduct complaint from a Sussex club was reviewed by a SCCBA disciplinary committee.
- The Metropolitan Cup C-Team eligibility reviewed.
- The county has 2,634 members according to Pianola.
- Youth Bridge activities are progressing, with a Youth Bridge Festival upcoming and social media efforts being expanded.
- Trophy strategy is under review, with a move toward engraved keepsakes being considered pending cost analysis.
- The next Management Committee meeting is scheduled for 11 December.

Discussed Topics

1. Meeting Opening and Attendance

- Sally: Confirmed apologies from Malcolm.
- Joanna Norcross: Confirmed no clubs responded to the invitation.

2. Minutes of Previous Meeting (19 June)

Sally invited accuracy points on the minutes of the previous Zoom meeting, these were accepted as a true record of the meeting.

3. Matters Arising

Sally reported on outstanding actions from the previous meeting, specifically contacting Barbara Herold and Katie Kennedy which had not been completed.

4. Chair's Report – Tournament Development Meeting

Sally provided a detailed overview of the Tournament Development Review meeting held on Tuesday at her home, covering assessments of all county tournaments against a set of metrics.

- Sally thanked David and Andrea for their extraordinary work running the **Sussex League, Invitation Pairs, and Championship Teams**.
- **Sussex League:** Considered a strong competition, accessible face-to-face and online; plans to increase entries via email, club outreach, and some face-to-face market research amongst club players.
- **Invitation Pairs:** Andrea continuing intensive work; plan to email NGS Queens and above in January to try to generate more entries.
- **Inter-Club Teams of Eight:** Clubs expressed dissatisfaction with the format (playing same pairs twice). Sally will run the event in 2027, engage an EBU panel Tournament Director, and ensure correct scoring and play plan.
- **Kremer Dersch:** Sally proposed reintroducing this free event for club committees in October 2027, to thank our club committees and to hear about any potential development projects they may have and how the county can help.
- **Sussex 9 High:** Pianola to be used from January to email the EBU-supplied list of players rated 9 or below.
- **Spring and Autumn Congresses:** Player appetite for two consecutive long days of bridge is declining. The Winter Congress at Patcham in December will serve as a test; if uptake is insufficient, congresses may be reduced to single events (spring pairs/teams or autumn pairs/teams).
- Pianola has dramatically changed entry data for Green Point Swiss Pairs and Midweek Swiss Pairs; a full cycle with Pianola is needed before major event changes are made.
- Recommendations for the competition and tournament programme are in progress; no final decisions have been made yet.

5. Chair's Report – EBU Matters

Sally reported on her attendance at county chairs meetings and a key contact at the EBU.

- Sally: County chairs' meetings continue to discuss long-standing issues. Highlighted Mary Cousins, responsible for club and membership development at the EBU, as a valuable contact.
- Sally: The EBU website remains difficult to navigate, making it hard for clubs to find relevant resources.
- Sally to continue discussions with Mary Cousins and assist clubs if they would like support from EBU membership development initiatives.

6. Treasurer's Report

John presented the financial position of the county.

- The county is now in surplus for the year, exceeding £1,000 year-to-date, following earlier charitable donations.
- Pianola has produced an astonishing increase in entries and revenue for Green Point Swiss Pairs and Midweek Pairs.
- UMS income remains steady at approximately £550 per month; overheads are well controlled.
- Anticipated surplus from the Kent Weekend and Winter Congress should result in a healthy year-end position, potentially like last year.
- A significant investment in new Bridgemates is under consideration for next year's budget.
- Current bank balance is £56,000.
- Jane: Asked why the county holds £56,000 and whether there is a plan for it.
- the county needs approximately six months' operating reserves; the remainder should be invested in bridge development in the county, but this is subject to well-costed and well-planned proposals.

7. Affiliated Club Updates

Trevor Smart has reported that the Newhaven and Peacehaven Bridge Club set up is still in progress.

8. Selection Committee Report

Peter reported on recent and upcoming representative events.

- **Metropolitan Cup:** Sussex entered three teams. The A team won the most matches but finished third of eight; the B team finished fifth of eight; the C team finished fifth of six.
- The winning London C-team was found to have at least three players NGS rated Ace Club or above, contrary to the guideline that C-team players should be no higher than Queen NGS.
- Christine Jepson, Chair of the Selection Committee, has written to the EBU and to the Middlesex organiser but received no response from Middlesex.
- Peter confirmed it appears to be a guideline rather than a hard rule, based on the wording found in the competition link shared by Katie Duncanson.
- Joy: Noted the breach is significant — not one category above, but two.
- John: Raised whether Sussex should enter the C group in future if eligibility is not enforced.
- Martin recommended all correspondence from Christine be copied to both Middlesex and the EBU; if no satisfactory resolution is received, Sussex should consider not entering the competition.
- Sally would discuss this matter with Christine to find a way forward.
- Christine has also been in contact with Jeremy Willans from Kent, who also sought answers.
- **Tollemache:** All potential players have been contacted and availability confirmed; team not yet finalised. Selection meeting to be arranged; Christine to notify Martin and Sally.

9. Tournament Committee Report

Peter reported on tournament committee activities.

- Draft minutes of the Tournament Development meeting being circulated.
- Full calendar to end of August/September next year has been sent out; Mervyn has added events to the website.
- Acknowledged the significant effort required to gather dates from all sources.
- Sally confirmed Joanna Norcross will be the permanent guardian of the calendar going forward.
- Trophy strategy to be brought to a future Management Committee meeting; people are less interested in physical trophies for their mantelpieces.
- Non-expert prize definitions need review, as NGS ratings fluctuate; proposal to ask entrants to include their NGS on entry forms.
- Jane Handley has identified a potential joint beginners event with Surrey next year and is following up.

