

## Minutes for the GCBA committee meeting held online on Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> April 2022

In attendance were Ian Sidgwick (President), Paul Denning (Vice-President), Mike Wignall (Treasurer), Patrick Shields (Secretary), Jan Bailey, Andrew Bull, Richard Butland (towards the end), Hylary Kingham, Nigel Mortimer. Roger Williams – plus Alan Wearmouth as chair of the REC.

### Report from Chief Tournament Director

1. A plan was put forward for the months May through August. Paul reminded us that in the past the theme in the Summer Series had been to encourage players to mix partnerships. This continues to be supported but not enforced, as some players have always proved unwilling to try out new partnerships. Following discussion the following was approved.

*There will be games provided on all Mondays during May-August except for the Bank Holidays (first Monday in May, fifth Monday in August). We will run an all-play-all teams game F2F at Cheltenham Bridge Club on the third Mondays and online on the first and fifth Mondays (a total of eight teams games) and we will run BBO Pairs League games on the second and fourth Mondays (of which there are eight). All events will contribute to a Summer Championship which comprises individual, pair and team awards. We will double the awards currently in use, so we will award players 2 or 4 points for success in the Pairs League (full attendance levels means 128 points per session across 24 pairs). For the face-to-face teams games, we will award 8-4-2 for the top places (which means 56 points per session spread across 6 pairs) and for the online teams games we will award 4-2-1 for the top places (28 points per session awarded across 6 pairs). The points will be allocated to the individual, to the pair, and to any group of 3+ who play as a team. A leaderboard will be maintained throughout.*

2. The charges for the face-to-face games will need to be tackled soon, and with Mike moving on shortly, Patrick will lead on that. Mike cautioned that if Cheltenham BC has better use of the premises in mind, we should not expect favouritism.
3. It was also agreed that the Bi-Weekly Swiss teams would pause until September but that the 9-High Swiss Pairs would have two series over the summer.
4. We discussed the recent fall in the entry levels of national knock-out competitions (down 50% from pre-Covid levels). Paul had identified the National Inter-Club Knock-Out (NICKO) as the most appealing choice for a revival of interest, but that the high entry fee for this (and for other KOs) was a clear inhibitor. Patrick will point out the price issue to the EBU, and all committee members are encouraged to sound out clubs they know about why entries have dried up.

### Finance

5. We had received an initial enquiry from Churchdown BC about potential financial help in acquiring a Duplicate machine; we understand that they are in discussion with Gloucester BC about shared use, and we believe this is very much the right approach – even though it can create some (solvable) logistical problems. We agreed that we would be very supportive of any suggestion where the GCBA could help improve the facilities available to any affiliated bridge club, and we would await a further approach from Churchdown BC.
6. We noted that we need a replacement Treasurer in a few months' time as our Constitution forces Mike to stand down at the next AGM. We agreed the Patrick would broadcast an appeal for volunteers and have one embedded in the next newsletter.

### Update from the Representative Events Committee

7. Alan reported that the County had been offered places in all three categories of the National Inter County League Playoffs, and having checked on the level of interest, we had accepted. The entry fee across three categories is £200 and we agreed that the standard inter-county match fee of £7.50 per player should apply, and that any prize money would be redistributed to those in the teams which earned it.
8. It was confirmed that the REC stood by the view deduced from a survey last year that County players would prefer, in the Midlands Leagues, to play local counties face-to-face and the four furthest counties face-to-face outside the December-February period. It was noted that there are some very polarised views on this topic.
9. Alan reported on a plan to meet with a sizeable group who were interested in representing the county in the future, with a view to understanding how to progress those ambitions. It was agreed that this was a useful development.

## **Report from Club Buddies**

10. Ian reported that he had arranged a meeting with clubs and teachers from the North-East of the county on Sunday coming. The plan is to discuss the way forward for bridge, and to distribute some of the EBU supplied marketing materials.
11. Hylary reported that Newent was planning a nervous restart of face-to-face bridge on 27<sup>th</sup> April. An issue is the availability of competent volunteers, and Nigel confirmed the same problem had been hitting Tudor, but that some new volunteers had been identified within the latest group of learners.
12. We agreed to continue our focus on re-establishing Affiliated Clubs before moving on to offer help to others.

## **Teaching**

13. Jan reported that Cheltenham BC had very similar learner numbers pre-Covid and post-Covid, and that they rely on word-of-mouth rather than advertising for this.
14. Schools Bridge is starting up at Woodmancote Primary (on 10<sup>th</sup> May), and most of the DBS checking is done or in the pipeline.
15. Patrick reported that an Education group within the EBU is working on how to make a combination of online teaching and club-based Assisted Play sessions available to all bridge clubs. One attribute desired from this approach is that learners can deal and play independently after about a dozen lessons. We discussed the experience of Bridge-in-a-Weekend courses, and agreed that they often struggled to enable independent play but they had proved very successful at enthusing newcomers, who then continue with slower paced courses. Internet play has proved very helpful to newcomers to the game.

## **OTHER BUSINESS**

16. Alan reported that the arrangements were proceeding for the Ross-on-Wye event in July to proceed as a face-to-face event, and the county commitment were it to be cancelled would only be £70. All were content.
17. We agreed that the AGM would be held on the evening of Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> June, and be followed by a bridge game. We did not settle whether the event will be live or online; Patrick will investigate the catering options were the event to be live before a decision is made.
18. The next meeting will be on Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> May 2022 at 1800 hrs.

THE END