

GLOUCESTERSHIRE COUNTY BRIDGE ASSOCIATION

Minutes for the GCBA committee meeting held online on Thursday 6th May 2021

In attendance were Patrick Shields (President), Andrew Bull (Secretary), Mike Wignall (Treasurer), Richard Butland, Jan Kinane, Nigel Mortimer, Ian Sidgwick, Roger Williams and Judith Sanis (CBC rep).

Finance and Programme

1. The Treasurer summarised recent discussions with Cheltenham Bridge Club and the committee agreed to the payment of a grant of £1,000 to CBC in respect of expenses incurred in reopening their playing premises following the Covid closure. The Treasurer was authorised to make this payment following re-commencement of Face to Face Bridge at CBC. It was confirmed that Gloucestershire clubs in general have been offered our help with re-opening if they need it.
2. Mike sent out a link to the accounts before the meeting, but noted that there are issues under discussion with the auditor, so they should not be regarded as final. His intention is that they will be ready a week before the AGM.
3. The accounts of the recent Cheltenham Congress (which made a profit) are with Jim Simons. It was agreed that the Congress was very well run, and we record here GCBA's appreciation of the work done by both the Congress committee, and by Sarah Amos and her team in running it.
4. It was agreed that we should charge £10 per team for the Summer Teams series which is being held on RealBridge.

AGM

5. Members have been notified that this will be held on 6th June. CBC have agreed to let us use their professional Zoom account for it.
6. Nominations for the officers and committee members need to be received by Sunday 9th May. Ian has agreed to stand for President, Patrick for Secretary (unless anyone else wishes to volunteer for this) and Mike to continue as Treasurer. Patrick is intending to continue as Chief Tournament Director. The other committee members present expressed their willingness to continue.
7. It was noted that the Judith's position of CBC rep is not currently an official CBC role. We have suggested to CBC that they make the role official.

Online Bridge

8. It was agreed that we should plan to continue playing solely online for the May-to-August sessions, as there is too much uncertainty about the possibility of face-to-face bridge in that time.
9. It was noted that there may be competition for the use of CBC premises on Monday evenings in the future, and we need to factor this into any planning for regular face-to-face GCBA club-style bridge. It was noted that this is a topic distinct from GCBA's county-wide championships and inter-county bridge.
10. We agreed to run the Swiss Teams every other week through May to July.
11. The 9-high Swiss Pairs has been running smoothly; we agreed to run two more series of this in May to August. It was noted that there have been other restricted events (9-high and 8-high

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Swiss Teams) held every few months across multiple counties (most recently run by Sarah Amos on behalf of the Midland Counties Working Group).

12. For the Representative Events Committee, Richard reported on feedback of players' views on whether Midlands Counties League games should in future be played face-to-face or online. There was considerable diversity in their views, with some opinions depending on the distance to travel, or on the time of year.
13. It was agreed that we should have a fuller survey of GCBA members on their views regarding the future of online/face-to-face play, and on whether they want a greater number of restricted events.

AOB

14. It was noted that in some counties, U3A have asked the county association for help with training new players, and that CBC hosts a weekly session for the Cheltenham U3A. Judith has been in touch with Alan Stanfield (a U3A director/teacher), and reported that he is keen to be involved and to keep in touch with the CBC directors. Patrick will ask Maggie Conu if she can help with providing contacts among the other Gloucestershire U3A groups, and investigate whether a county-wide U3A game is required.
15. The figures produced by Tim Anderson for the amount of bridge played at each affiliated club for the last 3 years show that 80% of GCBA players are at clubs which are active online, and that more bridge is being played now than in 2019 or 2020. The evidence suggests that people still prefer BBO to Real Bridge.
16. A survey by Somerset CBA shows that there is appetite there for more social bridge and afternoon bridge, and many players would welcome the chance to play against stronger opposition. This backs up our view that we would like more events to be available for all skill levels. It was noted that it is easier to find stronger opposition when playing online, as a wider geographical area is available.
17. Patrick asked if there was any appetite for GCBA (or among Gloucestershire clubs) to sponsor an English national bridge team, with the players visiting the club in return. There was some support for the idea, but rather than using the reserves it was agreed that the money should be raised via specific events.
18. Patrick gave a brief update on the Yorkshire teaching experiment (previously described in the March minutes) - they still have about 300 people signed up for the online lessons about 8 lessons in. The intention is that clubs will charge from the 10th lesson onward. Ian expressed an interest in seeing a sample lesson.
19. The next meeting will be on Thursday 3rd June.