

BWS (Brierfield/Warrington/Stretford) Bridge Club

Organisers' Meeting held on Zoom

Saturday 20th February 2021

Present

David Tilley (B/W/S)- chair
Richard Aubery (Stretford) to 11am
Linda Banks (Brierfield)
Chris Collison (Stretford)
Norman Cope (Brierfield)
Alan Crabtree (Brierfield)
Jim Steele (Warrington)
Helen Wright (Warrington) from 1030am

1 Welcome

David Tilley chaired the meeting, which opened at 10am.

2 Apologies

Mike Dennis (Warrington)

3 Minutes of Last Meeting (20th January 2021)

The minutes were accepted as read. Various items needed further discussion, but were on the agenda.

4 David Tilley's Report

On-line bridge continues to grow, with now over 90 tables a week in our 6 regular sessions. None of these are struggling for attendance. The Thursday morning Supervised Duplicate is doing well, now with upwards of 11 tables; when we started those in July, we had 5 or 6.

David continues to work through the records for 2020, for confirming the amounts due from Warrington and Brierfield, with 1 month still to do. Stretford have received the self-bill payments for 2020 from both Brierfield and Warrington.

David is also working through 2021 as we go along, and will soon be ready to invoice for January. Both Brierfield and Warrington have a robust ongoing process for self-billing for 2021, so the numbers will be readily verified.

5 Invoicing Update

See item 4.

Irene Cooke has taken over as Treasurer at Stretford. She will be dealing with payments to the respective charities for 2020 charity events. Once we have confirmation that this has been done, Brierfield and Warrington will reimburse Stretford accordingly.

6 Current sessions: review

There was no proposal to change our balance between RealBridge and BBO. Some members strongly prefer one or the other, but as all sessions are well supported, there is no need to change.

The last Friday in the month RealBridge session is now Swiss Pairs instead of regular Duplicate Pairs. We had our first one on 29th January. It was well supported, with 15 ½ tables. We will continue with this once a month. It was suggested we might make it more meaningful as Swiss Pairs by having more boards per round, eg 4 rather than 2. This will be considered for next time. **Action DT**

First Tuesday in the Month Random Teams: this was held for the first time on 2nd February. We only had 4 tables, but it was an enjoyable format, and we will persevere. The next one will be Tuesday 2nd March. The idea of making this a cross IMP's format, rather than random teams of 4, was suggested, which might be considered for the future.

We discussed the topic of a member survey; it is difficult to run a meaningful survey at present because of the imminent changes in lockdown rules, and uncertainty about timing of the resumption of face-to-face bridge. We would want, for example, to understand members' views on the balance of face-to-face and on-line bridge into the longer term, and how happy members would be about attending their Club to play face-to-face bridge as soon as it became permissible. We agreed that the content of a survey would be discussed in the separate Club Committees before attempting a survey across BWS.

Action: Club Committees

Posting results (action from last time): in order to make the process easier for uploading of results, David said he would set up a Dropbox folder to hold the results and hands files, and make access available to JSS, JJ, and LB, so that we could access them and upload directly, without DT having to send them by email each time.

Action DT

7 10-high Tournament- eligibility to play

This runs weekly on Monday afternoons on BBO, and is very successful, with typically 16 or 17 tables. Many of the less experienced players take part, so it is achieving its purpose as a stepping stone to full Club duplicate pairs.

There have been concerns expressed about ineligible players taking part, ie with an NGS grade of Jack. This has happened on a few occasions, by dispensation from the TD, David Tilley.

There was a long discussion on how to deal with the 10-high rule, and whether we should be rigid or allow some leeway. There was concern that some less experienced players would be unhappy if they frequently came up against strong players; on the other hand, some players might oscillate between 10 and Jack, and might on occasion have just moved up to a Jack without knowing, or when they had already arranged to play. In the end we agreed that the 10-high rule should be enforced, with the allowance that if someone had been a 10 during the previous month, and had only recently moved up to a Jack, the TD would have discretion to allow them to take part. However, players who are substantively NGS grade Jack or above would not be allowed to take part, even if partnering a weaker player.

