

## Minutes for the GCBA committee meeting held online on Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2022

In attendance were Ian Sidgwick (President), Pau; Denning (Vice-President), Mike Wignall (Treasurer), Jan Bailey, Richard Butland, Andrew Bull, Hylary Kingham, Nigel Mortimer. Roger Williams. Apologies were received from Judy Sanis, Patrick Shields and Alan Wearmouth.

### Finance

1. Mike provided confirmation that we will not charge for the County Knock-Out this year (the relevant players contributing sufficiently via Monday night games, and this might encourage entries).
2. Jan raised the question of GCBA financial support for attendees at the Wessex Youth Bridge weekend, which comes on 10-11<sup>th</sup> April at Cheltenham Bridge Club. The idea would be to ensure that the few on restricted incomes, or those with multiple children coming, are not discouraged by the price (£35 per child). It is not possible for the GCBA to identify the relevant children; our plan therefore is to inform the relevant Gloucestershire schools that support is available on request – but with no commitment to unlimited funding.

### Report from Chief Tournament Director

3. Patrick asked that we note and ratify the following:
  - a. Face-to-face event date change from 5<sup>th</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup> Feb.
  - b. Filip Kurbalija memorial event on Friday 25<sup>th</sup> Feb at 1900 hrs on RealBridge
  - c. We had planned to review the fully online Monday evenings, and the balance of online vs face-to-face games, at this meeting but then came Plan B in December and the situation has not clarified much yet, so the review would be better held until March 2022. Reports were received of two clubs who had to inform their players that a member present the week before had since tested positive for Covid.
4. Roger suggested we should investigate the possibility of the GCBA organising more competitions for lower-ranked players, perhaps using Sarah Amos and her team to staff these.
5. Patrick also raised the question of seeding the draw in the County Knock-Out, in order to ensure the best teams met in the final as this would improve the County's chances in the Pachabo. He stated his feeling that the primary purpose of this event is to determine the County Champions and the Pachabo qualification is an extra; on the basis of giving every team an equal chance, his intention is to resist this suggestion. He asked for committee confirmation of this stance. The ongoing discussion led to
  - a. A claim that the event has always been seeded in the past. The argument was also made that this is just one interpretation of the way the initial round was used to settle the draw going forward, and that option is not available this year.
  - b. The suggestion that this was the standard pattern for all premier events such as tennis Grand Slams.
  - c. The suggestion that each team had an "even chance" when the event is seeded.
  - d. A suggestion that the seeding should be done by the Representative Events Committee.
  - e. A decision that the event should be seeded. [LATER NOTE: there has since been additional input about this and the decision will be put on hold until a further discussion at the next meeting]

### Update from the Representative Events Committee

6. Ian raised a point from the record of the last REC meeting; he asked how much importance we place on the level of Gloucestershire connection in selecting players to represent the GCBA. One restriction is that the player has declared to the EBU that Gloucestershire is their primary county of allegiance, but beyond that the rules allow us to select someone who has never set foot in the county. Mike counselled against the introduction of a two-tier membership for the County Association, which might result if restrictions were imposed – while accepting that the presence on a county team of members who never get involved with the county is distasteful to some other members. Richard read an excerpt from the REC minutes, which had discussed this and decided that now (before face-to-face settles again) was not the time to change the existing practice. Nigel raised the option (used in some contexts) of a minimum membership time before one can represent the county. Hylary drew parallels with playing cricket for Yorkshire (you need to be born there) and on the issue of Members of Parliament being helicoptered into a location.

### **EBU Matters**

7. The EBU is organising a meeting for County Association representatives, but giving a group of County leaders the responsibility for defining the agenda. Ian will circulate the agenda when it appears.
8. The EBU is also assigning a Board member to be a buddy for each County Association, and the GCBA has Patrick.
9. Patrick has presented to the EBU Board on how the EBU Strategy should be organised, The presentation is available [from this link](#). The intent is to help CBAs work out how their activities can help or complement those of EBU-central.

### **Report from Club Buddies**

10. Ian reported that Northleach Club had suspended its face-to-face games but resumed again this week. Hylary reported that Newent was still restricting itself to online duplicate sessions. Ian indicated we still needed buddies for some clubs. The difficulty of persuading a non-affiliated club to affiliate to the EBU was discussed, particularly at a time when clubs might be struggling with their own survival.

[Paul & Jan had to leave at this point]

### **Teaching and the EBU Recruitment Drive**

11. Patrick was able to feed in the latest news on Smart Bridge (the short, online course currently under development by EBED)

*The first trial will complete by the end of February after which they will require a few weeks digesting feedback and finalising the product prior to the second 'pre-launch' trial. The suggestion is to start the 'pre-launch' trial straight after Easter, aiming to market the product over the summer and officially launch in September. Volunteers to help with proof reading etc are being sought.*

12. Ian expressed some disappointment with the timetable. There was discussion about modes of teaching, with the point made repeatedly that learning must be a much shorter process in the future. Richard made the point that the increase in online bridge should make learning the game more attractive to the younger generations.

### **OTHER BUSINESS**

13. We agreed that a write-up on the Wessex Bridge Weekend should feature in the next county newsletter.
14. Items to which we must come back to are
  - a. The suggestion of a Clubs meeting in 2022 which remains on hold.
  - b. The intention of Patrick to prepare an offering for Gloucestershire U3A associations on bridge which is still to be progressed.
15. The next meeting will be on Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2022 at 1900 hrs (although consideration of an 1800 hrs alternative is underway).

THE END

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