Minutes of the Annual General Meeting
of the Young Chelsea Bridge Club
held at 6.00 pm on Thursday 17th October 2019

Present (in person): David Ewart (Chairman); Brian Callaghan, John Dean, Paula Leslie, David Muller, Rosie White (MC members); 22 other members

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Steven Bird, Mike Eden, Gitte Hecht-Johansen, Anne McKellow, Ivor Snowdon, John Vos and Philip Watson.

2. Minutes of the AGM of 28th September 2018

The minutes of the last AGM were accepted as an accurate record of the meeting and there were no matters arising.

3. Treasurer's Report

The Treasurer, Paula Leslie, reported that the club was continuing to make a loss. The accounts for the year ending March 2018 were now finalised and available for members to see, but the final accounts for the year ending March 2019 were not yet available.

The Treasurer then handed over to Rosie White who had been conducting a study of the current year's finances, which would give a more accurate picture of the current financial state of the club.

Rosie circulated figures based on the first 6 months of the current year, These showed an income of £52,311 for the first 6 months and an estimated total income for the year of £121,150 (the second half of the year generating more income through more weekend events). The estimated cost of running the club for a year was £115,600 but this excludes a number of important factors. The main problem was that the club currently has debts amounting to an estimated £124,000, of which £99,500 is debenture loans. In addition, a rent review is due next year.

It was also made clear that the estimated running costs excluded any paid management. At present Nick Sandqvist is managing the bridge side of things on a volunteer basis, Rosie is handling the financial and admin side of things, and there are also volunteer directors and other helpers.

The Chairman noted that the debts may not be quite as much, some of the estimates having been pessimistic. Also that the debenture holders had all indicated that they were happy to wait for these to be repaid, and some might be willing to write off the loans. Nevertheless, the situation was dire.

There was a general discussion of ways in which the situation could be improved, and the following points were made:

a. **Membership subscriptions**. A major effort is currently being made to get in subscriptions from lapsed members, and to ensure that everyone who plays in the YCKO and club teams also pay their subscription It was noted that the club has a number of honorary members, many of whom might also be willing to pay a sub if asked. It was also noted that those members who signed up to pay by standing order pay a reduced amount and they might be asked to increase to the full subscription amount

b. **Bar profits**. The figures circulated showed that the bar was not making a profit, and a detailed study was needed to see why this was the case, and to rectify this situation.

c. **Maximising use of the premises**. Effort was needed to try to bring in new and different groups of people to use the premises outside of the current club hours. It was pointed out, however, that the premises were in need of upgrading in a number of respects -a lift, wall insulation, a new entrance and carpeting were all needed to create an attractive environment, all of which would incur substantial costs.

d. **Attendances**. It was recognised that the current members were supporting two fairly-well attended duplicates a week, on Mondays and Fridays and the same people will not attend the club more frequently. So a new and different membership was required to build up games on other days. As a first step towards this, Rosie was organising a new Goldhawks League which will start in January for beginners and other social players, running once a week on Thursday evenings. It was hoped this will bring people into the club and eventually build into a new club-within-a-club.

   A number of people present noted that daytime bridge was now much more popular than evening bridge, and would especially be preferred by those who have doubts about the Shepherds Bush area at night. Sessions timed at say 11.00 – 2.00, with lunch, might attract mums with schoolchildren.

e. **Teaching**. The lifeblood of any club is teaching and it is vital that we get this going again at the club. It needs someone to manage this and get the students in, preferably someone young, but they would need to be paid or at least incentivised. James Thrower was originally going to tackle teaching at the club and he might still do but this needed to be clarified. Daytime teaching is almost certainly the way forward.

f. **Publicity**. Different ways of publicising the club were discussed. Leaflet drops had been tried, but it was felt these were only effective if repeated regularly. A banner drawing attention to the club on the street was agreed to be a good idea and Liz Wright offered to investigate this. Ads in NextDoor were also suggested, particularly good as they can be localised.

g. **Approach to Landlord**. Tim Gauld suggested that we should approach the landlord to say that we are struggling to make ends meet and to ask for a rent reduction. We should be ready to accept that the premises could be put on the market in this situation, though the market is not strong and alternative tenants might be difficult to find.

4. Chairman's Report

The Chairman felt that the important matters had already been discussed. However, he wished to particularly acknowledge the incredible contribution to the club from Rosie White, who had single-handedly revived the Monday night duplicates as well as now making a major contribution to the club management

5 Amendment to Club Constitution

The Chairman proposed an amendment to Para 5.2 of the club constitution which states "There shall be no more than five elected MC members…". In the light of the extra effort needed to bring the club through this difficult period he proposed an amendment to " eight elected MC members…". This was voted on and agreed unanimously.

6. Elections to the Management Committee

Paula Leslie was standing down from the committee after completing her five-year term, but was re-standing for election. Rosie White, currently co-opted to the MC, was standing for election, as was Nick Sandqvist. All three having been duly nominated, they were voted onto the MC nem con.

7 Any Other Business

a. Rosie proposed that the club should enforce a rule of no refreshments being brought into the club from outside. This was agreed and a notice would be placed on the noticeboard and on the website.

b. Francois Picard proposed the club should hold an auction event or some other event that capitalised on the club's USB – ie the strength of its membership. He suggested perhaps a "Play with a Champion" event, and this would be investigated.

There was no other business and the meeting closed at approx. 8.00 pm.