

FINAL DRAFT
Sussex County Contract Bridge Association
A meeting of the Tournament Committee of the SCCBA was held via Zoom
on Monday 4 Mar 2024 commencing at 2.30pm.

1. PRESENT: P Clinch (PC – (Chairman), Mrs A Galpin (AG), J Hardy (JH), M Pool (MP) and D Wheeler (DW – Secretary).

2. APOLOGIES: None

2. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The final draft minutes of the meeting held on 17 Nov 2023 were agreed as presented.

3. MATTERS ARISING

Actions from the last meeting would be picked up under the relevant items below.

4. TOURNAMENT PROGRAMME

4.1 Sussex League

David Galpin (DG) had reported that the Sussex League was under way and he had sent the details to captains just over a week ago, a few days earlier than last year. For the first time that he could recall he had not lost any teams from those who competed last year and had welcomed two new teams. That meant there were now 26 teams in the competition, Divisions 1 and 2 have the usual 7 teams, Div 3 has 8, and, as last season, Div 4 has 4 teams playing each other twice. All bar one team have paid their entry fees and the missing fee would be chased if necessary. The playing season will again run to the end of October with an overflow to the end of November if necessary. All matches were played last season, the last one on 29 November.

4.2 Championship Teams

DG had reported that the Championship Teams is well on target and has reached the semi-final stage. The holders (Julian Mitchell's team) had been defeated at the quarter final stage so there will be new winners this season. A delay in playing one of the semi-finals would not prevent completion of the competition in time to identify the team that will go forward to represent the county in the Pachabo. All the qualifiers for the Plate (7 teams) are now known and this part of the competition will start in the near future..

DG had also completed the update of the trophies for both competitions, retrieving those that were missing, updating the engraving and awarding them to the 2023 winners.

4.3 GP events 2024 and 2025

PC reported that arrangements for the GP Swiss Pairs at Patcham BC on 28 July were in hand and planning for the GP Congress with Kent, including the Sussex Swiss Teams, at Tunbridge Wells BC over the last weekend in October would be started in due course. DW had advised the EBU that our GP events in 2025 would take place on the dates equivalent to those in 2024.

4.4 Sussex Pairs 2024

Preparations for the final (17 March) were nearing completion and the target of 22 qualifying pairs had been achieved. TC members noted Gerry Stanford's report regarding the 'location' of the final – face-to-face or online - and endorsed his proposed approach.

4.5 Invitation Pairs 2024

AG had circulated a progress report on 29 February, updated by her email of 4 March. TC Members indicated they were content with her proposals and she added that some TDs had yet to be booked – availability is proving to be difficult. AG wondered whether Worthing BC might be able to use one of their TDs for the sessions planned there. JH agreed to enquire and advise AG in due course. Although it might lead to a loss overall, TC members believed that the level of prizes should be maintained given the current surplus of receipts over expenditure.

Action: JH/AG

4.6 Spring Congress 2024

PC reported that entry forms would be posted on the website this week. Stephen Kennedy had agreed to direct. PC observed that the second day of the congress clashed with the Stepping Stone Pairs. As the timing of the congress could not be changed, he would speak to Jim Downes (SSP organiser) to see if his event could be moved.

Action: PC

4.7 Garden Cities 2024

PC reported that preparations were nearing completion for the county teams of eight competition on 23 March. The winners would go forward to represent Sussex in the GC on 11 May at Richmond BC.

4.8 NYST 2024

JM reported that despite her best efforts to maximise entries, the number attending Henfield did not reach the level required for the event to break even. She wondered whether a new organiser might bring some fresh ideas. DW observed that JM had used every avenue listed in the Competition Organiser guidelines and it was unlikely that another organiser could have done better. Alan Setchell (Horsham BC) had suggested that stratifying the event might make it more attractive but MC members were not convinced that this would make a material difference. JM had considered moving the event to Patcham BC (lower venue costs) but the low level of PBC members' interest in teams competitions might actually reduce entry levels there. PC observed that the upcoming events at Patcham BC and Henfield which would give further data on entry levels at those locations, informing further discussion in due course.

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4.9 David Pavey 2024

PC reported that 20 pairs had competed for the DP this year and, although this entry level was still below pre-pandemic levels, it was sufficient for the event to make a modest surplus.

4.10 Welcome Series Teams competition?

PC reported that discussions with a potential host club had been deferred whilst their work to find new premises remained to be completed. He would pursue this further as and when circumstances allowed.

Action: PC

4.11 EBU 9 High Corwen

DW reported that the EBU had consulted with counties to assess the potential level of interest in a national 9 high competition. He had circulated details to TC members and had indicated to the EBU that we would support the introduction of such a competition, we would prefer the qualifying events to take place in the first quarter of 2025 and we would be prepared to hold a qualifying event in Sussex. TC members were content with these responses.

5. TOURNAMENT MANAGEMENT

5.1 Committee vacancies

PC had identified two potential candidates and was hopeful of completing successful negotiations in the not too distant future.

Action: PC

5.2 CTD

Discussions with a potential candidate had been positive and PC would be sharing a job description shortly. PC was optimistic that a positive outcome was in prospect.

Action: PC

5.3 Competition pricing policy

In light of the healthy financial position, JH agreed that the current policy of holding prices at 2023 levels could be continued.

5.4 Competition Calendar 2024/25

DW reported that he would shortly initiate the exercise to gather the information to populate the 2024/25 competition calendar covering the year from September 2024 to August 2025.

Action: DW

6. EBU Competitions Working Group

PC reported that the CWG's current priority was identifying ways to increase the income derived from online GP events.

7. EBU Tournament Directors Development Group

PC reported that the TDDG would be meeting in April to conduct its annual review of national TDs.

8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

DW reported that an inconsistency in the Competition Rules had recently been identified by Mervyn Wotton and DW would seek MC approval at its next meeting for a minor change to the CR to resolve the matter.

Action: DW

9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING – 7 June 2024