

## FINAL DRAFT

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### SUSSEX COUNTY CONTRACT BRIDGE ASSOCIATION

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#### MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE SUSSEX COUNTY CONTRACT BRIDGE ASSOCIATION HELD via ZOOM ON SUNDAY 1 May 2022 AT 11 AM

**Present:**

**Martin Pool**

**David Galpin, Joy Mayall, Mervyn Wotton**

**Peter Clinch**

**John Hardy**

**Dick Wheeler**

**President**

**Vice Presidents**

**Chairman**

**Honorary Treasurer**

**Honorary Secretary**

and the following members:

Alexa Baxter, Andrea Galpin, Ernie Rivett, Gerry Stanford and Neil Watts.

Apologies were received from Peter Bates, Liz Cheveley, Helen Kent, Crombie McNeil, Julian Mitchell, Eileen Perrigo, Ollie Powell and Malcolm Wright.

#### **0. Opening Remarks**

The Chairman opened the meeting by welcoming those present to the Association's AGM 2022.

#### **1. Approval of minutes of the AGM held on 25 April 2021**

The final draft minutes were approved as a correct record.

#### **2. Matters arising from the minutes**

There were no matters arising.

#### **3. Chairman's Report**

**3.1** The Chairman welcomed attendees, observing that it was a select but much-appreciated quorum. He would give what he hoped would be a brief update of our activities since he became Chair of Sussex in April last year. He commented that it was no reflection on any of those present that it had felt a lot longer! The following paragraphs are a reproduction of his speech.

##### Progress in exceptional circumstances

**3.2** A lingering pandemic and a tragic conflict in Ukraine has, of course, put our game into sharp perspective. I am very happy to see the resourcefulness of clubs in joining together to form online bridge entities during the Covid crisis and pleased that most clubs are beginning again to build a solid face-to-face presence. Some clubs have needed to move premises or to redefine the sessions that they offer, and the county committee was continuing to monitor that evolution.

**3.3** Although many of us prefer the social atmosphere of live bridge, the online environment has become our friend over the past couple of years. Clubs are continuing to offer a mix of face-to-face and online games, even as clubs have reopened their doors. On June 19<sup>th</sup> the County will be hosting our first live event since the pandemic, the ever-popular Candles Swiss Teams at Henfield. The emphasis will be on fun, safety, and strawberries, so all are being encouraged to go to the website and enter now! A recent success online has been our joint Ukrainian relief project organised with Kent and Surrey. The Swiss Pairs and 9-High events have raised well in excess of £10,000. My heartfelt thanks go to all who organised and supported this event!

##### Membership, Teaching and the Less Experienced

**3.4** At 31<sup>st</sup> March our membership totalled 2,777, in the circumstances an understandable reduction of 188 since last year. We have continued to work with the EBU on marketing initiatives intended to recover these losses, and it's a priority for us all.

**3.5** Since the easing of pandemic restrictions our club bridge teachers have more than 250 members participating at different stages of their bridge education. We are cautiously optimistic that this number will return to pre-pandemic levels of 400+ as confidence in face-to-face settings returns. Some teachers have maintained and even expanded online sessions, as this enables them to expand their geographical coverage.

**3.6** Our series of events (variously known as the Welcome or Stepping-stone pairs) introduced in 2019 to provide opportunities for peer-group competition amongst learners and improvers, continues to be a popular part of our tournament programme.

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**3.7** We continue to invest in projects that support junior bridge, particularly the three counties strategy agreed with Kent and Surrey. Another Junior Bridge Camp is scheduled for later in 2022, and we are working with a much more active team in EBED to promote a range of national junior events.

### County Finances.

**3.8** I am pleased to report that tight financial management has continued with John Hardy's meticulous oversight. The development and delivery of online events at club and county level alongside the gradual recovery of club face-to-face sessions generated sufficient income to cover overheads in 2021 and continues to do so. Indeed, we have even able to subsidise some of our county events, producing pleasing increases in participation in both the Sussex Pairs and Championship Teams. The UMS rate remains at 7p for 2022-23, unchanged since 2012.

### County Competitions and National Performance.

**3.9** Our County teams performed creditably in 2021. We narrowly failed to qualify for the Tollemache final, and we also came second in the Southern Counties League, having led throughout the season. We also had finalists in Crockfords Cup, and second place in the National Pairs. At National level, Gunnar Hallberg and Oliver Powell both represented England, albeit at opposite ends of the age scale!

**3.10** The 2022 Sussex Pairs was won by Andy Ryder and Mike Allen, who were also part of the winning 2021 Sussex League team (with David Dickson, Matt Read and Ian Swanson). The 2021 Championship Teams was won by Dave Franklin, Martin Pool, Gerry Stanford, Mick Carrington and Kamran Nadim. The 2021 Invitation Pairs went to Andrew Southwell and Richard Fedrick. This year's David Pavey winners were Robert Delacour and Pamela Duffield. Congratulations to them all.

### Those Who Have Moved On.

**3.11** This year we lost May Langmaid, one of our best-loved Vice-presidents, and someone who gave enormously over the years to bridge in Sussex. When I arrived in the mid-1980s, May was already long-established as the organiser of the Invitation Pairs, which she ran with charm and efficiency. I went to a memorial service for May in Ditchling a few weeks ago, and it was enormously well-attended by family and many players from the West Sussex club.

