

Oxfordshire Bridge Association

Minutes of the Management Committee Meeting

held on Thursday 10 December 2009 at 7.30 p.m. at Oxford Bridge Club

PRESENT:

John Briggs [JB]	Chairman
Sandra Nicholson [SN]	Secretary
Dinah Lintott [DL]	Treasurer
Stephen Brown [SB]	Chief Tournament Director
Maxine Henry [MH]	Membership Secretary
Alan Grunwald [AG]	Tournament Secretary
Brenda Harris [BH]	Publicity Officer/EBU Shareholder
Geoff Nicholas [GN]	President/Chester/Wessex Secretary

Andrew Speyer	Abingdon	Krys Kazmierczak	Summertown
Clive Keep	Abingdon	Christopher Sheppard	Summertown
Nick Perceval-Price	Menagerie	Erica Sheppard	Summertown
Peggy Manuell	Oxford	Colin Jones	Wallingford

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from:

Peter Baxter EBU Shareholder (*now resigned, see item 3 below*)
Sue Maxwell EBU Shareholder
Lynne Hayes Cups, Noticeboards and 2010 Congress

Ian van Maanen	Abingdon	Sandra Claridge	Menagerie
Gordon Carroll	Abingdon	Esme Alden	Oxford
Mike Webley	Aylesbury	Chris Kerr	Oxford
Murray Cooke	Aylesbury Aces	Richard Sills	Oxford
Ian Brooks	Banbury	Kathy Talbot	Oxford
Alison Nicolson	Blewbury	Bill McCarthy	Thame
Kay Chamberlain	Faringdon	Norman	Gascoyne
John Barlow	Frilford	Wallingford	

2. Minutes of Management Committee meeting held on 7 September 2009

The minutes were unanimously approved (proposed Peggy Manuell, seconded BH).

3. Action points and matters arising from previous meeting

(Numbers refer to the minutes of the previous meeting. Some matters arising were covered in the Officers' reports which were circulated with the agenda for this meeting. Any discussion of items in those reports, or included under other main agenda items, is recorded in the appropriate place.)

3: Lynne Hayes had agreed to be co-opted as a member of the Committee. Peter Baxter had now resigned as an Oxfordshire Shareholder since he was moving to Yorkshire, so SN had agreed to act as a proxy Shareholder pro tem, with a normal nomination process to be followed at the next AGM.

4: The previous Secretary, Mary-Ann Sheehy, had now prepared minutes of the 2009 AGM. These would be placed on the County website.

5: Updated information on club contacts had been provided for the brochure and website. Proposed action on better promotion for the Presidents' Cup and Chester Cup would be carried forward.

6(a): The new date for the 2011 Congress had been confirmed with the EBU and LH had booked the venue as agreed. BH asked whether she should advertise the 2010 Congress in the February or April issues of English Bridge, or both, or not at all (the cost is more than £300 for 1/8 page). It was agreed (proposed Krys Kazmierczak, seconded Nick Perceval-Price) that it should be advertised in the April issue, with draft text going to JB, SB and LH for approval and a possible £1 increase in the entry fee, to be confirmed with LH. SB suggested that leaflets needed to be ready in time to be taken to the next EBU Shareholders meeting on 9th March, and that it should be possible to print them from the County website so that those attending Congresses could take some with them. When the leaflet was ready, AG was asked either to email everyone who came last year, or to send a copy by post. **ACTION:** AG to prepare entry forms in consultation with LH, put link on website and email/write to previous attendees – also, ensure EBU have the correct link on their calendar; BH to get forms printed by 9th March, and book advertising in EB.

6(e): JB had discussed possibilities for uploading results to the County website with SB and felt that we were doing the best we could for now.

7(i): DL and JB had decided that, where the cost of refreshments at invitation events is included in the entry fee, the County should pay. Refunds had therefore been offered to some members who had recently participated in such events. Other expenses such as travel costs remained the responsibility of the participating players.

7(ii): Kathy Talbot, who was unable to be present, had sent in a report to say that there had been some improvements in the securing and tidying of OBC premises after County duplicates. She and the Chairman had agreed that a rota of volunteers should be drawn up with specific responsibilities, including encouraging players to pay for their tea or coffee, as we would prefer to avoid the alternative of increasing the table money to cover the costs of refreshments. BH offered to keep an eye on payment when she was there on a Tuesday. SB commented that not everyone liked strong coffee and suggested it should also be possible to buy instant coffee at the old price of 30p.

4. Officers' reports

All officers' reports (except for the Chief TD's) had been circulated with the Agenda for the meeting. The following additional points were made:

Chairman: Indicated that he proposed to deal with club affiliation issues at the following meeting, by which time he hoped it would be possible to have a constructive discussion regarding the position of any clubs which in the end were not able to retain affiliated status, including the implications for the Wessex League (**ACTION:** GN to prepare a paper on possible changes to Wessex League rules, for the following meeting). Meanwhile the University club had been informed that in their case, holding a weekly duplicate during term times would be sufficient, even though this would result in fewer than 26 sessions a year. Menagerie and Highworth were considering the way forward.

