

Minutes of committee meeting of Somerset Contract Bridge Association

on the 10th April 2024

via Zoom

In attendance:

Mike Letts (Chair)

Alan Evans

Colin Simcox

John Cockram

Michael Wigmore

Sheree Pavey

Andrew Ridgers

Simon Brooke

Apologies Ceri Pierce and Frank Coltman, and from Alan Evans for the inadvertent technical exclusion of Richard Feetenby

1. Minutes of last meeting

Mike referred to the last minutes and asked for any matters arising.

No matters arising and approved.

2. Financial update

Richard F was accidentally blocked from the zoom meeting. He did however communicate to the meeting via WhatsApp and email. A finance summary is attached to these minutes.

The figure for the "National events and costs –£1800" was raised and Richard provided a breakdown:- £400 insurance, depreciation £400, website £250, leaving £750 on national events.

3. Andrew Robson

Simon Brooke was congratulated on the successful Andrew Robson event. It was a full house. The question of the venue was discussed. Not ideal but conveniently located so the consensus was to stick with Crispin Hall. Simon was looking at booking for next year and waiting for dates from Andrew R.

4. Festival of Bridge

Michael Wigmore talked about the progress of an event during the week of the festival of bridge 9th to the 15th September 2024. He had been in contact with Rob and Lou Hobhouse to gather more information as to the format of their proposed teams event. He also raised some possible ideas: (1) an open air game of bridge in a park or (2) a table of bridge players in a public library. He also thought

Saturday was a good day to play an event because of those working during the week; he raised some concern about avoiding a clash with any SCBA Woolavington events.

Michael W had emailed all clubs but had not received a single response, which was disappointing.

There were approximately 470 members in Somerset that were NGS 9 and under, to which the Festival (and other SCBA events) should appeal.

5. Tournament Programme

John C discussed the programme that he had prepared. The format was very similar to last year.

There followed discussion on the performance of this year's programme. John C pointed out that interest and attendance was poor and felt he expended a lot of effort for a poor return.

A variety of suggestions were made including making events free of charge and just provide tea and biscuits

Richard F suggested free Bridge and tea at £7.00 per head

Others felt it wasn't cost that was deterring participation. If anything the attraction of bridge with tea and a good social atmosphere was felt to be important

A few suggestions were put forward to galvanise interest:

Simon Brooke thought representatives in clubs should be sought, ones that could promote SCBA events and liaise between SCBA and the individual club.

Chairs of clubs should be encouraged to stand up and promote events, some chairs are already doing this.

Mike L suggested that directors could announce events.

Mike L agreed to send out an email to the club representatives/chairs.

The attendees were then asked to look carefully at the programme and check for clashes etc.

John C then went on to discuss the very real difficulties he has putting on an event.

Andy R was often left with a lot of work, i.e. sorting out bridgewebs, scoring and directing. He was however happy to continue with scoring.

The ideal situation was that an individual committee member would be responsible for an event, in terms of setting up, teas & coffees etc. This suggestion was thought to be a good way forward and would relieve John of some of the burden.

The very real and ongoing problem of the dwindling pool of county directors was discussed. Colin S and Frank C were expected to spend a lot of time out of the country this year and next.

Mike L suggested a list of potential directors be drawn up that John C could call upon. A director would be required for just a single event if sufficient were available.

Colin S pointed out that what was required was a competent and experienced director, they could be club level not necessarily county level. Any major problem arising could and should be sorted out after the event.

There was always the idea of co-directing as was suggested in previous meetings, which would mean directors could play and direct.

6. Congress

Frank had requested that the committee decided on pricing for the 9 High event at the congress. Richard F. suggested that the price be equal to lowest competition price for that day. It must at least be in line with other events rather than discounted as there is a venue cost to cover. A figure of £8.00 was agreed. The timing of the 9 high was discussed whether this should be on Friday morning or evening. If interest not high then the competition could be merged with another. Again it was important that the 9 high be promoted as effectively as possible. Mike L would liaise with Frank C.

7. AGM

Both Mike L and Ceri P were not standing for re-election. The vacancies created a Constitutional problem In that

“The management of the affairs of the SCBA shall be vested in the following Officers:-

- (a) Chairperson (who acts as the chairperson of the Executive Committee)
- (b) Vice Chairperson
- (c) Secretary
- (d) Treasurer
- (e) Tournament Secretary
- (f) Membership Secretary

And not more than six other members of the SCBA, who together will form the Executive Committee. All Officers and other Executive Committee members must be elected annually at the Annual General Meeting (AGM) by a simple majority of the paid up members of the SCBA attending the AGM.”

Mike L stressed the importance of getting other members on the committee and thereafter appointing a chair and vice chair.

The suitability of Woolavington was discussed and agreed that it was the most suitable venue for the time being.

John C and Andy reminded the committee that they needed numbers for the AGM. This would be the basis of the 3rd paragraph being sent out by Sheree

It was decided that the standard items would once again be on the agenda.

8. Any other business

Simon B announced that he had been appointed Auditor and wished Shirley Cummings to be thanked for all her hard work in auditing the accounts in past years.

Andy R enquired about coverage for the 2 events coming up on the 21st April. Andy R agreed to score and Michael W and Alan E would jointly direct.

Minutes prepared by Sheree Pavey

15 April 2024.