

Somerset Contract Bridge Association  
Minutes of the Annual General Meeting  
Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> May 2025  
At Woolavington Village Hall

1. **Apologies for Absence**

Sally Stuttard, Davina Lord, Michael Wigmore, Simon Brooks, David Lambert, Christine Jones, Martin Holcombe, Mike and Liz Tracy, Frank Coltman, Eve Dent, Pam Rickards, Rob and Lou Hobhouse.

2. **Approval of Minutes**

Proposed by Annie Holder and Seconded by John Cockram

3. **Matters arising**

None

4 **Chairman's Report**

Good to see a healthy turnout for our AGM

Having no appointed chair in the last 12 months, your committee has functioned well with each member making a good contribution to the operation of SCBA. We have found a chair person to carry the momentum forward through the coming year and perhaps beyond.

In the first year of his stewardship Tony Russ set himself the objective of developing bridge across the county and applied for a government grant of £5,000. He was persuaded to change this to £10,000 by the fund management and we duly received that sum. With co-operation from Somerset clubs, much effort went into the introduction of the game to newcomers and beginners alike. We spent over £7,000 over the 7 years since we received the grant, much of it pre-Covid. In 2021 we set aside £5,000 to help clubs return to normal club bridge and SCBA had 7 clubs requesting support, for which we have granted over £6,000 either for new equipment, supporting teaching programmes or just getting back on their feet.

You will see in the balance sheet we have £1,600 unspent but still available.

In addition, the county will commit to support beyond the funds set aside and I repeat the message I have given previously that SCBA will continue to help county clubs where they want to improve or replace equipment. After all the county has £33,600 in bonds and this belongs to its members.

Two notable successes this year, quite apart from the county programme were the Robson day and the Coda Cup Charity. The Robson day is a very rewarding event both for attendees—this year some 90 were present—and SCBA. It is an event we cherish and hope to retain. The Coda cup was a sparkling success with this year's players amounting to just short of 500. This event demonstrates that face to face competition still exists despite the availability of online bridge. I can tell you that in the last 6 years over £13,000 has been raised from this event and the members of the county clubs should be proud of this achievement.

Finally the BBO afternoon events were reduced to a trickle last summer and from its peak of 3 times a week during Covid we had to draw it to a close, not only because of table numbers and availability of directors, and directing county events itself has been a challenge for the county to adequately cover the county programme.

Richard Feetenby

## 5. **Tournament Director's Report 2024/25**

From a competitions point of view last year was a mixed bag. Some successes and a number of failures.

This report is not designed to list the events or the successful pairs.

We started with a 9 high teaching session. Very good turnout but entries for the 9 highs which we intended to run alongside the main Woolavington events did not work. More of that later.

We were hit by our Congress being cancelled at Weston. This was due to a date change by the WSM annual beach race. We did manage to get a one day Swiss teams at Woolavington so not all was lost.

Generally our events at Woolavington were poorly attended, requiring a rethink for the coming year.

The county league is very successful with 4 divisions all playing on Realbridge. The revolution is here with online being a great success. There are now issues with rearranged matches which are being sorted out. Don't forget when all teams turned up each month at Woolavington we used all three rooms with rearranged matches a rarity.

Once again Andrew Robson attracted a full house and was a good money spinner for our coffers now that we generally subsidise events held here.

The Michael Coda charity cup was well supported as usual.

So where are we going next year?

We have moved the men's and ladies pairs on to Realbridge. We have moved the mixed pairs and mixed teams online as well.

We have reduced the booking of this hall from 10 to 5 events: Paul Jones Teams, Swiss Teams, Swiss Pairs, Championship pairs and the club teams of 8.

The Congress is booked at the Webbington for 11/12 October. Both green point days.

What about the 9 highs? Well nationally there is a Corwen 9 high championship so we have decided to run a series of 9 high events and select pairs to enter on behalf of Somerset.

We have 5 regional venues: Cossington, the Congress Saturday, Ilminster, Kingston Seymour and Frome. This we hope will get more people involved with SCBA events.

Belinda Cox asked if it was possible that club directors could raise awareness of County events. It was noted that Mike Tracy was doing this as a matter of course and Kingston Seymour had just recently held an extremely successful Swiss Pairs event.

Andrew Robson is rebooked as usual at Street.

John Cockram acknowledged that issues had been raised with regard to the County League but decided against discussing this at the AGM as there were few league participants in attendance.

Sheena Lanham passed on a message from Lou and Rob Hobhouse, who apologised for not attending but wanted it to be known they were opposed to the changes to the format of the league.

## **6. SCBA Financial**

The accounts were distributed at the meeting.

A small surplus was realised for the last year and this compared with an £1,100 surplus the previous year.

The most dramatic impact on the County was the regrettable cancellation of the Congress due to the clash of dates with the Beach Race. Although we were able to recover the deposit from the Winter Gardens, we honoured our commitment to those members who could not recover their accommodation cost. This amounted to £1,673. The running of Swiss Teams at Woolavington did proceed successfully and a small surplus was achieved.

The Andrew Robson day was again a huge success all round and that together with the interest earned on the bonds covered the Congress loss and the County running costs of £950.

The County events programme struggled to attract good attendances and did not fully cover costs. Fewer face to face events at Woolavington is the result, with online events replacing some and the moving of No Fear to other County locations.

The balance sheet remains strong with £33,600 in bonds and I can advise a 3 year extension to the original bond which has £22,000 in it at 4% interest. This ensures a secure short term income stream and will be important should the Robson days lapse.

A further £7,000 is held for day to day needs with a modest interest rate.

The sponsorship fund remains open for use at £1,600.

Proposed by Annie Holder and Seconded by Sheena Lanham.

Richard Feetenby

## **7. Election of Officers and other Executive Committee members for 2025/26**

One committee member has resigned, Frank Coltman.

Sally Stuttard and Davina Lord were also nominated to join the committee. The remainder of the committee were all reelected:-

Richard Feetenby  
Michael Wigmore  
Sheree Pavey  
John Cockram  
Simon Brooks  
Andy Ridgers  
Colin Simcox  
Annie Holder  
Alan Evans

Proposed by Sheena Lanham and seconded by Suzi Allen

The meeting closed at 1.45pm.