

GLoucestershire County Bridge Association

Minutes for the GCBA committee meeting held online on Thursday 20th July 2023

In attendance were Ian Sidgwick (President), Andrew Bull (Secretary), Ben Ritacca (Treasurer), Alan Stanfield, Paul Denning, Roger Williams, Jan Bailey, Patrick Shields and Toby Roberts (CBC Rep). Apologies were received from Richard Butland.

Boosting bridge in Gloucestershire

1. Youth Bridge
 - a) Jan reported that there were 7 or 8 children, from several different schools, playing in the Saturday afternoon sessions, with more playing on Wednesdays. There are plenty of volunteers helping out at these events, so the children get a lot of support.
 - b) It was noted that for financial purposes we need to keep track of which people have had, or will be having, their DBS checks.
 - c) Alison Pritchard is currently organising teaching at one school in Stroud, and is planning to extend this to a second school next term.
 - d) It was suggested that we might have a subgroup responsible for coordinating the teaching of Youth Bridge.
2. Cooperative clusters
 - a) The clubs in the cluster around Stroud now have a list of all bridge activity in their region which Stroud BC will be uploading to their website. One established teacher has put out an advertisement around the region, and a club there has expressed interest in entering the Cleverly League.
 - b) Patrick, Alan and Ian will be meeting on Sunday 30th with club reps from the Tewkesbury area (North Gloucestershire/South Worcestershire).
3. Key Performance Indicators
 - a) It was agreed that we should start by collecting the numbers of people playing bridge in the county, and how often they were playing, as these figures can be obtained from the EBU and the UMS payments. It was suggested that they should be collected quarterly to reflect a fixed number of Mondays.

Financial policy

4. It was suggested that we should have more upfront planning for financial outlays, rather than working on an ad hoc basis (as is sometimes the case currently), and that we should have an authorisation policy stating who can spend GCBA money, and how much they can spend. Ian and Ben will draft this.
5. Churchdown BC have put in a request for a grant of £500 and loan of £3000 to enable them to buy a dealing machine (they currently use the Gloucester BC machine, but this is not very convenient). The request was accepted, subject to prudent conditions.
6. Some felt that we could encourage more people to direct/score sessions by paying them to do so, or by funding an event (e.g. a free bridge session and lunch) for directors/scorers.

GLOUCESTERSHIRE COUNTY BRIDGE ASSOCIATION

Teaching

7. Cheltenham BC had recently hosted an EBED training course for new teachers, but the delivery of this had not been universally well-received. It was agreed that if this (or other events) had encouraged people to take up teaching, it would be good if more experienced teachers could act as 'buddies' to support and assist the new teachers (and that this might similarly be good for new directors/scorers).
8. It was proposed that we could fund regular get-togethers for the teaching community in the county, and noted that it would be good if we had someone to act as focal point for this community (in the way Alison Nicholson is for youth training, and Patrick is for directing).
9. Churchdown are planning to try out the new Smart Bridge online training course (in which students work through the course at their own pace with teachers providing face-to-face help).
10. Alan has kindly agreed to take the lead on adult teaching for the committee.

Reserves Policy

11. Ian proposed that we set £8000 as the reserved fund for GCBA. We now need to decide how to spend the money we have above this level usefully.

Competition proposals

12. Patrick reported that we are planning to move the County Leagues to default to face-to-face (so matches would only be played online if both teams agreed to this). There is a risk that we will lose one or two teams as a result, but there are various online leagues also available.
13. It was suggested that we work with Cheltenham BC to come up with special events for bank holidays, e.g. with handicapping, and possibly played at a different time of day (maybe involving a lunch break).