8 Delays in sessions starting

A recent Monday evening (BBO) session had been very late getting started, which was unsatisfactory. It was not unusual for sessions to be several minutes late getting started, but this particular example was particularly poor, caused by a person who had registered to play not turning up, then subsequently denying he had registered.

There was a discussion about how to get sessions to start promptly. David Tilley said it was not as simple, on BBO, as just insisting everyone was logged in a good 10 minutes before the start, then starting on time and refusing anyone who turned up late: sometimes players can be logged in in good time, and sitting waiting to start, and the system thinks they are not there (possibly due to momentary disconnection and reconnection of one player in a pair, at an inopportune moment, without the player realising it). Then the TD has to try to contact the players to find out what is going on. If a contact phone number isn't to hand, this can waste quite a few minutes, and the whole session is kept waiting. We will look at how to make players' contact information readily available to the TD.

However, we agreed that we would insist on players being logged in ready to start at least 10 minutes before the session start time, and would be prepared to deny people entry to the tournament if they did not comply. We would continue to try to accommodate people if they complied in good faith. We will reinforce the requirement to log in at least 10 minutes early, by posting on the Club websites.

Action LB/JSS/DT

9 Education

We do not have data on how many learners have registered with Yorkshire Bridge / Jack Stocken.

Improvers lessons continue to be given on Zoom on alternate Thursday mornings. This is increasingly popular, with ~ 50 participants each time. The lesson notes are posted on the Warrington website (under New Players & Lessons/Lessons) in two versions: a screen copy of the PowerPoint presentation, and a printer-friendly version. On lesson mornings, the Supervised Duplicate uses prepared hands on the theme of the lesson. It was agreed last time that the lesson notes would be posted in advance of the lesson, rather than afterwards.

Action JSS

The future of Zoom lessons is unclear, depending on what happens with face-to-face bridge and the possibility of returning to classroom lessons (eg U3A in September). We will continue through to the summer, then take stock depending on demand.

10 Festival of Bridge Week

The Club Committees had discussed, and all agreed it was a good idea to hold a week of free bridge for members, and all would support it. The timing is suggested to be Easter week, with the first event being a pro-am pairs on Thursday 1st April. However, it was recognised that this timing might not be ideal, depending on when/how lockdown constraints are lifted- people might have other priorities at Easter. We agreed to reserve committing on the timing until we know more, but we can proceed to prepare a schedule of events.

Action: all, for suggestions

11 Psych Book

There were no new entries to report.

12 AOB

12.1 Master Point list: all BWS results had been being reported to the EBU as Stretford Bridge Club. We would look at a way of sorting the data to provide Warrington and Brierfield with their appropriate players' records. **Action DT/JSS**

12.2 Start time for evening events

We agreed to trial a start time of 715pm from 1st March onwards. This will be posted on Club websites. There is no proposal to change the number of boards at present. **Action LB/JSS/DT**

12.3 Alerting & announcing

We are still experiencing various problems with people failing to alert and announce properly, particularly on BBO where typing in is required, which can be tedious. This might in some cases be ignorance of the rules, sometimes laziness, and sometimes people being awkward and declining to explain, just saying "look at my convention card" – all unacceptable.

There are also problems with mis-clicks/undo's. This can be largely resolved by people setting their preferences to require "confirm" after selecting a bid, or a card to play, or both.

David Tilley has a chart explaining the requirement on announcing and alerting. Linda will draft an email attaching this chart, and explaining how to avoid mis-clicks (ie setting the confirm option, for both bidding and play of a card), and also about our policy on undo's. It will include a statement to the effect that since incorrect alerting and unaccepted undo's can cause problems, if either arises then the TD should be called, and this should be done at once. **Action LB/DT**

Once this is prepared, we will share with members by email and by posting on the Club websites.

12.4 BWS Teams of Four Lockdown League

The winter 2020/21 league is underway. We have 7 teams taking part in a round robin, to be completed by mid-April. The team standings are periodically posted on the Warrington website. Two-thirds of the matches are already complete. Participants generally liked the format; JSS will run another league once the present one is complete, if there is sufficient demand.

13 Date of next BWS Organisers' meeting

The date agreed is Saturday 20th March, at 10am.