

Oxfordshire Bridge Association

Minutes of the Management Committee Meeting

held on Thursday 22nd July 2010 at 7.30 p.m. at the Oxford Bridge Club

PRESENT:

John Briggs [JB]	Chairman
Sandra Nicholson [SN]	Secretary
Dinah Lintott [DL]	Treasurer
Alan Grunwald [AG]	Tournament Secretary
Brenda Harris [BH]	Publicity Officer/EBU Shareholder
Ian Angus [IA]	Match Secretary
Marryat Stevens	Youth Officer
Lynne Hayes	Cups, Honours Boards and 2010 Congress Organiser

Andrew Speyer	Abingdon	Alastair Gidman	Summertown
Ian Seward	Frilford	Erica Sheppard	Summertown

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from:

Stephen Brown [SB]	Chief Tournament Director
Geoff Nicholas [GN]	League Secretary

Esme Alden	Oxford	Neil Whiting	Summertown
Richard Sills	Oxford		

JB noted that following the AGM, the posts of Membership Secretary and Education Officer regrettably remained unfilled, although he had spoken to a number of people about them. He felt that we badly needed more people to become involved with the running of the County and would welcome anyone willing to volunteer.

2. Minutes of Management Committee meeting held on 24 March 2010

LH had pointed out that she was responsible for Honours Boards rather than Notice Boards. With this amendment, the minutes were unanimously approved. JB thanked AG for organising the venue at Wantage.

3. Action points and matters arising from previous Management Committee meetings (*Numbers, where included, refer to minutes of the previous meeting.*)

Promotion for President's and Chester Cups: this would be included in the next issue of the County Newsletter, which was due to go out with the prospectus in August. BH pointed out that we needed to organise a "stuffing day" to prepare the prospectus for

posting, using labels supplied by the EBU. In the absence of a Membership Secretary, she volunteered to arrange this, and would ask Maxine Henry to write out the procedure for future reference. **ACTION:** GN/DB/BH.

Intermediate level events: Although Wallingford already organises a duplicate evening suitable for intermediate level players, and Oxford Bridge Club is about to launch a similar event, it was felt that we also needed to do more as a County to provide events at this level. AG pointed out that two-thirds of OBA members are at or below Advanced Master level and although there are a few County events aimed at “newcomers”, there is very little suitable for “improvers”. After some discussion it was agreed that we should aim to set up a parallel event to County Night, taking place once a month (perhaps with a later extension to Wantage at another time of the month), using the same boards but playing as a separate section in another room. The aim would be to maintain a sociable, friendly atmosphere, with a host system and a firm restriction (to be determined) on who would be eligible to play. **ACTION:** JB to organise a small group consisting of JB, BH, AG, Esme Alden (if willing) and, ideally, someone from Thame or Aylesbury (possibly Alison Nicolson), to take this forward.

Website: AG reported that he had found two possible providers for new hosting arrangements. No progress had yet been made on the working group to look at integrating results and general redesign. Before taking this forward, AG was asked to let JB know what his objections were to the use of Bridgewebs, which was now successfully used by many other counties as well as clubs. **ACTION:** AG.

Group to discuss Executive Committee and Implementation of previous Working Group report: It was agreed that this should also look at use of funds, as suggested by the Auditor at the AGM. JB hoped to be able to find a group of about 6 people (including Kathy Talbot, who had already volunteered) who could work on this by email. Members were asked to volunteer and/or let JB know of anyone they thought would be suitable. **ACTION:** JB/all.

Newsletter - 3/6(c): the next issue was being prepared, focusing (as agreed) on encouraging entries for the President's and Chester cups. David Bygott wanted to include an old photograph for which the copyright belonged to one of the local newspapers. It was agreed that he could pay up to £20 for this if necessary. Normally this issue would go out with the Prospectus, but as the closing date for entries is 31st August, the timing may be wrong – BH to liaise with DB over this, and if necessary arrange distribution via the usual channels, including publication on the website. **ACTION:** DB/BH/AG.

Masterpoint and licensing arrangements: SB had sent in a report (sent by email before the meeting, but not received until later that week) explaining that the only issue that he felt needed to be reviewed under this heading was that we currently have three county Ladders (Teams, Pairs and Butler) and the EBU normally allow only two. He recommended changing to just the Pairs and the Butler, since the teams evenings are very well attended and so perhaps do not need a ladder to support them. There could be a few extra Butler events scored on the 5th Tuesday. If it was felt that a Teams Ladder was still needed then we should write to the EBU to request having three ladders.

