

## **BOOKHAM AFTERNOON BRIDGE CLUB**

Minutes of the 53rd Annual General Meeting, Monday 16th October 2023

1. Welcome by Chairman: Neil Higgins welcomed 79 members to the 53rd AGM. Agenda and financial statement were displayed on the hall screen.
2. Apologies for absence: 37 received. Names posted on notice board.
3. Minutes of last AGM : Previously circulated to members - read, accuracy agreed and signed by Neil. Their acceptance was proposed by Adrian Filkins, seconded by Carol Newton.
4. Matters arising:
  - Contactless payments: Our payment provider, Square, proposed to introduce a levy of 25p for each transaction involving a charity event. Following complaints from several organisations including BABC the levy was dropped.
5. Chairman's Report:

Good morning again everyone.

Traditionally, your Chairman's report would give a review of the last twelve months. I hope that you will forgive me with breaking that tradition and include reference to some of the events of the last five years.

I first came along to play bridge here in 2012, and as was typical in those days, it took almost a whole year before I became a full member due to the length of the waiting list. At that time Coral was Chairman and she was always so welcoming and friendly. Her aspiration, which she passed onto both Lawrence when he was Chairman and to me was that we should maintain the ethos of the club as "a club which continues to be somewhere people want to come because they can have a good game of bridge, played according to EBU rules in a friendly, non-threatening atmosphere." I believe that we have fulfilled her wish and I am confident that, under your new Chairman's leadership that this will be continued in the years ahead.

But a Club is not just one person and the success which we continue to enjoy is thanks to the contributions of so many of you, committee members and the many other members who help to ensure the smooth running of each session.

Our numbers at each session have remained strong and, on many occasions, we have played with twenty or more tables – not quite the heights of 26.5 which we achieved in February 2020 but still a number which many Clubs could never dream of achieving.

Even more impressive has been our ability to attract new members. We have had a constant flow of applicants, and Kate will be giving us all the statistics in her report, but with another 6 individuals either finishing today or in the process of completing

their two week notice period plus returning ex members will bring our membership level to around 200 once again. We know that, as always, there will be a few members not renewing their membership, but I am confident that by the time of our next AGM that a waiting list for new members will be in place.

So, I thank you all once again by coming along and ensuring the long-term future of Bookham Afternoon Bridge Club.

Once again, we owe a big vote of thanks to Alice Harper and her teams of duplimators who ensure that we have pre dealt boards ready for every session. If any of you are able to give up an hour or so, every 4 to 6 weeks, on a Thursday before our session to help deal the boards then do please let Alice or any of the committee know. Alice, please pass on our thanks to all of the team.

Thank you again also to Marilyn Clarke, who is not here today, she has been leading and co-ordinating our team of essential directors and scorers. We are so fortunate to have so many members who are willing to help in this way but of course we should welcome more volunteers to join our team to lighten the workload of others. We welcome Robert Newhouse to our scoring team but there is always space for more. We can provide training for anyone who wishes to direct or score a session so, if you are interested, then please let Marilyn know.

We are indebted to Richard Arnatt who has introduced some new movements into our sessions. These have been partly in response to requests from some members to reduce the frequency of the three board sit out when there is a half table. The new movement should mean that we only have a 2 board sit out with the added advantage of producing a fairer result due to having only 24 boards in play, so that you play all the boards, plus playing against more players each session. The movement for odd table numbers still requires some smoothing out and we are grateful for your patience whilst this beds in.

On your behalf I wish to thank Ron and Miranda who maintain our website informing us about all the Club news and forthcoming events. I do periodically see statistics about page viewing numbers and it is clear that this is a much-valued asset for the club and I also wish to thank our Independent Examiner, Chris Pullen who each year provides insight as to how we can make our accounts clearer. The need to reserve for unused pre-paid vouchers being a typical example where his input has been

invaluable.

