



Minutes of Annual General Meeting

Sunday 26 June 2011 @ West Midlands Bridge Club

Present: Darren Evetts (Chairman), Mike Thorley (Vice Chairman), Sandra Squires (Secretary & Membership Secretary), Jon Downing (League Secretary), Elayne Meakin (Competition Secretary), Stephanie Galvin (English Bridge Correspondent), Leslie Reece (Treasurer), Adrian Knight (Match Secretary), Colin Lang, Myra Scott (Newcomers Development Officer), Nicky Cook (Publicity Officer), Carolyn Fisher, Jane Hall and 37 Members.

1. **Apologies** were received from Peter Nicholds, John Pyner, Maggie Pyner, Hylda Townsend.

It is with sadness that we record the death of Norman Selwyn. Norman supported the County for many years both as a player and in regard to legal matters. He was a fine player as well as being a respected member of the County and West Midlands Bridge Club. His counsel and wisdom will be sorely missed.

2. **The minutes of the AGM held 20 June 2010** were agreed with one minor spelling correction and signed as correct.

3. **Matters Arising**

Darren Evetts reported that the proposal made by Dan Crofts for the league competition at last year's AGM had been considered by the competition committee who had decided that it was not practical. However the rules for the league are to be reviewed which may help alleviate the concern.

4. **Treasurer's Report (Leslie Reece)**

The income and expenditure account shows a surplus for the year of £1082 which is almost identical to last year.

Income

This was the first year of the EBU P2P membership scheme and the need for a cautious initial approach in the light of uncertainty about the intention of some of our major clubs has been well reported at previous meetings. This led to the Executive approving a P2P County fee of 7p.

It was pleasing that despite our initial concerns all the major clubs are now affiliated and, therefore, the Executive has approved a retrospective rebate of 25% of the contributions for the year 2010/11. This rebate reduces the P2P levy to 5.25p for the year which is incorporated in the figures.

There was no sponsorship income for the year 2010/11, but the other income remained steady. The revamped and more cost effective WPL made a good contribution. Some of the previous year's sponsorship money was used to support our efforts to attract new players into the introductory and fledgling pairs.

Expenditure

This year two specific additional costs arose. The first is the provision of £500 entry fee to the Inter-County League National Final for our three Inter-County League teams. The second is the contribution towards the initial cost of Bridgemates used for scoring County events.

Forecast

The current year has started well. The County has secured new sponsorship of £750 from Nicklin LLP, a firm of financial advisers. I would like to formally record our gratitude to them and also to Colin Lang who was responsible for negotiating the arrangement. We have also received a windfall sum of £800+ from the funds of the South Warwickshire League which has ceased to operate. Finally the recent Green Point event attracted a significantly higher number of entries and will produce a net income £200 higher than last year.

We intend to use some of this extra income on publicity and incentives to strengthen our efforts to extend our membership, attract young players and increase entries to our competitions.

P2P

It is a problem with P2P that the figure has to be settled so far in advance. Some months ago the Executive agreed an unchanged P2P fee of 7p for the present year. Unless significant adverse events occur later in the year, I expect that a rebate will be paid again at the end of the year.

Our Constitution requires that the fee for the year beginning 1st April 2012 should be agreed at this meeting. I am proposing that the meeting delegate this responsibility to the Executive, so that the decision can be made later in the year when more information is available. This proposal was seconded by Ian Handley and passed unanimously.

There were some questions on the costs in the accounts from members. Jon Downing noted that from 1st April 2012 the County would have to pay a P2P fee on its competitions and leagues at 50% of the EBU P2P fee (currently 31p). The County would absorb these additional costs for the first year. It was noted that membership to the County had increased by approximately 50% as a result of all affiliated club members becoming members of the EBU.

Acceptance of the accounts was proposed by Mike Thorley and seconded by Beryl Latham and unanimously approved.

5. Chairman's Report (Darren Evetts)

Prior to giving his report the chairman asked Elayne Meakin to give a brief summary of the County competitions during the year.

Elayne reported that the last year had produced an increase in numbers competing of about 10%. Questionnaires had been circulated after each event to gauge entrants' views across a range of factors. The overall rating from those questionnaires completed was just under 4 out of a possible 5. She asked players to let her know if they had ideas for further improvements.