**3.12** I would also like to pay a tribute to Peter Bates, who has decided to stand down from the Management Committee after a lifetime of dedication to the County. Peter spearheaded the Henfield Candles Swiss Teams, making it the most popular Swiss Teams in Sussex. He also contributed heavily to Schools Bridge, organised the Sussex Individual for years, and was an EBU shareholder representing Sussex views to the EBU board.

### Thanks

**3.13** Finally, I would like to offer an enormous THANK YOU to the County Officers whose collective experience has helped me immeasurably and kept me more-or-less on the straight and narrow for the year. Thank you, Martin, Dick, Joy and John. My thanks also go to all the members of the Tournament Committee and Management Committee, to Chris Jepson and the Selection Committee, to William Bourne for his commitment to youth bridge, to Eddie Williams for his help with directing, to Mervyn Wotton for his superhuman dedication to the website and to all the Tournament Organisers who have kept the Sussex ball rolling through this difficult time.

## **4. Honorary Treasurer's Report**

**4.1 Adoption of the Examined Annual Accounts.** The Honorary Treasurer had circulated his annual report highlighting:

- In another unprecedented year, the County has had a successful year financially, in spite of a continued reduction in its main sources of income - UMS income and income from tournaments. This was achieved as it was matched by a significant reduction in expenses.
- The income and expenditure account for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2021 reveals a surplus of £2,982 compared with a surplus in 2020 of £2,098. UMS income of £5,436 was 39% up on last year's total of £3,916, reflecting the gradual opening up of clubs for face to face bridge. This is still well below the 2019 total of £7,470.

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- The surplus on congresses and events at £1,417 was down by 41% on the 2020 total of £2,391 reflecting the absence of several face to face events held in 2020 pre-lockdown (charity SIMS, New Year Swiss teams, David Pavey) and well below the total for 2019 of £4,412. With the continued uncertainty over the holding of face to face tournaments, only a relatively modest increase in income from tournaments is expected for 2022.
- The Junior Bridge Camp was held in 2021 with an encouraging number of participants. As anticipated, there was a deficit of nearly £2,000 on the event, of which the Sussex share was £950. This was covered by a transfer from funds reserved for youth bridge activities with the balance of these funds now standing at £5,705.
- Overheads totalled £3,873 compared with a total in 2020 of £5,174. With the exception of charitable donations – nil in 2021 because of the absence of a charity SIMS event, total overheads were similar to those of 2020, and significantly down on the total for 2019 of £10,539 (which included year book costs of nearly £3,000). Overall, overheads have reduced in most areas, reflecting reduced activity as a result of lockdown.
- Total cash/bank balances at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2021 were £46,759 compared to £42,124 at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2020. The balance on the general fund increased from £40,579 at the end of 2020 to £43,561 at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2021.
- Going forward, the SCCBA will be facing numerous challenges, the main one being to ensure that the reduction in our main sources of income are matched by a continued reduction in our overheads. In addition, certain affiliated clubs may require financial assistance to remain viable until all are comfortable returning to face to face bridge. However, the SCCBA remains financially sound and has the resources to assist affiliated clubs as 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 such potential increases in expenditure. There is currently no plan to apply this increase.

The accounts had been examined by the county's independent examiner, Ronald James, and he had been content to certify them. At the Management Committee meeting on 11 February, members had also approved the accounts unanimously. The Honorary Treasurer invited questions. None were forthcoming and Ernie Rivett proposed adoption, seconded by Martin Pool. By show of hands this was approved unanimously.

**4.2 Appointment of Independent Examiner.** The Honorary Treasurer announced that Ronald James had agreed to be nominated for re-appointment as the independent examiner who would certify the County's accounts for a further year. Joy Mayall proposed and Neil Watts seconded and by show of hands Members present approved this appointment unanimously.

### **4.3 Approval of membership T&C**

The draft membership terms and conditions for 2022/23 had been circulated to Members present. The Honorary Treasurer indicated that there was no change from those in the previous year. By show of hands Members present approved these T&C unanimously.

### **5. Election of Officers**

The Honorary Secretary referred to the summary of nominations circulated to attendees. As there was only one nomination for each of three posts and no nomination for the fourth, he invited the meeting to approve the three nominations. Ernie Rivett proposed and Alexa Baxter seconded. By show of hands Members present approved the following appointments unanimously:

<b>Chairman</b>	<b>Peter Clinch</b>
<b>Honorary Treasurer</b>	<b>John Hardy</b>
<b>Honorary Secretary</b>	<b>Dick Wheeler</b>

### **6. Election of a Maximum of Ten Committee Members**

The Honorary Secretary reported that there were only eight nominations for the maximum of number (10) of posts allowed by the constitution and he invited members present to agree to the election of those nominated. David Galpin proposed and Andrea Galpin seconded. By show of hands Members present approved the following appointments unanimously.

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**Alexa Baxter, Andrea Galpin, David Galpin, Joy Mayall, Ollie Powell, Neil Watts, Mervyn Wotton and Malcolm Wright.**

### **7. Members' resolutions**

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

### **8. Award of Gladys Hakki Trophy.**

The Gladys Hakki Trophy for 2021/22 had been awarded to Fergus Cameron of Bexhill BC. The Honorary Secretary was in touch with Brian Gould (Chairman, Bexhill BC) to make arrangements for the presentation.

### **9. Any Other Business.**

Reflecting on the Chairman's thanks to those who had supported him, the President felt that the meeting should also convey many thanks to the Chairman for his unfailing commitment to deliver the requirements of both Chairman and Tournament Manager. The President urged the new Management Committee to take action to reduce this workload as soon as possible. The meeting concurred.

The meeting closed at 11.21am.