County duplimite machine (6c): Stuart McPhee and his wife had volunteered to take over from Stephen and Pauline Brown, for which the County was very grateful.

4. Officers' reports

As the meeting followed on soon after the AGM, officers had not been asked to prepare formal reports in advance on this occasion.

Treasurer: The Treasurer reported that there was about £4,000 in the current account, plus £21,000 invested. The surplus would definitely be lower than that reported in the previous year, due to the County P2P fee being set at 3p rather than 6p. A small amount of income from P2P had been received from the EBU (Stephen Brown's report, received after the meeting, clarified how this was made up). It was noted that the amount received each month should gradually increase, as not all clubs had yet uploaded all data.

Secretary: The Secretary reported that the EBU had sent out a letter explaining that clubs were to be contacted to ask them to elect a County club representative to sit on a new Regional Club Committee, which would in its turn elect and send representatives to the National Club Committee. The first step, apparently, would be for the existing club committee regional representative to approach clubs to determine who should be the point of contact for counties with reference to club matters, and then to relay this information to the county so that we could liaise with clubs about inviting nominations for the County club representative. It was agreed that in our case, this would involve duplication of effort. **ACTION:** SN to liaise with Tom Garrett to avoid such duplication.

Chief Tournament Director: In SB's absence, JB said that he believed the prospectus was in hand (SB later reported that it should be ready by late August). He added that whilst we would continue to send it out by post this year to all members, next year we hoped to do most of the distribution by electronic means, including separating the advance notice of the AGM from the booklet.

Tournament Secretary: AG asked whether we should allow non-members of the OBA to participate in OBA events if they were members of other national bridge unions, as we already allowed this for the Congress. Under EBU regulations, we were obliged to use their conditions of entry for the Congress, but could determine entry criteria locally for our own events. It was agreed that these should be restricted to County members only.

EBU Shareholders: A meeting had been held on 1 July 2010, largely covering technical matters such as changes to the Articles of Association. BH and SN had attended but Sue Maxwell had neither attended, arranged a proxy, nor sent an apology. Despite this, JB reported that the General Manager of the EBU had told him that shareholders did not have to be re-elected annually: once elected, as long as they were still eligible to be a shareholder, they remained in post and had to resign before a new election could be held. **ACTION:** JB to speak to SM to see whether she is willing to resign.

Match Secretary: It was noted that some of the Dawes League dates had been changed since the first draft of the 2010/11 calendar.

League Secretary: GN was unable to attend but had provided a report as follows:

1) **Masterpoints** for the seasons Wessex, Presidents and Chester have all been sent to the EBU and I believe have already been credited to individuals' masterpoint records.

2) The wording of the **proposed Wessex regulations** needs very careful consideration with regard to the make-up of the divisions. Last season we had thirty nine teams participating, with eight in each of the top four divisions and just seven in the fifth division. In my view this is totally correct...do we really wish to relegate a number of teams (one from each of the top four divisions) so that the bottom team has the most teams participating?

However, there is a strong possibility that this coming season we may have forty one or more teams. If we say the highest number of teams should be in the highest division (**as is currently done**) then one extra team will be promoted from each division (clearly apart from the first). It surely cannot be right to regularly muck about with the whole league in this way? It's unfair on the players, but particularly unfair on the captains who have to explain why his/her team may be promoted or relegated a couple of weeks before the season starts!

May I respectfully suggest that we always attempt to maintain the numbers in the three higher divisions at eight. Clearly we do not want to see division four or five with too few, or too many teams participating, but I suggest this may be left to the tournament committee to decide if things are not clearcut. *(I would further suggest that seven is a minimum and nine a maximum for each of the five divisions.)*

3) On a separate matter, I am pleased to mention that in the last two months we have had nine and a half tables in June and nine tables in July participating in the **monthly Seniors competition**. These are the highest numbers to date. Okay, there are no guarantees but this is encouraging.

The committee agreed that if necessary, the lowest division should have more teams, rather than restructuring the upper divisions at the last minute. GN would be able to implement this recommendation for the coming season in accordance with the new regulation (xxvii), which was agreed at the recent AGM; and the rules would need to be amended in due course to reflect the change. **ACTION:** GN.

Youth Officer: MS reported that he would be attending the junior teach-in weekend at the end of August, and would continue running a schools bridge club and teaching in local schools, with the aim of getting a team to play in the Schools League. He was also in discussion with a group organising minibridge teaching in the south of the county, in collaboration with Berks & Bucks.

