

Minutes of Warrington Bridge Club Committee Meeting
Sat 11th January 2025, 0930hrs, on Zoom

1. Apologies

None

2. Minutes of previous Committee meeting, held 19th October 2024.

The minutes of the previous meeting were accepted. There were no matters arising not on today's agenda.

3. Review of 2024 (excluding finances)

Broadly 2024 was a successful year, with membership creeping up, and attendances improving, especially on Thursdays. The attendances at our Monday evening Charity/Improvers sessions were very healthy, including the Christmas social. We also built in some resilience, with more people able to take on more activities of the Club, for example Ian doing some of the teaching, and Carolyn helping with generating the periodic billing information, which is quite a large admin task. We had a very well attended teaching-for-teachers session in September, organised by Ian.

We had a few concerns, eg

- the Children in Need Charity SIM pairs, which was poorly attended with only 5 tables, and the disproportionate amount of admin to run it, especially for Janet.
- our limited number of TD's for Monday evenings.

4. Finances

a. Overview

Janet had shared, in preparation for the meeting, a summary of our finances for 2024. In broad terms, we operated roughly on a break-even basis, which was as intended. Our costs had increased, but our increased attendances had compensated. Therefore our reserves remained at a similar level, of about one year's expenditure. The Committee agreed that this was about right.

b. Choice of 2025 Charity

There were no suggestions of an alternative local charity to the Walton Lea Partnership. The Committee was very happy with their appreciation of our contributions, and resolved to continue supporting them in 2025. However, we are open at any time to new suggestions from anyone who wants to make a case, provided it's a local cause. Malcolm suggested we talk to Walton Lea about our continued support, and that we explore a publicity photo opportunity, eg presenting them with a large cardboard "cheque". **ACTION Mike**

c. Contribution to charity

As agreed last time, the Club will match the table money raised. This has already been done for the Christmas Social.

d. Billing frequency

The Committee confirmed the previous decision to reduce from 6 times per year to quarterly. This will reduce the workload on the secretary and the treasurer.

e. Method of billing

Janet said she preferred to stick with the present system, of sending out individual bills to each member.

5. Expenditure items

- a. **New laptop:** this has been purchased, and set up ready to use. In case of teething problems, we might decide to use the old one on the next Monday session, and try out the new one on a Thursday afternoon. **ACTION Jim**
- b. **Signage:** complete and erected. The Committee were happy with what had been done.
- c. **Bridge tables:** procured and in use.
- d. **Side tables:** we have already got some samples for comment. The general view was that the larger rectangular ones are better, providing more room and a flat surface for drinks, etc. However, they don't stack so well. We agreed to buy 7 more of the rectangular ones and three more of the round ones. That will make us up to 8 rectangular and 5 round. **ACTION Ian**
- e. **Tennis Club banner.** In abeyance. We have the banner in our possession (with Mike).
- f. **Training for teachers:** this is a standing item. We will wait until we find a suitable course (venue, timing) for Ian, Jim and any others who are interested (eg Malcolm). The Club will fund the cost.

6. 2025 calendar

- a. **2025 AGM:** this will be 630pm on Monday 10th March, F2F in accordance with members' expressed wishes. We will need to issue the formal notice in due time. **ACTION Jim**
- b. **Spring Social , Charity/Improvers night, and prize giving:** 630pm on 24th March.
 - We agreed we'd provide a cold buffet and drinks. No GF, but veg options. **ACTION Janine**
 - Drinks – wine and soft drinks **ACTION Mike**
 - Janet suggested we buy a bottle of wine and box of chocolates for Hilary, in recognition of all the work she has put in, and continues to. **Action Mike or Janet?**
 - **Prizes:** Jim to get these. **Action Jim**
- c. **Paper copies of calendar:** we did this last year, but there was little take-up. We will confine this year's to the notice board and website. **ACTION Jim**
- d. **Socials:** There are two socials (Spring and Christmas) in the calendar, for which we will provide food & drink.
- e. **Charity/Improvers nights:** we have settled on having 6 in the year.

