

**WEST OF ENGLAND BRIDGE CLUB**  
**Minutes of the Annual General Meeting**  
**Wednesday 16 May 2018**

**Committee present:**

Alan Williams (Club Chairman), Bernice Horseman (Vice Chairman and Membership Secretary), Bill Ashford (Treasurer), Chris Frew (Secretary), Jan Duncan (Tournament Secretary), Alan Evans (GHS Liaison), Jen Challoner (Minister for Fun)

**Members:** Bridget Johnson, Tom Nolan, Carol Nolan, Laurie Barth, Vicky Lucas, Jane Chapman, Sandra Cooper, Paul Brown, Margaret Mundy, Ian Mundy, Margaret Randall, Peter Randall, Steve Tomlinson, Chris King, Clive Richards

**Apologies:** David Jones

**1. Minutes of the last Meeting – 17 May 2017**

A proposal to accept them as correct was made by Vicki Lucas and seconded by Jan Duncan. This was approved by all those present.

**2. Matters Arising**

None.

**3. Chairman's Report (Alan Williams)**

Alan said: "It's been a mixed year for the Club.

Table numbers are up on last year, although still well below our peak years. The Thursday afternoon supervised play sessions continue to be the most successful, a lot of which is down to the hard work put in by Jen, Laurie, Bill, David and others, and also the good reputation the sessions have acquired more widely. It is near full capacity every week.

We are also seeing the beginnings of a migration from those sessions into other sessions, in particular the new Monday afternoon duplicate pairs run by David Jones and also into the Wednesday evening duplicate pairs. It is to facilitate that migration that we are now bringing all members into Full Membership, albeit at a reduced fee for a year.

The Friday evening teams sessions are now also in good shape thanks to the efforts of Gareth and Mary.

We continue to cooperate fully with Golden Hill to get the premises refurbished, and so it is most disappointing that little progress has been made on this front. The work was originally scheduled to happen in the winter period just gone, but then it slipped into this coming winter, and now even this is up in the air. The problem is that the estimates received for the work proposed exceed the available resources, so Golden Hill are looking at various options such as splitting the work into two projects. Meanwhile the Committee are considering some alternative strategies, as we cannot allow things to just drift along.

We've had another year of brilliant social events which the Minister for Fun will report on later. For me and I hope for all us, the West of England is a happy bridge club in which we support and respect

each other with a smile, and I'd like to thank all club members, and also the staff of Golden Hill, for making it so.

I have continued to be a bit of a part-time Chairman and unable to put as much time and effort into the role as I would like, which is why we would like to bring in an eighth Committee member to bolster our resources. I would like to give a big thank you to Alan, Bernice, Bill, Chris, Jan and Jen for their enthusiasm, hard work and support over the past year."

A discussion ensued.

Vicki asked whether we might actually leave GHS? Alan said that although the temporary premises to which we are relocating for October/November look good, we should not get ahead of ourselves; let's see what the GHS Trustees propose.

Falling numbers at key sessions was raised. Alan said that we had done a detailed investigation of former attenders, and the reasons for drop-off were unchallengeable; most had moved away or died. A few identified the poor premises/facilities as an issue. Gareth's alternative sessions at Stoke Lodge are of minimal impact. The key problem is our failure to locate and recruit new joiners to match natural turnover. Clive asked whether we have surveyed Thursday people, asking why they had not moved on? Agreed we would ask. **Action: Committee**

Tom Nolan thought that we should push Wednesdays more, and give prizes on a handicap basis.

**Action: Committee to consider**

Vicki felt that part of the reason Thursdays are successful is that the format is not subordinate to an overall competition.

#### **4 Treasurer's Report (Bill Ashford)**

Bill reprised his Notes to the accounts:

##### **4.1 Accruals and Prepayments**

We owe the EBU about £151 in playing fees (for March 2018). We also allow prepayment of membership fees and for 2018-19 we received £480. The annual fee of £150 to Pianola was paid in April 2017 but relates to 2016-17. In addition, we owe £70 director's fee to an outgoing director which wasn't paid in 2017-18. Also, there was an outstanding phone charge relating to Jan-March 2018.

##### **4.2 Current Assets**

Bank of Scotland reduced our deposit account interest rate from 0.5% p.a. to 0.05% p.a. so we moved £30,000 to a 120-day deposit account with the Hampshire Trust Bank, paying 1.35% p.a. (increased to 1.60% in December 2017). It paid £422 in interest in the year, compared with 88p from the Bank of Scotland deposit account. We continue to enjoy 'free' banking with Bank of Scotland.

##### **4.3 Income**

- (i) We received £16264 Table Money this year, 6% up from last year. Player sessions totalled 4282, up 282 from last year. Both Monday and Wednesday evenings saw a reduction in numbers; from 2108 to 1715 and 1078 to 935 respectively. Fridays saw a significant rise from 772 to 926, following the considerable effort put in by Mary McKenzie and Gareth Evans. The remainder of the increase was due to the additional "friendly bridge" session on Monday afternoons, under the direction of David

Jones. 664 player sessions were recorded and a number of the players competed in some of the evening sessions.

