

GLOUCESTERSHIRE COUNTY BRIDGE ASSOCIATION

Minutes for the GCBA committee meeting held online on Thursday 1st September 2022

In attendance were Ian Sidgwick (President), Andrew Bull (Secretary), Jan Kinane, Hylary Kingham, Patrick Shields, Roger Williams and Toby Roberts (CBC rep).

Support for clubs

1. Ro Kaye has agreed to continue as the county's Designated Lead for Child Protection and Vulnerable Adult issues. This will include organising a county rep at congresses, and providing an annual update on the safeguarding policy to clubs (including with GCBA). Ian will agree a suitable date for this with Ro.
2. Following a request, Patrick has volunteered to hold a session for directors. We agreed that club buddies would approach clubs for the TD names for such a session, and that to enable this Patrick would search out and publish the list of club buddies. The list will be maintained within the BridgeWebs membership list.
3. Following his successful visit to Tewkesbury BC, Ian encouraged more such visits, and noted it would be helpful for visitors to take the list he produced of ways in which GCBA can support clubs, which he agreed to circulate. [Note: he has now done so - see Appendix A - and invites additions to the list].
4. With Tudor BC having recently switched to card payments, there was discussion about whether Cheltenham BC had written up how they made the same change (though they have now moved on to making payments in advance), which might help other clubs decide if they would find it practical. It was noted that it would be convenient if GCBA could also switch to cashless for their sessions at Cheltenham.

EBU EGM

5. No-one had any strong views regarding the proposed changes to the disciplinary process.

Cheltenham Congress

6. The Cheltenham Congress is now scheduled for 29-31st May with the Green Point events on the Saturday and Sunday and a 9-high event on the Monday. It was suggested that the 9-high event would have more of a congress "feel" for the new players expected at such an event if it were run in parallel with the main events, and would reduce the venue hire from 3 days to 2.
7. The joint GCBA/Cheltenham BC Congress Committee are considering possible venues. We agreed that we would be happy for them to book Dean Close School if Cheltenham think that is the best option.
8. The break-even for the event would be approximately 30 tables, which is lower than the most recent online attendance, but it is hard to judge what effect Covid will have on face-to-face Congress attendance. We accepted that the financial risk around the attendance level is jointly due to GCBA and Cheltenham BC.

Everett Cup

9. It was agreed that this would be held in support of Sue Ryder, though it was felt that we should get wider input at the 2023 AGM regarding which charity should be supported next year.

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10. Previously, a lot of credit for the high turn-out at this event has been due to the work put in by Allan Sanis. We are looking to get more people to help out with this - Patrick is seeking additional assistance with this.

9-high events

11. Patrick had issued a report on the events run currently (see Appendix B), and other ideas for encouraging new players were discussed, including the SBU approach of running Gentle Duplicate sessions for learners during the summer (which usually marks a hiatus in teaching). More is available for this group than was the case before.

Junior fund-raising event

12. It has been proposed that GCBA and Cheltenham BC jointly host a tutorial/play session on 7th January to raise funds for the EBU junior squads, and also to boost the profile of the squads, with the possibility of making this a regular event. This idea was generally supported, so we now need to consult with Cheltenham. [Note: This has now been given full support by the Cheltenham BC Management Committee]

Online Green Point events

13. EBU have proposed that online 1-day Green Point events should be run by EBU rather than by counties, as online events are de facto national events anyway, and there is a danger that, if run locally, they will clash with other events. This would not currently be a major issue for GCBA as our GP events are intended to be held face-to-face.

Any other business

14. The task list (for which we will seek volunteers) is still being completed.
15. It was agreed that we would postpone discussion of the Reserve Policy until we have input from the Treasurer.

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Appendix A (originally sent to clubs in November 2021)

GCBA OFFERS TO CLUBS

It is to be hoped that by Spring things will be further back to “normal”. Is now therefore the time to be planning how to build back up to pre Covid levels - and beyond? It is important to get back the players that went “dormant” during Covid but we also need new ones. Teaching is vital but we can also think about the significant number of existing social players and how to tempt them in to club duplicate.

There are a number of opportunities open to clubs and some are free just for the asking, they are benefits of being EBU/GCBA affiliated.

Here is a selection:

Need help on the technicalities of on-line bridge? Try asking GCBA. We have of course helped several clubs of late.

Would you like to hold some special event but are daunted by the requirements for expertise, equipment, knowledge or manpower? Let us know and we will see how we can support you with inter club matches, town twinning events and any other formats.

Do you have members who would like to be trained as teachers or directors? Get in touch, it doesn't have to cost much or indeed anything.

Are you held back in investing in bridge equipment due to limited funds? Get in touch: GCBA is open to consider requests for grants.

Got some interesting news to share? Get in touch - we are keen to feature clubs in our newsletter.

Would you like some professionally produced posters and leaflets to attract new members? Get in touch- they are free and can be customised to your club.

Is there anything else that you would like support on? If so then please do get in touch.

Kindly use this email address as opposed to clicking reply: president@gcba.org.uk

Ian Sidgwick

President GCBA

County EBU Shareholder

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Appendix B

PROPOSAL FOR 9-HIGH EVENTS IN GLOUCESTERSHIRE

The label “9-high” is used here as a placeholder for any form of restriction which avoids less experienced players being intimidated by higher standards of play or complexity of system.

FACE TO FACE POSSIBILITIES

Non-GCBA offerings: most club games and all club Gentle Bridge games (although how easy these are for newcomers is not clear)

Teams

- Bredon Vale Cup : has had limited support in recent years, was moved to Monday night to make attendance easier but not a great effect; coming on 25th Sep 22, with a max of one National Master per foursome.
- Rank Xerox Trophy : as for BV; to happen in Spring 2023 if Bredon Vale successful

Match Point Pairs

- Ace of Clubs : got going when David Simons drove it, but club heats only happened if clubs pestered, and it has been dropped in recent years. No plans currently.

What can we add?

- Not much in the way of teams, the current offerings look flexible and full.
 - It is very difficult to judge the appetite, but it is possible that a well planned face-to-face day for the participants in the online 9-High Swiss Pairs might work.
 - Alternatively, a GCBA organised session for learners from all clubs, perhaps in June as lessons wind down, would be useful, as well as being good advertising for the GCBA.

ONLINE POSSIBILITIES

Non-GCBA offerings: both EBU (twice daily) and EBED (twice weekly) run multiple games for this audience. And many clubs also run “Gentle Bridge” sessions – but not all of these are on RealBridge, which limits the interactions available.

Teams

- The Midlands Counties No Fear Swiss Teams comes in November, January and March – on a Saturday afternoon. GCBA advertises and organises entries.
- Cleverly Teams League : runs September to April and lower divisions naturally lower players.

Match Point Pairs

- 9-High Swiss Pairs now starting series 17 in September 2022.

What can we add?

- It might be worth introducing a “Learners’ League” for teams-of-4 to get learners playing competitively but in company they know. Surrey has been successful with this as “Try Teams” recognising that this avoid the serious complexity that comes with Match Point Pairs.
- Given the homogeneity/blandness of online games, it is very hard to suggest any Match Point Pairs event which doesn’t replicate what already exists and would be appealing.