During the last five years we have embraced a number of changes and I again thank you all for supporting them. Who would have ever thought that we would move away from collecting cash for table money, so no longer an opportunity for some of you, following your summer holiday abroad, to use up your spare overseas coins. Firstly, the move to collecting payment through the contactless payment machine and then during this last year the move to using books of pre-paid vouchers has significantly improved the efficiency of our accounting and banking. The take up of the books of vouchers has far exceeded our initial aspirations and so the queues which used to form for payment at the central table each time are a long-forgotten memory. The battle we had last year proving that we were not a gambling den, getting our contactless machine reinstated, has more than paid off.

I never cease to be amazed by the generous fund raising of our members. During the five years for which I have been Chairman we have raised over £14,800 for a variety of causes and over the next few months there will be further opportunities to continue this good work. Next month we will again be entering the CIN SIMs and then in December the Dorin Salver SIMs organised by Surrey in aid of QEF. Our Christmas event will be raising funds for Cherry trees which provides short term respite for children and young adults. In March we will again be holding an Andrew Robson Masterclass with funds raised being split between the Barn Hall and other local charitable organisations. Shortly after I became Chairman in 2018 we celebrated our fifty year anniversary. As well as a number of one-off events, including our golden anniversary tea, we raised considerable funds which went to a number of causes nominated by our members as well as providing £800 towards the furtherance of bridge amongst the younger generations in Surrey.

Mentioning the Barn Hall, reminds me that we should pass on the thanks of the Club to Roger and Rob who prepare the Hall and then clear away afterwards for us. On your behalf we do give them something a little more tangible, by way of thanks, at Christmas.

The fact that we have such a smoothly run club is of course thanks to so many of our members. Many of you take the time at the start of a session to help set up or to help at the end putting away boards and everything else required during the

afternoon. Thank you to you all who help but there is one area where the Club needs more of your help and that is we need more of you to volunteer to act as host. We have been so successful in attracting new members and I know that some of our newer members do drive some distance to play. But if everyone takes a turn then you should only need to act as host once every two years or so – not much of an ask – rather than relying on a limited number of individuals who kindly fill in at short notice whenever we look to have a gap. Just occasionally, and that is sad, we have not been able to provide a host and an individual looking for a game has had to return home. I urge you all to find a slot when approached, or just add your name to the schedule on the side table.

Finally, this now only leaves me to pass on my biggest vote of thanks and that is to your committee. Not just the most recent committee but to each of those who stood over the last five years. We have been so lucky to have had so many willing committee members and they have all worked so hard setting up the sessions, collecting your table monies and now the vouchers plus clearing up afterwards. More importantly they have acted as a team supporting me and I am extremely grateful to them all. However, I should like to single out two individuals who, without whom, I should not have been able to complete the last five years and they are Kate, who administers our membership so efficiently and who does so much more besides plus Sue, who I know sometimes gets driven to despair by my interfering with her cash analysis. Thank you both for all your support and I know that the next Chairman will be equally grateful for your support over the next 12 months.

I am convinced that I will have failed to mention someone who I should have highlighted and thanked so if I have, I apologise – no slight was intended.

I shall finish by once again thanking you all for your support over the last five years and ensuring that Bookham Afternoon Bridge Club continues to flourish. I know that the Club will be in safe hands with Jerry, and I urge you all to support my proposal by electing him as your new Chairman shortly. I will support him in every way possible and I am sure that you will all help him as much as you have helped me.

Thank you

Neil Higgins

16 October 2023

6. Treasurer's Report:

**Bookham Afternoon Bridge Club  
Treasurer's Commentary on Accounts for the year  
1<sup>st</sup> September 2022 to 31<sup>st</sup> August 2023**

The accounts show that we have made a significant surplus of **£1874** in the year which ended on 31<sup>st</sup> August 2023.

Last year our rationale for increasing both the table money and the subscription was based in part on the loss in the year ended 31st August 22. Also table numbers and the number of members were still not at pre-Covid numbers, we were anticipating a 15% rent rise and also an expected increase in transaction charges by Square our contactless provider. We were not back to 2 sessions a week in face to face until March.