- (ii) Match fee income was £288, slightly up from last year.
- (iii) Membership subscriptions totalled £2111, almost identical to last year.
- (iv) Teaching income reflects the 8 sessions held October to December 2017. The total figure is partly offset by extra rent payments (£246) and teacher's fees (£640) but still shows a profit of £474.
- (v) "Social Bridge" reflects income received for supervised play on Thursday afternoons and is net of organiser's expenses. In addition to reimbursement to the club for rent, we received £900 as a donation from the organiser, reflecting the profit made from the consistently high number of attenders, many of whom are now playing in the regular club sessions.
- (vi) "Other Income" includes £319 Xmas Party raffle sales, sale of packs of cards (£12) and income from Excel BC for board dealing (£417).

#### 4.4 Overheads

- (i) Director's costs rose by £1923 this year. The fees paid for directing were increased at the start of the year to reflect the sums paid by other local clubs. In addition, there was the extra session on Monday afternoons plus £216 paid for attendance at a director's course.
- (ii) The rental we pay GHS continues to rise in line with the RPI. We booked extra sessions for the eight lessons plus the regular Monday afternoon session. This and the rent increase largely accounts for the rise to £9913.
- (iii) Equipment costs comprise cards, scorecards etc., board dealing (partly offset by a reciprocal arrangement with Excel BC) and IT expenses (Pianola and domain renewal). We replaced the old PC with a laptop, along with a mobile hotspot which has reduced phone charges and the cost of a wifi connection.
- (iv) Food for events includes Xmas party, Burns' night and Bastille night plus biscuits.

#### 4.5 Profit

This fell from £2385 to £1012, despite the increase in table money and stable membership fees. This is due to the extra expense incurred in running an additional session, allied to increased directing costs. In addition, there have a few extra outgoings to replace old equipment (such as the PC) and in anticipation of the long awaited refurbishment. Despite these extra costs, the club remains financially secure.

#### 4.6 Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Irene Robinson for auditing the accounts. In addition, I remain grateful to the previous treasurer, Chris Frew, for all his continuing help and advice.

A motion to accept the accounts was proposed by Peter Randall, seconded by Vicki Lucas, and approved by all those present.

### 5. Membership Secretary's Report (Bernice Horseman)

Bernice reported:

"The current membership of the Club stands at 170, composed as follows:

- 15 Life members
- 101 paid up members
- 32 paid to 31 March 2018
- 22 paid to 31 March 2017

We are incorporating the Thursday afternoon Daytime members into the main body of ordinary membership. This is not yet complete; about 28 Daytime members have yet to be changed

I am hopeful that about one third of the unpaid members will rejoin.

The decrease in full membership seems to be due to:

- people moving away;
- people growing older and not wishing to play in the evenings.

We are also looking forward to the renovation of the club premises and hope that this, when complete, will attract some ex-members back to the table!"

## **6. Tournament Secretary's Report (Jan Duncan)**

Jan reported:

"The club now runs five regular sessions each week. In addition to the evening sessions on Monday Wednesday and Friday, we run a very successful supervised non-competitive session on a Thursday afternoon which typically attracts 7 or 8 tables. We also run a gentle (competitive) duplicate on Monday afternoons with up to 4 or 5 tables.

The club has maintained all of the existing club competitions in 2017/2018 and I will announce the winners of those competitions now:

- The Pairs Championship was a tie between Eric Page & Colin Oakley and George Whyte & Alan Franks
- The Moorstone Cup (Handicap Teams) was won by Bernice Horseman, Brian Burrige, Jen Challoner & Laurie Barth
- The Preddy Cup (Teams Championship) was won by Ian & Margaret Mundy, Pat Clowes & Fiona Herlihy
- The Nick Barham-Hall Trophy was won by Jane Drew & Mike Chan
- The Mixed Pairs Championship was won by Pauline Hart & George Whyte
- The Club Individual was won by Jan Duncan
- The Lewis Morton Trophy (Handicap Pairs) was won by David Griffiths & Brian Sharples.

In the Avon County events I can report the following successes by club members:

- The Avon Mens Pairs was won by Bill Ashford & George Whyte
- David Jones was a member of the winning team in the Avon Championship Teams
- The Avon Knock Out Teams final features a number of club members on different sides, including Robert Covill, Steve Turner & David Jones
- Avon League 3 was won by Margaret & Peter Randall, David Griffiths and Keith McIndoe
- Eric Page, Colin Oakley and Alan Williams are second in League 2 with a chance of winning
- Avon League 1 was won by a team including Suzy Lawson & Mike Elliot

Mike Huggins (playing with Rob Lawy) won the Pairs Championship at the EBU Seniors Congress.

In the National Inter-Club Knockout (NICKO), West of England B (Steve Turner, Mike Elliott, Steve Tomlinson, Robert Covill, John Councer and Suzy Lawson) are through to the round of 16, having beaten Bath B away in round 1, Cheltenham C at home in round 2, Bristol A away in round 3 and Reading C away in round 4. In round 5 they are home to Cheltenham D, a match that will be played before the end of June.

