

**Minutes of Warrington Bridge Club Committee Meeting
Saturday 3rd September 2022, 930am, on Zoom**

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

1 Apologies: David Tilley, Janine Curwell

2 Minutes of previous meeting, held 2nd July 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 each month. Most sessions make a positive contribution, while a small number of sessions make a small loss. We agreed to continue the current online sessions unchanged.

4 F2F Activities/ Alford Hall

a. An issue is disabled parking, and the problem that it is being used indiscriminately, so that spaces are not available for those who need them. This is discouraging some members from attending. We will continue to discuss with Alford management, which should be easier now that Jess has returned from maternity leave. **ACTION Mike**

Jim reported that we expect a request for a rent increase, applicable from 1st October. We do not yet have formal information on how much this will be.

b. Monday evening sessions: over the summer attendance has been five to six tables, although not the same people every week. We expect numbers will pick up a little in the autumn.

c. The Monday evening WhatsApp group, as proposed last time, is now up and running successfully.

d. Thursdays from next week onwards:

- Mornings - our Intermediate Course will recommence on 8th September. The u3a Beginners and Improvers courses start on 15th September at the Olive Tree, Penketh. Malcolm gave an update on likely numbers for these courses, though this might change after the u3a enrolment day next Wednesday. We will run some Thursday mornings jointly between the Improvers and Intermediate classes, as Gentle Duplicate sessions, as these were successful and popular last time. We will be guided by Malcolm as to when is best to start with these sessions.
- Afternoons - we agreed that Thursday afternoon sessions would restart, on 8th September, with the same open playing session format as we held on Thursday mornings over the summer, as these proved popular. We will keep this under review, and hope to introduce some relaxed duplicate sessions, as stepping stone to full Club duplicate sessions.
- There will continue to be an advanced lesson on the first Thursday of the month, the next one being 8th October.

e. Social events: we agreed to proceed with a trial event, eg in late October, with the aim of giving members a chance to mingle, to facilitate new members getting to know the regular players better and feel comfortable in the club environment. Mike will discuss possible details for the social with Janine. **ACTION Mike**

f. Relaxed Monday evening sessions: we also discussed the possibility of designating occasional Monday evening sessions as "relaxed", with fewer boards (say max 21), and encouraging newer players to come along to these specific sessions.

5 Membership update.

- a. There has been a small increase in membership since last time. We now have 55 Full Members (up from 53), 43 New Player Members (up from 36), and 22 On-line Members (down from 23, by transfer of one person to full membership). Our total membership is now 110, a healthy increase from our low point of just under 60 in 2019. Of the 110 members, 75 were active during the last two-month charging period of July & August.

We should expect a number of additional New Player Members this month, as people move up from u3a Improvers to our Intermediate class. It was noted that most of the present New Player Members are due to move up to Full Membership in January.

Jim screen-shared a record of our membership applications. He will send a copy to Janet for her records. **ACTION Jim**

- b. Jim has drafted a proposed email to all members to update them with what's happening in the Club from September, and has shared with the Committee. This was discussed. The Committee felt it included the right information, but some thought it was too wordy. Brigitte and Janet suggested that the email be reduced to bullet points, with the full version as an attachment. **ACTION Jim**

6 Finances

- a. Update: Janet reported that our financial situation is healthy, with table numbers good enough to cover our costs at the session fee of £3.00 (This is unchanged, apart from the decision already taken to raise our Thursday morning classes from £2.00 to £3.00). Clearly our finances are dependent on sustaining and building attendances, and on the anticipated increase in expenditure/ costs. Alford Hall will be increasing the rent from 1st October, amount yet to be confirmed.
- b. Session fees from September: all sessions will be charged at £3 until further notice, as already circulated and posted on the website. The Committee agreed that this was good value, especially as we continue to offer free tea/coffee/biscuits at all F2F sessions. We do not anticipate any need to raise fees, despite rising costs, as our table numbers are slightly increasing. We will keep this under review.
- c. Expenditure plans:
 - Socials: Mike will talk to Janine, with a view to producing a draft plan to circulate to the committee, probably along the lines of socials held at Belong before lockdown. **ACTION Mike**
 - Competition prizes: (see item 7): we will want to provide some prizes for the various competitions we propose.
 - New table cloths: we agreed that the present lot are rather old and tatty, and too much of an assortment of fabrics and colours. Mike will produce costings for a set of new cloths. These should not have table numbers incorporated. **ACTION Mike**

7 Club Competitions

- a. Monday evening Duplicate Pairs: last time we discussed that we are recording scratch pairs and handicap pairs competitions on Monday evenings, as cumulative for all 2022. We were happy with the automated handicap system, which simply uses players' actual results on a rolling 12-month basis, an option available automatically within Bridgewebs. Nevertheless, we will check with Malcolm Strange on the previous system used. **ACTION Jim**

- b. Teams: The Committee felt it was too early to try any teams events. We don't have adequate numbers yet on a Monday evening. However, we will look to introducing "trial" sessions on Thursday afternoons, once we have a better idea of Thursday afternoon table numbers and support for the idea.
- c. Last time Malcolm suggested we might have a couple of trophies to hand out each week for the NS and EW winners of our proposed Thursday afternoon Relaxed Duplicate. The trophies would change hands each week to the winning pairs. This would require results available on the day, ie use of Bridgemates. This would be a good idea anyway, as it would eliminate the extra work of manual scoring from paper travelers every session. Accordingly, we agreed to introduce Bridgemates training in our joint Gentle Duplicate sessions on Thursday mornings, and/or Thursday afternoon sessions, as soon as we felt it was appropriate.

8 Education /Teaching

- a. Jim gave feedback from the survey of participants in the teaching sessions which finished in June. The main comments suggested reducing the length and complexity of some lessons, allowing more time for prepared hands, and having more experienced helpers to assist with the bidding and play of the prepared hands. Lesson content has already been revised accordingly, and the syllabus for the new Intermediate course posted on the website. The email to members (se 5b above) includes an appeal for members to assist on Thursday mornings when they can.
- b. The new Intermediate class will commence on 8th September. We do not know at present how much support there will be, but we hope for an enrolment of at least 20.
- c. The advertising campaign is ongoing, and posters have been put up in various locations. Some have only stayed up a short time, so we need to and replace notices where needed. **ACTION All**
- d. The enrolment day for u3a is this coming Wednesday afternoon, 7th September. Malcolm Roberts, David Simmers, and Brigitte Massey will be there. Extra copies of the A4 advertising poster have been provided as handouts.
- e. 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.
- f. As stated above, we will continue offering an advanced lesson, on the first Thursday afternoon of the month.

9 AOB

- a. Jim reminded the Committee there is a plastic container in the equipment box containing laminated movement cards, for any number of tables, to help anyone running a duplicate session. David will review them to see if any others are needed, especially with the possibility of occasional Monday sessions being reduced to 21 boards. (See 4f above). **ACTION Dave Burrows**
- b. ECats have yet to publish dates for Children in Need charity events, normally early November. We will support as usual, but decide once we know the dates which sessions (F2F and online) the club will offer. We will encourage participation by all our members.

10 Date of next meeting (on Zoom)

Proposed Saturday 22nd October 0930, but after the meeting it transpired not all can make that. Possible alternative Saturday 12th November 0930. To be confirmed.