He hoped that it would soon be possible to make an announcement about a replacement Match Secretary following Nick Smith's resignation.

Treasurer: The County's financial position is sound and she believed we could afford to lose £1000 for one year if the proposal on the County P2P fee was accepted. Overall, most money is spent on entry fees for high-level EBU events (Corwen, Pachabo, Tollemache, Dawes/Garden Cities) and on production of the prospectus. The Congress is profitable.

GN queried the figures for the Seniors competition. DL and JB explained that the accounts were prepared according to actual receipts and payments rather than on an accruals basis, therefore figures could vary from one year to the next depending on exact timing. Overall DL believed that the Seniors made a small loss. The same timing issues applied to the Andrew Robson seminars, the figures for which were queried by BH, who said she understood they made approximately £290 profit each year.

Secretary: Asked SB and AG to note changes of club representatives recorded in her report.

Chief Tournament Director: Apologised for not providing a written report. Explained that he had run a heat of the County Pairs but only four pairs had wanted to compete.

Membership Secretary: Was still trying to establish whether some participants in the Swiss Pairs event held earlier that month were OBA members – it appeared that John Slater had taken details away with him at the time.

Suggested that for next year's prospectus, when the number of copies would be considerably increased following the introduction of Universal Membership, labelled copies (without envelopes) should be distributed via clubs. SN said that this left clubs with problems of storage and postage costs for those copies not collected. Nick Perceval-Price and SB reminded the meeting that one reason for posting individual copies of the prospectus to all members was in order to meet the constitutional requirement of informing them about the AGM (notice of which is included in the prospectus). **ACTION:** SN to check with the EBU whether we are required to do this by post, or whether email is sufficient.

Tournament Secretary: Reported that there had been 30 entries for the recent County Swiss Pairs competition.

Webmaster: Reported that Richard Lonsdale had now renewed the hosting arrangement for one year only, after which alternative arrangements would need to be put in place.

Some members favoured switching to a unified solution, such as Bridgeweb/Scorebridge, but as neither AG nor SB wished to go down this route, it was agreed not to pursue it. **ACTION:** AG to find a new provider to host the website in its current form, before the expiry of the current arrangement in November 2010.

EBU Shareholders: The meeting congratulated Peter Baxter on his election to the EBU Selection Committee.

Publicity Officer, Match Secretary: No further points.

President/Chester/Wessex Secretary: No further points.

6. Business to be dealt with

a) Implementation of P2P, including confirmation of County P2P charge

JB apologised for the confusion over the amount of the County P2P charge, which had resulted from the wholesale change of County officers at the previous AGM. As indicated by the Treasurer earlier in the meeting, the OBA's financial position was currently very sound, so although he still believed that 6p would be the correct P2P figure to provide an overall amount equal to the current income from annual subscriptions, he felt that the proposal to limit the figure to 3p for the first year was supportable.

Krys Kazmierczak asked why it was necessary to decide on the figure for 2011 so early, when the EBU's P2P amount for that year would not be decided until their next AGM in October 2010. JB replied that he felt that giving advance notice of the higher figure was in the interests of clarity and would be helpful to clubs.

DL pointed out that the proposal did not include a figure for the annual cost of direct or secondary affiliation after April 2010 for individuals who would not be members of OBA-affiliated clubs. It was proposed that this should remain at £4.00 p.a. in 2010, to be reviewed when more information became available.

With this amendment, the County P2P charge of 3p for 2010/11 rising to 6p in 2011/12 was proposed by Nick Perceval-Price, seconded by AG, and unanimously agreed. **ACTION:** SN to advise the EBU and all OBA clubs of the confirmed amount ASAP.

b) Officer posts currently vacant (Education and Training, Match Secretary)

BH reported that Alison Nicolson had sent her a "job description" for the role of Education and Training Officer, which she would forward to SN for circulation (*see annexe, below*). It was generally agreed that the complete role was actually too much for one person and that it should be split into two, one part being a "Youth Officer" who would be concerned with under 18 year-olds, the other part – needing a new title – to be concerned with adults new to bridge, and with encouraging bridge teachers in the county to work together in a more coherent way. Marryat Stevens had effectively been carrying out the role of Youth Officer for some time and it was unanimously agreed (proposed by JB, seconded Nick Perceval-Price) that his contribution should now be officially recognised and that he should be invited to join the Management Committee. **ACTION:** JB to invite Marryat to take on the "youth" role; anyone with a suggestion as to who might be approached for the "adult" role, to let JB know.

c) County Newsletter

David Bygott's offer to take over as Editor of the County Newsletter was warmly accepted.

