

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 28 June 2024

Present:

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

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

AGENDA

1. Apologies

Mrs A Baxter (AB), Mrs A Galpin (AG), Mr D Galpin (DG) and Mr C McNeil (CM - Eastbourne BC).

2. Minutes of the meeting of 22 March 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, 7.2, 8.1, 8.2 and 15.had been completed.
- Other actions from the previous meeting would be picked up under the relevant items below.

3. Chairman's Report

PC referenced the average age of MC members and the need to identify younger blood to inform succession planning. He invited MC members to identify potential new MC members wherever possible. PC's other reports would be made under the relevant agenda items below.

Action: MC Members

4. Treasurer's Report

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

JH had circulated these reports which showed a surplus of £218 (2023; £1,824). UMS income continued to be reasonably healthy at over £500 per month. This was still lower (91%) than pre-pandemic but continued to improve on the last couple of years. Other points of interest were:

- The Charity SIMS event generated a surplus of £1,128 and the MC approved a donation of £700 to each of our chosen charities, Crawley Open House, Demelza Hospice and Guild Care, a total of £2,100
- There was a small deficit on other tournaments of £329 (2023:£586), reflecting surpluses on the heat for the EBU National Pairs of £459 and the Spring Congress of £116 which helped to cover losses on the New Year Swiss Teams - £353, the Teams of Eight - £132, the Candles - £318 and the Sussex Pairs - £134.
- Overheads (other than donations) at £2,475 for the year to date were 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.
- The County has reserves of £46,067 and cash balances of £51,188..
- With UMS income continuing to be steady at over £500 a month and in the absence of any unexpected overheads, a reasonable surplus for the year is anticipated. This is, of course, dependent on:
 - Tournament income remaining steady overall. In the current climate of fluctuating entry levels this remains difficult to predict, although it is anticipated that a healthy surplus will be generated by the Kent/Sussex GP weekend.
 - The amount that the County commits to supporting events during the EBU "Bridge-It's a Big Deal" week in and around September
 - The amount that Sussex will commit to sponsor the Autumn 2024 Junior Bridge Camp.

Overall, the County continues to be in a healthy financial position and is likely to report a reasonable surplus for the year. Even with significant amounts of expenditure referenced in the final bullet above, the County will remain in a healthy financial position.

4.2 Insurance

JH had circulated an information note on the County's insurance cover. This had recently been enhanced by an EBU policy which protected those acting on behalf of the Association. DW agreed to amend the *Role of the Management Committee* paper to reflect this.

Action: DW

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5. Affiliated Club Issues

5.1 Club relocations

DW noted that Eastbourne had completed its move to new premises at the beginning of May. Its county website entry had been updated accordingly. PC reported that efforts to find a new site for Avenue BC had not borne fruit thus far. Three locations continued to be used to house playing sessions and there were sufficient funds to continue the search for permanent premises.

5.2 Top 50 Clubs in England

DW reported that a recent report from the EBU had identified the top 50 clubs based on the number of player sessions. Sussex had three clubs listed with Patcham at 17, Eastbourne at 20 and Worthing at 40. DW emphasised that this was only one way of measuring size and others, eg number of members, number of tables per session, etc produced different results. The EBU's focus on player sessions reflected their interest in the growth (or otherwise) of bridge playing (and revenue generating) activity.

5.3 Bridge in Rottingdean

DW reported that in the early months of 2024, a new club had been created in Rottingdean – the Kiplings BC – playing at the same location as the Rottingdean BC. The latter remained affiliated with the EBU but DW believed that KBC was not affiliated. It appeared that KBC had been created following a disagreement amongst RBC members about the value of EBU affiliation.

6. Selectors' Report

NW reported that the SC had met twice since the last MC meeting, first to select the teams for the National Inter Counties Leagues final and the President's Cup. The former brought together the winners from A, B and C groups in each of five regional competitions, in our case the preceding Metropolitan Cup. The final had been held on 2 June and Sussex had finished in a very creditable second place behind Yorkshire. At one stage, Sussex had led the field with Kent in second but Yorkshire had overtaken both towards the end, winning by just two VPs. After late withdrawals from the team chosen for the Presidents Cup, Sussex were forced to withdraw their entry. The second meeting selected the teams to represent the county in this year's Metropolitan Cup on 14 September. The SC would be meeting again in due course to pick the teams for this year's Tollemache event.

7. Tournament Committee Report

7.1 Competitions

DW advised MC members that the minutes of the TC meeting on 7 June contained updates on all current and near future events in the calendar. PC reported that preparations were in place or in hand for all events in the remainder of the calendar year.

