



Minutes of Council Meeting held at West Midlands Bridge Club

Wednesday 25 February 2009

Present:

Colin Lang (Chairman), Sandra Squires (Secretary), Leslie Reece (Treasurer), Jon Downing (Vice-Chairman), Carolyn Fisher, Stephanie Galvin (Master Points Secretary), Pip Whitehouse (Tournament Secretary), Margaret Wort, Roy Moore, Elayne Meakin, Mike Meakin, Alan Pagett, Adrian Knight, Deryk Whitfield

1. Apologies

Dave Cropper (Youth Officer), Beryl Latham (Admin Secretary), John Robbins (Match/Selection/Publicity Secretary), John Pyner, Hilda Townsend, Jane Hall

2. Minutes of last meeting (151008)

The minutes of the last meeting were taken as read and signed, following amendments:

Item 5 - Tim Johnson in place of Maggie Jones, as Club Liaison

Item 6 - 10 Tables, not 10 pairs under section dealing with WPL.

3. Matters Arising

None

4. Resignation of County Secretary

Chairman reported that Darren Evetts resigned as County Secretary on 17 October 2008. He paid tribute to Darren's ability and work for the County. On behalf of the Council, he expressed appreciation and thanks for Darren's services, for his efforts to revitalise our competitions, and also for taking on responsibilities considerably beyond the remit of Secretary.

The Chairman pointed out that Darren's resignation left a large hole in County administration, particularly in respect of Tournament Directors. The WPL will need a TD from September. It was now urgent for new faces to come forward, and Colin has written to all Clubs asking their support in that regard. Mike and Elayne Meakin were thanked for stepping into the breach, also Ken Crane who has offered his services in Scorebridge to the County.

5. Election of new Secretary

The Council has authority to fill an interim vacancy until the next AGM. Sandra Squires was proposed by Colin Lang and seconded by Jon Downing as County Secretary and duly elected. Colin thanked Sandra for her willingness to take on the task.

6. Treasurer's Report – Leslie Reece

Draft figures indicate that the County will breakeven for the current year to 31 March. Subscription income is slightly down. The County has £1,250 sponsorship still remaining. Some of this will be needed to cover the estimated loss of £350 on the Goodman Cup. This arose as the competition was held over three nights and prizes were given whereas previously was it was held on one day. This loss is not sustainable in the future.

The final figures for the Green Point event showed a small profit, even though numbers were down. This was due to change of venue and reduced hire charges.

County Funding - As discussed at previous Council meeting, the County has three options to collect its income from April 2010 when P2P comes in :

1. Collect subscriptions from members
2. A levy on clubs
3. P2P supplement collected by EBU on behalf of county

Options 1 and 2 would impose considerable administration on the County, and it was decided to opt for the P2P supplement. Leslie expressed the hope that this would not exceed 7p but disaffiliation by Clubs may cause serious problems, and the County may need to look at other or additional options.

Contracts for P2P are to be sent out to Clubs by EBU by June 2009, and Clubs need to return them by October 2009. Roy Moore advised that there was an attempt to head off P2P. Steve Green has an alternative proposal and may ask the EBU to call an EGM. He needs 12 shareholders to sign a request, but he is not a shareholder himself.

Leslie indicated that he could not attend the forthcoming Shareholders meeting, and agreed that SG could attend as his proxy. EBU to be notified as required. It was agreed that the County would support SG's initiative.

7. EBU Strategy – John Pyner

No report - there has been no EBU meeting since last Council meeting. Next meeting is 11 March 2009.

8. Tournament Secretary's Report – Pip Whitehouse

Tollemache Cup: The Warwickshire team were congratulated on achieving 3rd place in the final.

Championship pairs: The final took place on 3rd December. The winners were Steve Green and Rob Helle. They qualified for the Corwen Trophy together with the 2nd to 4th places who were Libby and Colin Lang, Mike Leese and John Collin and Caroline and Harvey Brown. This was not a successful competition format as the entry now reduced to only 24 pairs, from 31 last year, and 46 the previous year.

Introductory pairs: only attracted 6 entries - won by Chris Thomas and Errol Thomas.

Swiss pairs: 16 pairs - won by David Kenward and Glyn Preece.

Goodman Cup: 9 teams took part in main qualifying session.

Charity Simultaneous Pairs: 7 clubs have indicated that they will run heats so far. This is one of our most popular events (149 pairs played last year at 6 venues).

