Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Young Chelsea Bridge Club held at 6.30 pm on Friday 6th November 2026

Present: Chris Duckworth (Chair), Mark Lehto (Treasurer); Brian Callaghan, Sara Chiappara, Athena Chow, Heather Hanbury, Ryan Stephenson (MC members); Eva Balazs-Elek, Jayne Barber, Jon Cooke, Mark Davies, John Dean, Eryk Gozdowski, Alex Hannon, Richard Hazell, Susan Hunt, Michelle Kunz, Juliet Melford, Aaron Pullen, Nathalie Williamson

1. Registration of Proxies

The following members were present by proxy: Dani Ball, Bianca Baratta, Federico Baratta, Annie Barr-Smith, John Bonham, John Breen, Paul Gibson, Chantal Girardin, Marianne Harper, Joy Latif, Jonathan Lillycrop, Alison Maurin, Billie MacCarthy, Jonathan Partridge, David Muller, Paul Nicholas, Graham Sadie, Debbie Sandford, Veronique Sauret, Mike Smyth, Kath Stynes, Pauline Van Luven, Rosie White

Additional apologies had been received from Carrie Eden, Mike Eden, Joe Fawcett, Gitte Hecht-Johansen, Shelley Shieff

3. Minutes of the AGM of 7th November 2025

The minutes of the last AGM had been published on the club's website. The minutes were accepted as an accurate record of the meeting. The only matter arising was covered by the Chairman's report.

4. Matters Arising from the minutes of the last meeting

a) Publicity for availability of host system

The meeting had asked for the availability of a host be better advertised. The name of the host is now included in the club calendar and also shown in the "What's happening this week" item on the club's website

b) Request for bar service when the first floor is used for the duplicate game

In order to facilitate ordering drinks from the bar when playing upstairs, a bar phone has been provided. Messages sent to this number will be received by the bar staff who will bring the requested items up to the Warwick Room. This service is advertised on the white board in the Warwick Room. The number is 07599 644642.

In addition, it has been decided to install a lift between the ground and first floors, which is being financed by a donor. Planning for the installation of the lift is in progress.

c) Improved communication with members

The bar phone can be used by members who need to contact the club urgently when staff are present eg "I'm on the way but will arrive late for the game"; "Have I left my coat behind at the club?"

Additionally, the club has set up a WhatsApp community called "**YC Announcements**" which it is hoped all members will join. This will be used for sending short messages from the club about timely issues eg. "This Friday's special hot food buffet dish is shepherd's pie"; "The game tonight will be upstairs"; "The local tube station is closed, please find an alternative way of reaching the club".

The first messages have been sent out to all those for whom the club has mobile numbers, and any club member who has not received them and wants to do so should contact the club to provide their number to be included.

5. Chairman's Report

A written report had been sent out with the agenda (see Appendix A below) and Chris summarised the main points.

Financially, the year had been more or less break even, with income down from the previous year as expected. Membership of the club is stable and the club's Friday duplicates and the YC Super league continue to be well-attended. The Goldhawks sessions for bridge students, beginners and improvers are growing steadily, with 4 sessions now each week, and the after-school teaching for local kids provided by Tom Townsend is continuing, now with a regular two tables each week.

Our relationship with Hammersmith Chess Club has been cemented by a long-term agreement for them to use the building for as long as the bridge club does – a mutually beneficial arrangement.

Chris concluded by thanking the staff, MC members and all those club members who have supported the club and its activities throughout the year.

6. Treasurer's Report and Adoption of accounts for 2025/26

Mark had circulated a brief report prior the meeting explaining that the accounts for the previous financial year were not yet available from the accountants, having been delayed due to illness. A first draft of these had in fact been received by him within the past 24 hours, but were not yet suitable for circulation. This draft suggests that YCBC Ltd made a small loss on the year, but Cardinbrook Ltd had returned a surplus. Some adjustments between the two companies may still need to be made, however, that could change the figures to some extent.

It was agreed that Mark will clear some questions on the figures with the accountants, then circulate the accounts to the membership with a request for their adoption. This will be done before the end of this year.

A question was raised as to whether the club would be increasing its prices. Eva noted that bar prices had been held steady for all of 2026 but she would be reviewing them in January 2027 and some items will go up. Mark noted that it had been agreed to increase the match fee for the Super League in the next season. Otherwise, there are no immediate plans to increase either membership subscriptions or table money, but a rise will be inevitable before too long, as table money has not risen for a long period of time.

6 Election of Directors

The two most senior directors, Brian Callagan and Heather Hanbury were retiring from the Board of Directors in rotation, but both were standing for re-election. There were no other nominees, so both were declared re-elected and no vote was needed.

Chris was pleased to note that two new club members, both currently students on our bridge teaching courses, had expressed interest in joining the Management Committee. Michelle Kunz has marketing experience, and Aaron Pullen has experience in both technical IT and competition organisation, so they will bring valuable skills to the MC. No vote was necessary and they were co-opted onto the MC forthwith.

