

**MINUTES OF THE A.G.M OF SURREY COUNTY BRIDGE ASSOCIATION**  
**Held online on Sunday 18th July 2020**

**ATTENDANCE:** 28 members were present online. Although the quorum is 30, these members have to be present in one location which is not possible in the current circumstances.

**APOLOGIES:** Keith Scott

**MINUTES OF PREVIOUS YEAR**

The minutes of the 2019 AGM were accepted.

**MATTERS ARISING**

Trevor said that because the person who had been asked to be President for the past year could not unfortunately take up the offer, Tim Green had continued as President throughout the year. Trevor thanked him, and said that, subject to the AGM's approval, he would be taking over as President from Tim.

**PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS**

Tim Green gave the following address:

Tim thanked those members of Surrey who were not on the committee for joining the online AGM. He said that he hoped we would be able to resume a Face to Face AGM next year. Constitutionally this meeting is the best we can do in the circumstances, and he hoped nobody would object.

The committee have been trying very hard to run regular online sessions, and we were the first county to run an online Sims in April. He thanked Tony Cherrett for assisting Surrey in developing an online offering.

Questions about the relevance of county organisations and the EBU were already being asked before lockdown. The SCBA has been working with clubs to promote events and assist them with understanding online bridge.

Tim Warren has promoted Youth Bridge during the past year with a very successful Schools Cup event just before lockdown.

Tim ended by saying he personally appreciated Trevor's hard work in driving forward the impetus of the County's activities.

**ACCOUNTS FOR YEAR ENDING 31<sup>st</sup> MARCH 2020**

Thomas Lundquist presented the accounts. He said the deficit of £2k was mainly due to the fall in numbers at the Green Point event which made a loss this year for the first time. Trevor explained this was partly due to a mix up in dates.

Other competitions also achieved £500 less than budget.

The County had also experienced a loss of £300 where a fraudulent claim had been paid in error. This was at a time when bridge clubs were being targeted by scammers, and coincided with Thomas's debut in the role. Procedures have now been tightened up to ensure there can be no recurrence.

Thomas said he was now standing down as Treasurer and thanked the members of the committee for their support. He wished good luck to his successor John Gallagher.

Acceptance of the accounts was proposed by Sue Osborne and seconded by Barbara Hobson.

**ELECTION OF COMMITTEE**

Before the election Trevor mentioned the resignations of Thomas Lundquist, and said that both Meena Samani and Suleman Akhtar were leaving due to the demands of their other work. He also said that during the year the committee had reluctantly accepted the resignation of Harry Figov for health reasons and had welcomed John Lemmey as web manager. He thanked all those leaving for their contribution.

President: Trevor Hobson

Chairman: Tim Warren

Secretary: Gail Norman

Treasurer: John Gallagher

Match Secretary: Jeffrey Allerton

Competitions Secretary: Shirley Pritchard

Communications Officer: TBA  
Development Officer: TBA  
Junior Officer: June Middleton  
Web Manager: John Lemmey.

### **ELECTION OF COMMITTEE**

The committee was proposed *en bloc* by Tony Cherrett and seconded by David Burch.

### **ELECTION OF ACCOUNTS EXAMINER**

Trevor said that John Manches was also standing down after 3 years. He thanked John for his diligent approach to the post.

He mentioned that when advertising for the post of the new Treasurer the committee had received several applications. One of those people, Sue Preston had agreed to take over from John, but as she is not a qualified auditor would prefer to be referred to Accounts Examiner.

Her appointment was proposed by Jane Green and seconded by Ian Lewis.

### **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Sue Osborne said that members appreciated all the hard work that the committee have put in during the past year. Ian Lewis concurred with this, and said that Trevor in particular is owed a debt of gratitude by members of the County and clubs. He also mentioned that events had received a lot of support at the beginning of the year.

Trevor then opened a discussion on online bridge by saying that he felt that there would be no Face to Face bridge during this current financial year. The County would therefore incur no fixed costs such as hall hire, and may therefore see a return to a surplus but it is difficult to be accurate at this stage. He said that it appeared there was a trend in online bridge for players to prefer to play against people of their own level, especially since in games of 18 boards and 6 other opponents percentage swings against opponents of a very different standard were more marked. He reminded clubs that they could request that their sessions were not included for inclusion in NGS when they submitted them to the EBU.

Tony Cherrett said he was encouraging clubs to come online and was happy to assist clubs. Sue Osborne said that her club Claygate could combine with another club such as Oxshott, although she felt around 50% of Claygate's members would not wish to play online.

Meena Samani mentioned Cobham Heath where the Chairman was opposed to online bridge, and she feared that these clubs might be lost to bridge next year. Unless people had played online bridge, she felt they would not wish to resume playing as they would have found other interests during lockdown. Lyn Painter of Godalming mentioned they were going to start playing online.

Steve Hooker from Dorking said they had now become a virtual club and were getting around 10 tables compared with 8 pre lockdown. He said he had conducted a survey of his members to see when and if they wished to recommence F2F bridge.

Chris Lewis from the Bourne club mentioned they had 60 players playing online.

Tony Cherrett mentioned the initiatives that had been introduced at Caterham including having a link for those people who didn't wish to play online but wanted to watch a player with commentary. Sue Osborne said she was very pleased to hear about this.

Ian Lewis said Camberley had found that an organised online teams league was popular.

Trevor said that the Lady Rose and Surrey leagues would be online for the coming season.

John Manches asked if it was possible to have some sort of FAQs or helpline where people could phone if they had queries about online bridge. Trevor commended the online video and booklet on the webpage, but said he felt that perhaps the club needed to nominate a person that their members could ring so they were talking to someone they knew.

John Gallagher mentioned the complications of BBO from a financial point of view, and felt this might be discouraging people to play online. Ian Lewis offered to send John a template of a spreadsheet which would show the costs and income from BBO more clearly.

Chris Lewis said he felt that BCL was much simpler to understand financially, but Trevor cautioned that using BCL meant that clubs could avoid paying UMS. Douglas Wright said that there was a new feature of BCL which made it easier for clubs to pay UMS.

Tony Cherrett said that he felt the county should be taking stronger action against clubs who do not pay UMS. Lyn Painter said that paying UMS was not necessarily straightforward for some clubs such as Godalming as they don't pay table money, and don't want to ask their members for extra

contributions.

Jane Green mentioned that she had played socially distanced bridge using tablets. Shirley said that this was an innovation that she thought could be the future of bridge with no boards to make up, or bidding boxes or Bridgemates to touch. She said that if people wished to know more about using tablets, they should go to the EBU Forums, (Club Forum, Updated advice about social distancing) to follow the thread.

Steve Hooker said that he was a chess player, and chess has grown since lockdown as people realise the potential benefits of playing online. It also attracts the younger players.

Tony Cherrett mentioned an initiative at Oxford BC whereby players use Zoom and play in breakout rooms so they can discuss the hands and chat after the game. He is doing something similar at Caterham where players can listen to a match on Zoom.

He mentioned that he thought Surrey shouldn't ban kibitzing as it is a useful way for people to learn to play online by watching. Trevor said it was banned to prevent cheating, but Tony felt that wasn't a problem with no prizes at stake.

Douglas Wright said that EBED were introducing teaching online and it was being renamed the English Bridge School. He asked what the County were doing to recruit new members.

He also said he was going to try teaching F2F bridge from September in a room with a maximum of 4 tables.

Tim Warren said he would like to thank William Clennell for all his help and assistance with online bridge. He also said that he was daunted to be following Trevor as Chair of the County Committee as Trevor had done so much work in the role. He said he was grateful that Trevor had agreed to stay on as President.