

Minutes of Warrington Bridge Club Committee Meeting
Saturday 2nd September 2023, 930am, on Zoom

Present: Mike Dennis (chair), Jim Steele (secretary), Janet Jagan, (Treasurer), David Burrows, Carolyn Bailey, Malcolm Roberts, Janine Curwell, Brigitte Massey

1 Apologies: none

2 Minutes of previous meeting held Saturday 3rd June 2023: accepted as a true record.
There were no matters arising not on today's agenda.

3 BWS: On-line activities

- a. Review of weekly sessions- attendances, costs, charges: Jim shared the current version of the rolling spreadsheet which tallies up attendances, costs, and income in our on-line sessions. Sessions all show a small profit, except for the occasional Monday which makes a small loss. Jim commented that he checks our data with Brierfield (Shirley Saunders) each month to ensure that we agree the numbers; this is important for reimbursing Stretford correctly. On-line bridge is working OK for us, generating a contribution to Club funds. The meeting agreed we are generally OK with the current arrangements.
- b. No BWS meeting since 28th March 2022: we have provisionally agreed Wed 13 September at 10.30am; Jim will confirm with the Committee, to agree who will attend on behalf of WBC.
ACTION Jim
- c. Proposal some months ago to change Mondays to RealBridge (suggested by Dave Tilley, supported by Brierfield). Survey showed that some players were against, so we have not changed. We will review at the BWS meeting.

4 F2F Activities

- a. Thursday morning relaxed duplicate, using Bridgemates (with other tables for learners): very successful over the summer; most weeks 7 tables: 5 tables playing duplicate, plus 2 tables of learners; this week we had 8 tables. Continue to 7th September.
- b. From 14th September we will recommence teaching in the mornings, and Relaxed Duplicate sessions will move to the afternoon, 1pm start. Brigitte suggested we should look at keeping the duplicate in the morning and move the lessons to the afternoon. Malcolm said that people were used to Thursday mornings being lessons, as they move up from Beginners to Improvers to Intermediates. We resolved to keep the plan as it is for now, but to review, depending on the success of the Thursday afternoon sessions.
Cover to run Thursday afternoon 21st September (Jim unavailable): Mike Dennis and Keith Perry to agree who covers what that day, with the morning teaching session as well. **ACTION Mike**
- c. Alford Hall issues
 - i. Sorting out the store room: some junk has already been removed. The main issue is the uneven floor, making it difficult to move the wheely box in and out. This is in hand with Alford.
 - ii. Internet reliability: much better now that a new extender has been installed in our bridge room (the Festival Suite). We can use a mobile hotspot if necessary – both Jim and Janet have the facility on their mobiles.
 - iii. Disabled parking spaces. This seems to be broadly OK now, after Alford's campaign.
 - iv. Room heating: the boiler for heating the Festival Suite is separate from the rest of the premises, located in the room off the back of the kitchen, and is not on a timer. It has to be switched on manually. As we approach the colder weather, it's important that we check that Alford staff have remembered to switch it on, at the start of the evening. Brigitte suggested we might have some back-up fan heaters. An issue here is they would have to be PAT tested, so it's not as simple as just supplying our own.

- v. Décor of Festival suite- some improvements are desirable; this will be subject to ongoing discussion with Alford Hall management.
- d. Monday evenings: we still need to establish a rota for opening up, setting out tables, etc, and bringing the milk. We discussed the problem of punctuality, and some people rolling up late, towards 7.15pm, making life very hard for the TD, and delaying the start of play for everyone. The meeting resolved to have a blitz on this issue, by regular reminders at the start of sessions. Mike agreed to do this at the start of Monday sessions each time he is there, for a few weeks, to see if we can achieve an improvement. **Action Mike**
- e. TD rota: this is now in place, with TD's nominated in advance as shown on the website calendar.
- f. Calendar of events:
 - i. We confirmed the Christmas social for 11 Dec, joint with Improvers night.
 - ii. Improvers/ charity Monday evenings: we confirmed 23 October for the next one. On the subject of charities, Janet said she got no guarantee from the Salvation Army to use our donation locally. We resolved to send our donation to the MND Association instead. **Action Janet**. For our next charity event, we suggested the Walton Lea Partnership. Malcolm commented that Morrison's have a list on display showing which local charities they support, eg by sending food. Also, we will consider canvassing members by email for their suggestions on future charities to support. **Action Jim**
 - iii. Elizabeth Bennett Memorial trophy (not played as planned on 3rd July) – we suggested 16th October. Janet has since confirmed with Carol Bingham that this is OK, so we have now confirmed it in the calendar.

