

Minutes of Warrington Bridge Club Committee Meeting
Saturday 2nd July 2022, 930am

Present: Jim Steele (chair), Mike Dennis (secretary), Janine Curwell, Malcolm Roberts.

1 Apologies: Janet Jagan, Brigitte Massey, David Burrows, David Tilley

2 Minutes of previous meeting, held 7th May 2022: accepted as a true record.

Matters arising not on today's agenda:

- a. Update on equipment costs: the laptop has been repaired for £20, and is now OK. There are no other known imminent costs. The dealing machine will require a service eventually, which will cost £300 (including transport), but this is likely to be well into the future.
- b. Bidding boxes (condition of various inserts): we have checked through all our bidding boxes and changed the inserts where needed. Some have had complete new sets, but for many, only the 1C, alert, and pass cards required replacing (the bidding cards most commonly used and which get worn and grubby).
- c. Left- handed bidding boxes: there are four boxes at the back of the "spare" drawer, clearly labelled as Left handed, for anyone requiring one.

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. This has improved since we dropped the Sunday morning session, unpopular with Warrington players, and which was regularly loss-making for us. Everything is running reasonably smoothly, and the Committee saw no need for further changes.

Jim had had a brief telephone discussion with David Tilley before the meeting, and we proposed to hold the next BWS meeting in late August (tbc).

4 F2F Activities/ Alford Hall

- a. The top issue for us with Alford hall 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 agreed to discuss further with Alford management, including a suggestion of putting a polite windscreen notice on vehicles along the lines of "If you don't need to use a disabled space, please be considerate and leave it free for someone who does". We commented that this was a more general issue for Alford, not just for our Monday evening bridge. **ACTION Mike**
- b. The Monday evening WhatsApp group, as proposed last time, is now up and running successfully. We will set up a Thursday WhatsApp group for the proposed September start of Thursday afternoon relaxed duplicate sessions.
- c. Half-table sit outs: Jim suggested we might provide some bridge-related activity for a sit-out table, such as a bidding quiz, or tabling some notes from one of our lessons. The Committee felt that this was OK provided it didn't create more work. **ACTION Jim**
- d. Running a club social: this was suggested by Janet for discussion by the Committee. We felt it was a good idea, and would like to hold one, probably on a Monday evening in mid-September, after the main holiday period. The details will be discussed at our next meeting (date, format, etc).

- e. Thursdays over the summer: until the start of the next Thursday morning Intermediate course (probably 8th September), there will be a WBC open session each Thursday morning at 10am. It will be open to all at a charge of £2.00. WBC will charge members via the usual cashless system, and all others (u3a members and other individuals) will be charged £2.00 cash on the door. This will require someone to be there to keep the register and collect the money, as well as put out and put away the equipment (tables etc). It was noted that the Friday morning u3a session has now been discontinued. Malcolm said he would be there every Thursday except 7th July. [It was also noted that u3a will also be holding an open session at Alford Hall each Tuesday morning over the summer, at 1030].
- f. Alongside the new Intermediates course starting in September, we will try to establish Thursday afternoon bridge at Alford Hall. One idea is to have say the 1st Thursday in the month for an advanced lesson, with other Thursdays being a relaxed duplicate pairs. We hope that some of the people from the Next Level (ie Intermediate) course just finished will want to play on a Thursday afternoon.

5 **Membership update.**

There is little change in membership since last time. We now have 53 Full Members (up from 51), 36 New Player Members (no change), and 23 On-line Members (no change). However, we will expect a number of additional New Player Members in September, as people move up from u3a Improvers to our Intermediates class. It was noted that present New Player Members will be expected to move up to Full Member in January.

6 **Finances**

In the absence of the Treasurer, Jim reported that our financial situation remains stable. On-line bridge is self-supporting and makes a small but useful contribution; F2F has been variable but most weeks we have managed to cover our rent. The attendance trend is positive with Mondays reasonably healthy at 6+ tables, even during the holiday period with some regular attendees away. We noted that Alford hall are likely to ask for a rent increase in the autumn.

As previously agreed, there will be a change in September 2022, when the charge for Thursday morning will increase from £2 to £3, thus standardizing all session charges, whether F2F or on-line, at £3.

7 **Club Competitions**

We agreed to restart scratch pairs and handicap pairs competitions on Monday evenings, as cumulative for all 2023. Jim shared a table showing Monday F2F pairs current statistics, as already on the website, for 2022 to date. We will need to decide minimum number of appearances to qualify (the current tables show 8 appearances, for 2022) and what system to adopt for handicaps. The Bridgewebs system allows the following options:

- i. Rolling monthly 12 months results
- ii. Bridgewebs member database
- iii. NGS grades
- iv. Manual system, with values manually set

We have used a manual system in the past, but are unclear on how it worked- need to consult Malcolm Strange.

ACTION Jim

The present tables on the website, set up by Jim, simply use option i, which requires no work to implement.

Teams: we have not restarted any teams events since lockdown; we need a critical mass of players for it to work. We will discuss at future meetings, to decide if/when they would be run (for example 2nd Thursday afternoon in the month?)

Malcolm also 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. Jim supported the idea, but commented that 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.

Mike reported that he was still pursuing locating all the Club trophies. Most of them were now found.

ACTION Mike

8 Education /Teaching

- a. The current Thursday morning Next Level (Intermediates) class is now finished. A new Intermediates class will start in September, based on essentially the same syllabus. Malcolm advised that we could get a dozen people or so moving up from U3A Improvers.
- b. Malcolm suggested that he and Jim should sit down to review syllabus and content, to improve the continuity between Beginners, Improvers, and Intermediates. This will be done on a Thursday morning when both Malcolm and Jim are there. **ACTION Malcolm/ Jim**
- c. The Intermediates course format will probably be reduced lesson length (~30 minutes) followed by play of prepared hands. However, Jim said he would like to survey course members to get a better idea of what works best, and how to tweak the course for September. He will draft a survey and share with Malcolm and Mike for comment. **ACTION Jim**
- d. We will continue to offer some Thursday morning Gentle Duplicate sessions, joint with u3a Improvers, as these have proved very popular. How soon into the term we could start will depend on the class – this might be before Christmas. Malcolm will advise.
- e. Advanced lessons once per month on a Thursday afternoon: we will review the demand with a view to restarting in September. **ACTION Jim**
- f. Advertising campaign: The Committee agreed with the proposed poster format, which has also got the blessing of Andrew Young and David Simmers. It is aimed at advertising both u3a and WBC bridge teaching, as well as WBC generally. Distribution should be anywhere we can find suitable notice board facilities, over as much of greater Warrington and surrounds that we can manage. It was noted the Warrington Libraries policy is not to display such notices, but to put them in a folder, though this might be variable at different libraries. Locations would include village halls, sports clubs, golf clubs, church halls, etc. We could also use as a hand out at the u3a enrolment day. We will go for a print run of 100 full colour A4 paper copies to start with.

ACTION Jim.

Costs: Jim advised that a print run of 100 would be just over £16. However, getting laminated copies would be a lot more expensive, so he proposed laminating copies himself, as 100 laminating pouches cost only about £11. Only a proportion will require laminating.

Once obtained, copies will be given to each Committee member for distribution. We will record where we have put them up.

ACTION All

9 AOB - none

10 Date of Next Meeting

Saturday 3rd September 2022, 0930hrs, on Zoom. Unfortunately this was the only suitable date, and we recognize that David Tilley is not available of the first Saturday of the month.