

Minutes of Warrington Bridge Club Committee Meeting

Sat 17th January 2026, 0930hrs, on Zoom

1. Apologies

Brenda Newton, Janine Curwell

2. Minutes of previous Committee meeting, held 22nd November 2025

The minutes of the previous meeting were accepted. There were no matters arising not on today's agenda.

3. On-Line Bridge

Friday evening attendances are bumping along at about 5 tables, though recently 6.

Tuesdays are a bit lower, at about 3 tables. We agreed we will persevere and try to build attendance. Jim has advertised it at Thursday sessions. We will ask Simon Barber to mention it at a few Wednesday evening F2F sessions at Antrobus. **ACTION Mike**

4. Finances

a. Janet presented her 2025 Income and Expenditure account, which will be submitted to Brian Drinkwater, our auditor. Comments:

- i. We have operated at a small loss in 2025, but this was expected and planned for.
- ii. We are missing a payment to Alford Hall for our Alford membership subscriptions. This should have been invoiced to us last April, but wasn't. The bill would have been about £700 (on-line only WBC members are exempt). Mike will email Jess **ACTION Mike**

b. Charity for 2026:

- i. We continued supporting the Walton Lea Partnership for a second year in 2025. We agreed to change, and support one or more alternatives in 2026, but to keep to our format of 6 Charity/Improvers events per year (ie as in our calendar).
- ii. We agreed that our first Charity event of 2026, on 26th January, would be in aid of the Alford Hall children's Easter charity (as a one off).
- iii. We agreed to consider other option for the rest of the year, including the Warrington Food Bank.
- iv. Matching the table money: in principle we agreed to keep match-funding, but would keep this under review over the year.

c. Billing

- i. This time, Jim, as agreed, sent an email reminder to people to pay their bill promptly. Janet will put a "please pay by" date on the invoices, at a duration she feels will work best.

ACTION Janet

- ii. Chasing up: this is not Janet's responsibility, though she did say that a reminder text message usually worked. If Janet advised Mike and Jim of any late payers, we will chase up.

d. Auditor: Brian Drinkwater will not continue after doing the 2025 accounts. Carolyn agreed to carry out the auditor role for 2026.

e. Membership: we continue to attract new members, so we are growing slowly. Our list is currently 143. Our low point was 59 in 2018. The Committee felt that no change or direction is needed, and we should continue to run as we are and build steadily.

f. Alford Hall will apply new room hire charges from April. We do not yet know what they propose to charge.

g. Alford Hall have declared they are going to apply charges for advertising, which in our case would be £175/year for our fixed sign. We agreed we would have to accept this charge for 2026. We will keep under review, an option being to remove our sign -not something we would be keen to do.

5. Calendar 2026

- a. Agreed, and issued. There is a full year calendar on the website and on the notice board.
- b. The website displays the detail session-by-session calendar for the current month plus the subsequent two. Each first of the month, a new month is displayed, but this does not reflect exceptions from the usual weekly schedule. Normally Jim amends this at the start of each month to make sure it's accurate, but will be away for the first week of February. Ian agreed to do the amendments this time. **ACTION Ian**

6. Expenditure items

- a. Bridgemates: we agreed to purchase additional Bridgemates, to add to the 15 we have at present. Mike reported he has purchased an extra 3, but they are refurbished ones, as Bridgemate have ceased making them, having moved over to a new version, with a colour touch-screen (Bridgemate III).
- b. Long term approach on technology for scoring: the system we have now of Bridgemates II and Scorebridge works OK, so we have no need to make any changes in the short term. However, the new generation Bridgemates are much better to use, having colour touch screens and more information. There is also a very good, and cheaper, alternative of using tablets, alongside eg BridgePal. Jim has shared a link to videos describing both.

7. Publicity

- a. Local GP surgeries/ Primary Care facilities (standing item): Mike will discuss with Andrew Young a shared flyer between WBC and u3a Bridge Section. **ACTION Mike**.
- b. Essential Guide: Ian confirmed that this is still working OK, as our entry in What's On continues to be displayed.
- c. EBU Club & County webinars: the EBU is now running monthly on-line sessions for bridge clubs to discuss their ideas for growing the game. Around 50 to 60 people typically attend, from clubs all over the country. Jim has been attending on our behalf. The next one is Tuesday 27th January 10am, on the topic of Innovation. Jim will be away and unable to attend. There was no-one else available from our Committee to attend, as Tuesday mornings clashes with bridge at Alford Hall. The EBU publishes the video on their website after the event, but doing it that way means we can't participate.