2010/11 Competition Winners:

Cock O' the County	Audrey and Henry McBride
Frank Cup	Roger Bryant, Rob Helle, Gareth Roberts, David Kenward
Goodman Cup	George Cuthbertson, Ian Handley, David Jones, Gary Watson, Mike Leese, Steve Wood
Garden Cities	Margaret Wort, Paul Hackett, Jason Hackett, Justin Hackett Darren Evetts, Barbara Hackett George Cuthbertson, Ian Handley
Mixed Pairs	Carolyn Fisher, Peter Oldbury
Championship Pairs	Adrian Knight, Leslie Reece
Ladies Pairs	Carolyn Fisher, Jane Hall
Men's Pairs	Darren Evetts, Justin Hackett
International Replay	Stephen Green
Green Point Swiss Pairs	Ian Clarke and Christine White, Jan Vos and Peter Hasenson, Andrew Lee and Tugrul Kaban (All equal 1 st)

Warwickshire Pairs League:

Sept – Jan

A: Glyn Preece, Peter Heatherington

B: Mike Sallis, Brian Osmond

C: Margaret Crangle, Mary Andrew

Feb – June

A: Ian Handley, George Cuthbertson

B: Graham Cope, Barbara Roberts

C: Sonya Vinn, Paula Leek

Introductory Pairs

Helen Richmond, Cecilia Turner

Fledgling Pairs

Corrine Stanton, Sandra Wallace

Chick O' the County

Jim Quy, John Luciola

Warwickshire League

Division 1 - West Midlands A (Hackett)

Division 2 - Moseley C (Leese)

Division 3 - Moseley E (Rose)

Handicap Trophy

Moseley C (Leese)

The main change in the programme of events had been to run events for newcomers. Three events were run alongside a County competition. Introductory pairs for players with less than 5 years experience playing; Fledgling pairs for players with less than 2 years experience and Chick of the County for 1st year students which has been run alongside the Cock of the County competitions played today. The winners of this competition have been awarded the Steve Byrne Memorial prizes.

Next season will be broadly the same with an additional competition for seniors to be run on a Thursday afternoon in September. Players must be over 60 on the day. There will also be amendments to the Frank Cup handicaps. The qualification to the Championship Pairs final will also be reviewed.

Darren then gave his report:

At the beginning of the year I was pleased to welcome back on to the Executive Committee Elayne Meakin and Myra Scott, who were co-opted to the roles of Competitions Secretary and Newcomers Development Officer respectively. I was also pleased that Nicky Cook accepted the role of Publicity Officer and Stephanie Galvin the role of English Bridge Correspondent.

Warwickshire has had a very successful year. In July our Dawes Team (county first team) won the County Teams of Eight National Final, having qualified by winning the Midlands Inter-County league Division One. Congratulations to the team of Roger Bryant, George Cuthbertson, Ian Handley, David Jones, David Kenward, Mike Leese, Garry Watson, and Steve Wood and to all the players who contributed to the success of the Dawes team during the preceding season.

In April we scored an outstanding, and probably a unique, achievement by winning all three of the Midlands Inter-County Leagues. The Dawes, Porter and Markham teams will be represented at the County Teams of eight National Final in July. We wish them the best of luck. With three teams participating how Warwickshire can fail to win for a second year running I do not know! Our congratulations must go to all the players who represented Warwickshire during the season. Thanks also to our Match Secretary, Adrian Knight, for making some excellent selections!

Warwickshire has achieved further victories: The Oxfordshire Invitation Event - The Beck Cup, congratulations to the team of George Cuthbertson, Ian Handley, David Jones, and Garry Watson. The Midland Counties Challenge Bowl - Congratulations to the team of Adrian Knight, Peter Oldbury, Leslie Reese, and Brent Wormald.

We were invited to join West Midlands Bridge Club in playing host to the 2011 Corn Cairdis (a friendly international match between England and Ireland). Three teams representing the organisers, the host County and the host Club from Ireland and England competed in the two day event which proved a success for England who, having trailed throughout the weekend, scooped victory in the final match to win by 3 Victory Points. Congratulations to the EBU Organiser's Team of Sally Bugden, Malcolm Oliver, Andrew Petrie, and Peter Stocken and the County team of Adrian Knight, Peter Oldbury, Leslie Reese, and Brent Wormald and the Club team of Tony Cundy, Jane

and Cyril Hall, and Tony Poole. An Open Teams event was also held alongside the main event. It was a thoroughly enjoyable weekend. Our thanks to West Midlands Bridge Club for hosting the events and providing such fine hospitality.

