

Minutes of Warrington Bridge Club Committee Meeting
Saturday 28th January 2023, 930am, on Zoom

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

1 Apologies: None. David Tilley has recently tendered his resignation, which was accepted.

2 Minutes of previous meeting held Saturday 12th November 2022: accepted as a true record. There were no matters arising not on today's agenda.

3 BWS: On-line activities

Jim shared the current version of the rolling spreadsheet which tallies up attendances, costs, and income in our on-line sessions, to update the Committee. We remain in modest profit, and in January to date all sessions made a contribution. Friday evenings are the most popular for Warrington members. The meeting agreed to continue the current arrangements.

Jim commented that we had still not had a BWS Organizer's meeting since 28th March 2022. Things have continued satisfactorily, however, with Adam Wiseberg doing most of the work as TD.

Regarding use of robots (relevant only to BBO sessions) we agreed to continue as present, with the TD having discretion to use robots if another option could not be arranged on the night (eg standby players).

4 F2F Activities/ Alford Hall

- a. **Disabled parking spaces.** This is a significant issue, with some members being reluctant to attend because they find all the disabled spaces occupied, especially in the evening. We agreed to continue putting a polite slip under the windscreen wiper of any car without a blue badge. **ACTION** Jim will provide the paper slips.
- b. **Setting up on Monday evenings:** we need more members to help with setting up and putting away afterwards. Jim has produced an aide memoire so that people will know what's required, but we need to strongly encourage members to make the effort ie arrive a bit earlier and help set up. We will consider establishing a rota.
- c. **Monday evening joint relaxed duplicate** for newer players to join in: the one on 28 November had been very successful, and we agreed to do more, and that one every two months was about right. We agreed that of the 6 for 2023, two would be linked to other events (summer social on Monday 21st August, and Christmas social on Monday 11th December). The other 4 would be charity events: 27th February, 24th April, 26th June, and 23rd October. The Management Committee to choose the charity or charities. One suggestion already is Warrington Food Bank. We agreed that we should aim for a minimum number of boards on these sessions, and suggested at least 18, preferably more.
- d. **Thursday morning gentle duplicate sessions**, joint with u3a Improvers: we agreed this is successful format, and we would schedule more. The dates we agreed are 23rd February, 13th April, 8th June. All are part of the present classes of Intermediates and Improvers, which finish at the end of June. We will also schedule some for the next classes which start in September; there will be one in 2023 calendar year, on 7th December; further ones would be scheduled for 2024, when we consider next year's calendar.

- e. **Club Socials:** the Committee agreed we should run three during the year. The first will be on Monday 6th March, a Spring Social and 2022 Prizegiving, with catering and prizes first, followed by a normal duplicate pairs session. The others would be a Summer Social on Monday 21st August, and a Christmas Social on Monday 11th December. The format of the Summer and Christmas socials will be to combine with a Relaxed Duplicate Improvers night, when we would hope for a larger number of tables (see 4c above). All three socials would start at 630pm, with catering first then, bridge to follow. We discussed catering, and agreed “afternoon tea” style, ie no hot food. Assuming we bring in the food ourselves, rather than use Alford Hall’s catering, we won’t be able to use the kitchen for preparing. In terms of numbers to cater for, 32 (8 tables) is probably optimistic/top end for the Spring Social and prizegiving. For the Summer and Christmas Socials, we can assess nearer the time, but we would hope to get around 48 (12 tables).
- f. **Thursday afternoons:** we agreed to try to continue to build the Thursday afternoon relaxed duplicate pairs, which was running OK at present, albeit with only around 3 tables. We will carry on with the planned Advanced lesson on Thursday 2nd February, but then not do any more until the autumn, starting with the first Thursday in October.

5. Membership update/ publicity

- a. Unsurprisingly, the annual process of billing for annual subscriptions has weeded out a number of people who have been inactive during 2022. However, we continue to see a trickle of new members, mostly who have learned about WBC from the website, which remains our main vehicle for club publicity.
- b. There are a few members who are yet to respond about whether they wish to continue (total 5), and these are being chased up. Our total membership (including those 5) is now 106, comprising 69 full members, 16 New Player members, and 21 on-line members.
- c. We agreed to casual players (especially on Thursday afternoons) paying the visitors fee if they wished.
- d. It was noted that our Club details have been omitted in error from the Local Groups section of the latest edition of the freebie Essential Guide booklet, which is issued every two months and goes through letterboxes throughout the Warrington area. Jim has contacted the editor, who apologized and assured us that it would be corrected next time, and included in all editions, not just the one for Stockton Heath & Appleton as before.