5. Education/ teaching

- a. u3a enrolment day is Wednesday 6 September 1-3pm, at Winmarleigh House. Malcolm Roberts and David Simmers will attend. Jim Steele and Hilary Wood will also attend to lend support. Jim has prepared an A5 size handout and printed off 20 copies.
- b. Advertising the courses (beginners/improvers/intermediates): our website already displays this. The information on beginners and improvers courses is also on the Warrington u3a website. Jim has also posted a flyer in the What's On In Warrington page on Facebook.
- c. New Intermediate Class starting 14 September 2023; we need more support from members to help run the Thursday morning classes, to sit in and make up tables, and to offer advice as people play the prepared hands.
- d. Approach to teaching: we resolved to put more reliance on people reading the course notes in advance, and less on input on the day, to make it more interactive, and to put more emphasis on playing and learning from prepared hands (but this needs more people helping). Malcolm commented that he includes a slip of paper with the prepared hands, in the improvers class, to summarise the main learning point from the hands, what the contract should be, etc. Jim will consider this for the intermediates class. **Action Jim**
- e. Cover for morning of 21 September: Keith Perry is available.
- f. Monthly advanced lessons – we agreed to defer these while we continue to build attendance on Thursday afternoon relaxed duplicates.

6. Finances/ general publicity

- a. General update/comments – Janet had no issues to raise.
- b. Expenditure- proposals/plans:
 - a. 3 extra Bridgemates now procured.
 - b. Publicity sign (on metal posts) at Alford Hall: we have Alford agreement. The meeting resolved to proceed. Jim will prepare a draft design for consideration by the Committee, and investigate suppliers. We will aim for the same size as existing ones at Alford hall.
 - c. Mike asked if we would want to put up a publicity banner elsewhere, such as SH Tennis Club. The cost would be about £250/year. Mike would see whether a cheaper trial might be possible, to gauge effectiveness. **Action Mike**

7. **Membership update**

- a. We now have 110 members: 70 Full, 20 New Player, and 20 On-line. Membership is creeping up slowly but steadily. We have had 8 new members in 2023. We expect an influx of New Player members with the start of the Intermediates course on 14 September.
- b. Recruitment drive: We discussed the possibility of advertising in Warrington Guardian. Mike said that had been tried before, had been very expensive, and not delivered any new members. We discussed approaching it instead not by paying for advertising, but by writing an article to submit as something the paper might like to publish – they are always looking for copy which they don't have to write themselves. We could major on the joint enterprise of Warrington u3a and WBC. Anything we propose would need to be run past Andrew Young first. **Action Jim**

8. **2023 Competitions/ trophies**

- a. Mike had agreed to arrange engraving of the two trophies awarded on 6th March 2023. (one with Carolyn, the other with Keith /Stuart). In hand. ACTION Mike
- b. 2023 Competitions recap
 - i. Elizabeth Bennett memorial trophy: annual handicap pairs event to take place in one session. New date confirmed as Monday 16th October.
 - ii. Teams (Jordan Vase): being played over 5 Monday evenings as handicap XIMPs pairs, instead of Teams of 4. Dates are 27/3, 29/5, 31/7 (actually played on 7 August), 25/9, and 27/11, so 3 of the 5 have already been played. Best 3 of 5 to count. David had raised a problem of how the handicaps work for XIMPs scoring, when they are designed to apply to Match Points. Jim is looking into this and will offer solution to David for his consideration.
Action Jim
 - iii. The rest of our competitions for 2023 are as we agreed last time:
 - Monday Evening best average of the year: scratch and handicap pairs (ie 2 competitions). We specified a minimum number of appearances to qualify: 12.
 - Friday evening on-line best average of the year: scratch and handicap, pairs (ie 2 competitions). We specified a minimum number of appearances to qualify: 12.
 - Most improved player over the year, based on precise (ie to 2 decimal points) NGS grade on 1/1/23. Caveats: (1) if a player has no grade, but acquires one during the year, their start point is their first grading (2) We exclude members who are on-line only.

9. **AOB**

Carolyn raised the issue of the EBU having revised its alerting and announcing rules, eg no need to alert or announce a double after the first round. David would check out the new rules, and decide what we should tell people. **Action David**

10. **Date of next meeting**

This will be held on Saturday 11th November 2023 at 0930, on Zoom.

Jim Steele
2/9/23