7.2 Chief Tournament Director

PC reported that Stephen Kennedy (SK) was now operating as the county's CTD. A job description was being developed and it was hoped that this would include membership of the TC. SK had directed several recent events with very positive feedback.

7.3 Welcome Series

DW reported that, following decisions at Worthing and Horsham to restart their Pairs events in September 2024 and March 2025 respectively, he had reviewed the event guidelines (with WBC and HBC) with a view to inviting Chichester and Eastbourne to consider holding events in their parts of the county. He would report further in due course.

Action: DW

7.4 Other matters

JH observed that the GP Swiss Pairs in July had attracted only three entries thus far. This seemed to reflect an unhelpful trend towards late entries.

8. Secretary's Report

8.1 Appointments 2024/25

DW had circulated the proposed list of appointments for MC approval. MC Members confirmed their approval unanimously.

8.2 Use of Social Media

DW referred to a recent invitation from the EBU for counties to provide input to social media regarding *Bridge – It's a Big Deal*. DW had responded conveying the MC's previous decision not to create an SCCBA presence on social media. He added that he would however check with MC Members that this remained the case. After a wide-ranging discussion, MC Members confirmed their belief that a combination of website and membership email remained sufficient for Association communications with its members..

9. EBU Matters

9.1 Festival of Bridge – It's a Big Deal

DW had circulated a copy of his recent summary report to the EBU. This had indicated that thus far, in addition to the county's commitments (to make the Autumn Congress a BIABD themed event and to match club table money surcharges during festival week), nine clubs had reported their intention to hold BIABD events. This had been well received by the EBU. DW had suggested that more clubs may become involved over the next weeks and he would report further as required

Action: DW

9.2 EBED relationship

DW reported that the EBU were working through the series of changes needed to restore a productive relationship with EBED. Special action, involving shareholders, was unlikely now to be required. The recent Chairmen's Conference had revealed that, amongst a number of management changes, William Bourne had recently been appointed as one of the new Trustees required and he had taken on the role of Treasurer. MC Members agreed that this was a very positive development. DW also reported that the new EBED senior management team would be conducting a strategic review over the summer months.

10. Membership Secretary's Report

AB had reported that the current membership total was 2644, just one fewer than the total reported to the previous meeting. The email address list now totalled 2421, also one fewer than reported in March.

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11. Webmaster and Master Point Secretary's Report

MW reported that his ability to resolve three problems encountered in the 2024 NYST had not just been due to his having studied the Bridgemate manual but in subsequent work to understand Bridgemate configuration, recovery and, particularly, diagnostics features. He felt that the new knowledge acquired would make resolution of future problems less arduous. NW observed that Brian Kirkdale is conducting a trial of tablet computers in place of BridgeMates at West Sussex BC. DW agreed to follow up on the results of this in due course.

Action: DW

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 Surrey CBA had taken responsibility for the Autumn JBC 2024 with Tony Cherret taking the lead. DW recommended that Sussex should offer sponsorship at the same level as Kent CBA. MC Members agreed.

13.2 Bridge in Schools

PC reported that, in conjunction with Douglas Wright (DWr) and using contacts provided by Ian Wright from the pre-pandemic minibridge in schools project, several schools had been identified as open to the establishment of after-school bridge groups. There were prospects that more may be identified in the coming weeks and work was in hand to identify a project leader to coordinate further development of these 'green shoots'.

Action: PC/DWr

13.3 EBED portfolio of youth bridge initiatives

DW had circulated a summary of these initiatives for MC Members' information and he would share it with Sussex Bridge Teachers after the meeting.

Action: DW

14. Education

DW reported that EBED are delivering club TD training in Bookham, Surrey in the autumn and details had been circulated to club contacts.

15. Charities Co-ordinator's Report

DW advised that the invitation to nominate charities to benefit from the Charity Sims in 2025 would issue after the MC meeting in September. Dates of club heats had been requested in the 2024/25 competitions calendar trawl.

Action: DW

16. Equipment and Trophy Co-ordinator's Report

A missing trophy, the Broad Salver, had been found to be with Brian Kirkdale. MWr would give NW the details for him to follow up and collect. JH enquired about the possibility that new storage might be needed for county equipment. MWr confirmed that this might be needed but there was no immediate requirement. He would monitor the situation and report back in due course.

Action: MWr/NW

17. Next Meeting

Via Zoom at 10.30am on Friday 27 Sept 2024.

18. Any Other Business

MP reported that dealing for upcoming events would be taking place at Patcham next Thursday. Help previously offered by JM and PC would be appreciated if available on that date.

Action JM/PC

The meeting closed at 11.31am.