In 22-23

Table numbers have increased compared to our actuals last year, (12) as have the number of members. Though we are not yet back to pre-Covid numbers.

We averaged 16 tables a session in the year since last November.

We expected to spend some money on servicing the duplimating machine but did not do this. We plan to do this in this next year.

The expected charging by our contactless provider we found fortunately does not apply to our business.

We introduced the voucher system which has proved very successful. This has made the administration of the table money so much easier and the queues in the middle of the room have been eliminated. Thank you to everyone for embracing this so readily.

Paying by voucher has also proved an easier way to raise charity funds and we introduced this rather than taking cash in 2023. Each voucher is worth £3 and we distribute £3 per voucher to whichever charity we are collecting for.

In 2022-23 we raised £2411 for charity and the amounts and charities are shown on the income and expenditure sheet. The charities:

Children in Need, Queen Elizabeth Foundation, The Grange, ECATs charities, Barn Hall.

We sold 5980 vouchers in 22-23 of which close to 1000 have not yet been redeemed or spent at the table. We have included in the income and expenditure account the actual

value of the vouchers redeemed or spent. But not the ones which are in your handbags or wallets waiting to be used. The value of unspent/unredeemed vouchers is shown in the balance sheet – the value is £2638.

We do not expect to make a surplus in this next year as although our table numbers are increasing so are our costs. We have healthy reserves which will enable us to cover a loss should it occur.

Our rental costs having increased by 15% last year are expected to rise by a further 10% in January. Pay to Play – the charge from the EBU for each player increased in April and a further charge of 2p per player payable to Surrey Bridge is about to be reinstated – a charge which has not been levied since the pandemic. We also need to provide for servicing of the duplimate machines and we will be looking at the equipment this year to see what we need to update.

As I said our table numbers look to be increasing - we have averaged 17 tables per session in the last 3 months. (We had up to 27 tables in the February before the pandemic.)

We have a number of new members joining. We are still short of the 211 we had preCovid.

**For this next year we are proposing NO increase in table money or subscription. We will continue as £3 for table money for members and £4 for visitors plus £15 for annual subscription which becomes due on 1<sup>st</sup> November. We will continue to sell books of 10 vouchers at the discounted price of £27. This bulk purchase aids our administration.**

Subscriptions are due on 1<sup>st</sup> November and I will be available to take any payments either through the contactless machine after this meeting. Any members not here today can also make a payment online.

Bank account details as follows:

Acct name: Bookham afternoon Bridge Club

Sort code: 30-92-70

Account number: 01242266

The accounts have been independently reviewed by Chris Pullan. Our thanks to him for doing this.

Any questions on the accounts for last year?

Thank you

Sue McDonald

Treasurer

16<sup>th</sup> October 2023

There were no questions. Acceptance of the accounts was proposed by Lawrence Penney, seconded by Alice Harper and approved unanimously.

7. Secretary's Report:

Bookham Afternoon Bridge Club

Secretary's Report AGM 2023

Since our last meeting we learned the sad news of the death of Dorothy Steinart which came as a considerable shock after her short illness.

We were officially informed of three resignations, most recently Elizabeth Taylor, a very loyal and longstanding member who has now moved to Dorset to be near her family.

Following a number of unpaid subscriptions and despite an extended period of grace with no response received, together with considerable efforts to ascertain the status of their membership, a number of names were removed from the membership.

I am delighted to report that during the year we have welcomed many visitors, 31 of whom have successfully applied for membership while four previous members have rejoined. Our membership, as confirmed by the EBU, now stands at 197. We have 8 applicants for membership; there are 14 vacancies and no waiting list.

Our newest members are Anne Chamberlain, Diana Greenman and Denis Farrugia.

There have been very few occasions when we have been unable to provide a

Spare Partner, thanks to the many members who have signed up for this duty, some on multiple occasions.