## **7. Golden Hill Liaison Officer's Report (Alan Evans)**

Alan Evans said:

"The major item regarding refurbishment of the premises has been dealt with by the Chairman, so this report concerns more mundane matters.

Shortly after the previous AGM we purchased a laptop to replace the old, slow computer. After some initial setting-up and some problems at first with the internet connection, it is now consistently working well.

A possible replacement system for the Bridgemates has been considered. It has merit, but at present there is not yet a strong enough case to replace the Bridgemates. It remains a possibility for the future.

Changes were made to the directing rota earlier this year in response to some dissatisfaction. Please address any concerns on this to me.

GHS now have recently taken on a new cleaner after the previous one retired. Some improvements have already been noted. In addition, the chairs were cleaned again in April.

An instance of impolite behaviour toward the bar staff has been reported. We hope this will not recur. Members are reminded that drinks should be collected from the bar because it is not practical to offer at-table service.

GHS are entitled to usurp a few Friday evenings in the year for their own use. One such is this week: there will be no bridge this Friday (18/5).

Goodwill is generated by our participation in running the tea/coffee stall at Golden Hill's annual Party in the Park, this year on Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> September – thanks to all involved last year, and I may be looking for volunteers again this year."

## **8. Fun Events Officer's Report (Jen Challoner)**

Jen said:

"As well as two Christmas Parties, the other two events are Bastille Night and Burns Night. Bastille Night 2018 will be our 5<sup>th</sup>; Burns' Night 2018 will be our 4<sup>th</sup>.

All these nights are well attended thanks to our ticket sellers Jan Duncan, Chris Frew, Laurie, and Vicki Lucas. We just about break even on cost and have, as promised, fun.

Many members have requested more Fun nights, e.g. a cocktail night, but at present two are enough. They involve a lot of work and thanks must go to Damien, our chief purveyor of cheeses and haggis and also our Burns' Night chef, Julie Lee, who also provides our festive feast at Christmas. Thanks also to Lesley Reed, our chief sausage purveyor and chef, and to Chris Frew and Bill Ashford,

who have the arduous task of choosing and buying the whiskies. Thanks also to Karen, Damien's wife, for all her help.

The Thursday 'Improvers' have now got in on the act and tomorrow we are hosting the Mad Hatter's Tea Party which will probably become a permanent feature in the WoEBC calendar.

Both Christmas Parties were great fun, especially the Improvers, who have taken dressing up to new levels. This year Laurie wrote and directed a play. Unfortunately he had a motley cast: our Chairman, Alan Williams, refused to die on time, Bill Ashford talked too much and Vicki Lucas and I drank too much!

Do come to Bastille Night on Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> July and please practice your French."

## 9. Motions submitted for Discussion

Two amendments to the Constitution were proposed, as below:

### 9.1 To abolish the 'Daytime' class of membership

#### **Current Constitution:**

3.2 Membership shall be maintained in four classes: Ordinary, Daytime, Associate and Life.

3.2.1 Ordinary and Daytime members shall pay an annual membership fee each year, as determined for each class by the Management Committee.

#### **Proposed Constitution:**

3.2 Membership shall be maintained in three classes: Ordinary, Associate and Life.

3.2.1 Ordinary members shall pay an annual membership fee each year, as determined by the Management Committee

This amendment was proposed by Vicki Lucas, seconded by Bernice Horseman and approved by all present.

### 9.2 To increase the size of the Management Committee to 8 members

#### **Current Constitution:**

4.2 The Management Committee shall consist of 7 members of the Club, including the Officers.

#### **Proposed Constitution:**

4.2 The Management Committee shall consist of 8 members of the Club, including the Officers.

This amendment was proposed by Chris Frew, seconded by Jen Challoner, and approved by all present.

## 10. Election of Officers and Committee

Chris Frew reported that he had received only one nomination for each of the Officer roles, which was of the existing incumbent. He had also received only four nominations for the four 'Ordinary Committee member' roles now allowed by the Constitutional change above; the three incumbents, plus Vicki Lucas. Chris therefore suggested that the new Committee should be elected *en bloc*. This was formally proposed by Steve Tomlinson, seconded by Tom Nolan, and agreed by all members present.

**11. Any Other Business**

During a general discussion, the following points were made:

- Lyn Webley volunteered to wash all tablecloths
- Jane Chapman asked for a secure bike rack **Action: Alan Evans to put to GHS**
- Tom Nolan asked that website minutes be more up-to-date. It was agreed that we would post provisional minutes in future, rather than wait for formal approval at a following Committee meeting **Action: Committee**
- Should we bring our evening start time forward to 7:15? The general feeling was that this was a good idea, though Margaret Mundy said that, for those who worked, it may cause a problem **Action: Committee to consider further**

The meeting concluded at 19.15.

Signed.....

Date .....