

Minutes of WBC Committee meeting Monday 4th January 2021, 1030hrs on Zoom

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

1 Apologies: none; all present.

2 Minutes of last meeting held 12th September 2020: accepted ; no comments/ amendments.

3 Chairman's Report

Our on-line bridge has gone from strength to strength over the past 4 months. We now run 6 duplicate pairs sessions per week:

on BBO: Sunday morning, Monday afternoon, and Monday evening.

on RealBridge: Wednesday afternoon, Thursday morning (Gentle Duplicate), and now Friday evening (switched over from BBO on 1st January).

We changed one of the less popular sessions, Monday afternoons, to a 10-high, starting on 7th September, and we have built it up from 4 or 5 tables to regularly 10 or 11, and even had 16 tables on 28th December.

We started the Wed afternoon session (originally run as Brierfield only) on 28th October; not great to start with, but when we changed it to RealBridge on 18th November, it has picked up and we now get 9+ tables.

We (as BWS) started paying £40 per event TD fees from 1st November, with each of the three clubs being responsible for 1/3 of that. We increased our table money accordingly to £3.00 for standard sessions (was £2.50) and £1.00 for Gentle Duplicates (was free). During Nov & Dec we managed to make a small operating profit averaging over the 56 events, so our fees look to be OK and sustainable.

RealBridge is cheaper than BBO: excluding TD costs, but including the 40p pay-to-play EBU charge, BBO costs us £1.20 per person; RealBridge costs us 88p per person (>20 boards) and 76p per person (up to 20 boards).

Zoom lessons started on alternate Thursday mornings before the Gentle Duplicate, on 1st October. We now regularly get 30+ attendees.

Membership: we have lost a few members during the year: Alan Simpson, Warwick Sherwood, and Pam Osborne. It is also likely that after the long lay-off from live bridge, some members might decide not to return. Fortunately, we have built membership in 2020, adding 28 New Player members (with one more in the process of joining) and 12 Full Members (with another 8 in the process of joining). Our profile in the bridge world is increasing, and further influx is possible in 2021.

Competitions: the Lockdown Swiss Pairs league ran for 8 series. It was great in getting people into on-line bridge, but ended in December, as it rather ran out of steam as other on-line bridge became more popular. We now have a Teams of 4 (BWS) Lockdown league running over the winter, ending in mid-April.

The Chairman expressed particular thanks to Helen for coping with the much increased workload associated with lots of new members, and on-line bridge invoicing, and to Janet for taking on some of the website duties, and running the later Lockdown leagues.

4 Club Membership Policy

The Committee agreed to continue current policy:

- New applicants will be accepted on trust unless there is any known reason to do otherwise.
- We will continue to offer New Player membership at 1/3 of the charge for full membership.
- New player members will be encouraged to play in standard events, and even when they do, we will allow their ongoing New Player membership to continue for a year, before asking them to upgrade to full membership. This will increase the table numbers in our events, and serve to enhance the experience and confidence of our New Player members.

5 Minutes of the last BWS committee meeting, held 19th December

The minutes were noted. The Committee expressed the view that the balance of BBO and RB events was now about right, and we should not promote any further change over to RB without canvassing the views of WBC members. It is however accepted that such decisions are for the BWS consortium as a whole, not simply a matter for Warrington Bridge Club (See minute 7).

6 Competitions and Events

With the cessation of our Swiss Pairs Lockdown leagues, we now are running a Teams of Four round-robin league on BBO (across BWS), over the winter, ending in mid-April.

7 RealBridge v BBO

There were differing views in the Committee about which platform they preferred. However, RealBridge is becoming more popular in general. We decided not to promote further change over to RB without canvassing members' views. (see Minute 5).

There are options with RB to mitigate some features which some don't like, such as muting other players at the table (rather than just turning down one's own speaker volume), and switching off one's video link and operating on sound only.

RB might offer some extra options, such as casual bridge, and teams of four, which are already available on BBO. Janet would check out.

Action: Janet

8 Club finances /AGM

The Chairman and Treasurer have both done a lot of work in working out the finances (outgoings and income) of our on-line bridge activities over 2020, and we are likely to be in a position to produce an audited set of accounts within the usual timescale for an AGM in February/ March (The previous AGM was on 17 February 2020). However, the lockdown makes holding a "normal" AGM much before mid-year extremely unlikely. The Committee discussed the possibility of holding a virtual AGM on Zoom, but it was decided that there is little pressure to do this at present. We will discuss how/when to hold the 2021 AGM at our next meeting; we might decide to canvas members on whether they want an on-line AGM, or to wait until we can safely meet as a Club. Irrespective of the timing of the AGM, we will proceed to produce our audited accounts on as near as possible our normal timescale.

