

Briter Bridge Club 2

Annual General Meeting Tuesday 3rd September 2024

At 6.30pm at Parklangley Club

Agenda

- 1. Attendance and Apologies for Absence**
- 2. Minutes and Matters Arising from AGM 2023**
- 3. Chairman's Report**
- 4. Financial Report, and Audited Accounts (please see separate document)**

Table money for 2024 - 2025
- 5. Technical Report**
- 6. Membership Report**
- 7. Election of Committee for 2024– 2025**
- 8. Consideration of issues relating to morning, afternoon and evening sessions**

Including points raised by members
- 9. Annual Meal**
- 10. Bridge Weekends**
- 11. Margaret Burrell Memorial Cup Competition**
- 12. Any Other Business**

Briter Bridge Club 2

Annual General Meeting Tuesday 5th September 2023

at 6.30pm at Parklangley Club

Draft Minutes

1. Attendance and Apologies for Absence

The meeting was attended by 25 members: Richard Ockenden, Irene Ockenden, Jenny Davis, Diana Letchford, Sheila Tutt, Angela Hughes, Pauline Boatwright, Susan Lee, Walter Million, Margaret Styles, Julia Booth-Brockbanks, Tim Burrell, Colin Blount, Stuart Bell, Janet Bell, Sally Randall, Gail Wells, Lynne Erasmus, Penny Cockram, Jan Titcombe, Pat Hunt, Brenda Castle, Chris Uphill, Ray Uphill, John Hayward, Kate Mitchell, Doreen Prockter

Apologies were received from 13 members: Susan Hughes, Derek Chadwick, Duncan Bell, Caroline Ashcroft, Sue Langley, Anthony Perkins, Andrea Hixson, Joan Evans, Jane Hall, Nga Lim, Andre Erasmus, Suzanne Foster, Luke Titcombe

2. Minutes and Matters Arising from AGM 2022

The minutes were accepted as a true record. There were no matters arising not covered by the agenda.

3. Chairman's Report

Tim presented his report; we have now completed eleven years as Briter Bridge Club 2 and have slowly got back to a degree of normality following the difficult Covid period. Our finances are in a much healthier state than a year ago, helped by the establishment of our beginners and improvers sessions on Tuesday mornings. Over the past year, three 14 week courses (based on EBU material) have been completed, with typically 6 to 8 students and many of the 'graduates' have moved on to attending guided duplicate sessions, run by Colin and assisted, when necessary, by Stuart. Several players have now joined the afternoon and evening sessions and have settled in well.

It was good to see several of the morning group at our club annual dinner on 29th June, which was enjoyed by a healthy number of club members, with thanks to the excellent catering team at Parklangley Club.

There has been a recent issue regarding the purchase of alcohol at the bar. The licence covers members and their guests. Clarification from the club manager indicates that Briter members can be regarded as guests of Tim Burrell, who holds a social membership on behalf of Briter Bridge. It may be necessary to show that we are bridge club members when purchasing alcoholic drinks.

The Margaret Burrell Memorial Cup competition ran on a handicap system over the last year and with the final result extremely close and positions alternating up to the last minute. The committee endorsed the view that it should be awarded jointly to Julia Booth-Brockbanks and Jane Hall.

Tim thanked his fellow committee members for their hard work for the club over the past year; to Colin for keeping the accounts straight and providing appropriate advice and recommendations, to Jan for dealing with the technical issues (scoring/ website etc), to Janet for her secretarial support and for keeping the evening sessions going, and to Ann for maintaining the membership and attendance records over the year. Those attending the meeting endorsed this and thanked Tim for continuing in the role of Chairman.

4. Financial Report and Accounts

Colin presented the accounts, audited and signed by Stuart Bell. The club is now in a much healthier position, financially, thanks largely to the introduction of the morning sessions, incorporating tuition and guided play, with typically 12 people attending. Afternoon attendances average between 5 and 7 tables, while the typical evening attendance is around 3 tables.

Over the past year, our income has exceeded our expenditure by approximately £4000, allowing for the fact that we are holding deposits for our bridge weekend at Folkestone from 6th to 8th October. There is no reason to expect that attendance levels will reduce over the forthcoming year (hopefully they might increase); our room rent from August for the forthcoming year has increased by just £5 to £105 per week. We are in a position to reduce the weekly table money and we can spend some money on improvements to our scoring system. Nevertheless, it would be prudent to maintain a balance of around £3000 to cover contingencies. It is unlikely that we will have any trouble with our dealing machine or that it will need any attention for a good while; it gets very light use - a first service is recommended after 50,000 hands have been dealt, but this is the sort of unexpected expenditure we need to allow for by maintain a healthy balance.

