

WEST SUSSEX BRIDGE CLUB

Minutes of the 46th Annual General Meeting of the West Sussex Bridge Club
held on Thursday 2nd May 2024 at The Old School, Cuckfield

Present: Neil Watts, Chairman
Chris Jago, Secretary
Rob Harris, Treasurer
+36 Club Members

1. Welcome by Chairman

The meeting was called to order at 7 pm and the Chairman welcomed all members in attendance.

2. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from: Valerie Austin, John Beaumont, Hazel Beveridge, Gillian Butcher, Jeff Callaghan, Ann Calverley, Joan Collins, Peter Collins, Margaret Drake, Alan Duddy, Jackie Dyke, Caroline Exall, Linda Gardiner, Anthony Gimson, Helena Hoare, Philip Hunt, Mary Guy-Jones, Rob Jenner, Andrew Pettit, Iris Pettit, Myra Taylor, Maureen Topley.

3. Approval of Minutes of 45th AGM

The previous Minutes were approved with no matters arising (proposed by Norman Hardy, seconded by Suzy Gray).

4. Chairman's Report

The Chairman presented his report which had been previously circulated, the highlights of which were:

- Sadly, one member, Dilys Jones, died during the last year.
- Attendance at face-to-face and online sessions over the past year has shown mixed results, although it has been encouraging to see that the table count at both Tuesday and Thursday evening f2f games has increased to a healthy number.
- The pairs' league was not well attended, however, and the future of this event will be the subject of further review by the Committee.
- The Chairman congratulated the winners of various events held over the course of the last year. Club champions for 2023-24 are: Mike Allen (Individual); Mike Allen and Philip Hunt (Men's Pairs); Julia Brown and Margaret Drake (Ladies' Pairs); Chris Jepson and David Clifton (Mixed Pairs); John Rix and Richard Haynes (Non-Expert Pairs).
- The Bournemouth mini break tradition will continue next year, beginning Sunday 2nd February 2025.
- The online lessons sponsored by the Club last year were successful and consideration is being given to offering more later this year.

- The WhatsApp group has been successful in allowing members to find partners at short notice.
- We are considering replacing our BridgeMates with tablets, which are very easy to use.
- The new Haywards Heath rugby club building in Cuckfield is under construction and we are keeping a weather eye on it as a possible future bridge venue.

Additionally, the Chairman reported that the Committee was recommending a change to the discounted amount for annual membership renewal if paid by the end of May, as well as a change to the new membership fee. This results in an annual fee of £15 for existing members, discounted to £10 if paid by 31st May; new members will benefit from the discounted fee of £10 in their first year if joining before 1st October, or £5 thereafter. No objections were raised and these changes are therefore approved with immediate effect.

The Chairman gave special thanks to Robert Hirst for his past service as director and Committee member; whilst Robert is no longer able to play bridge in person, happily he is continuing to play online.

5. Acceptance of Independently Examined Financial Results for year ending 31st March 2024

The Treasurer presented his report, highlighting the following:

- Income is up due mostly to increased return on investments and an increase in voucher sales, the latter having benefitted from the new process of timely payments by BACS.
- Expenditure is up due mostly to an increase in occupancy costs at The Old School (although this is just a timing issue), a reduction in gifts and donations, and the new sponsored teaching cost.
- The Club therefore made a small overall profit this year of £3,000.

The financial results were accepted by the membership (proposed by Carol Watson, seconded by Alan Gardiner).

6. Election of Officers and Committee

The following Committee members were elected unopposed:

Hon Secretary: Chris Jago

Hon Treasurer: Rob Harris

Committee Members: Ed Barter, Brian Cutler, Mark Darby, Mary Guy-Jones, Jane Lawrence, Colin Mallows

The Hon Chairman, Neil Watts, was not up for re-election since his term has not yet expired.

7. Thursday Afternoon Sessions

The Chairman reviewed the state of the Thursday afternoon session, which has not been meeting the previously set 4-table target. He noted that, on 15 occasions since the last

AGM, the session had attracted fewer than 3 tables. In addition, additional directors would be needed if the session were to continue.

Comments from the floor represented diverging views; some felt that the Club should continue to subsidise the game if members were enjoying it, and others felt it was not enjoyable with as few as 3 tables. A couple of members suggested promoting the session to U3A groups and the Mid Sussex Wednesday afternoon group, and also placing an advert in the local paper with a special offer. The Chairman asked for a show of hands and those who felt strongly in favour of continuing the session were clearly in the minority. It was therefore resolved that the Thursday afternoon session would be withdrawn with immediate effect.

8. Any Other Business

- 1) Jo Jewson requested that North and East players be more diligent about sharing BridgeMate results with South and West players after each board. This is a recurring issue. The Chairman, in asking that members take note of this request, thought that the results would be shown more clearly on tablets.

The meeting was adjourned at 7.35 pm and was followed by 32 members playing 18 boards of bridge.