

Wells City Bridge Club (WCBC) :

Minutes of AGM held on 16th May 2024

The Annual General Meeting of the WCBC was held on 16th May 2024 at St Thomas Church Hall at 6.00 pm with 27 members in attendance

The meeting was opened with Charlie welcoming everyone and thanking them for attending.

Apologies were offered from Mary Loakes, Jonny, Dick, Ruth, Keith, Ian and Carole, Philippa, John Hole, Barbara, Gordon, Jo, John Marriott, Julia, Libby and Derek, John and Lyndsay and Joanna.

1. Minutes of the last AGM: The minutes of the 2023 AGM were accepted as an accurate record. Proposed by Sheena and seconded by Carol H.

2. Matters Arising: There were no matters arising.

3. Election of Officers: Charlie said that whilst the present officers are all happy to continue for another year volunteers were invited and would be welcome. Present officers are Chair: Charlie Sutton. Treasurer: Janette Norris. Secretary & Website: Carol Baron, Other members Rosie Shaljean, Lyndsay Hewitt and Keith Beasley. There being no further nominees the present committee were duly elected. Charlie thanked the club members for their vote of confidence, but stressed that he hoped other Club members will come forward to stand for Committee next year as present Committee members may not want to continue forever.

The motion to adopt the current officers was proposed by Phil and seconded by Mary Nielsen and approved unanimously.

4. Amendments to the Constitution: Before asking for a vote to accept the amendments Carol explained a typing error had occurred and been corrected in the title of the club and also that the wording to section 7 should include “but shall be eligible for re-election” Motion to accept the amendments as explained was proposed by Tania and seconded by Don. Acceptance of the amended Constitution was voted on and agreed.

5. Treasurer’s Report: Janette began by explaining a couple of figures on the balance sheet which had caused some confusion.

The balance c/fwd on the RHS should show £4850.82 and on the LHS £4750.35. Her report follows:

“I have distributed copies of the end of year balance sheet, and I will outline the most significant figures. Firstly, thanks to Roy Rowe who has kindly audited the accounts And to the weekly table money collectors, John and Rosie and others who assist, and to Charlie who always cheerfully picks up the pieces.

The bank balance at year end was £4750.35.

Expenditure during 2023-24 financial year was £4377.57.

Income (subscriptions and table money) was £4277.10 as itemised in the left hand column resulting in a small deficit of minus £100.35.

Unusual expenses this year were the purchase of the laptop £339. The club also funded the refreshments at October social night to £263.

We have now returned to our pre-covid charity donations through club play. £261 was donated to Children in Need

The club has averaged 6 tables per week and at £3 pp this has resulted in a steady financial balance. We have a membership of 55 currently. I recommend that the weekly fee remains at £3 and subscriptions at £5. This will ensure that the club has reserve funds to meet any changes in hall fees or venue, to have reserves for a dealing machine should we have the structure in place to manage one, and also to have funds for social events.

Thank you, that is the end of the Treasurer's report. Any Questions ?”

Tanya asked whether it would be sensible to increase subs to make good the small deficit in this year's balance. It was generally agreed that increasing subs was not necessary at present as the balance was considered to be comfortable and the club is operating at a working profit. Sheena asked whether it would be possible to have an Extraordinary General Meeting if it becomes necessary to increase subs or table money in future. It was confirmed this could be done.

Motion to adopt the accounts was proposed by Charlie, seconded by Yvonne.

Motion to agree table money was proposed by Valerie, seconded by Carole H. Both agreed.

6. Chairman's Report:

“ Firstly I want us to remember that we've lost both David Beavis and Norman Eve this year and although David had recently stopped playing he was still a close ex-member. Norman was and is sadly missed by everyone at the club for all he brought to the club. Yvonne has asked me to pass on her thanks for the donation made by the club to Norman's charity choice.

This time last year we were congratulating ourselves on having got going after the pandemic and making it through the first year with increasing table numbers, so that financially we had broken even, and people were enjoying their Face-to-Face bridge once more.

This year I think we can again afford to congratulate ourselves on a further successful year, there are of course some players who have not rejoined and there are a few who we are waiting to recover from medical issues. We wish them speedy recovery and hope they will rejoin us soon. We have however gained a number of new players who I hope are enjoying our relaxed yet competitive bridge. This has resulted in there being a healthy number of tables each Thursday so financially we are in a sound position, but I hope, more importantly, that we provide an enjoyable (if somewhat noisy) atmosphere. We must do better on that!

Other Points to Report from the Year:

Charity and Social Evenings:

For charity events we joined in the nationwide Children in Need charity event in November and we also donated £100 to the Somerset charity event the Michael Coda Cup. It is proposed that we have a local charity evening but more on that later.

We also had a very enjoyable New Year social event for which Carol organised the food, which the club funded, Paul and John ran the bar and we played a non-competitive evening of bridge, although there were prizes.

Teaching Evenings:

We've started a series of teaching sessions (which I've taken but I'm open to offers if someone else wants to take some) and I want to thank Dick who found out what people felt they needed and 'encouraged' me to organise them! They seem to have been successful with normally

between 16-20 people attending. We have covered topics such as Doubling for Take out, Doubling for penalties, Leads against No Trumps, Leads against suits, and most recently playing No Trump contracts. You'd have to ask those that take part whether they both enjoyed them and whether they learnt anything, I just need to say I've really enjoyed preparing and taking them - not quite like being in the classroom with a bunch of 16 year olds, but very close, you are better behaved but just as noisy!!

