

Gloucestershire County Bridge Association
Executive Committee Meeting
26th April 2018

In attendance were Jim Simons, Patrick Shields, David Simons, James Hastie, Paul Denning, Peter Swales, Anne Swannell, Judy Sanis, Richard Butland

1 Apologies for absence were received from Richard Harris, AshokKwatra and Peter Waggett

2 The minutes of the meeting held on 1st February were approved with no matters arising not covered elsewhere

3 The President had nothing to report

4 The draft accounts for 2017/18 were presented and showed a surplus of £1336 subject to a number of accruals to be made. A number of individual line differences from the previous year suggested items had been differently allocated and James to review and adjust as appropriate prior to the AGM. The Chairman suggested that grants to clubs should be shown as a separate item now that it was becoming significant. The accounts are awaiting audit. It was agreed that, when approved at the AGM, the accounts would be posted on the county website

There was discussion of the request from Stroud BC for support to start up new bridge sessions including directors training costs and initial start up losses. The Committee agreed to provide a grant to Stroud BC of £250. The amount agreed was calculated as follows: 50% of directors training fees (£189), start up costs (£20), contribution to initial losses (£41)

James highlighted a misunderstanding between Gloucester BC and the County with regard to approved support for new equipment. Whilst the initial 20% contribution was agreed as a grant, the second tranche was intended as a loan but the wording of the offer document led Gloucester BC to believe it was also a grant. The Committee approved giving latitude to James to resolve the agreement.

The grant to Winchcombe BC of £500, previously agreed, has been paid. It was agreed that expense invoices would transition from paper base to electronic and James would prepare instructions and notify potential expense recipients

5 Preparation for the AGM on 13th May are well advanced. Andrew Bull has offered to stand as Secretary and with the exception of Vice President the position of all Officers are filled subject to AGM approval. Jim is to ask Peter Walker to present the prizes. Peter Swales to ensure a working microphone available for AGM

6 Patrick outlined a new approach to future Committees; it was proposed that Officers would meet monthly to manage day to day business with other committee members open to attend if they wish and full Committee meetings being freed up to discuss major issues and strategy. The Committee agreed the proposal together with an agreement that terms of reference be drafted

7 A report from Patrick on matters which we didn't have time to discuss is provided as an Appendix to these minutes.

8 The CTDs report had been circulated and there were no questions. Richard Butland was in attendance and the Committee thanked him for chairing the Representative Events Sub- Committee

9 The CBC representative had asked to remind the Committee to make better use of the bookings register

10 The Committee thanked Judy Sanis for her work on publicity for the County

11 The date of next meeting was agreed as Thursday 21st June

12 Patrick will organise the GCBA Sim Pairs event for the week beginning the 11th June.

13 The Committee proposed a vote of thanks to Jim at his last meeting as President.

VP Report for GCBA Committee, 26 Apr 18

Items to note

1. Stanley Shield : I spoke to Keith about this after we decided to postpone the arranging until the new committee was in place (post May AGM) and he was comfortable with that but expects action in June.
2. Some bridge organisations are carefully writing into their Conditions of Contest the right to refuse entry to any game without reason; this is a response to those accused of cheating turning up to play. We should consider adjusting our rules similarly.
3. Somerset recently obtained £10k from the Lottery Fund to support their Fast Track Bridge teaching initiative.
4. The possibility of giving up Men's and Women's events as discriminatory, which was mentioned at a previous committee meeting, is being considered by Cheltenham Bridge Club.