I would like to reiterate that although Spare Partner duty is not a condition of membership there is, I believe, a reasonable expectation that, where it is possible to do so, members will sign up at least once during the year.

As Neil and Sue have mentioned there has been a very encouraging increase in attendance. While the success of the club in this respect is to be greatly welcomed it does mean a considerable increase in the committee's workload. Who could imagine that an activity where the most strenuous effort involved is sorting one's hand, reaching for a bidding card and queueing for tea, could create so much heavy lifting behind the scenes?

But I assure you that this is the case! And for me personally the passing years mean that dealing with those heavy crates and bags can be quite a challenge. And there are occasions when, for family reasons or illness, extra cover is required. As I am responsible for managing the duty rota, I am only too aware how challenged we are at times to cover all duties since some committee members are also on Marilyn's directors and scorers rota. However, we are now fortunate in having three club members who are prepared to add extra muscle and brain power to our committee which has felt somewhat overstretched at times.

So, while their nominations have been provisionally approved we are appealing to you all for your support in approving the resolution to increase our committee to twelve members, with the addition of Richard Arnatt, Yvonne McConnell and John Stewart.

I would like to thank the present committee for all the loyal help and support which they give me as well as those members who frequently lend a hand with setting up and clearing away. And I wish to pay a special tribute to Neil for his

outstanding leadership as Chairman over the past five years.

Finally, I wish to emphasise the fact that, over recent years and the wise guidance of the three Chairmen with whom I have worked, our club has evolved into the friendly, welcoming association which we enjoy today. We are a very diverse collection of individuals but it is my hope that we can continue to maintain the standards of kindness and consideration which are our hallmark.

Thank you.

Kate Castree, Hon. Secretary, BABC.

16th October 2023

Acceptance of the report was proposed by Sheila Hayter, seconded by Renate Lane and approved unanimously.

8. Rules and Procedures: To consider three proposals from the committee.

Proposal 1

To amend The Constitution, Item 2, increasing the number of committee members from 10 to 12 and increasing the quorum from 5 to 6.

2. The management of the Club shall be in the control of the Committee, but major decisions shall be in the control of the members. The Committee shall consist of the Officers, namely the Chairman, Vice Chairman, Hon. Secretary, Hon. Treasurer, Coordinator of Directors and Scorers and seven ordinary members. Six members of the Committee shall constitute a quorum. The Committee shall be elected at each Annual General Meeting, with members being eligible for re-election. Nominations of Club members for Officers and ordinary members of the Committee shall be sent to the Hon. Secretary not less than seven days before the A.G.M., the approval of those nominated being obtained. The Committee shall be empowered to co-opt other members of the Club to serve on the Committee and to appoint Officers if a vacancy occurs during the year between Annual General Meetings.

Proposer: Neil Higgins, seconded by Jerry Broers.

The Proposal was unanimously accepted.

## Proposal 2

*To amend the Constitution, Item 7, introducing a joining fee paid by new members which will be deemed to include their subscription for that club year and introducing a deadline for payment.*

7. Annual subscriptions shall be decided by the Committee and announced at the A.G.M. Annual subscriptions fall due for payment on 1<sup>st</sup> November for the year commencing on that date, and membership will automatically cease for those not paying within six weeks from that date. (13<sup>th</sup> December)

New members elected in the year shall pay a joining fee which will include any subscription due for the remainder of the year. The amount of the joining fee shall be decided by the Committee and announced at the AGM. For new members in the period between the A.G.M. and 1<sup>st</sup> November the joining fee shall be waived. Any offer for membership will be withdrawn after 6 weeks if the joining fee has not been paid.

Table monies shall be decided by the Committee.

Proposed by Sue McDonald and seconded by Cindy Troop.

The Treasurer, Sue McDonald, explained that this was a 'tidying up' exercise to provide for those members joining between 1st November and the 31st October as we do not have pro rata option for subscriptions.

The Proposal was unanimously accepted.