Dealt Boards:

We started this last week, a first for a normal club evening although we have had dealt boards in the past for one off evenings like Children in Need. I've long wanted to be able to offer this as most clubs do nowadays and it should help your bridge – providing you take the opportunity to look up the results afterwards. We do need to discuss some implications of having dealt boards so it is on the agenda later (my agenda not the one I sent out earlier to you).

Now some “Thank You’s” for making the club work.

As with last year there are a lot of people that enable the club to function and who deserve our thanks:-

Carol B. who looks after the membership and the website, and Carol is more than happy to spend some time showing anyone that struggles how to use the website. It is important to keep an eye on what is put on there as well as your weekly results.

Janette looking after the finances, and Roy for auditing the accounts.

Rosie S. helping people find partners and collecting money each Thursday, as well as John for collecting the table money.

Dick, Francis, John, Valerie, and Glenn who take on the sometimes thankless task of directing whilst still trying to enjoy playing - not always easy!

Johnny and Mike F for looking after the equipment and scoring as well as Janette, Jules, and Ruth who share the scoring duties.

Ruth who took on the task of organising a team to play in the County League. The results may not have been as good as we would have hoped, but I hope all those that played enjoyed playing and I do hope we can continue to put a team in next year.

Carol H. and Loucie who have made sure there are refreshments each week and organised us onto a rota. They want to step back from this so they can concentrate on bridge and so a big thank you to them both and to Sheena and Mary N for taking over.

*At this point Carol and Loucie were each presented with a plant to show our appreciation.

For those who are new to the club please don't think that any of us are trained in any of the above so please do put your names forward to help - none of us are experts as probably shows some Thursdays when everything goes pear shaped!

That is just about the end of my report unless anyone thinks I've missed anything important that happened this year”.

7. County League : Ruth was unable to attend the AGM but sent the following message:

“A big thank you to all who played in the County League. We were placed in the 3rd division (lowest) and played against 8 other Somerset teams. All matches were online which meant we could all play in the comfort of our own homes (prior to Covid all matches had been played at Woolavington). Sadly, we ended up bottom, however I think we put up a very creditable performance especially since some of us had never played Real Bridge before. Amongst the disappointing results there was one stunning 18-2 win, so not all bad! Hopefully next year we will be able to move off the bottom spot”.

Charlie expressed our thanks to Ruth for taking on the task of team manager.

8. Teaching.

This had proved to be a popular addition to the club and further sessions will follow as members wish.

9. Festival of Bridge

The EBU are organising a Festival of Bridge (titled ‘It’s a Big Deal’) to promote the game and to raise money for Cancer research. They are asking for as many clubs as possible to participate by holding a bridge event. Charlie reported that he had been in contact with the Chair of Coxley club and it is proposed that we should have a joint event with Coxley and Street. Street would organise the play with Coxley and Wells organising refreshments. Further information will be forthcoming.

10. Charity Evening and Summer Social:

The committee are suggesting that we hold a joint Summer Social and Charity event in June this year. They propose a “bring and share” buffet with table money (amount at individual’s choice) to a local charity. Tania suggested we try to avoid Glastonbury dates in June. Before the meeting Charlie had asked for suggestions and the charities under consideration were: Heads Up , Wells FoodBank, Connect Centre and the Lawrence Centre. A few words about each of the charities was shared by various club members. All the charities nominated are deserving of support but a show of hands favoured the FoodBank. Charlie said that we will consider all of the of them again for future support.

11. Dealt Boards:

Charlie spoke about dealt boards, a subject he has spoken of previously and continues to prefer for play at the club. The cost of buying our own machine would be very high, and using the facilities in Street has always proved to be difficult. Caroline Macpherson who has recently moved to Wells has a dealing machine and has offered to deal the boards for us, in exchange for her being allowed to play at the club occasionally with one of her learners. In recompense neither she nor the learner would pay table money. The feeling of the membership, in general seemed to be in support of dealt boards with many commenting that it would improve the profile and strength of the club. A general discussion followed about either accepting her offer, or whether a better arrangement would be to pay for the service of dealing the boards bearing in mind we have voted in the past not to waive table money for directors, scorers, etc. Charlie said that he did not know whether that was something Caroline would agree to, but he would speak with her again. It was proposed from the floor that the decision be left to the club committee. The club officers present agreed to this.

12. Presentation of Annual Awards: The presentation of the following awards followed.

WCBC Shield: For the pair with the highest overall average. At least 10 weeks of play is needed to qualify:

Ann Margaret Drew and Valerie Jackson.

Chairman's attendance award: Made for the best attendance of the year.

Loucie Smithson.

Pairs Award – NGS 9 and below: For the pair with highest average and having NGS 9 or below. At least 10 weeks of play is needed to qualify:

Rosie Cutbill and Keith Beasley.

Simon Loveday Award:

For a person or pair who contributes the success and running of the club and at the same time successfully improves their bridge.

Dick Crane and Johnny Heriz-Smith

13. Vote of Thanks:

A vote of thanks to the Charlie and the whole Committee was made by Carole Hamblin on behalf of the members of the club.

The meeting closed at 6.45 and was followed by duplicate bridge with 6 ½ tables in play.

CB: 18/5/2024