

FINAL DRAFT

SUSSEX COUNTY CONTRACT BRIDGE ASSOCIATION

A meeting of the Management Committee of the SCCBA took place via Zoom at 10.30am
on Friday 27 Sept 2024

Present:

Mr P Clinch (PC)	Chair
Mr J Hardy (JH)	Hon Treasurer
Mr D Wheeler (DW)	Hon Secretary

and other elected members: Mrs A Galpin (AG), Mr D Galpin (DG), Mrs J Mayall (JM), Mr N Watts (NW) and Mr M Wotton (MW). Also attending were the President Mr M Pool (MP) and Mrs H Kent (HK) – Crawley BC).

AGENDA

1. Apologies

Mrs A Baxter (AB), Mr Stuart Barker (SB – Eastbourne BC), Ms Thea Sydenham (TS - Chichester BC) and Mr M Wright (MWR)

2. Minutes of the meeting of 28 June 2024

2.1 Accuracy

MC Members were content with the minutes as shown in the final draft.

2.2 Matters Arising

DW reported that:

- Actions from paragraphs 4.2, 13.3 and 18.had been completed.
- Other actions from the previous meeting would be picked up under the relevant items below.

3. Chair's Report

PC observed that there had been much activity in recent weeks, particularly in relation to the *Bridge – It's a Big Deal* festival and efforts to re-establish bridge in schools. He would contribute further on those and other matters under the agenda items concerned. He added that continued low levels of entries to face-to-face events, particularly the recent Autumn Congress, were disappointing despite the best efforts of event organisers. He suggested that the MC would benefit from grass-roots representation to provide a broader perspective on the make-up of the competitions programme and how it might be made more attractive to club members.

4. Treasurer's Report

4.1 Treasurer's Report and Accounts for p/e 30 Sept 2024

JH had circulated these reports which showed a surplus of £886 (2023; £1,824). However, in anticipation of a significant contribution by the County to *Bridge-it's a big deal*, he had inserted a provision of £1,625 for this item (see below), which results in a potential deficit of £739. UMS income continued to grow gradually, now at over £550 per month. This was still lower (88%) than pre-pandemic but continued to improve on the last couple of years. Other points of interest were:

- The MC had committed to match donations to Cancer Research UK (CRUK) raised by table money surcharges at club duplicate sessions during festival week, up to a maximum of £1,500. Although we do not have final numbers, it is likely that the agreed cap will be reached. In addition, the UMS charges from club sessions during festival week, are being donated to Cancer Research – around £125.
- Continuing the commitment to support schools bridge, further investments in training Minibrige teachers are taking place, currently estimated to be at least £500.
- Although Sussex is not organising the Junior Bridge Camp this year, the County is committed to supporting the event to the extent of matching the support provided by the other counties involved – up to a maximum of £750.
- Tournament income is likely to result in an overall deficit of £474 (2023:£586). There was a healthy surplus on the heat for the EBU National Pairs of £458 (2023:£270) and on the Spring Congress of £116 which helped to offset some of the losses on the New Year Swiss Teams (£353), the Team of 8 (£132), the Candles (£283), the Sussex Pairs (£134) and the Mixed Pairs (£122). There was no other significant surplus or deficit on tournaments although a healthy surplus on the Kent/Sussex GP weekend in October is anticipated.
- Overheads (other than donations) at £3,542 for the year to date are in line with those incurred in the same period last year, and in the absence of any unexpected items, the overheads for the remainder of 2024 will be similar to those of last year.

Even taking into account the details noted above, the County continues to have a healthy financial position with reserves of well over £40,000 and a current cash balance of over £53,000.

5. Affiliated Club Issues

5.1 Club relocations

DW had noted that Avenue BC playing sessions were now stably located and the search for permanent premises continues. AG added that attendances are now healthier and membership is increasing. PC observed that Eastbourne BC activity was now back to pre-relocation levels at its new premises.

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5.2 Bridge in Rottingdean

DW reported that he had received further information regarding the two clubs now operating in Rottingdean. Until some 12 years ago, only one club – Rottingdean BC - operated. At that point a second club – Kiplings BC – was created. RBC is EBU affiliated and KBC is currently trialling affiliation free of charge. Both clubs use the same premises and some players are members of both clubs.

6. **Selectors' Report**

NW reported that the SC had met the previous week. Sussex had been successful in the recent Metropolitan Cup with the 'A' and 'C' teams both winning their groups. The SC had decided that, if available, these teams would represent Sussex in the National Finals in June 2025. The SC had also chosen the Sussex team for the Tollemache which will be played on RealBridge on 9/10 November. Chris Jepson would be the NPC. DW agreed to check whether we had received the entry form.

Action: DW

7. **Tournament Committee Report**

7.1 Competitions

DW advised MC members that the minutes of the TC meeting on 13 September contained updates on all current and near future events in the calendar. PC reiterated his concern that face-to-face entry levels were not recovering. The Autumn Congress had attracted only 7 tables for the pairs and the teams only one, leading to the latter's cancellation. In hindsight, the timing of the event, soon after the 'saturation' of other *Bridge – it's a Big Deal* events may have made it less attractive. On a more positive note, PC observed that entries for the upcoming Ladies Pairs looked more encouraging.