## Proposal 3

*To amend the Membership Rules and the Membership Application Process to clarify permitted visitor attendance ie after three visits visitors must apply to join except in exceptional circumstances to be approved by the committee.*

5. In exceptional circumstances visitors may, subject to approval from the Committee, continue to attend periodically as visitors without applying for membership. Any approval granted will be kept under review and may subsequently be withdrawn.

Proposer: Kate Castree, seconder Marilyn Clarke.

The Secretary, Kate Castree, explained that the reason for the Proposal was that a number of visitors had, after making the necessary nine visits, declined

to apply for membership but wished to continue to attend on an occasional basis. Such an arrangement would be contrary to our constitution as a club and would create an additional administrative burden.

Concerns were expressed regarding the situation visitors who are family members staying on holiday. Assurances were given that they would be permitted to attend although notice of their intention to visit would be appreciated. We already make provision for visitors whose circumstances make membership unrealistic. Individual cases are sympathetically considered.

Neil accepted that concerns are valid but emphasised that the protection of members from possible poor behaviour by visitors was central to the amendment.

The Proposal was unanimously accepted.

## 9. Election of Officers and Committee Members

### 53<sup>rd</sup> AGM 2023 COMMITTEE NOMINATIONS

POSITION	NOMINEES	PROPOSER	SECONDER
<b>CHAIRMAN</b>	JERRY BROERS	Anitra Trout	Elizabeth Gibbon
<b>VICE CHAIRMAN</b>	ADRIAN FILKINS	Lawrence Penney	Ann Chapple
<b>HON. SECRETARY</b>	KATE CASTREE	Alice Harper	Elizabeth Gibbon
<b>HON.TREASURER</b>	SUE MCDONALD	Miranda Moore	Sue Goodey
<b>COORDINATOR OF DIRECTORS AND SCORERS</b>	MARILYN CLARKE	Lesley Milton	Sue Goodey

## ELECTION OF SEVEN COMMITTEE MEMBERS

RICHARD ARNATT	Anneke Prior	Trevor Gaskell
ANGELA DUKE	Julie Kamieniecka	Renate Lane
YVONNE McCONNELL	Melanie Harcus	Tina Higgins
JILL PATTISON	Pam Harrison	Christine Wood
ANGELA REID	Julie Kamieniecka	Sheila Price
JOHN STEWART	Lawrence Penney	Jane Carradine
CINDY TROOP	Ann Borthwick	Hilda Gardiner

Original signed nominations attached in hard copy files.

The new Chairman and committee were unanimously approved.

10. Election of Honorary Examiner:

CHRIS PULLAN, proposed by Brian Glicksman and seconded by Tony Belton, kindly agreed to continue to serve in this capacity.

His nomination was unanimously approved.

11. AOB: Neil reminded members of the opportunity to buy tickets for the Andrew Robson event on 7th March 2024 and the sign-up list for the Christmas Event on 11th December was also available.

12. Presentation of Trophies:

The new Chairman, Jerry Broers, kindly invited Neil, the retiring Chairman, to present the Queen's Jubilee Cup to Steve Lock and Alick Fraser; he presented the Chairman's Challenge Cup to Lesley Noble and John Cumming.

Penny Webster-Smith, winner of the Anniversary Plate and Ann Borthwick, winner of the Gordon Jenner Trophy were unable to be present and will receive their trophies at a later date.

Before the meeting ended, Jerry expressed his thanks to Neil for his inspired leadership over the past five years, especially through the very challenging Covid pandemic when online bridge became a valuable resource for so many. His innovations, including contactless payments and discounted voucher table money, and scoring through EBU Club Pairs have also been of benefit to the club. Jerry presented Neil with two bottles of wine on behalf of the club with best wishes for the future.

Further on behalf of the club Kate presented Tina Higgins with a floral arrangement with thanks for the support and encouragement which she must surely have given to Neil throughout his time as Chairman.

The meeting closed for lunch at 12.15pm followed by duplicate bridge.