6 Finances

- a. The treasurer gave an update about the club financial position, which is healthy, and no changes are needed. We agreed to keep our annual subscriptions and playing fees unchanged at 2022 levels, and that we can still cover our increased costs, which are
 - Rent increased to £90 per week, effective from 1st October 2022.
 - Alford Hall membership fees, increasing from 1/4/23, which we absorb in our annual subscription.
 - EBU charges (UMS fees), which are increasing to 44p per player per session from 1/4/23
 - EBU Club annual subscription, increasing to £28 from 1/4/23.
 - County fees – these are still to be confirmed in February, but at present amount to 4p per player per session.
- b. We agreed that we should continue with the present Auditor (Brian Drinkwater). We will need audited accounts for 2022, for the AGM on 4th March. **ACTION** Janet Jagan

- c. Club financial year: we agreed that no change is required, and we will stick to the calendar year January to December. However, we also agreed that next year we would not bill for annual subscriptions until the billing process in early March, though bills issued in January will notify members of their subscription amount due in March.
- d. Expenditure items:
 - We have purchased a new notice board, now in use.
 - We have purchased new table cloths, now in use.
 - We will fund the refreshment costs at our 3 planned socials in 2023.
 - We will fund prizes, to awarded at the event on Monday 6th March.
 - (From previous meeting) We will consider offering funding to Alford to improve the room (eg curtains) but will need assurances from Alford about our tenure.
 - Bridgemates: we will purchase 3 more (ca £120 each). **ACTION** Mike to check compatibility, and place order.

7. 2023 AGM, Committee Membership and roles

- The **AGM** will be held on Saturday 4th March, 1030am, on Zoom. A notice of meeting and agenda will be issued and posted on the Club notice board, and emailed to members. **ACTION** Jim
- David Tilley has resigned from the Committee and the Club.
- **Committee roles, for proposal en bloc at AGM:**
 - a. Chairman: Jim has previously notified that he is standing down as Chairman. Mike Dennis agreed to fill the role for a period, and we will look to groom a successor in due course. We will seek to appoint a vice-chair to shadow the role, for this purpose.
 - b. Secretary: Jim Steele. We will seek also to appoint an assistant secretary, to gradually take over some of the activities presently carried out by Jim. A N Other to be approached.
 - c. Treasurer: Janet Jagan
 - d. Competitions Secretary: David Burrows
 - e. Social Secretary: Janine Curwell
 - f. U3a liaison and teaching: Malcolm Roberts, Brigitte Massey
 - g. Education/ teaching: Jim Steele
 - h. Website: Jim Steele

8. Competitions/ TDs, Scoring

- a. TD training: Janet had identified a 4-day course (delivered over 4 separate weekends at the Deva) of which the first two days are most relevant: movements and setting up and running sessions, and the laws and TD rulings. Mike Dennis and Janet Jagan expressed interest in attending. We agreed to support this, and the Club would fund the cost. The next available course dates are not suitable, so we will look for convenient dates in the future. We would ask if any others are interested in attending (eg Malcolm Strange). **ACTION** Mike, Janet. Jim might also attend, as he is already doing this job on Thursday afternoons, but has not had the full training.
- b. Scoring training: Janet will shadow the scorer until she is happy to take it on, on her own. **ACTION** Janet
- c. TD Rota: we will set up a TD rota for Monday evenings. **ACTION** David Burrows. Names which could be on the list at present are David Burrows, Keith Perry, Stuart Hunter, Peter Jordan, Rita Jordan, Mike Dennis, and Malcolm Strange. Some of these would also do the scoring. Others (MD, Peter Jordan, Rita Jordan) would require a separate person to do the IT/Scoring.
- d. David Burrows agreed to take the lead as Competitions Secretary.