Helen tabled a draft set of numbers for information (see Appendix 1). The financial position of the Club is broadly satisfactory; since ongoing on-line activities are running at a small profit, there was no need to take corrective action.

9 Fees: Subscriptions, session charges, charging arrangements

The Committee agreed to keep joining fees, annual subscriptions, and session charges as they are.

Charges to members will continue to be invoiced every two months, in arrears.

Helen is in the process of sorting out money over/underpaid by members, so that everyone will be operating as far as is possible without historical credits or arrears. Our future charging policy will be to charge in arrears only, not to charge anything in advance for future presumed sessions. We will continue to do this every two months. The period might be revised once we restart face-to-face bridge.

We have some money available from our grant, most of which was used for our dealing machine etc. It is intended for bridge training and development. The Committee agreed we should purchase a pro Zoom subscription, which would be used for teaching etc.

We would initially buy a 1-year subscription.

Action: Jim

10 Committee membership

This item was held over until the next meeting, through lack of time.

11 Club Strategy

Current Club developments are very much aligned with our Club strategy, which is aimed at securing the long-term viability of the Club.

We will review the strategy at least quarterly.

12 Preparation for Resumption of Face-to-Face Bridge

The key item is finding and deciding on a venue, which is linked in part to what days/times we will want to run live bridge. Our history is to have our centre of gravity in South Warrington, and this should continue.

We might or might not want to necessarily carry on with Monday and Thursday evenings, though continuing with Monday evenings is highly desirable. Given the success of other clubs running afternoon bridge, this is something we might want to consider. The Committee also took the view that once live bridge is again possible, we will want to run this alongside some on-line activities. We might even look at seasonal changes, eg more on-line/ less live bridge on winter evenings, with the opposite at other times of year.

The Committee consensus was that it is still too early to be able to meaningfully explore our full range of venue options. However, Warrington Golf Club is an attractive option, and Janet will follow up the possibilities.

Action: Janet

13 Education

Mike Hickling might put on a course for beginners/ near beginners, but this would be by private arrangement between himself and the learners. The Club could advertise and promote, and suggest names of suitable candidates to Mike.

Action: Jim to talk to Mike Hickling

14 AOB - none

15 Date of Next Meeting

Monday 1st March, 1030hrs, on Zoom.

D R A F T**Warrington Bridge Club****Income and Expenditure Account Year 2020****Income**

Members Annual Subs	1,005.00
Table fees (inc. free nights)	1,257.00
Social	
BWS	2,335.00
BWS Charity	234.00
U3A	125.00
Income Subtotal	4,956.00

Further 2020 income

Nov/Dec playing charges, circa	£2,388.00
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Lottery Grant

Income Total	4,956.00
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Expenditure

Room hire	720.00
TD Free Nights	136.00
Scorer Free Nights	163.00
Pay 2 Play	375.70
EBU Affiliation and Insurance	58.00
Prizes and Engraving Trophies	
Website	48.00
Total	1,500.70

Further 2020 expenditure

Settling members' overpayments, circa	£500.00
To Stretford for 2020 online bridge, circa	£3,382.00
Total	£3,882.00

Equipment	20.00
Social Nights	36.48
Sundries	85.80
Total	142.28

Further 2020 Profit/(loss)	estimate	-£1,494.00
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Lottery Grant Spending

Duplimate Boards	
Dealing Machine	
Playing Cards	
Total	0.00

Total Expenditure	1,642.98
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Income	4,956.00
Expenditure	1,642.98
Profit	3,313.02

Balance Sheet 31/12/20

Club Funds 31/12/19	4,197.90
Profit	3,313.02
Per Bank Balance 31/12/20	7,510.92

Note 1:
2021 subscriptions invoiced in January 2021 will be £875.
This is less than the 2020 figure of £1,005, despite new members, because we are not charging annual subs to the 31 members who have not played on-line bridge, and therefore will have had no bridge for over a year. The income foregone is 31 x £15 = £465.

Note 2:
Our lottery grant was £5640.
We spent £4432.70 on dealing machine, cards, etc, leaving £1207.30 still to spend on suitable things, ideally related to the promotion of bridge, teaching, new players, etc.

I certify that the above accounts are in accordance with the books of account and vouchers presented

Treasurer

Chairman

Auditor