

FINAL DRAFT

SUSSEX COUNTY CONTRACT BRIDGE ASSOCIATION

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE SUSSEX COUNTY CONTRACT BRIDGE ASSOCIATION HELD VIA ZOOM ON SUNDAY 26 APRIL 2026 AT 11 AM

Present:

Martin Pool

Joy Mayall, Mervyn Wotton, David Galpin

Peter Clinch

John Hardy

Dick Wheeler

President

Vice Presidents

Chair

Honorary Treasurer

Honorary Secretary

and the following members:

Alexa Baxter, Sally Bugden, Katie Duncanson, Andrea Galpin, Martin Greeley, Jane Handley, Joanna Norcross and Helen Yoward.

Apologies had been received from John Grist, Lynda Smith, Colin Smith and Malcolm Wright

0. Opening Remarks

The Chair opened the meeting by welcoming those present to the Association's AGM 2026.

1. Approval of minutes of the AGM held on 13 April 2025

The final draft minutes had been circulated and were approved unanimously as a correct record.

2. Matters arising from the minutes

The action arising from paragraph 8 had been completed. The action arising from paragraph 9 had also been completed, resulting in agenda item 7 at this meeting.

3. Chair's Report

3.1 The Chair observed that this was his fifth and final report from the Chair, and he was very happy this year to be here in person. He welcomed those attending the call, and those who will read the report later via these minutes. He offered an open invitation to reach out to him personally if anyone had comments or questions. He reviewed the past year, highlighting the following areas of activity.

3.2 Our Community.

- Bridge teaching continues to thrive in the county. Extrapolating from the totals reported by those who responded to a recent survey, those teaching at affiliated clubs are likely to have more than 550 students participating at different stages of their bridge education, a significant increase on last year's estimate (450) with the potential to add club members over time.
- The County continued to offer advice and resources to clubs on increasing membership with modest success. Our active membership at the close of 2025 totalled 2056, compared with 2000 three years ago, 2049 two years ago and 2033 one year ago. The EBU set a target for 2025 to increase overall membership by 5% but have yet to report back on that. Our increase was just over 1%. Using the figures that have been made available from the EBU, their increase was 1.9%.
- The Management Committee remains committed to investments which support junior bridge and maintains a ring-fenced fund for that purpose. I thank those members who have continued to give their time in teaching bridge to schoolchildren, always a challenging activity as school curriculum demands increase. Two Sussex schools have entered in tournaments and matches with schools from other counties, and I am delighted that our new Youth Officer, Katie Duncanson, will be leading the charge on this in the coming year. We have links with key contacts in EBED to ensure that our activities are complementary to the EBU junior squad structure and the wider programme of national youth bridge events.

3.3 Our Finances.

- These continue to be strong with regular UMS (Universal Membership Scheme) income of over £500 per month, as can be seen in the Treasurer's report. The development and delivery of a range of online and face-to-face events in 2025 generated sufficient income to cover overheads, and there are sufficient reserves for bolder investments to be made by the new administration. We have again kept the county Universal Membership Scheme rate at 7p for 2025/26, a rate that has not been increased since 2012.

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3.4 Our Philanthropy.

- Eight clubs held heats during our charity sims week generating donations of £1275. Congratulations are due to all who supported this event. Leading the way were Chichester (£326), Patcham (£275) and Crawley (£264). The Management Committee decided to augment the total from reserves to enable a donation of £1000 to each of the three beneficiaries selected – St Wilfrid's Hospice, UK Harvest (both Chichester) and Queen Victoria Charitable Trust (East Grinstead).

3.5 Our Competitions.

- Our tournament programme continues to be a combination of online and face-to-face events reflecting the mixed environment now demanded. Events for the less experienced remain an important part of the programme with a new "9-high" county championship (online) and Welcome and Venture Pairs events (face-to-face) at Eastbourne BC being added in 2025. The past year also saw a continuation of discounted entry fees aimed at encouraging more members to return to face-to-face competition bridge.
- The level of attendance at our events has been similar to that of 2024. The Tournament committee will continue to review this, and to consider options to increase event popularity, particularly teams' competitions and events for the less-experienced
- For more experienced players we have again partnered with Kent CBA to hold a joint green-pointed weekend in Tunbridge Wells, which has proved to be very successful. We have also, once again, assisted the EBU by staging a semifinal of the National Pairs using Sussex resources.
- At National level we have had a couple of successes. The County A-team reached the final of the Tollemache Cup for the first time in several years. The Avenue Bridge Club won the 2025 Garden Cities Trophy for Sussex, an outstanding achievement.