7. Any Other Business

a) Rosie White had sent a question about the poor condition of the BridgeMates, asking if they could be replaced or refurbished. The meeting agreed that some BMs are in need of attention and the possibilities for refurbishment will be investigated.

b) Jon Cooke noted that the club had seen many successes in the last year, including winning the Garden Cities Trophy, coming first and second in the NICKO and winning the NICKO Plate. Alex Hannon suggested that the club should have a presence on Instagram, where these and other successes could be advertised and where we might attract interest in bridge from a younger age group. Michelle, newly elected MC member, agreed to help with setting up an Instagram account, but help will be needed from members to supply suitable material to post.

c) Mark Davies noted that the club would be celebrating its 60th anniversary in 2028 and hoped that this would be suitably celebrated. Sara responded that the committee was aware of

this and initial thought had already been given to the best way of doing this. She was very keen to promote the club through this anniversary.

d) Eryk Gozdowski asked when the Honours Boards would be updated. Brian responded that this was in hand. It had proved difficult to find a suitable person to undertake the updating using the traditional gold leaf, and he proposed to try the use of vinyl lettering, which was also cheaper. Initially he planned to update just one board, to check that the quality is satisfactory. Assuming it is, the remaining boards will be updated thereafter.

There was no other business and the meeting closed at 7.15 pm.

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Appendix A

Chairman's Report - YCBC AGM November 2026

As members will be aware, the Young Chelsea leases the whole of the London MindSports Centre, but is dependent on hiring out space within the building in order to meet the day to day costs of running it. Due to a number of factors which the Treasurer will explain, the last 12 months for the club has been a less successful period financially than the previous year, but we have still achieved a small surplus. However, there has been progress in a number of areas that are important to us in fulfilling our charitable aims and establishing our place in the community.

We have consolidated our relationship with the Hammersmith Chess Club (HCC) by signing an agreement with them for their long-term use of the building. This gives us a guaranteed long-term income from HCC and gives them the guarantee of a permanent home, a mutually beneficial arrangement. The London Go Centre, our other long-term partner in the building continues its regular twice-weekly activities, and recently hosted the European Women's Go Championships. Other independently-organised chess activities continue to grow, alongside a wide variety of additional users running mindsports events and other activities.

The use of the building by Hammersmith & Fulham council has also continued throughout the year, but their future level of demand is still uncertain. The new Civic Centre has still not yet been fully opened, and the impact of the opening continues to be a concern, along with funding cuts which will affect how the council prioritises its spending.

The room bookings and building maintenance continue to be efficiently run by Eva and her team. These include Gabor, our duplimate operator and general handy man (who has been kept quite busy this year, sorting out a number of plumbing problems in the building!) and the team of Ukrainian staff – Nataliya, Tanya and Olena - who keep everything operating smoothly. Many thanks to all of them.

We are very pleased to have found a donor who is willing to finance the installation of a lift in the building. It is planned for this to run between the ground floor and the Warwick Room, in the area currently occupied by the store rooms in the north west corner of the building. No firm date has yet been set for the installation, but the plans are progressing. It is hoped that the availability of lift access to the first floor will significantly increase the range of activities which can be accommodated upstairs.

Turning to the club's own bridge activities, membership is more or less static at around 500, including students and junior members. The main Friday evening games continues to attract a healthy regular attendance, and the Super League is as popular as ever. We continue to run teaching programmes for all levels and we have further developed the options available to those progressing from being bridge students to becoming competent club players. As well as running regular courses for Beginners and Improvers, we now have four regular weekly "Goldhawks" sessions: two daytime sessions – a Tuesday supervised duplicate and a Friday morning relaxed duplicate – and two evening sessions – a Tuesday evening Supervised play session and a Thursday evening supervised duplicate, all of which are well attended. In addition, we run afternoon seminars for Improvers which are popular for reinforcing various aspects of the game. This year we have also run a series of advanced seminars for regular club players, but the take-up of these from their target audience has been somewhat disappointing.

Youth bridge activities have also continued this year, with minibridge teaching at a local Youth Club and our after-school bridge sessions for local school-children. We are most grateful to Tom Townsend, who runs these, with help from Ewa Kater, and Barry Myers – the sessions are now well-established and numbers are growing.

I would like to take this opportunity of thanking everyone else who has helped to keep the wheels turning and to make the club a success this year, including: Brian Callaghan, who is a member of the club management team along with myself and Eva; all the Management Committee members; Gitte and all the TD team; Sara and Shelley, our teachers; and everyone who helps in other ways, including hosting, offering professional expertise when needed, helping with competitions etc. Finally, I would like to thank all the members who support the club by coming along to play – do keep coming as often as you can! The Young Chelsea Bridge club belongs to you, its members, and without you there would be no club.

Chris Duckworth
October 2026