Colin proposed that we should keep our annual membership subscription at £10 per annum and reduce the table money to £3.50. Furthermore, the morning practice session should become a club session, with those attending eligible to apply for membership and pay £3.50. Students attending the tuition sessions would pay £5, as would visitors. To encourage morning players to come to afternoon or evening sessions, when appropriate, there would be no further charge; this would also apply to other members who attend more than one session, e.g. afternoon and evening.

We are also now in a position to upgrade our scoring system to use tablets, as is becoming the case at other clubs. These are much easier to use than the Bridgemates and the scoring systems available are much more user friendly – there are several options. The cost is unlikely to exceed £1000.

There has been some relatively minor expenditure over recent months; we have introduced the option to pay by card, for which we needed to buy a card-reader and we pay 1.75% commission on card payments. It is ideal for the relatively small sums we take and makes banking much easier. In addition we have retired the rather rickety wooden side tables and bought some more folding plastic stools, which are ideal as side tables for drinks and the cards that are not currently in play.

Three proposals were put to the meeting: –

- a) acceptance of the Treasurer's Report and the audited accounts,
- b) the recommendations regarding membership subscriptions and table money, and
- c) delegation to the committee to research and proceed with the introduction of an improved scoring system, including the purchase of appropriate kit.

These proposals were all approved by those present.

5. Technical Report

Jan reported that our bill for the Bridgemates website has remained the same for the past 5 years and that we receive good service.

She had provided very detailed information on the options for upgrading our scoring system. The aim was for it to be easier for players to use and for scorers to operate, than our current combination of Bridgemates and Pairs Scorer. Our Bridgemates are not that easy to read and we already have one which is not working properly.

Informal discussions have found no enthusiasm for using members' phones, so the proposal would be that we would use inexpensive tablets. We would need about ten tablets with protective cases (or a case for all of them), a multicharger to use between sessions (a tablet uses approximately 25% of a full charge per session), a wifi router and there would be the cost of the software. Free trials are available so we can work out which suits us best. Around £1000 should be sufficient. There is the possibility of purchasing hardly used kit from a local U3A group who have decided that they do not want 'tech'; this would come well under this budget, but we might want a few spare tablets and possibly another inexpensive laptop.

6. Membership Report

Ann was unable to attend the meeting, but she reported that at the end of the 2022-2023 club year, we had 60 paid-up members and that over the course of the year, we had 33 visitors, 29 attending the morning sessions. (This has changed already, with those attending for 'guided practice' now eligible to join and many of them have already done so.)

7. Election of Committee for 2023– 2024

There have been no additional nominations and the current committee members have all indicated their willingness to continue. So the committee for 2023-2024 comprises

- Chairman – Tim Burrell
- Secretary – Janet Bell
- Treasurer – Colin Blount
- Technical Director – JanTitcombe
- Membership Secretary – Ann Close

8. Consideration of issues relating to morning, afternoon and evening session

There were no issues raised that had not already been considered.

9. Annual Meal

Over thirty people, including several of our morning players, enjoyed a delicious dinner in the Parklangley Club bar in June, with wine provided by Briter Bridge Club. It was agreed that we should do the same next year, starting just a little later, as the bar was very busy at the 6.30pm for 7pm start time, although we would still want it to be reasonably light at the end of the meal.

10. Bridge Weekends

We are holding a bridge weekend at The Burlington Hotel in Folkestone from 6th to 8th October. We have 9 full tables. Thanks are due to Susan Hughes for all her hard work liaising with the hotel.

11. Margaret Burrell Memorial Cup Competition

Tim presented the Cup to Julia Booth-Brockbanks, one of the two joint winners. Jane Hall will receive the Cup around the beginning of March 2024.

12. Any Other Business

A vote of thanks was proposed to the committee and endorsed by the meeting.

The meeting closed at 7.20pm

Janet Bell – Secretary

September 2023

Briter Bridge Club 2 Chairman's Report September 2024

Establishment of the club

The club has now completed its twelfth year and we have now more or less got back to a degree of normality following the difficult COVID period. As the Treasurer will report we have a reasonable balance helped by the establishment of our beginners and improvers sessions.

Use of the Bar

Following on from what I said last year the issue of presenting a club card to buy alcohol does not seem to have been an issue during the year. If asked, just say you are a member of the Bridge Club and give my name.

Beginners' sessions

These have proved very successful. During the year we have had three 14 week courses. Beginners then go on to take part in improver sessions where duplicate bridge is played under guidance. Thanks must go to Colin for running these sessions ably helped when necessary by Stuart. Several of our students who have been through this process now play in the afternoon or evening. Another course may take place in January 2025.

Table and Membership fees

Our last AGM agreed that table money should be £3.50 for members and £5 for non-members and an annual membership fee of £10. Colin will be proposing a way forward when he goes through the accounts with you.

Social event

We were able to hold our annual meal again this year. On the 19th June the Langley Club again provided us with an excellent dinner which was appreciated by all who attended. It was great to see some of our trainee members attending.