3.6 Our Team.

- We continue to be blessed with a small, dedicated group of people who give freely of their time and I thank all the competition organisers, the tournament directors, the webmaster and those who sit on the various committees be they the Management Committee, Tournament Committee, Selection Committee or Conduct Committee. Once again, they have produced an excellent bridge programme to county players of all levels. Also thank you to all of the Officers of the county including our President, Martin Pool, Joy Mayall, John Hardy and of course Dick Wheeler.
- Our Management Committee has been strengthened by the addition of two new members who were co-opted recently – in addition to Katie Duncanson we welcomed Joanna Norcross. This AGM will also enable the addition of Sally Bugden and Jane Handley. I am sure they will all play prominent roles in future years.
- There have also been departures. We have lost a long-term organiser in Gerry Stanford (who is moving to Devon in the summer); we wish him and his wife a prosperous time in the West country.
- Most impactful of all, however, is the retirement of Dick Wheeler from the position of Honorary Secretary to the County, a position he has held since 2011. I can speak for several Chairs before me when I say that Dick has been the glue that has held the County together in that time, and his knowledge, his wit, his friendship, his responsiveness and his prodigious efficiency will be amongst the things that we will sorely miss. Dick received a Dimmie Fleming award from the EBU in 2020, and never has that award been more richly deserved.

3.7 The Chair concluded by wishing the incoming committee the very best for the future. He looked forward to the positive changes they surely would bring.

3.8 The President sought to add to the Chair's comments regarding Dick Wheeler's retirement. The President observed that back in 2011, when Dick was appointed as Honorary Secretary, he was regarded as a bit of a 'wordsmith' but his erudite comments and prodigious output generated not only valuable contributions to the Association's business over fifteen years but also affection for the man. An illustration of his commitment arose last year when he attended a meeting whilst in hospital following an emergency admission. All of this led to the Officers believing that Dick should be appointed as a Vice President of the Association. Members present approved this proposal unanimously.

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4. Honorary Treasurer's Report

4.1 Adoption of the Examined Annual Accounts.

The Honorary Treasurer had circulated his annual report highlighting:

1. The County had had another satisfactory year financially with the income and expenditure account for the year ended 31st December 2025 revealing a surplus of £1,917, compared to a small deficit of £383 in the previous year. Our main source of income, UMS charges, totalled £6,534, slightly down on last year's total of £6,610. The main reasons for the overall improvement related to expenses incurred in 2024 re bridge teaching seminars, £1,818, and the Counties contribution to the EBU "Bridge-it's a Big Deal" (BIABD) festival, £1,120.
2. The surplus on congresses and events at £2,130 was significantly up on the 2024 total of £1,426. The County retained a policy for certain events of having reduced or no entry fees, resulting in a deficit on County events of £121, less than the deficit in 2024 of £189. One day events were similarly affected, with a deficit of £352, compared to a deficit in 2024 of £503. Income from the Spring and Autumn Congress's, green pointed events and online events contributed a surplus of just over £1,000 similar to the surplus in 2024. Income from the charity SIMS event was £1,584, compared to £1,127 in 2024.
3. Overheads totalled £5,265 compared with £6,122 in 2024. Last year's total was inflated by the County sponsoring three seminars relating to bridge and minibridge teaching resources to the tune of £1,818. Overall, overheads remain fairly consistent year on year.
4. Donations totalled £2,000 with £1,000 being donated to each of the two chosen charities (£2,085 in 2024, £2,100 offset by other donations of £15 with £700 donated to each of three charities. The Management Committee agreed to increase the level of donations in 2025 to compensate for the absence of donations during the pandemic years.
5. Total cash/bank balances at 31st December 2025 were £52,263 compared to £50,638 at 31st December 2024. The balance on the general fund increased from £45,466 at the end of 2024 to £47,383 at 31st December 2025.
6. These accounts, which were presented to and approved by the Management Committee on 20th March 2026, had been examined by the SCCBA independent examiner, Lynda Smith, who had indicated her approval by signing the balance sheet on 9th February 2026
7. With UMS income continuing to be steady at over £500 a month and in the absence of any unexpected overheads, a reasonable surplus for the coming year is anticipated. The loss in 2024 was a result of donations to BIAD-£1,120 and youth bridge investment - £1,818. Without these 2 items, the results for that year would have been in line with those of the year just ended.
8. Going forward, the SCCBA will continue to face challenges, the main one being to ensure that a broad balance is achieved between our main sources of income and our overheads. The SCCBA remains financially sound and has the resources to assist affiliated clubs if required. As approval was given at the EGM in 2018 for an increase in the UMS county charge, from 7p to 8p for 2019/20 or in a subsequent year, the County can quickly arrange for an increase in income to cover potential increases in expenditure. There is currently no plan to apply this increase.

