

Minutes of Warrington Bridge Club Committee Meeting

Sat 18th July 2026, 0930hrs, on Zoom

1. Apologies

Janet, Janine, Helen

2. Minutes of previous Committee meeting, held 9th May 2026. The minutes of the previous meeting were accepted. There were no matters arising not on today's agenda.

3. On-Line Bridge

- a. We are making a little bit of progress, with some new names turning up to play, both on Tuesdays and Fridays. We will persevere with the County initiative, and seek to continue building. We have got up to 5 tables but not every week. We'll be happier when we get to six or seven most weeks.
- b. Friday evening costs: this remains a slight concern, as we are losing money when we have fewer than 5 tables, with the TD fee being paid to Adam Wiseberg. No action required, apart from continuing to try to build numbers.

4. Finances

- a. Update/ comment: Janet had given her apologies for the meeting, but had commented that there were no concerns.
- b. Membership update: now 134 (of whom 24 play on-line only), one increase from last time (two new members less one deceased). The next influx is expected in September, when the new classes start. We should gain approx. 10 from current u3a Improvers.
- c. How to deal with the Q2 invoice already sent to Gordon Amos: we agree to waive this, unless his family want to settle up, or pay the amount to our charity (Warrington Food Bank).
- d. Longer term, do we want to increase annual subscriptions or playing fees? We agreed this is not an urgent decision. Our general view at this stage is that playing fees should stay as they are for 2027, but we should revisit the annual subscription of £10, because £7.50 of this (except for on-line only members) goes straight to Alford Hall. We will discuss at our next meeting.
- e. The hassle of chasing up late payers remains. We confirmed our decision last time that Janet should send out the initial invoices, and after a suitable elapsed time, report any non-payers to the secretary. Other committee members will then chase up as appropriate. We will also attempt to persuade those paying by cash or cheque to adopt our system of payment by bank transfer.

5. Expenditure items

- a. Longer term strategy: we might eventually change over to using tablets, or BriAn, rather than moving on to Bridgemate 3, but there is no urgency to act. We can observe how various systems develop over the next two or three years. Local clubs which we're associated with (Croft, Antrobus) are unlikely to be trying these before we'd want to take action. We might carry out a dummy trial of BriAn ourselves at some time in the future. Jim will ask County if they'd be interested in organising a demo session and invite all M&CBA clubs. **ACTION Jim**
- b. Next year, 2027, is our 50th year (the Club started in 1977). We discussed options to mark the occasion. We agreed:
 - i. Look at buying 100 mugs, dishwasher safe, with our logo and 50 year anniversary printed on. **ACTION Mike** to price up.
 - ii. Upgrade our trophies **ACTION Jim** to investigate.
 - iii. Mark up our Alford Hall sign with a 50 year sticker.
 - iv. Hold a one-off 50 year anniversary handicap competition, with trophies to keep. **ACTION Jim** to look at fitting it into our 2027 calendar.

6. Publicity

- a. SH Festival: we had a stand on the Sunday (5th July). It was unclear whether we achieved any new interest. We will probably not repeat next year.
- b. Local GP surgeries/ Primary Care facilities: no progress. Keep on the agenda as a standing item.
- c. Essential Guide: Ian reported that our entry in the What's On section is still being included.
- d. EBU on-line webinars: these are held monthly on a Tuesday morning, on topics related to clubs/grass roots bridge. Video recordings of the sessions are available on the EBU website. Jim was intending to attend on 21st July, but was not free to do so. However, we have had some feedback on it from Mark Madeley, about the EBU EnjoyBridge website (<https://www.enjoybridge.co.uk>), which has been actioned by Jim, adding 3 items (Intermediate class, Thursday relaxed duplicates, and Tuesday on-line).

7. Operations

- a. Results of membership survey: we recently ran a survey to find out members' views on various matters, such as session start times. We received 45 responses. Key outcomes:
 - i. Monday evening start time: there were more in favour of an earlier start than for the status quo. However, a significant number who wanted to retain the present timing said they would be unable to attend if it were earlier. The committee decided to keep to the present start time.
 - ii. Friday evening on-line start time: there were slightly more in favour of an earlier start than for the status quo. However, a significant number who wanted to retain the present timing said they would struggle to make it earlier, because of disruption of mealtimes etc. The committee decided to keep to the present start time of 715pm.
 - iii. Extra lessons on summer Thursday afternoons: there was support, so we decided to put on two to see how it goes in practice.
 - iv. A teams of four event: there was support to run this. It is planned for 23 July.
 - v. Mini-bridge demo and play: there was some support. So we will run this, on 27 August..
- b. Rota/cover for Mondays when Jim and Mike are both away: Jim will circulate his dates of absence for the rest of 2026, to Mike, and include Roger & Helen. **ACTION Jim**
- c. Dealing machine when Roger is away: this is working OK. Roger can pass the machine to Jim if he's going to be away for any extended period.
- d. Club Strategy: we had a discussion on some ideas to take the Club forward. We still need a draft strategy update. Action remains on Mike to update the previous document, but this time we have a draft M&CBA strategy to take into account. **ACTION Mike-** carried over from last time.
- e. SIM pairs: we will not pursue a SIM pairs event for 2026- too much hassle as it requires separate payments to ECATS and to the charity, and too much of the money gets raked off for admin.
- f. Advanced lessons/ workshops over the summer: one already held on 16 July, with excellent turnout, and another set for 20th August.
- g. Monday TD rota: we previously agreed that Mike Dennis, Malcolm Strange and Jim Steele would be added into the rota. Jim will update the Monday TD for the period to end November. **ACTION Jim**
It was noted last time that Ian Douglas, Malcolm Roberts, and Jim Steele are all accustomed to carrying out the TD role on a Thursday afternoon, including doing the scoring, and this already works well on an ad hoc basis.

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

- a. Additional committee members- we will keep an out for likely people to approach. We do have a shortage of expertise on competitions, on how to run events other than duplicate pairs (eg multiple teams). We will seek advice as required from Keith or David.
- b. Venue: we are very happy with Alford Hall, but should consider contingency should this become unavailable to us in the future. There is a member's meeting on **Sunday 26th July 1pm**; we will try to have WBC committee members present. We still await a meeting of representatives of Alford Hall user organisations.
We will refresh our list of alternative venues. Ian circulated this after the meeting. Not all are ideal- one is at present unavailable, and one probably too small. We will pursue the most promising options, and check out several venues in more detail. We will also look at and what kit we would need for a short-term emergency relocation, as a contingency in case the need arises.

9. Education/Teaching

- a. Training for bridge teaching (standing item) Jim and Ian will continue to keep a look out for suitable training (venue, timing). Standing item.
- b. TD training: M&CBA have now run two repeats, in different locations, of the Paul Mathews course some of us attended (jointly with Antrobus) on 27/4/24. Our priority at present is not additional TD training, but more about getting those who have been trained into a TD rota and gaining experience in practice. (see item 7g)

10. Future events

- 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 plan to do this on Thursday afternoon 27th August.
- b. We had previously discussed an inter-club teams evening with Croft, and though their committee were supportive, the membership were not, so we have had to shelve the idea. Instead, we propose a teams-of-four afternoon event on Thursday afternoon 23rd July. Jim will email member to invite attendance.
ACTION Jim (complete)

11. AOB

No items

12. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Saturday 19th September, 0930 hrs, on Zoom.