In October 2010 a new event - International Replay - was introduced by Warwickshire, in partnership with Coventry & North Warwickshire Bridge Section. International Replay is an invitation event where players compete in a Butler Pairs competition scored on an individual basis. The boards played are those of past international matches, with the scores from the original match forming part of the overall Butler, and the Experts' scores included in the rankings. When there is a half table we use the Bridgebase Online BOTS (Robots) as a pair, and players play on the computer against the BOTS instead of sitting out. The BOTS' scores are also included in the rankings. This proved an interesting and enjoyable event. We pushed the boundaries of technology to their limits whilst at the same time giving some players their first taste of playing bridge online!

Warwickshire played host to the 2011 Inter-University Bridge Festival, which was held at Warwick University in February. Coventry and West Midlands provided support to the event, which was attended by students from Imperial College, London School of Economics, Southampton and Warwick Universities.

I am sure you are aware that Warwickshire, in partnership with West Midlands Bridge Club, has agreed to host the 2011 National Women's Teams in September. This is an EBU National Green Point event that was traditionally held in a hotel but, due to falling numbers and increasing costs it has become uneconomical for the EBU to continue to run it. A similar situation occurred with the Great Northern Swiss Pairs, which is now run by Yorkshire. We hope the National Women's Teams will prove as successful for Warwickshire as the Great Northern Swiss Pairs has proved for Yorkshire. I hope to see a large number of Warwickshire Ladies playing.

It was with sadness that the South Warwickshire League was dissolved. Our thanks to those people who have administered this League over many years.

In addition to my duties as Chairman of Warwickshire I am also an EBU shareholder. For those of you who do not know the EBU is divided up into shares. The number of shares a County holds depends on the number of members it has. Warwickshire currently has three shares. The EBU has a Board of directors, elected by the shareholders annually, who are responsible for the day to day running of the Union. In addition there are a number of Sub Committees responsible for Tournaments, Laws & Ethics, Selection and so on, similar to the structure of our County Association. The Shareholders meet twice a year, with one of those meetings being the AGM. I have found my first two meetings very interesting, with many topics being discussed rigorously before a decision is made. Decisions are made on a simple majority vote of those present. Sometimes, although not in my time, proxy voting is used. It is fair to say that the Shareholders from across the Country do ensure that their members' interests are represented, whilst at the same time ensuring that the EBU is managed soundly and sensibly.

Regional and National Club Committees have been set up in order to provide a forum where clubs can feed directly to the EBU Board. This in no way removes the responsibilities of the County but adds to the avenues of communication available for our members to make their views known at national level. One example of this is perhaps the regulation of systems and rules on announcements. These, and many more, will be in the remit of the Regional and National Club Committees. I am pleased to say that Warwickshire will today be electing its representative to serve on the Regional Committee and liaise with all of our clubs.

At my first meeting of Shareholders the question of Pay-2-Play was discussed. The Board's proposal for a 3 pence increase was not widely popular and the resulting agreement after much discussion was for a 2 pence increase with effect from 1 April 2011. I have to tell you that there were some Counties who felt it should be much more, and some who felt it should be left at the existing amount. I hope you will agree that 2 pence seems a sensible increase. However, this leaves a projected shortfall to the EBU of about £17,000. The October EBU AGM should be interesting.

One particularly interesting fact that the collection of Pay-2-Play data has provided is that four Warwickshire clubs feature in the top 20 most attended affiliated clubs in England. These are West Midlands who were 6th, Kenilworth 12th, Sutton Coldfield 15th and Stratford 17th.

It is my intention that during the course of the coming year members of the Executive Committee, predominantly Shareholders, should make themselves available to visit our Clubs. This could be at the Club's AGM, at a committee meeting or at a members' meeting. It would be up to the individual Club to decide how best this could be achieved, in order to give the Club and their members access to those at the heart of decision making at both County and National level.

We have been very fortunate to once again secure sponsors. Nicklins LLP, accountants and business advisers, of Birmingham have agreed to be our sponsors. I would appreciate your support by taking a leaflet and whenever possible would ask that you consider Nicklins for your accounting or business needs. I would like to thank Colin Lang for his continued efforts in securing sponsorship for our County.