- e. **Competitions:** we had a detailed discussion about possible competitions. David would consider these and put forward a proposal for 2023. **ACTION** David Burrows.
- Handicaps: David would decide what to go for. We previously had a handicap system devised by Malcolm Strange, but we were unsure of the status of that. Bridgewebs offers some automatic systems, including NGS grade, and last 12 months actual results.
 - Trophies: the secretary will collect as many of the club trophies as can be found, so we can reassign to actual competitions. **ACTION** Mike Dennis
 - Possible competitions:
 - I. Elizabeth Bennett memorial trophy: suggestion we hold an annual handicap duplicate pairs on the Monday nearest the anniversary of her death (18/9/22). For 2023 this would be Monday 18/9/23.
 - II. Teams (Jordan Vase): not feasible to hold a teams competition at present. Suggestion we designate 6 Monday evenings for Cross-IMPs scoring (ie akin to teams scoring), for an annual competition. For 2023, as we are late starting, we have 5 possible dates given our other calendar proposals: 27 March, 29 May (a Bank Holiday, but we'd be open anyway), 31 July, 25 September, and 27 November. Make it handicap pairs or scratch pairs? Make it best 3 of 5?
 - III. Suggestion to have a handicap competition running through the year for average of best n scores playing with a different partner, where n could be say 6. We weren't convinced this would work well, so should we have some form of individual competition?
 - IV. Monday Evening best average of the year: scratch and handicap pairs (ie 2 competitions). Need to specify a minimum number of appearances to qualify. We suggested 18.
 - V. Friday evening on-line best average of the year: scratch and handicap, pairs (ie 2 competitions). Need to specify a minimum number of appearances to qualify. We suggested 12.
 - VI. 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) do we include on-line members? (Note: Jim has downloaded a table of NGS grades at 1/1/23, so we have the starting data)

8. Club Calendar for the Year

Jim agreed to prepare a calendar for the 2023 year, to incorporate all the ideas discussed today, so that all the Committee can check the programme for comment and agreement. **ACTION** Jim Steele.

Once agreed, we will have a website version, and a notice board print-out. However, we do not propose to produce printed hard copy for issue to members.

9. Education /Teaching

- a. Thursday morning Intermediate class, started September 2022. This is going well, with good attendance, usually 16 to 20 people. However, we still need more support from WBC members to make up table numbers and give advice on bidding and play of the prepared hands. Committee members will help as personal circumstances allow, and we will strongly advocate on Monday evenings to seek volunteers. If possible, we will have a rota.

- b. Jim is away after the Thursday lesson on 16th March, will miss 5 Thursdays, 23rd March to 20th April inclusive. This includes 3 lessons on the mornings of 23/3, 30/3, and 20/4, which will be covered by Keith Perry/Mike Dennis. Those same 3 dates will have a relaxed duplicate pairs in the afternoon, also requiring to be run (Mike Dennis?). The other two dates are 6/4, when the Olive Tree will be closed for Easter, and we will hold a joint open session with u3a classes in the morning (no session in the afternoon), and 13/4, when we will hold a joint gentle duplicate with the u3a Improvers in the morning, run by Mike Dennis/Malcolm Roberts (no session in the afternoon). **ACTION Mike Dennis/ Malcolm Roberts/Keith Perry**
- c. (As previous meeting): support for teaching classes: Martin Cookson will continue to assist Andrew Young with the Beginners; Malcolm Roberts and David Simmers will run the Improvers, and Brigitte will assist at the Olive Tree as required, across the two classes.
- d. The present Improvers and Intermediate classes are well attended. However, there is a concern about this year's beginners, as we need a flow of people to feed into next year's Improvers and beyond. We need to find ways of boosting interest.
- e. Advanced lessons: see minute 4f above.
- f. Charging for lessons: we discussed what other clubs are doing. Deva charge £5 per lesson, for Beginners and Improvers, and Middlewich charge £93 for a block of 11 lessons, upfront, and run beginners, improvers, and advancers. Therefore, at Warrington we look to be low-priced. However, given how the u3a charging model works, with everything free after the annual subscription, we felt that we should remain as we are.

10. AOB

We agreed there is no need for a Club mobile phone. The existing one is very old and non-functioning and will be scrapped.

11. Date of next meeting (on Zoom)

This will be held on Saturday 11th March 2023 at 0930, which will be the first meeting of the new Committee after the AGM. Could Committee members please put it in their diaries.

Jim Steele
31/1/23