

## **Minutes of WBC Committee meeting Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> June 2021, 1030hrs on Zoom**

**Present:** Jim Steele (Chairman) , Mike Dennis (Secretary), David Burrows, Angie Pinnington, Janet Jagan, Malcolm Roberts, Helen Wright (Treasurer) (Helen joined the meeting at 1120hrs)

**1 Apologies:** none

**2 Minutes of previous WBC Committee meeting, held 8<sup>th</sup> May 2021**

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

**3 Minutes of previous BWS Meeting.**

There had not been a BWS Organizers' meeting since the one on 1<sup>st</sup> May, which preceded our last WBC Committee meeting. The date of the next BWS meeting is still to be arranged.

**4 Committee membership**

Jim introduced and welcomed Malcolm Roberts, who has now been co-opted onto the Committee. He has particular knowledge and experience of our new Player members and Warrington U3A.

Helen has previously indicated she wishes to stand down as Treasurer. Janet Jagan has volunteered to take over. The hand-over will proceed as soon as practicable, given administrative issues such as arranging a bank mandate. Helen as said that she is prepared to continue on the Committee. Accordingly, the Committee felt that we now had adequate numbers.

These new arrangements will be presented for members approval at the next AGM (see item 5c).

As reported last time, 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.

**5 Preparations for Returning to Face-to-Face Bridge**

**5a Members Survey**

The members survey was completed in May, with an excellent 80% response. Jim had prepared a summary of the results, with comments and draft conclusions for consideration by the Committee. The Committee were in agreement with the conclusions. *Accordingly, after the meeting, the summary was posted on the website for members to read. Access is restricted to Club members, and the summary shows statistics only, so that individual responses remain confidential.*

**5b Return to F2F Bridge**

The survey results showed that of the members keen to return to F2F bridge, nearly half would prefer to wait a while rather than start as soon as possible. Therefore we would be likely to have low numbers attending to start with, especially if we opened up as soon as formal restrictions allowed. The Committee agreed that we should get our preparations in place, but keep a watching brief, with a view to starting around mid-September.

Evening v Afternoon bridge: the survey showed that of those who say they will play F2F bridge at WBC, 35% preferred evenings only, 13% preferred afternoons only, and 52% were OK with either. The Committee concluded that our F2F bridge should comprise at least one evening (almost certainly Mondays) and at least one afternoon (day to be decided). This is of course in addition to whatever on-line bridge sessions we continue to run once F2F bridge has restarted.

Premises: unfortunately we have recently been informed that Warrington Golf Club will not provide a bridge venue for us. This is disappointing, as it would have been a great venue. Mike reported that Belong are prepared to offer us the same terms as we had before, obviously contingent on Covid safety, but that would be restricted to evenings only. We do have a list of possible other venues, many suggested by members; Mike will work through the list to explore their viability and availability, and other committee members offered to help with this. This work will be carried out over the next few weeks. **Action: Mike Dennis**

With regard to the selection of premises, the survey showed that most members said the important criteria are location, car parking, and being comfortable and spacious. Cost to play, and having a bar, were seen as much less important.

### **5c Holding our AGM.**

There was a strong majority in favour of holding the AGM on-line, or of being happy with either on-line or in person, and only 14 members said we should wait to hold it in person. The Committee decided that we should hold it on-line, as this not only met the preferences of most members, but it also was likely to have a higher attendance than we have traditionally achieved, thus giving more members the chance to have their input.

Jim and Mike will work out a process to set up the AGM to be done on Zoom, complying with our constitutional requirements on amount of advance notice, opportunity for members to table agenda items, etc. The aim is to hold the AGM as soon as practicable, though this will certainly need to be quite a few weeks away. **Action: Mike Dennis, Jim Steele**

## **6 Review of Sessions/Events**

There has been a significant drop off in the table numbers for our on-line (ie BWS) sessions over the past month or so. This is not unexpected, as it was typical for the summer months in F2F bridge, as people are more likely to have other priorities when the weather is better. Jim screen-shared our Operating Costs v Income spreadsheet, which shows that certain events tend to be poorly supported by Warrington members, and have now become loss-making; however, the overall weekly operating finances remain slightly positive. The Committee agreed that we should continue with our present schedule of BWS events through the summer, and take stock again once we have a firm proposal in the diary for return to F2F bridge.

## **7 Finances**

### **7a Operating Costs v Income**

As mentioned in minute 6 above, the operating profit (for on-line bridge) has declined of late, but remains slightly positive, and there is no need for any corrective action.

### **7b Payments to Stretford for BWS Activities**

The self-billing procedure is working well, and we continue to reimburse Stretford every two months in arrears, on the same cycle as our invoicing of members. No changes required. However, Helen said that she has yet to pay Stretford for March & April. Jim will confirm to Helen the amount due, and Helen will make the payment. **Action: Jim Steele/Helen Wright**

### **7c Invoicing Members**

It appears everyone is now used to the current system of invoicing every two months in arrears, and it is working well. No need for any changes. The next invoices will be set out in early July, for the two months of May + June.

### **7d Financial Audit for 2020**

This is complete, audited by Geoff Fisher. The accounts are ready for tabling at our AGM.

## **7e Bank mandate**

The process to add Janet Jagan to our list of authorized persons to operate our bank accounts is in hand.

## **8 Education**

### **8a Zoom lessons**

The fortnightly lessons, run by Jim on zoom, which have been very popular with typically 45 to 50 attendees, will end on June 17th for the summer. However, the weekly Thursday morning Gentle Duplicate sessions will continue unchanged. The arrangements for restarting lessons will depend on various factors, particularly the Warrington U3A classes. See item 8b below.

### **8b Warrington U3A**

Malcolm Roberts gave the meeting an update of recent discussions within Warrington U3A, which was quite upbeat. The plan is to restart Year 1 (Beginners) and Year 2 (Improvers) in mid-September, both on Thursday mornings (1030-1230) at the Olive Tree, Penketh. The roll for the Year 1 class is already full, and there are 12 names for the Improvers class. The tutors have updated their lessons to accord with modern Acol, consistent not only with Jim's lessons but also with the EBU teaching system, and with No Fear Bridge (Acol stream).

The proposal is that a Year 3 class would be run in parallel, ideally at the same time and venue, to give maximum flexibility for pupils and instructors. This would be run not by U3A, but by Warrington Bridge Club. U3A are very happy to act as feeder for the Year 3 class. This will entail WBC in booking the room, enrolling the class members as New Player Members of Warrington Bridge Club, and operating the charging. The Committee concurred with this proposal, though recognized that with the interruption to U3A activities because of Covid, there will be one year of minimal feed through from U3A. We agreed that even if this was loss making for a year, it would be appropriate use of the extra funds we still have available from our Lottery grant, which specified education. However, we might expect a Thursday morning Year 3 class to be reasonably well attended by existing New Player members, and by others who were in the Year 3 U3A class when it was suspended in March 2020.

With the above in mind the Secretary will contact the Olive Tree to discuss hiring a third room on Thursday mornings. This will be done in liaison with Paul Atherton, who is in charge of U3A room bookings.

**Action: Mike Dennis.**

## **9 AOB**

No items.

## **10 Date of Next Meeting**

Saturday 31<sup>st</sup> July at 1030 hrs, on Zoom.