SN passed on some further thoughts that he had sent through, mainly concerning the possibility of an additional information/report service to be provided in an online form between the regular issues. It was agreed that he should be encouraged to discuss this suggestion with AG, and to co-ordinate with BH over the production and circulation of paper copies (including proof-reading).

DB had also made the point that, while the OBA committee had every right to establish guidelines, he felt that full control of the copy in the Newsletter (including, for instance, the right to reject commercial advertising) should be in the hands of the Editor. The committee supported this principle, but wished to make it clear that the Newsletter should continue to carry notices of County competitions prominently on the front page, as it had previously been agreed that this was the most cost-effective method of reminding all members about forthcoming events.

It was agreed that the name of the newsletter should be changed from Oxford Bridge to Oxfordshire Bridge. **ACTION:** SN to advise DB of this, and ask him to co-ordinate with AG and BH over circulation and distribution. DB to create his own working group as needed.

d) County Pairs competition – proposal from Clive Keep

Clive Keep (the County Pairs organiser) presented his paper and the following discussion took place on the individual points within his proposals:

1. KK felt that the wording should be stronger (e.g. "every club should hold a heat") but there was no general agreement on this.
2. There was some concern that restricting each heat only to members of that particular club might not result in open competition, and might cause difficulties where one partner was a member of the club and another was not. It was agreed that clubs should be allowed to determine their own policy on this issue.
- 3/4. Ideally there should be two OBA heats, but it was recognised that there might not be sufficient demand for more than one. In this case, it should preferably be held after all the other heats, and certainly should not clash with any other club heat.
6. CK explained that because the most successful pairs in the final were expected to represent the county in the Corwen competition, he felt members should not be allowed to participate unless Oxon was their primary county of allegiance. After discussion a formal vote was taken on this point which resulted in acceptance by 7 votes to 3.
- 10/11. In future we might consider the possibility of having variable numbers in the semi-finals, with fixed ratios qualifying in club heats. To be reviewed next year?
16. The allocation of Master Points needs further clarification both on the scale to be used, and on how to award MPs when a session designated as a club heat is split into competing and non-competing sections. CK was asked to get guidance on this from SB which should then be included in the prospectus for future reference.

With the agreed amendments, the proposals were carried nem.con. and CK was warmly thanked for his work in preparing them. **ACTION:** CK to advise clubs on the new rules,

and arrange this year's semi-finals accordingly. SB to clarify the arrangements for awarding Master Points at club heats, and put this in the prospectus for next year.

e) Oxford Times Cup

As noted in the Chairman's report, the competition due to take place in November had been postponed, owing to a lack of suitably compliant entries. AG noted that it was difficult to be fair as to who qualified to enter this event.

It was agreed that the date for 2010 and future years should be changed to come nearer the end of the "learning year", when more novices might feel ready to enter such a competition. **ACTION:** AG to liaise with "novice contacts" in all major clubs to encourage entries.

f) Working Groups

JB suggested that the Working Groups on the operation of the proposed Executive Committee, and on the implementation of the previous Working Group report, should be combined. Kathy Talbot had agreed to become a member of this group, and SB also volunteered. **ACTION:** JB to convene the group.

The proposed groups on the Newsletter and the Website were left to David Bygott and AG to organise as they felt necessary.

7. AOB

(i) Noticeboards: Richard Sills had sent in a report to say that, after experiencing lengthy delays, he had reverted to the previous signwriter and was hoping that the OBA honours boards would shortly be updated. Some work had already been completed and the signwriter was currently waiting to obtain more gold leaf.

(ii) Poor attendance at County events: Colin Jones suggested that this should be an item for discussion at a future meeting, including ways to avoid clashes with dates of other events outside the County.

8. Date and venue of next meeting

Wednesday 24 March, Comrades Club, Wantage – directions are on the Wantage club website if needed.

(Monday 14 June, AGM, Oxford Bridge Club)

Annexe: Duties and responsibilities of County Education and Training Officer

(adapted from a note prepared by the former post-holder, Alison Nicolson)

Juniors

To encourage more young people (up to age 18) to learn to play bridge and become regular players. This includes:

- Providing support and teaching for junior learners
- Arranging teaching in schools
- Liaising with EBU over MiniBridge schools recruitment events in the local area.

Adults/general -

To encourage more adults to learn to play bridge and become regular players, eventually progressing to full membership of a bridge club within the County. This includes:

- Maintaining an up-to-date list of opportunities to learn bridge in the county, and publicising it as appropriate, especially via the County website.
- Being able to recommend courses beyond the basics - there are lots available.
- Keeping in regular touch with all teachers in the county.
- Providing support for teachers when requested, including being able to observe the lessons of others & give feedback.
- Visiting clubs & encouraging them to set up a teaching programme.
- Setting up & running events for students & novices, preferably where the learning happens – perhaps on the basis that two or three pairs will qualify for a second round. (The education officer needs to get teachers to recruit entries for such events, which will not happen without support & encouragement.)

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