Competition

I'm delighted to announce that Stuart Bell was this year's winner. Congratulations to him. The newly engraved cup will be presented at the AGM. Congratulations to Pauline Boatwright who came second.

Extra session

A member of the club has asked us to consider whether it would be possible to have another session on another day. We have explored this and it would have to be Thursday afternoon. We'll be taking soundings at the AGM to see if there is sufficient interest.

Thanks

Finally I would like to offer thanks to all the Committee for the hard work they have done during the year; to Colin in keeping the accounts straight; to Jan for keeping us all informed by the web site and helping us with our technical problems; to Janet for her secretarial support and all the hard work she has put in to try to keep the evening sessions viable; and to Ann for maintaining our membership and attendance records for the year.

Treasurer Report: AGM 3rd September 2024

Financial position to July 31st 2024

2023/24 accounts audited by Stuart Bell on August 17th 2023. Signed accounts are below (Appendix A).

- Bank Balance at August 1st 2023 £5,357.12 (inc £800 Folkestone deposits)
- Bank balance at July 31st 2024 £4,509.90
- 2023/24 capital investment of over £1,550

Background to Financial position

Revenues exceeded forecast due to:

- Higher than anticipated Afternoon attendance (average 6.6 tables, from 5.5)
- Higher than anticipated Evening attendance (average 3.3 tables, from 2.5)
- Continuation of the Morning Practice sessions (average 3.4 tables, from 2)
- Continuation of the Morning Beginner sessions (Average 6.2 attendees, from 6)
- Operating costs remaining stable
- Worthing and Folkestone weekends break even

Other information

- Stotesbury Room rental to rise (3.6%) to £109.73 per day from September 2024
- Whitehead Room rental to rise (3.6%) to £36.58 (when used)
- Average weekly income required to cover all operational cost is approx £175
- One-off annual costs expected to be circa £1,200

Proposals for 2024/25

Current levels of attendance will be maintaining through 2024/25 which will enable:

- Reduction in session Table Money from £3.50 to £3.00 (reducing excess reserves)
- Visitor fees (£5) and Annual Subs (£10) to remain unchanged
- Continuing incentive to attend multiple sessions (targeting evening attendance)
- Capital investment (£600 - 800) in technology/equipment (Server, Tablets, Card Carriers)
- Retaining a reserve circa £3000+

Approvals requested

- Audited accounts
- Lower table fee
- Further technology/equipment investment

Colin Blount

Treasurer

18th August 2024

Technical Report

Firstly, my apologies as I will not be able to attend the AGM. There are not likely to be any questions that Tim or Colin cannot answer but, if there are, I will make sure I am keeping my eye on my phone.

Website

It is still vfm and used by the majority of UK bridge clubs. We probably don't exploit it as much as we could but it serves our purposes. Colin and I will explore whether we could use any of the new features. Only problematic feature is an issue with emails sent to members from the website. If you want to respond to an email from the club please, don't click on the "reply to" button or arrow on your email app but click on the link/s in the body of the message. We will try to make those more obvious. Erroneous replies are copied to me and I forward them, but it causes a delay and it is more difficult for the originator to get back to you.

PairsScorer

This is the software we use to calculate the scoring. For the benefit of our new members I will briefly recap the issue. It is no longer supported free of charge for non EBU clubs. This means that loading it onto new laptops is difficult and sometimes impossible. But while it still works and we have sufficient useable copies the hassle of learning a new system still outweighs the inconvenience of fewer people being able to correct scores after the event.

Arcscorer on tablets

This is the system we have been using instead of the Bridgemates for the last few months. It is easier to use and see the results for players. It is less forgiving if the set up needs changing just before play commences and there is less documentation. The result is over reliance on Colin and Tim because they have used it the most. We need more players to take turns. We can organise some training sessions and compile some crib sheets. It would help those setting up games if all the tablets were reset at the end of a session. If you don't know how to do so please ask.

Issues for AGM

- Agreement by members that the majority are happy to continue with Arcscorer. and purchase some additional bits of kit as per the Treasurer's report. (We may well maintain support for the Bridgemates for use upstairs.)
- Volunteers for learning to set up the tablets

Dealing machine

Still working well. We have fewer volunteers to house the machine and deal the boards than in the past so new helpers would be useful

Jan Titcombe

Technical Director

August 2024

Membership Report

By the end of July 2024 we currently have 84 full members, spread over the Tuesday morning, afternoon and evening sessions.

We seem to average approximately 7 tables in the afternoon and the evening numbers have picked up considerably in the latter quarter of the last year.

The teaching sessions on Tuesday mornings have been a huge success and are mainly responsible for the increase in membership numbers.

Throughout the last club year (August to July), there have been 18 students attending on Tuesday mornings, 12 of whom continued to the end and with 7 students going on to become full members, as of August 2024.

Ann Close

Membership Secretary

August 2024