7.2 Competitions Calendar 2024/25

DW reported that the populated calendar had been transferred to the website as planned in August. All future updates would be applied direct to the website calendar.

7.3 EBU Nine-High Corwen 2025

DW had circulated a paper advising the background to this new EBU pairs competition for the less experienced and the following TC recommendations:

- Qualification process – Single event during prescribed period 1 Jan – 31 Mar 2025.
- F2F or online? EBU final will be online so Sussex qualification should also be online.
- Organiser – PC has agreed to be the organiser and will choose the date..
- Entry fee – Agreed as £3 per person
- Trophy – Agreed that Lord Newton's agreement should be sought for his trophy to be assigned to this new competition. PC will clear lines with LN.

MC members were content to proceed as recommended.

7.4 Welcome Series

DW reported that informal responses from Chichester and Eastbourne suggested that they might be willing to hold Welcome Pairs events in their parts of the county. On a less positive note, Worthing BC had recently cancelled its Welcome Pairs event owing to insufficient interest. If Chichester and Eastbourne did agree to run events in 2025, this might create a broader community and the potential for higher attendance. He would report further in due course.

Action: DW

7.4 Other matters

- PC reported that instructions for Sussex Pairs heats had recently issued to participating clubs.
 - DG reported that, following TC agreement, he had advised Sussex League team captains over a staged re-timing of the league season. He had fielded requests for it to return to its pre-pandemic timing (Autumn/Winter) and his proposal would see that goal reached for the 2026/27 season.
 - AG reported that session 6 of the Invitation Pairs had recently been completed and she was using a prize structure (including prize for aggregate winners of the final two sessions) to encourage continued attendance.
 - PC reported that recent experience suggested that EBU rules on the use of robots may not be being applied correctly. DW agreed to ask the TC to look into this and report back.
- Action: DW**
- PC reported that the New Year Swiss Teams 2025, previously held at Henfield Hall, would be held at Patcham BC to see whether the lower costs involved might allow a lower entry fee and thereby attract higher attendance. Other events previously held at HH would continue there in 2025.

8. **Secretary's Report**

DW had nothing to report beyond his contributions under other agenda items.

9. **EBU Matters**

9.1 Festival of Bridge – It's a Big Deal

DW had circulated copies of the final list of events and an outline of the summary report he was compiling. The latter would be shared with MC members and the EBU by mid-October. At this point, with reports from five (of eleven) participating clubs received, the total of donations made to CRUK was already over £5K.

Action: DW

9.2 Modernisation of EBU Articles of Association

DW reported that the EBU were consulting shareholders regarding major changes to their Articles of Association with a view to formal proposals being put to the next AGM in November. He had circulated copies of the consultation papers and now invited MC members to register any comments/concerns they may have. The EBU will be holding a series of Zoom meetings to field

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comments/concerns, hopefully to resolve them before the AGM. MP and JM would attend the Zoom on 7 October and PC and DW would attend on 15 October. Comments from other MC members should reach them before these dates.

Action: MC Members

10. Membership Secretary's Report

AB had reported that the current membership total was 2612, 32 fewer than the total reported to the previous meeting. The email address list now totalled 2392, 29 fewer than reported in June.

11. Webmaster and Master Point Secretary's Report

MW reported that he had been very busy in recent weeks dealing with a multitude of website changes emanating from the Sussex contributions to *Bridge – It's a Big Deal*, the introduction of the competitions calendar for 2024/25 alongside a number of individual county events. Alongside this, for "light relief", he had researched and resolved a BridgeMate problem which had arisen in the GP Swiss Pairs.

12. Conduct and Discipline

JM indicated that there was nothing to report on this occasion.

13. Youth Bridge

13.1 JBC 2024 – Responsibility and sponsorship

DW reported that, whilst Tony Cherrett would continue to lead JBC24, overall responsibility for all JBCs had now been assumed by EBED. MW observed that previous JBCs held by Sussex had involved more publicity in Sussex than that currently being deployed. DW commented that we were doing all we had been asked to do by EBED.

13.2 Bridge in Schools

PC reported that he would be meeting with Douglas Wright (DWr) on Zoom later that day to review progress towards the introduction of minibridge in schools. He commented that future progress would continue to be difficult in the absence of one or more project leaders.

Action: PC/DWr

14. Education

Nothing to report..

15. Charities Co-ordinator's Report

DW advised that the invitation to nominate charities to benefit from the Charity Sims in 2025 would issue soon after this meeting. This would include a reiteration of the request for club heats.

Action: DW

16. Equipment and Trophy Co-ordinator's Report

Nothing to report.

17. Next Meeting

Via Zoom at 10am on Wednesday 4 Dec 2024.

18. Any Other Business

- MP invited other MC members to formally acknowledge the exceptional workload being undertaken by PC and express their appreciation of it. MC members concurred unanimously.
- PC noted DG's request for reference to the upcoming Championship Teams competition to be included in his next Chairman's letter to all members.

The meeting closed at 11.56am.