7. Succession planning

- a. We agreed that this should be a standing item on the agenda.
- b. The Committee all indicated for the moment that they are willing to continue.
- c. Use of dealing machine: we agreed we would arrange a session for a number of people to have a refresher with Keith on using the machine, as it is only Keith who does it, and has done so for some time. Interested people include Mike, Ian, Janet, and David. Mike Dennis will approach Keith about this. **ACTION Mike**

- d. TD's: we agreed we need to expand from just DB, KP, and PJ for Monday evenings. There are some who already do directing, eg at Antrobus or online, or who have done it before: Hilary, Jim, Mike, B French, and Malcolm Strange. We should aim to get these people doing TD on a Monday; it won't need specific training, but will need an established TD to be there to assist until the individual is comfortable doing it on their own. **ACTION David** to set some dates.
Mike will ask Malcolm Strange. **ACTION Mike** .
- e. Website: Ian is already a Bridgewebs webmaster for Birchwood & Croft. Jim and Ian will arrange a time to go over the WBC website pages, so that Ian is in a position to update the website if and when required. **ACTION Jim, Ian**
- f. Secretarial: there was some discussion on membership lists. Jim said that the website member list is the master one, but we operate two more: our Scorebridge Player database, and a spreadsheet of Bridgemate ID's for printing and putting on the inside lid of the wheely box so people can quickly find their Bridgemate ID at the start of a session, if they've forgotten it. Jim also said he would prepare a list of Club secretarial duties, and discuss with Carolyn. **ACTION Jim**
- g. Training: this is already in hand, with Ian taking on some of the Intermediate lessons.

8. Scoring Software

Ian will add BridgeGem software to our new laptop. TD's will then have the option of using Scorebridge or BridgeGem. **ACTION Ian**

9. Publicity

a. Local GP surgeries/ Primary Care facilities

Mike reported that Andrew Young had already been going down this route for u3a, and had got to the stage of developing an A5 leaflet for "social prescribing" to be left with surgeries to give out. There is work to do to get the take-up to work. Mike said he would work with Andrew. **ACTION Mike.**

b. Essential Guide

Ian confirmed that he is keeping on top of this, so that we are included in their What's On pages.
ACTION Ian

c. Advertorial (local press)

The time to do this will be when we have an annual prize list to report on, in March. Jim will draft some copy. **ACTION Jim**

10. On-Line Bridge

- a. BWS: This is now one session per week, on Friday evenings. It is operating fine, is viable, and generates a small surplus. We are doing a little better than before, financially, because most of the Brierfield members who wanted to continue after Brierfield Bridge Club opted out of BWS have joined Warrington, and because we have ditched the loss-making Monday evening session. Janet commented that when someone stands in as TD on a Friday they should be reimbursed the same as our regular paid TD, and this had happened once recently. The Committee agreed.

- b. The joint RealBridge sessions with Antrobus on Tuesday evenings started on 2nd July 24 as planned. So far it is just viable, but we need to build numbers. The most recent session was well supported, but this was related to poor weather and people unable to get to F2F bridge. There are some signs of pick-up, though, and we agreed to persevere in the meantime.
- c. We now have our own Club RealBridge account. We used on Thursday afternoon 9th January, when F2F was cancelled due to the weather. This got a few more people playing on RealBridge for the first time.

11. Education/ teaching

- a. Training for bridge teaching (Jim/Ian/ Malcolm)- standing item. We will continue to look for suitable course (venue/timing). We agreed that the Club should fund this.
- b. We confirmed that we will not disrupt our schedule to fit in Advanced lessons, and anyway we are unsure of demand. If we get requests, we will log the details. There is a wealth of material on-line to pick from, for those who are interested.

12. Date of Next Meeting

Agreed for Saturday 29th March 2025, 930am, on Zoom.

This is after the AGM and Spring social/prizegiving. We will use email/phone etc to sort out any arrangements for these events, in the meantime.