**Warrington Bridge Club**

Minutes of 43rd AGM, held on 17 February 2020

Present: Chairman, Jim Steele; Treasurer, Helen Wright; Committee members Mike Haworth, David Burrows, Angie Pinnington, Janet Jagan; and 13 members.

1. **Apologies:** Ann Ankers, Barbara French, Mike Dennis, Helen Miller, Ann Forsyth.

1. **Minutes of 42nd AGM 14/3/2019**.

These had been displayed on website & notice board, and were taken as read. Proposed by Pat Morris, seconded by Ray Nolan.

1. **Matters arising.**

There were no matters arising not otherwise covered in the agenda.

1. **Chairman’s Report.**

The Chairman thanked Carol Bingham for stepping in at short notice to take the minutes, in the absence of Mike Dennis. He expressed thanks to Committee, in particular the Treasurer Helen Wright for her hard work in helping to manage bedding in of the new payment system, and to the Secretary Mike Dennis (in his absence through being unwell), for resolutely driving a vision for the future of the Club, and greatly helping the new Chairman along the learning curve, David Burrows for his work as webmaster, and Keith Perry for operation of the dealing machine. He also thanked the other members who willingly give of their time to essential activities, without which the Club could not function, notably TD’s and scorers.

The Chairman also made particular mention to thank Mike Haworth, who is standing down after many years on the Committee, but was very pleased to note that Mike will be continuing as a TD.

The Chairman made an appeal to all members to consider putting themselves forward to join the Committee, and/or to become TD’s. For the role of TD, training and support would of course be provided.

Regarding membership, the Chairman acknowledged it had been a difficult year, as a number of stalwarts have either sadly died, or are no longer able to attend for health reasons, and numbers of tables have dropped a bit. On the other hand, we have attracted about six new members from other sources, who have now joined WBC for 2020. For the future, things do look brighter: the Chairman expressed optimism that the work we are doing with our Monday afternoon and Thursday afternoon Improvers groups will stand us in good stead in the medium to longer term. Between these two groups we already have about 45 people learning duplicate bridge, and many of them are very enthusiastic. We are already starting to run Gentle Duplicate sessions: the most recent one on 13 February had 6 tables, and we posting the Gentle Duplicate results on our website. The Chairman thanked Mike Dennis and Hilary Wood for the help they provide him in running those sessions.

Teams: Monday evening multi-teams is now reinstated by popular demand, over the winter months, and has been well supported and successful. The Committee will be considering whether to also introduce it on Thursdays, starting in the autumn. Any comments from members would be much appreciated.

The Chairman mentioned Best Behaviour at Bridge, since it is not only crucial to our enjoyment of the game, but sets the tone of our Club, in terms of whether new, and especially less experienced, members will feel encouraged to stay. He hoped members would agree that, while things are not yet perfect, they are generally getting better. He asked that members pay heed to the TD’s remarks at the beginning of each session, and reminded that ANY dispute during play should be referred to the TD.

New payment system**:** despite a few niggles, it is a big step forward, avoiding the need for collecting cash at the table. The Chairman thanked members for their cooperation. Members can see their attendance record in the Members Area on the website, from which members’ payments are calculated.

NS/EW: One of the problems the Committee has been trying hard to iron out is proper randomisation of who sits NS and who EW. It is getting better, but it is clear that some members are bucking the system, which is not only unfair, but defeats the object. The Chairman asked all members to please observe the Club rule to toss up at the start of each session. To be clear, the winner of the toss doesn’t get the choice which direction to sit – the winner of the toss sits NS. The Committee will be considering how to make the system more watertight, including alternatives to the present coin-toss arrangement.

The chairman mentioned the Spring Social & Prizegiving, April 20th. It is on the calendar on our website, as well as on the printed Club Calendar, which all members should have a copy of.

1. **Financial report.**

The accounts were presented. There was one question about the negative profit figure, and commensurate reduction in our balance, over the year. After an explanation, acceptance was proposed by Carol Bingham, seconded by Elizabeth Bennett.

1. **Appointment of Auditor.**

Geoff Fisher has agreed to continue for 2020.

1. **Subscriptions, Table fees, and Charges for Visitors.**

The Committee recommended that these should all remain as for 2019. Proposed by Elizabeth Bennett, seconded by Hilary Wood.

1. **Election of Officers.**

It was proposed, in the absence of any nominations, that the present officers should be re-elected en bloc. Proposed by Ray Nolan, seconded by Terry Summers.

1. **AOB.**

There was one item, namely the difficulty of gaining entry sometimes. A comment was made that Belong are no longer willing to issue entry fobs. The Chairman agreed to look into this, and commented that we did our best to have someone on door duty, which should work OK if members arrive on time.

This concluded the formal agenda, and the meeting closed at 6.50pm.

Subsequent to the agenda, there was a request from Cynthia Simpson to discuss whether the 4-minute cut-off for starting a hand should be rigid, or whether the TD should have some discretion depending on circumstances. Some other members expressed support for Cynthia’s view that it should be rigidly observed. After some discussion, a show of hands indicated by 14 to 3 that the 4 minute rule should be rigid, and play should not start. As a point of information, it was pointed out that removing any cards from the board constituted starting the board, whether any player had yet looked at their cards or not. The Committee noted the show of hands and would take this forward to the next Committee meeting, and for communication to TD’s.

The discussion finished at 7.05pm, and 32 members played bridge.