Running a County like Warwickshire takes a lot of time, dedication and commitment from a large number of people. I would like to thank all our Bridge Clubs, and their members, who have played host to the many events we have run over the year, and for their commitment to ensuring that the affairs of the County are kept in good order. I would also like to thank some of our members individually: Ken Crane for his work on Electronic MasterPoints, our County Player Database and other IT related matters; George Cuthbertson for his work on the Competitions Committee, Commentaries and Website updates; Jan Eden for his support with duplimating and with Betty for their support of events; Prue Knight, Sue and David Jones, Peter Oldbury, Steve Royston and Sid Sidney for their support with duplimating, Bob Galvin for acting as our Independent Examiner; Mike Meakin for his support in the organisation and running of events and the reminders he sends us; Myra Twyman for her support with publicity, Roger Twyman for his work as our Webmaster; our Tournament Directors, some of whom also provide telephone rulings for matches played privately. I would like to thank Ian Hendry, David, Marilyn and Martin Jones, Mike Meakin, Maggs and John Pyner, Ang Shen Ting, and Nick Woosnam for their directing expertise.

I have found my colleagues on the Executive Committee a pleasure to work with. Not only do they carry out their duties with dedication and commitment but they do it with a sense of humour and in fine spirit. I would like to thank Mike Thorley, Sandra Squires, Leslie Reese, Nicky Cook, Jon Downing, Stephanie Galvin, Adrian Knight, Elayne Meakin, Myra Scott, Carolyn Fisher, Dodo Georgevic, Jane Hall, David Jones, Colin Lang, Peter Nicholds, John Pyner and Nick Woosnam for providing Warwickshire with an Executive Committee it can be proud of. I would like to add a special thank you to Colin Lang for his support and advice on a variety of matters throughout the year.

I normally make it my policy not to name individuals, because if one misses anybody out it can cause such embarrassment, but, my experience of working with those I have mentioned has been so fulfilling it would not be fitting to say a blanket thank you. I sincerely hope that I have not missed out anybody, but if I have please forgive me and accept my thanks nonetheless. Finally, I would like to thank you, our members. Your support of the many Clubs you are members of, your attendance at County Competitions and contributions to the administration of the County are all vital to our continued success - thank you. Could we please show our appreciation to all the people I have mentioned, who provide so much for our County and contribute so much to its success.

I believe that my first year as Chairman has been a successful one. I am not certain how we are going to improve on it for the coming year, but, with the team we have we certainly have the building blocks to do so.

6. Election of Officers and Council for 2011/12

Sandra Squires read out the nominations for County Officers and as there was only one nomination for each post the following were duly elected.

Chairman	Darren Evetts	Vice-Chairman	Mike Thorley
Secretary/Membership	Sandra Squires	Treasurer	Leslie Reece
Competitions Secretary	Elayne Meakin	League Secretary	Jon Downing
English Bridge Correspondent	Stephanie Galvin	Newcomers Development Officer	Myra Scott
Publicity Officer	Nicky Cook	Match Secretary	Adrian Knight

The following Council members were also elected

Carolyn Fisher, Jane Hall, David Jones, Peter Nicholds, John Pyner, Nick Woosnam

Also included in the nominations were the 3 shareholders Colin Lang, John Pyner and Darren Evetts. It was felt that the shareholders should be nominated at the AGM although it is not required by the Constitution. The Executive will look at possible amendments to the Constitution to clarify this point. All 3 shareholders were elected unanimously

Darren Evetts stated that we had had 3 members who had expressed an interest in representing the County on the Regional Club committee. After discussions Chris Harris was nominated and seconded as the Warwickshire representative. This was passed unanimously. Chris stated that he would contact all the clubs in the County.

7. Election of Independent Examiner - Mr Bob Galvin was proposed by Leslie Reece, seconded by Colin Lang, and agreed unanimously.

8. AOB

Dan Crofts asked if the County would consider changing the day of the WPL. He stated that it clashed with Moseley's main club night and had had a significant effect on table numbers. Darren Evetts responded that as clubs within the County play on different nights of the week any day chosen would clash with one or more club nights. However, he said he would pass the comments on to the competition committee and would feedback their comments.

9. The next AGM will be held at Coventry and North Warwickshire Bridge Club on 24 June 2012 at approximately 5pm.

Sandra Squires
July 2011