

Minutes of WBC Committee meeting
Saturday 8th May 2021, 1030hrs on Zoom

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

1 Apologies: none

2 Minutes of previous meeting, held 27th March 2021

Accepted. No matters arising not on today's agenda.

3 Minutes of previous BSW Meeting (draft) held 1st May 2021.

Accepted. Survey of members is on today's agenda.

4 Unethical play on-line

An issue has come to light via the EBU, where a number of players, in various clubs up and down the country, have been found to be cheating whilst playing online. The EBU has produced a list of such players, and they are banned from playing at all EBU clubs/ sessions for various periods of time, usually two or three years. In view of this, we have added an information item on our website with a link to the EBU's list of such players, and Jim has added an extra line to the declaration on the club membership application.

5 Committee membership

5a Attracting new Committee members.

As agreed last time, Jim had a conversation with Malcolm Roberts, to see if he was interested in joining. The response was very positive, and Malcolm has discussed this with his fellow U3A bridge leaders, Andrew Young and David Simmers. We agreed that Malcolm should be invited to join the Committee as a co-opted member, pending our AGM. It is possible that AY and/or DS might also be willing to join.

Action Jim

5b Committee Roles

Helen has indicated she would like to stand down as Treasurer. This could be formally be applicable at the next AGM. Janet Jagan volunteered to take on the role, which will be proposed at the next AGM. In anticipation of the endorsement of the membership, we will commence a hand over from Helen to Janet.

Action Helen/Janet

Jim has indicated that he is willing to continue as Chairman for another year after the next AGM, should the membership wish him to do so, but then would like to be standing down and replaced by a new Chairman. He said the workload of running the Club needs to be more evenly distributed. He will be happy to continue in some role, if required.

6 Preparations for Returning to Face-to-Face Bridge

6a Survey of membership

The content and platform (Google Forms) was approved by the Committee. We will conduct a small trial amongst the Committee to ensure it operates as we want, then issue to members next weekend (15th May), for return by end May.

Action Jim

6b Premises /days / times/ F2F bridge/on-line bridge – future arrangements

What we should do here will be informed by the results of our membership survey.

It is difficult to get useful information from potential venues while Covid restrictions, and how/when they will be phased out, are unclear. We will nevertheless continue to do whatever we can to establish information.

We had some progress regarding Warrington Golf Club as a possible venue for Monday evenings, but this cannot be ratified until they have held their House Committee (due in a couple of weeks). Also it would also only be available for one session per week, which is a big drawback. If we chose WGC, we would need a second venue. We agreed that it is highly desirable if possible to hold all our F2F bridge sessions at the same venue. If we could not achieve that, then two venues would be possible, as we have enough funds to be able to duplicate the hardware required; moving equipment every week from one venue to another and back again was seen as impractical.

7 Club Finances

7a Update of Operating Costs v Income

Jim shared the most recent spreadsheet. We are making adequate income from our on-line operations, though not every event is cost-positive, and we made only a small margin in April, due to making 9 events free to members in our Easter festival.

It is important we do continue to achieve a contribution to Club funds from on-line bridge, as we are likely to incur some significant expenditure in getting F2F bridge up and running again; also it is hard to predict how many tables we will get to begin with, once we do restart F2F bridge, and room hire might well exceed our income if there are not enough.

7b Payments to Stretford for BWS activities

All the BWS costs (to BBO, RealBridge, EBU, etc) are initially borne by Stretford, then Warrington and Brierfield reimburse Stretford with our respective share of those costs. Establishing the amount of that share is now resolved: all three clubs have agreed a self-billing arrangement by Warrington and Brierfield, supported by the detailed data. The detailed data for Warrington is compiled and kept up to date by Jim, event by event, but this is quite a time consuming activity at 6 events per week.

Warrington have agreed to reimburse Stretford every two months; the payment for Jan & Feb has been made, and the payment for Mar & April will be made this month.

Action Helen

7c Invoicing Members

This process continues, every two months in arrears. Helen said that now the historical under/overpayment matters are all resolved, which took her quite a lot of time and effort, the ongoing invoicing runs quite smoothly. However, there are some issues with some members being tardy in settling their account. She will report any slow/non-payers to the Secretary for follow up as necessary.

Action Helen

7d 2021 Subscriptions

We previously agreed to waive 2021 subs for anyone who hasn't played on-line, since they have effectively had no Club bridge since March 2020. We confirmed this as what we want to do, irrespective of when F2F bridge starts up again later this year. However, a few members have since started playing on line. We will review at the time of the next invoices in early July (for May & June) to decide whether we should charge them a 2021 subscription.

7e 2020 Charity payments

This remains unresolved by Stretford. We agreed we would settle directly with the charities concerned. Jim will provide the information to Helen (recipient and amount), and Helen will make the payments.

Action Jim / Helen

7f 2020 annual audit

Helen has met with Geoff Fisher, the auditor, and the accounts are ready for an AGM.

7g Bank Mandate

Jim has been added to persons authorized; we are continuing the use of two-person authorization process.

8 Review of club sessions

We agreed to continue the current schedule of events, timings, and mix between BBO and RealBridge. The monthly random teams event would be given more prominence on the website. **Action Jim**

9 Education

Fortnightly lessons on Zoom continue to be well supported, with 45 to 50 attendees each time. Jim will continue doing these until around end June, then break for the summer months. We will take stock of how the live U3A classes are proposed to operate, as soon as the information becomes available, then decide on our strategy on supporting Improvers for the autumn and beyond. There are some preliminary proposals about how U3A bridge might start up again in September, eg three classes (Beginners/ Improvers/ Next Level) being run simultaneously at one venue on Thursday mornings; if this were feasible, U3A would run the Beginners and Improvers classes, and WBC would run the Next Level class, with all the teachers working and cooperating together. It was suggested that we ask some club members to help with this program.

The weekly Thursday morning Gentle Duplicate session will continue indefinitely, until we resolve our future schedule with F2F and online bridge. The results of our membership survey will be crucial in helping us get the mix right.

10 AOB

No items.

11 Date of Next Meeting

Saturday 12th June, at 1030 hrs, on Zoom.