Cups and Honours Boards: LH reported that the Wessex League Division 5 cup, which had been missing at the time of the AGM, had been located and she hoped it would be returned shortly.

5. Report on 2010 OBA Congress and arrangements for organisation of Congress in 2011

LH presented the accounts for the 2010 Oxford Congress which showed a net profit of £1846. The event had been full on both days (86 pairs and 44 teams) and had gone very smoothly, with the only minor glitch being the need to hold an appeal panel on Saturday evening after the scoring had been done. In response to an enquiry as to whether we could have got more entries if there had been space, AG said this was marginal but the trend seemed to be that if you ended up having to turn people away, entries actually went up the following year, so this would need to be kept under review.

LH also presented a set of recommendations for the organisation of the Congress in future. These included: keeping the date one week earlier in 2012 and future years to avoid possible clashes with other events; ordering all equipment, including tables, from the same supplier – Martin Lee being one possibility – to avoid complications; using Bridgemates to score the pairs; and paying extra for the teas in order to get better cakes. She strongly suggested that a sub-committee should be set up to run the event in future, and said that she would be prepared to sit on such a committee, but not to be responsible again for running the event on the day and taking all the decisions. Other people who had helped, and might be prepared to join the group, were AG, SB and GN.

JB congratulated LH on the tremendous success of the event, both financially and operationally. It was agreed that we should spend about £300 more next year to provide better teas and simplify the organisation. **ACTION:** LH to book hall and dates for 2012, and look at simplifying arrangements by contracting with Martin Lee.

6. Action points arising from AGM

- a) Men's/Ladies' Pairs:** BH suggested combining the competitions into a single “non-mixed” field: however, it was felt that this would not be appropriate. After discussion it was agreed that the County should offer a “non-expert” prize in both events (with criteria as for the Sandra Landy, no more than 10,000 master points at the time of receipt of the entry) and give them wider publicity, with the aim of increasing entries by 20% over the previous year, in order to avoid discontinuing the events. **ACTION:** AG/BH.
- b) Dimmie Fleming award:** The proposal to nominate Bill McCarthy for a Dimmie Fleming award (given by the EBU to to publicly recognise those who have worked hard over many years to promote bridge locally at County and Club level) was unanimously agreed. **ACTION:** SN to put the nomination to the EBU, with a request to speed up the process if possible.
- c) Use of the ongoing surplus:** JB had already indicated that he would like this to be considered by the group looking at the implementation of the previous Working Group report. The general thrust should be to promote and develop bridge within the County as widely as possible, rather than to increase support for the top players, e.g. when representing the County in national events. It was suggested that we might consider subsidising the Tuesday night intermediate event discussed earlier (see item 3, above).
- d) Election of officers:** There were still no volunteers for either Membership Secretary or Education Officer.
- e) Selection committee:** JB to speak to Colin Jones to see if he is willing to continue as Chairman.
- f) P2P fee:** To be kept under review when we have more information about actual levels of income in 2010/11.
- g) Wessex League:** It was suggested that, with 3 out of 8 teams in Division 1 possibly not eligible for the Garden Cities, we should look at some form of parallel scoring so that the Garden Cities entry would be determined only by the results between those teams eligible to enter. After discussion it was agreed that the rules as agreed at the AGM should stand. It was also agreed that it was not necessary to alter the arrangements for playoffs.
- h) Constitution:** Discussion of the number of reps per club was inconclusive, but will be looked at again before the next AGM. It was noted that Wallingford now has no membership fee and allows players to join at their first visit to the club.

7. AOB

County Night championship playoff event: DL pointed out that there had been a problem with this year's event because the carry-forward arrangements meant that some of those playing could not possibly win. She felt that if we were to continue to hold such an event in future, the carry-forward system needed to be overhauled, or perhaps abandoned altogether.

Beck Cup invitation event: It was noted that it had not been possible to arrange a suitably qualified non-playing director for this event, even though the rules specified this. MS, who is qualified to direct at county events, commented that he would like to do more but was not given enough advance notice.

8. Date and venue of next meeting

The next meeting will be held at 7.30 pm on Monday 6 September, at the Oxford Bridge Club (following the Wessex League meeting).

Dates for further meetings in 2010/11 are listed in the Calendar, with a venue outside central Oxford to be arranged for the March meeting, possibly also for December.