8. Operations

- a. Charity/Improvers nights: the next one is Monday 26th January.
 - i. Malcom Roberts volunteered to be host.
 - ii. Email to advertise: Jim will be away. Carolyn will send out an email to members. **ACTION Carolyn**
 - iii. Opening up/ setting up: **Mike and Malcom**.
 - iv. Collecting the cash and recording attendees: **Malcolm**
 - v. Running the dishwasher for the mugs: if this isn't done on the night, Ian will check and sort it out the next day, as he's there on Tuesday mornings anyway. **ACTION Ian**
- b. Rota/cover for Mondays when Jim and Mike are both away. This will next arise on Monday 2nd February, when Jim, Hilary, and Mike are all away. Mike will ensure someone is delegated. **ACTION Mike**
- c. Club Strategy: we had a discussion on some ideas to take the Club forward. We still need a draft strategy update. **ACTION Mike** will circulate to the Committee members for comment.
- d. SIM pairs: we don't have a SIM pairs event, now we have opted out of Children in Need. Keith has contacted ECATS to see what is available. We can choose to run a SIM pairs as a charity event or a regular Club session, depending on timing and what options we have.

- e. AGM on 9/3/26:
 - i. we agreed to keep annual subscriptions and playing fees fixed for another year.
 - ii. Committee: all present agreed to continue. We need to check with Janine and Brenda if they also are willing. **ACTION Mike**
 - iii. We discussed whether we should have a vice-chair nominated. Mike will check to see if Keith would be willing. This would require being on the Committee. **ACTION Mike**
 - iv. Roger & Helen Hesp have been approached to join the Committee. They have tentatively agreed.
- a. Spring Social 23/3/26
 - i. Format: same as 2025.
 - ii. Competition prizes : **ACTION Jim**
 - iii. Hosting : **Malcolm**
 - iv. Food & Drink: **Mike & Janine**.

9. Succession/ Resilience /Resource planning (Standing agenda item)

- a. We implemented the action from last time to approach Roger and Helen.
- b. Venue: we are very happy with Alford Hall, but should consider contingency should this become unavailable to us in the future.

10. Education/Teaching

- a. Training for bridge teaching (standing item) Jim and Ian will continue to keep a look out for suitable training (venue, timing) **ACTION Jim/Ian**
- b. TD training: The County (Mark Madeley) have agreed, at their meeting on Tuesday, to run one or more half day TD seminars, at different locations, depending on demand. This is the Paul Mathews session which some of us attended in April 2024. Janet wants to attend, and there are 4 people from Croft. It will be free to affiliated clubs, and £10 pp for non-affiliated. We await further details.
- c. Getting our TD's doing the role: we need a plan to get our trained TD's to get used to doing it. This should mean doing the TD role, while an experienced TD is there to assist if necessary. We should devise a schedule to get Jim, Hilary, Mike, Malcolm Strange all up to speed. **ACTION Jim**

11. Future Events

- a. Run a mini-bridge session: the idea is to make members familiar with using mini-bridge as a teaching/learning tool, so that they might use it with eg grandchildren to introduce them to bridge. We will look to doing this one afternoon next summer, say a Thursday afternoon in July. Need to check that Andrew Young and John Marshall are available. Once date chosen, invite members to attend. **ACTION Jim**
- b. Inter-club team event: we discussed possibly a Thursday afternoon in the summer, minimum 8 players per club, between WBC and Croft. Ian will check whether there is interest at Croft for a summer afternoon event. **ACTION Ian** If not, we could try organising for a Monday evening.
- c. Café bridge: some clubs have tried this and found it very successful. However, it is necessarily complex. We agreed best to wait until one or more of us has attended such an event, so we can discuss with someone present who knows how it works.

12. Date of Next Meeting:

We will hold a short meeting on Sat 28th February, 0930 hrs, to discuss AGM matters. Our next normal Committee meeting will be on Saturday 14th March, 0930 hrs. Both meetings on Zoom.