

Minutes of WBC Committee meeting
Saturday 27th March 2021, 1030hrs on Zoom

Present: Jim Steele (Chairman) , Mike Dennis (Secretary), Helen Wright (Treasurer), David Burrows, Angie Pinnington.

1 Apologies: Janet Jagan

2 Minutes of last meeting held 13th February 2021

Accepted as read. They are also posted on the website. The question of whether these should be posted for open access, or made for only members to read by putting in the Members' Area, was discussed. It was agreed we should carry on with the present arrangement.

3 Minutes of BWS Organizers' Meeting

The minutes of the last meeting, held on 20th February, had been shared prior to the meeting. These are also posted on the website for general access, for anyone who wants to read them. There should have been another meeting last Saturday 20th March, but this was postponed, so we did not have up to date information, for example on the proposals for special events during Easter week. These will be made available to members as soon as possible, by posting on the website, and by email circulation as appropriate.

4 Membership update

Jim gave a summary of the current numbers. Since mid-2020, we have gained 59 members: 25 full members and 34 New Player members. With other changes, our total membership now stands at 120. The major influx occurred over a few months, and now there are only occasional new applications.

5 Club finances

We had already received a full update of the Club finances from Helen, at the last meeting. Jim presented a spreadsheet which shows our ongoing income and expenditure for on-line bridge: this remains healthy, with sustained good table numbers. The spreadsheet also enables us to self-bill accurately for each two-month period, for reimbursing Stretford for our online bridge costs (BBO, RealBridge, EBU, and TD costs).

Annual audit: Helen has all the information ready for Geoff Fisher to carry out the audit, but they won't be able to meet to progress this until Covid constraints allow, ie earliest 12th April.

There was a discussion about half tables and the use of standby players (and how we pay for them). The current arrangement is we can have half tables on either BBO or RealBridge, so no standby's are required (BBO used to require full tables, but not any more). However, there was a strong preference expressed to avoid sit-outs if we can; a possible solution is to have a list of members who would be prepared to play at short notice to make up a full table; also, if this were to happen, those players drafted in at short notice should not have to pay for their session. This will be discussed at the next BWS Organizers' meeting (now scheduled for Tuesday 30th March). **ACTION MD/JSS**

Helen brought up the situation where one new member had not responded when invoiced for payment; even though the amount involved was small, this had involved Helen in a lot of extra work chasing up. It was agreed that if such a situation happened again, Helen should simply refer it to the Club Secretary to progress the matter.

6 Return to Face-to-face Bridge - preparations

6.1 Programme of events

The Committee discussed how the programme for the future might look. There was unanimous agreement that offering a mix of on-line and live bridge would be desirable.

One possible set up would be:

- Monday evening face to face bridge
- An afternoon face-to-face bridge (possibly Thursday, and possibly alongside an Improvers session)
- On-line bridge on Thursday evenings
- On-line bridge on Friday evenings

It is virtually certain that we could continue with on-line bridge as a joint venture if we wanted to (Stretford are keen on the idea, though we don't yet know about Brierfield's longer term plans), or we could go it alone, or some mix of the two.

The Committee agreed that it was now an opportune time to canvas members about the future programme. The Secretary would draft a survey.

ACTION MD

Angie mentioned that Deva Bridge Club had recently conducted such an exercise- she would circulate a copy so we could see how that had worked.

ACTION AP

New members/improvers would be included in the survey, with some specific questions about what they would like to see.

Liaison will be maintained with Warrington U3A (AY, DS, MR) so that we are aware of their plans as soon as they start to be crystallized.

ACTION JSS

6.2 Premises/facilities

This is to some extent chicken and egg, as any decision on premises will depend on which days/times we want to run face-to-face bridge. Returning to Belong is an option, as is Monday evenings at Warrington Golf Club (to be confirmed, **ACTION JJ**), though that would almost certainly not be available on Thursday afternoons. We also have a fairly extensive list of other possible venues, as suggested by members. The Secretary will continue to check out known possible locations, for review at our next meeting.

We agreed that a single venue for all our face-to-face bridge would be strongly preferable, but it would be feasible to operate at more than one if it presented other advantages.

ACTION MD

7 Sessions /events

We are still planning, as BWS, to run a festival of bridge to run over Easter week, where sessions will be free to play in for all members. The programme should have been agreed by now, but postponement of the BWS Organizers meeting has got in the way. However, we do know the first event proposed is a "pro-am" duplicate at 10am on Thursday 1st April.

We will discuss the programme at the BWS meeting next Tuesday (30th), and communicate asap with members by website and email.

ACTION MD/JSS

8 Committee membership

We discussed the issue of getting more club members to help with the Committee. WBC has a long-standing issue with attracting new blood, and has quite a few members who have "done their turn" in the past, or who are not interested in Committee work. However, there are some experienced and long-standing members who might be willing to assist with specific activities, eg teaching.

We would approach one or more of our new members to ask if they would like to join the Committee.

ACTION JSS

After the meeting, Mike suggested we should also focus on increasing our pool of TD's, as this will be critical for our resumption of face-to-face bridge.

9 Club Strategy

The only key item not being pursued at present is action on publicity.

Mike agreed to initiate putting information in local free community newsletters, once we have a clear plan for our venue(s)/sessions.

ACTION MD

10 Education

We will continue offering Improvers lessons on Zoom, fortnightly, as at present, until June. By then, we should have a clearer view of what will be happening with face-to-face teaching, eg with Warrington U3A. Jim repeated his request for one or two other members to be prepared to share this workload.

11 AOB

There was discussion how to treat the expense on our pro Zoom account. We agreed to leave it as it is, under general Club expenditure, rather than under Lottery Grant.

12 Date of Next Meeting

Saturday 8th May, 1030hrs, on Zoom.