The Honorary Treasurer invited questions. None were forthcoming and the Chair proposed adoption of the accounts, seconded by the Honorary Secretary. The accounts were adopted unanimously.

4.2 Appointment of Independent Examiner.

The appointment of Lynda Smith as Independent Examiner for 2026 was proposed by the Honorary Secretary and seconded by the Honorary Treasurer. Members present approved the appointment unanimously.

4.3 Approval of membership terms and conditions

The draft membership terms and conditions for 2026/27, proposed by the Honorary Secretary and seconded by the Honorary Treasurer, had been circulated to Members present. The Honorary Secretary indicated that there was no change from those in the previous year. Members present approved these terms and conditions unanimously.

5. Election of Officers

The Chair referred to the summary of nominations circulated to attendees. There was only one nomination for each of three posts and no nomination for the fourth. The nomination for Chair had been proposed by the

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President and seconded by the retiring Chair. Joy Mayall had proposed and Alexa Baxter seconded the nomination for the Honorary Treasurer. The nomination for the Honorary Secretary had been proposed by the retiring Honorary Secretary and seconded by the Honorary Treasurer. With no competition for each post, each of the following nominees was elected unopposed.

Chair	Sally Bugden
Honorary Treasurer	John Hardy
Honorary Secretary	Joanna Norcross

The newly elected Chair expressed her thanks to Peter Clinch, his Officers and other MC Members whose commitment to the success of Sussex bridge had been vital, particularly during the pandemic and its aftermath. They were such a hard act to follow. She added that she was very grateful that Peter had agreed to remain on the MC, continue as Tournament Manager and Chair the TC. Peter added that he saw the newly elected Chair as a very strong successor with previous experience of the administration of the Association and her time (2008-2013) as Chair of the English Bridge Union.

6. Election of a Maximum of Ten Committee Members

The retiring Honorary Secretary reported that there were only nine nominations for the maximum number of posts (10) allowed by the constitution and he invited Members present to agree to the election of those nominated. Each had been proposed and seconded as required. With no competition for each post, each nominee was elected unopposed.

Alexa Baxter, Peter Clinch, Katie Duncanson, Andrea Galpin, David Galpin, Jane Handley, Joy Mayall, Mervyn Wotton and Malcolm Wright.

7. Management Committee proposal for amendment of the Constitution

The retiring Honorary Secretary referred to the paper circulated to attendees. This rehearsed the background and specified the proposed change – to make the number of members required to call for an Extraordinary General Meeting consistent with that required for a members' resolution at an Annual General Meeting. Members present approved the change unanimously.

8. Members' resolutions

The retiring Honorary Secretary reported that no Members' resolutions had been submitted.

9. Award of Gladys Hakki Trophy.

The retiring Honorary Secretary reported that the Gladys Hakki Trophy for 2025/26 had been awarded to Thea Sydenham of Chichester BC for many years of service in multiple roles. A summary of her outstanding contribution to Sussex bridge had been published on the county website. Peter Clinch would make the presentation at Chichester BC in due course.

Action: Peter Clinch

10. Any Other Business.

The newly elected Chair referred to the newly elected Honorary Secretary, Joanna Norcross, and looked forward to working with her. Joanna's experience would be very useful. Joanna expressed appreciation for the kind words.

The meeting closed at 11.34am.