- Peter plans to step down as Tournament Committee Chair; creating organiser worksheets to support new organisers and the incoming chair.
- Discussion on payment by cheque — only a couple of entrants still pay this way; acknowledged the administrative challenges.

10. Secretary's Report

- Joanna Norcross: Thanked Alexa Baxter Worthing for a detailed walkthrough of Pianola.

11. Ladies' Pairs – Pianola and Mailing Discussion

Joy raised concerns about the inability to filter Pianola mailings by gender for the Ladies' Pairs event.

- Joy: Pleased with new entries generated via Pianola but noted that the system cannot target by gender, resulting in men receiving the Ladies' Pairs invitation.
- Sally: Explained the limitation arises because EBU membership records do not capture gender, and manually reviewing 2,500+ records is impractical.
- Katie Duncanson: Suggested reframing the message positively — e.g., "Are you interested, or do you know anyone who would be interested in the Ladies' Pairs?" — to avoid the need for an apology.
- All agreed with Katie's suggested approach.

12. Membership Secretary's Report

Alexa provided a membership update.

- **Details**
 - County currently has 2,634 members according to Pianola.
 - Tournament directors directing county events need to be set up as results uploaders in Pianola; currently only peter is set up in this role.
 - Explained the difference between results uploaders (can confirm/correct name matches) and chief scorers (can delete and re-upload events); Mervyn retains chief scorer status.
 - Pianola automatically matches names by EBU number and surname; discrepancies in first names are managed automatically, but surname mismatches require manual confirmation by the results uploader.

- Additional tournament directors to be set up as results uploaders in Pianola as needed.

13. Webmaster and Masterpoint Secretary Report

Mervyn provided a brief update.

- Calendar update completed.
- Confirmed the EBU has committed to maintaining BridgeWebs; issues should be directed to Jonathan Lillicrop at the EBU.
- Mervyn: Noted that payment for BridgeWebs previously went to Gwyn's account and may now change.
- Alexa: Confirmed Worthing recently paid BridgeWebs to a different account following the founder's death.

14. Conduct and Discipline

Joy reported on a conduct matter originating from a Sussex club which was reviewed by a disciplinary committee with their considerations sent to the club in question. The county has completed its work on this matter.

15. Youth Bridge Report

Katie provided an update on Youth Bridge activities.

- **Lancing Prep Hove:** Club disrupted by Year 8 girls' commitments (prefect duties, netball); moved to Mondays from next week.
- **Lancing College:** Two-week carousel with Year 9s completed with Sue's assistance; Andy Ryder has offered further help.
- **Cardinal Newman:** Simon Sparrow continuing despite a less useful timetable slot.
- **Skinner's School, Tunbridge Wells:** Lawrence Satow is setting up a bridge club next term.
- Katie: Emphasised the importance of having a teacher champion within schools; asked members to share contacts.
- **Grant application:** Submitted to Patcham Community Centre; trustees meeting expected in October.
- **Social media:** Katie created an animation for Facebook and proposed setting up an Instagram page for Youth Bridge and new member recruitment.

- Joy: Confirmed a Sussex Bridge Facebook page exists, last posted in 2018, originally set up by Andy Ryder.
- Katie: To contact Andy Ryder about Facebook page admin access.
- Katie: Proposed sharing social media posts with the committee and asking members to like, comment, and engage to generate visibility.
- Jane: Confirmed Horsham Bridge Club has an Instagram page and has been sharing Youth Bridge content.
- Sally: Agreed to an Instagram page being set up; to consult with Katie on an approval process for posts.
- **Youth Bridge Festival:** Five participants signed up; additional attendees expected. Sally to attend on Saturday 10th to welcome participants.

16. Education Report

Jane provided a brief update.

- Emailed all clubs with a link to the county teachers page, requesting updates; few responses received so far.
- Working with Mervyn to update the teachers page.

17. Charity Coordinator Report

Jane reported on charity activities.

- Following a conversation at Horsham, Horsham Bridge Club wishes to enter the Charity Sims event.
- Sally: Noted that clubs need to be invited to nominate charities for the Charity Sims; this was previously overseen by Dick Wheeler.
- Jane: To send out an email to all clubs inviting charity nominations; Peter to forward last year's email from Dick Wheeler as a template.
- Sally: Responses needed by end of November so the charity can be determined at the 11 December meeting.
- Jane to send charity nomination email to all clubs by end of November.

18. Equipment and Trophy Coordinator Report

Discussion on the current state of trophies and potential move to engraved keepsakes. John Reported:

- Several trophies require repairs (cost unknown); others are running out of engraving space.

- Continuing with existing trophies would involve significant ongoing expenditure.
- Joy: Expressed preference for engraved keepsakes over physical trophies.
- Sally: Proposed comparing the annual cost of engraving and repairing existing trophies against the cost of providing engraved keepsakes for each event winner.
- John: Raised practical questions about ordering keepsakes in bulk with different engravings.
- Alexa: Shared that Worthing Bridge Club gave engraved glasses as keepsakes, using a local engraver at reasonable cost.
- Katie: Shared a link to a trophy/medal company in the chat.
- Sally: Agreed no decision can be made without costings; asked John to investigate costs of repairs, ongoing engraving, and keepsake options.
- Report to be presented at the next meeting if possible.

19. Next Meeting and Any Other Business

- Sally: Next meeting confirmed as 11 December.
- John advised he will be travelling on 11 December and unable to attend but will provide all relevant financial information in advance.
- Sally: To circulate additional meeting dates for next year ahead of the December meeting.

There was no other business and the meeting concluded at noon