Mixed Pairs: Only qualifying result received so far is from Sutton Coldfield. Moseley is playing this evening.

Frank Cup: It was noted that a Director will be needed for this event on 1 April. West Midlands BC was asked to help find one.

9. WCBA Strategy Update – Colin Lang (focussing on Competition format)

WPL: The WPL numbers were down. Currently there are 20 pairs in both Premier A & B and 12 in both Divisions 1 & 2, a total of 64. Previously there had been 80 pairs, and apart from other considerations, this means a substantial loss of revenue. Clubs are to be encouraged to ask more members to participate from September.2009, especially those Clubs in the vicinity of WMBC

Serious concerns were expressed about the accommodation and playing conditions for Premier A & B and tables being too close. It would relieve congestion if A and B were split (playing with 1 and 2 respectively) but they would not then be playing same Boards, and unable to compare. Elayne Meakin is meeting with Daren Evetts to try to overcome this problem.

Championship Pairs: See above comment. It is proposed that the Clubs be asked to run heats on a normal Club night (as with Mixed Pairs) with a 2 session semi-final and final on a Sunday. WMBC, Sutton, Coventry and Moseley to be asked initially (Sandra Squires/Colin Lang)

Goodman Cup: See above.

Frank Cup: Concern was reported that the Goodman Cup final and the Frank Cup are being played on the same night (Wed. 1 April) and therefore the 2 Goodman finalists are excluded from the Frank. Is there room for 2 County Teams competitions, with duplication of effort ? Comments please.

BPL: It was announced that this would move next season from 3rd Wed. to 1st Wed. each month.

10. League Secretary's Report – Jon Downing

Stephanie Galvin and her team were congratulated on completing all their matches before the end of February.

Division I - on schedule 14 matches have been completed so far.

Division II - behind schedule with only 8 matches completed so far

Division III - on schedule with all teams having played at least 3 matches.

The Handicap trophy: All first round matches except one have been completed and second round has been assigned.

11. Selection Committee/Publicity Report – John Robbins

No report received.

Tollemache Selection - Colin Lang presented a discussion paper (copies available on request) under the heading "the status quo is not an option". It was based on his recent experience, which he described as totally unsatisfactory. It contained a summary of complaints heard or received, and challenges to the fairness and transparency of the selection process, some applicable also to Inter County match selection. It contained a number of suggestions for consideration and decision (if possible) at next Council meeting. Clear basic guidelines were also needed to be laid down by the Council.

12. Secretary's Report – Colin Lang/Sandra Squires

Correspondence: 2 letters received from EBU :

- On insurance for Clubs, which may well be of interest.
- enclosing Draft revised / updated Constitution for County Associations, mainly as a result of P2P. Colin to report to next meeting on any proposed changes, which will need approval at AGM. Any departure from draft will require EBU approval.

Calendar Updates: AGM and Cock of the County to be held on 28 June not on advertised date. Clubs should please advise Sandra Squires of all changes to the calendar.

A draft calendar for 2009/10 (so far as possible) will be presented at the next meeting (Sandra Squires), and Clubs are requested to supply details for next season as soon as available.

Website Report: Hits to date: 74782, a substantial increase (of 29055) since October meeting.

Midland Counties Congress: Colin has resigned from the organising committee due to pressure of County business. WCBA will need another representative, unless Darren has decided to remain MCC Secretary.

13. Green Point Swiss Pairs – Sunday 17 May 2009

This year we have changed from a Teams event. It is hoped this will attract greater numbers needed to make it pay, given that EBU now charge a fee, irrespective of whether event shows profit or loss to the County !

Flyer to go out to clubs and surrounding counties in March. Roger Twyman to be asked to put entry form on the web site. Sandra Squires to contact EBU re link to EBU site.

14. Youth Officer's Report – Dave Cropper

None received. It was noted that there has been no report from Dave since his appointment. Colin agreed to contact him.

15. AoB

County flyers - Colin Lang is currently producing them, and expressed concern that some Clubs are not posting them on their Notice Boards. He requested all Clubs to ensure their members are made aware of forthcoming county events. The need for someone with special skills involved in Publicity was highlighted by Jon Downing.

16. Date of next Council Meeting – Wednesday 29 April 2009 @ 7.00pm. West Midlands Bridge Club. Coffee available upon arrival.

S A Squires

March 2009