Report on GCBA Strategy

5. Objectives O1.1 thru O1.4 in support of existing bridge players are all progressing well, with a full report on the Cleverly teams League (from RH) attached below. All four of these should continue into the next year's plan.
6. Objectives O2.1 thru O2.3 are in support of quality bridge.
 - a. The training programme (O2.1) continues to run and planning for the next year has taken place.
 - b. The intent to increase our rota of friendly inter-county matches has reached an agreement (please approve) to hold a friendly match between 24 players of Gloucestershire and 24 of Avon, at Cheltenham Bridge Club on Sunday 12th August. The 12 pairs would be split into 4 top club pairs, 4 average club pairs, and 4 pairs of newcomers.
 - c. The offer of services of the County team players to clubs has, so far, fallen on deaf ears. It will be repeated again soon.
7. Objectives O3.1 (TD support for clubs) and O3.2 (financial support for clubs) have both been carried through, and there are ideas for expanding on O3.1 in the near future.
8. Objectives O4.1 and O4.2 around publicity have stalled, but will be progressed over the summer. We need to understand better our (county) responsibility for giving the game publicity.
9. Objectives O5.1 thru O5.3 about teaching of bridge have only recently begun to gain momentum and no significant progress can yet be reported.

Report from the Midlands Counties WG (26 Apr 18 meeting)

10. The group pressed that the core business of the coming Shareholders meeting should be joint planning by EBU Central and the Counties on how to take forward the refreshed Strategic Aims (which will be published very soon). Gordon understood this but does not have the power to make it happen.
11. We heard from the Yorkshire Club Support programme which had (with matched funding from the EBU) helped a number of clubs to turn around their dropping membership numbers, and their hard work and the same levels of support are available to counties or groups of counties who wish to take on the job of helping their own failing clubs. More details and the YCS's multiple reports are available on request.
12. We heard of and saw the new EBU Welcome Pack (which looks miles better than the previous welcoming letter) and heard of the options whereby a learner can become an EBU member for free for a year.
13. We had reports from five of the six tasks which the MCWG had identified as worth tackling this year. Highlights were
 - a. Taking a positive approach to learners (L-plates or P-plates on the table when new to a duplicate) and a much more gentle attitude to mistakes in the regulations and calling the TD, will cut away some current disincentives seen by newcomers to the game.
 - b. A number of counties have had positive experiences with handicap competitions, as a means of mixing different standard of player. [and we should try some]
 - c. There is considerable uncertainty about the number of non-EBU-affiliated bridge clubs in the country, and it is not clear what value they might find in the EBU. Both questions are to be researched.

Cleverly League progress report for GCBA Committee Meeting 26/4/2018

The long-standing Gloucestershire Clubs Bridge League (known as Round the Houses by some) was renamed and re-organised last summer to try and attract more players to take part in Teams Bridge. Hitherto there had been 3 or 4 divisions spread over the whole County with promotion and relegation but with the long distances sometimes involved the numbers have been slowly declining.

We decided to re-launch the League, keeping the First Division and dividing other teams into regions. A number of Committee Members approached old and new Clubs around Gloucestershire to see if there might be more interest, some extra publicity was given and I am pleased to report that we were able to start the 2017/8 season with 24 teams – up from 18 in 2016/7. We have new teams from Tewkesbury, Chipping Campden, Southam and two from Wotton-under-Edge as well as fresh faces from Training at Cheltenham Bridge Club.

What we did not do was spell out the exact Rules for promotion and relegation, not knowing until the last minute how many teams were definitely taking part. We ended up with 5 teams in the NW, 6 in the North East and 7 in the South, plus 6 retained from last year's First Division. We did, however, promise a play-off between area divisions to determine promotion to the First Division and this date has been set for Sunday 17th June. A copy of the existing Rules is on the website and we propose having a general discussion with all those attending this play-off day, plus any written submissions, before completing plans for the 2018/9 season. Possible changes are to enlarge divisions to give more matches, have fewer Regions, then more travelling and always the entries we get determine just what is feasible.

We propose 2 Teams being relegated from the First Division in future years (for 2017/8 maybe only one but promote 2 teams from the 17th June event to provide a slightly enlarged First Division next season).

I am sorry I will not be at the Meeting but If any members of the GCBA Committee have any views they wish to contribute to the success of this League please contact Patrick or myself.

Richard Harris