

Minutes of 73rd Annual General Meeting of Farnborough (Kent) Bridge Club
Held on Wednesday 20th August 2025 at 7pm

Committee Members present:

Chris Clegg, Chair

John Hunt, Treasurer

Kim Romanski, Honorary Secretary

Wendy Church, James Foster, Claire Martin, Rodney Meredith

Other members present:

Richard Anscombe, Teresa Berry, Camilla Blackburn, Pauline Boatwright, Graham Clements, Peter Cox, Richard Creamer, Jean Fishleigh, Paul Fishleigh, Allan Foster, Gillian Foster, Richard Gibbons, Brian Grimwood, Indiana Hamilton, John Hemington, Brian Hogg, David Hudson, Marian Hunt, John Hunter, Norman Inniss, Barbara Jackson, Jan Johnson, Phil Jones, Christine Kempton, Bob Kendall, Mary Kendall, Jenifer Kerr, Janet Kopczyk, Don Mitchell, Moya Nesom, Jean O'Doherty, John Oakland, Sue Parkins, Mike Pearson, Lesley Reche, Roger Pechey, Susan Phillips, David Powell, Hilary Powell, Mike Rafferty, Yogi Rajah, Gillian Ridges, Charles Scott, Rajinder Sehmi, Tom Smith, Valerie Smith, Chris Steed, Rod Steed, Jennifer Viles, Susanne Walsh, Jenny Watson.

Total attendees: 58

1. Apologies for absence:

Laura Birnhak, Matthew Beddow, David Brown, Stephen Brown, Joan Chandler, Michael Collins, Anthony Conway, Suzanne Foster, Ian Galletti, Daphne & Jerry Gilbert, Jeremy Heckscher, Luke Kerr, Roy Lambert, Jo Lightfoot, Bob Manser, Gordon McBride, Mike Pearson, Diana Potter, Simon Read, Steve Ripley, Rosie Robson, Alan Singleton, Helen Smithson, Annie & Brian Thompson, Tony Urwin, Jane Waldeck, Leila Williams, Norman Wright

2. Approval of minutes of 72nd AGM

Approved

3. Matters arising

None

4. Election of officers

Chairman, Chris Clegg, Treasurer, John Hunt and committee members Wendy Church, & Rodney Meredith were uncontested. The nomination of Kim Romanski as Honorary Secretary and Claire Martin as committee member were also uncontested. The chairman suggested a bloc vote for all.

Proposed by: Hilary Powell

Seconded by: Lesley Pechey

Approved

5. Chairman's report The Chairman's report for 2024-2025 was as follows:

As part of a drive to speed up play, you will be pleased to know that my report will take less time than it should to play a hand - 3 minutes!

Farnborough continues to go from strength-to-strength and last year saw increases in membership, income and attendances which grew 12% to 5,300 bums on seats, hardly surprising they show signs of wear and tear.

Inevitably this increased the committee's workload so on behalf of all members I would like to thank Joan, Wendy, James, John and Rodney who remained calm and carried on particularly when their chairman was AWOL for a few weeks. I would also like to warmly welcome Claire and Kim who are worthy replacements for Joan and James.

Keeping the show on the road involves considerable commitment from directors, hosts, scorers and keyholders as the club simply can't function without them, so on behalf of the committee, thank you. And thanks go to Jenny Kerr, Hilary Powell, Stephen Brown, Richard Creamer, John Hemington, John Oakland and Mike Penney for all their support throughout the year.

More players and sessions have unfortunately resulted in an increase in poor behaviour, as predicted by the great and good. Ironically none of the spats were caused by a new member but were the result of rudeness, bickering or petty squabbles involving people who have played in this room for decades and who should know better. The committee has decided this must stop and I shall deal with this later in the agenda.

The club retained the Corbett Cup for the third year running and our inaugural charity Swiss Pairs event raised over £1,200 for Cancer Research. We are running it again on Tuesday 16th September and there is still time to sign up online if you've not done so.

We would also appreciate your support for our inaugural EBU 'National Handicap Pairs' event on Sunday 7th September, which again you can do by going on our website and pressing 'Book Events'. Even a Luddite like me found it easy.

Finally, I would like to thank you and all the other members for continuing to play at this great club and making it so successful. And a reminder that next year we are 75 years old and the committee is considering how best to celebrate this great anniversary and would warmly welcome your support.

6. Treasurer's report The Treasurer's report for 2024-2025 was as follows:

The club enjoyed an increase in income last year due to the following factors:

1. Firstly, we had an increase in paid up membership from 118 members to 154 members which raised an extra £420.00.
2. Secondly, there was an increase of £5,000 in table money, up 34% on last year, which does however also include £650 in advance payments. This can be attributed to a 12% increase in overall attendance which is an extra 577 people over the year. An extra 86 people attended on Wednesday's, and an extra 240 people attended on Friday's. Tuesday attendance makes up the difference and averaged 6.5 tables a session and continues to be popular. A special thanks to John Oakland for running these sessions.
3. It is also worth mentioning that the host system worked well and there were 80 hosts in total. This equates to £280 in credits, so maybe this incentive has worked!

