

Minutes of committee meeting of Somerset Contract Bridge Association

on 18th November 2024

via Zoom

In attendance:

Alan Evans

Richard Feetenby

Colin Simcox

John Cockram

Michael Wigmore

Andrew Ridgers

Annie Holder

Simon Brooke

Apologies: Sheree Pavey, Frank Coltman

Minutes of Meeting 15th July

The minutes were approved.

Matters arising

None that were not already listed on the agenda.

Financial update (RF)

Congress: Woolavington teams with table money at £1800 showed a surplus of £333. However, following the cancelled WSM weekend SCBA honoured its commitment to those who paid for accommodation but could not obtain a refund or deferral. This amounted to £1673, so our net Congress shows a deficit of £1340. Richard speculated that the loss would have been considerably greater had the Congress proceeded with the projected small number of entries.

Club development funding outlay was £1000 to Castle Cary for a dealing machine which we supported with a 25% grant. This fund is now consumed but the Sponsorship fund for teaching/training remains available with £1893 balance carried.

County events: those completed with low attendances show a deficit of £100 but there will be a surplus on county league to offset this.

Interest earned on Bonds will be £1228 to cover general running costs of £943.

A net deficit of £1000 is anticipated, though the Robson event will make a positive contribution.

Bank balance stands at £7000 and Bonds at £33500, so there is good protection for future needs.

Andrew Robson (SB)

Simon reported that planning is going well and details should be available in the next few days for publication on the website and circulation via email to previous participants and others expressing interest. The event will mostly repeat the arrangements of the previous one. John queried the temperature in the room to be used; the provision of adequate heating should be checked shortly before the event. No lunch will be provided. There will be a longer break of an hour and a quarter between the two sessions.

Playing of County League events

Alan raised a proposal from team members that County League matches should all be played on the scheduled dates rather than rearrangements being allowed as at present. Several members felt that there were too many rearrangements of matches, which cause problems in trying to get eight players to agree on a date. Bob Warrender, the League Organiser, had been consulted and said he believed that some teams (notably in 1st division) are bending the rules and cancelling if one of their better players is unavailable. Unexpected absences should be covered by substitutes, even from another team if necessary. The Committee broadly agreed with the proposal although Andy noted that the consequence of a cancelled match should be clear in advance; Colin explained how an appropriate score would be determined according to the strength of the teams involved.

The details of the planned change to the rules should be clarified and the intention to change made clear to League teams before implementation for the 2025–26 season.

Tournament programme going forward: including venue, promotion and possible online events

John started with the Championship Teams: there are four entries. John will arrange the draw this week. The first round (i.e. semi-final) must be completed by mid-February and the final by mid-May to allow the winners to be entered into the Pachabo Cup. There was discussion of the mechanics of the event with the conclusion that the semi-final and final should be over at least 32 and 48 boards respectively, in 8-board stanzas, with Realbridge being the preferred platform, although if played face-to-face the exercise of seating rights would be permitted.

The last event at Woolavington (3rd Nov: Teams and also No Fear Pairs) was deemed successful, apart from the local power cut, although that revealed that many in the No Fear event were satisfied with just a single session. Suggestions have been made by members to hold some events elsewhere, such as in Street, or else online, in order to increase numbers. John intended to continue with this year's plan, which aims to play one event per month at Woolavington (excluding October for Congress), but views should be sought from players on how they would like next year's events to run: F2F at Woolavington or elsewhere or online. There was considerable discussion of the best way to run and promote Nine High or No Fear events alongside other events in the Calendar.

At this point the Zoom meeting terminated, restarting 15 minutes later after considerable discussion of No Fear events on WhatsApp in the meantime.

Entries to the next event – Men's and Ladies' Pairs on 8th December – are poor so far, and it was agreed that a combined event would be run if numbers remained low but with separate Men's and Ladies' winners. A No Fear event would also run alongside it.

A single-session No Fear event would be run alongside the Championship Pairs on 16th Feb, but not with the Swiss Pairs on 12th Jan.

Michael Coda Cup (24th–28th Feb.): John would be assisted by Annie in organising this (and Andy for scoring). Caroline M can provide sets of boards if required. Clubs can sign up for the event on as many days as they wish because there will be a different set of boards each day. Clubs should use the EBU code for charity events when setting up the session and submitting results to the EBU to avoid P2P charges.

AOB

John reported that all the EBU's free cards have been distributed.

Michael queried the method of selection for the Tollemache Cup in view of the difficulty in fielding a team this year. Andy thought that a personal approach to preferred team members was the best way.

Minutes prepared by Alan Evans