Obviously, outgoings increased as a consequence:

1. Hall rent went up 15% or £967, mainly due to the extra 14 Tuesday sessions. We also made a one-off contribution of £215 towards the installation of the new wi-fi system located within the hall and also pay £15 a month in ongoing usage. We have been advised by the landlord that we can expect a rent increase this year of up to 23%, which is an extra £3 an hour.
2. Refreshments went up £415 due to the extra sessions and more consumption by an ever-larger membership! The overall cost averaged out at £20 a session which I think is very reasonable. Wendy continues to shop around to get great value for money and visitors and members alike comment favourably about our refreshments.
3. Main items included in the stationery costs are:
 - £200 for 3,000 scorecards,
 - £350 for 80 sets of bidding cards,
 - £290 for 5 new tables,
 - As well as batteries, manuals, laminating, paper and printing costs.

4. The engraving total includes the purchase of a new trophy for the Friday ladder NGS and a new plinth for the Hopper Cup. Other trophies may soon need extra plinths too as they are quite old and filling up fast!
5. Competition expenses included the Corbett Cup.
6. Miscellaneous includes the cost of a day's tuition for new scorers by Stephen Brown.
7. Total outgoings increased by 10% or £1,490 mainly due to increased hall rent.

As mentioned earlier, the change in club funds does, however, include the advance payment of £650 for table money. It also includes £865 entry fees already paid for two events scheduled for September, the EBU National Handicap Pairs and the Charity Swiss Pairs for Cancer Research.

The Christmas party was attended by 62 people and again everyone agreed the catering was impressive. 90% of the cost was covered by attendees and the raffle, leaving a deficit of £200.

We still expect to have to replace the dealing machine soon but thank Mike Penney for eking out the life of the current one. We also plan to update the outside cupboard to make more use of the limited space and to avoid damaging the bridge tables any further as they are expensive to replace. We are also planning for our 75th Anniversary and expect to partly subsidise the event.

I would like to thank Richard Anscombe for auditing the accounts once again.

Finally, I must also thank you all for your prompt payments each month.

Richard Anscombe, Independent examiner of accounts, declared that the accounts produced this year were "perfect" and gave his approval.

7. Election of independent examiner of accounts

Richard Anscombe accepted this role for the coming year.

Proposed by: David Powell

Seconded by: Phil Jones

Approved

8. Subscriptions and table money

As reported by our Treasurer, we have had a considerable rise in costs and a rent increase of £1 an hour which may go up another £1 or £2, as FVH have confirmed that, due to a lack of in-house volunteers, they have been forced to outsource their management accounts, resulting in more fees, and maintenance costs have gone through the roof, literally!

To offset this and to bring us in line with other local clubs, the committee proposes a 50p increase in table money to £4, effective 1st September 2025, subscriptions remain at £12, and the visitor fee will be £6 per session.

Proposed by: Val Smith

Seconded by: Jenny Kerr

Approved

9. Etiquette

The Chairman reported that poor behaviour, rudeness and disrespecting opponents is a problem for the club and recent events show that it is getting worse. This has involved a lot of unnecessary work for the committee which has unanimously agreed that it must stop. Member approval was sought for a proposal for a '3-strikes & out' policy to be written into the constitution. A member proven to have behaved badly or who is abusive to the partner, opposition or director would firstly be given a written warning. A second offence would result in a 4-week suspension, and a third offence would result in a lifetime ban from the club.

Several members were concerned as to how this would be 'policed'. The final solution was that EBU has info on disciplinary procedures and therefore this does not need to be written into the constitution as it was pointed out that the constitution (point 3.8) states that we can make 'rules'. It was therefore suggested that we make a rule and consequently did not need a vote.

Finally, the Chairman informed members that there is a new and separate page on FBC's website in the main menu called 'Etiquette'. This has been given more prominence and includes the fact all players should have a convention card as well as best behaviour at the bridge table.

10. AOB

The Ladder and rules update – A new set of rules were written following member feedback before the AGM. The rules are still not agreed: Many members were unsatisfied with the number of pairs in first division and would also prefer to start afresh each year. Some also raised the issue of substitutes and that the rules were quite confusing and could be simplified. The rules were redone for the AGM and due to be uploaded to the website the following day, but due to member input and comments, the committee has put a temporary hold on uploading to the site to give time for further discussion and decisions going forward.

It was announced that a new set of lessons will take place from 6th October 2025

11. Presentation of trophies

Congratulations to trophy winners as follows:

Boxwell Cup - Championship Pairs

Chris Clegg & Sue Parkins (2024)

Smith Cup - Teams of 4 Championship:

Luke Kerr, Matt Brown, Phil Jones, Stefan Sypliwczak

De Winter Cup - Ladies Pairs

Christine Kempton & Marian Hunt

Hitch Cup - Mens Pairs

Stephen Brown & John Amor

Burton Pryor Cup

Luke Kerr, Gavin MacKay, Phil Jones, Stefan Sypliwczak

Hopper Cup - Cut in Teams

Brad Featherman, Marian Hunt, Richard Creamer, John Hunt

Rayner Trophy - Mixed Pairs

Norman Inniss & Claire Martin

Poole Flitch - Life Pairs

David & Hilary Powell

Jackson Cup - First Wednesday Trophy

David Hudson

Rayner Cup - Jackson Cup Runner-up

Christine Kempton

Friday Cup - Friday Pairs

Craig Cooper & John Gibbons

Friday Ladder

Craig Cooper & John Gibbons

Friday Ladder - NGS

Jean & Paul Fishleigh

Lines Trophy - Most Master Points gained

John Hemington

Lillian Martin Bowl - Friday cut in Teams

David Brown & Mike Wood

Hampton Shield - Highest aggregate score after adjusted Handicap

Hilary Powell

Haycocks Cup - Beckenham v Farnborough

Not played

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 8.20pm.

Kim Romanski
Honorary Secretary