

Minutes of Warrington Bridge Club Committee Meeting
Saturday 20th April 2024, 2pm, on Zoom

Present: Mike Dennis (chair), Jim Steele (secretary), Janet Jagan (Treasurer), David Burrows, Carolyn Bailey, Malcolm Roberts, Ian Douglas, Brenda Newton

1 Apologies: Malcolm Roberts, Janine Curwell

2 Minutes of previous meeting held 9th March 2024: accepted as a true record.
There were no matters arising not on today's agenda.

3 Review of AGM- what we need to do next

- a. Expenditure items: the Committee has already agreed to purchase 6 tables for the Festival Suite, at a total cost of ~£240. This will match the u3a commitment to do the same, and the 16 tables will remain the property of WBC/u3a respectively. Alford propose to scrap all their wooden tables (round and rectangular) and will purchase a remaining quantity, to a total of 20 square and 4 rectangular. Alford's outlay will therefore be reduced to less than £500. All the tables will be fixed leg rather than folding.
- b. 2025 AGM: after comments from members, the Committee agreed to hold the next AGM face-to-face, at the start of a charity/improvers night (of which we have 6 per year, and where the attendance is expected to be high). We will go for an early start, to allow the normal time for playing bridge.
- c. Process for gathering members' suggestions on priorities for expenditure: Jim to draft an email for sending to all members, for consideration by the Committee. **Action Jim**

4 Other items of expenditure/ improvements/ publicity

- a. **Signage at Alford Hall:** Mike was actioned to proceed, but he is not happy with the present proposed supplier. He will pursue a suitable provider, and also carry out a check that the location we propose is suitable (eg no clash with buried services) **Action Mike**
- b. **Tennis Club (SH) Banner:** Already in place. The cost was £48 for the banner and £120 for 6 months display. We agreed to continue with another 6 months (£120), through the summer tennis season, then review. **Action Mike**
- c. **Lighting on road to Alford car park:** this is now satisfactorily resolved, Alford Hall having erected new lighting.

5 Publicity

- a. **Web site:** The website continues to be the main source for attracting new players. Jim continues to try to keep it up to date, relevant, clear and helpful, but any comments /suggestions on how to improve it and its impact would be very welcome. **Action All**
- b. **Essential Guide:** this booklet drops through doors in the Warrington area every two months. It contain a Local Groups 2-page spread, which is different for the 11 various editions in the WA and WN postcode areas. WBC usually has an entry (mentioning Mondays only!) in some editions, such as the Stockton Heath one, but sometimes it's omitted, and sometimes it has mistakes/typos. We should keep on top of this, to try to get the correct info published, and across all editions.
Action Ian
- c. **Flyers:** no further action at present. Revisit in advance of the new lessons seasons starting in September.
- d. **Facebook:** periodically post an item in the What's On In Warrington Facebook Group
Action Jim/Ian
- e. **Next Door:** periodically post an item on the Next Door site **Action Jim/Ian**
- f. **Advertorial:** we were unclear how best to use this idea. Possibly wait until we have something specific to report (eg a successful charity night) and offer to the local press?

6 BWS Matters

- a. **Existing sessions:** Friday evenings continue to be successful, and generate a small income. Monday evenings were loss-making, and have folded anyway due to lack of support (the last session which ran was 19 February). Jim is now setting up the RealBridge links.
- b. **Proposed Tuesday evening session:** we are pursuing a possible joint session with Antrobus Bridge Club. They already run a RealBridge session on Tuesday evenings, but it's barely viable, with only about 3 tables. It is cheap to run, as it's not EBU affiliated (so no P2P charges) and uses a playing TD at no charge. They charge £1 per session, so we would do the same. By joining forces we could get more tables, and share out the TD duties. To be discussed with Antrobus Committee. **Action Jim**

7 F2F Activities and Calendar

- a. **Thursday afternoon relaxed duplicates:** OK. These are popular and enjoyable. No need to change anything. Continue to have Ian and Malcolm doing the TD and scoring duties, and try to build attendance.
- b. **Opening up on Monday evenings:** no change. Jim and Mike to continue to share diaries, so we know in advance when neither will be there, and for someone to be nominated to do it on those occasions.
- c. **Format/aims for Monday evenings:** as discussed last time. The Committee did not see a need for change, but should focus on helping people, especially newer players, to feel welcome and comfortable. Brenda expressed concerns that newer players often felt intimidated by eg people calling the TD, and by not "knowing the rules". Jim agreed to include a lesson in the next Intermediate Course on etiquette, announcing/alerting rules, etc. **Action Jim**

8 Education/teaching/ training

- a. Thursday morning intermediate lessons continue OK. The help offered by Carolyn (when Mike is away) and Brigitte is proving invaluable. We need an update of the dates Jim will be away up to end June, to ensure cover.
Note: checked after the meeting, and there are no Thursdays up to end June where Jim is planned to be away, as it stands now. First Thursday Jim plans to be away is 4th July. If this changes, Jim will inform Ian/Keith Perry/Mike **Action Jim**
- b. Numbers in the beginners class: in the absence of Malcolm, we did not have an update.
- c. TD Training: Mike, Ian, Jim and Malcolm will be attending a half day TD refresher course on Saturday 27th April, arranged by Antrobus Bridge Club. The trainer will be Paul Matthews from Hartford Bridge club.
- d. Training for Bridge teachers: Jim and Ian are both interested in attending a course. The Committee agreed that we should fund this. We will enquire about courses / dates/ locations available.
Action Jim/Ian

9 Finances

- a. Janet reported that everything is operating smoothly- no issues.
- b. Janet has passed the gift to Brian Drinkwater, the auditor, and said that he is willing to continue.
- c. Free sessions: the Committee confirmed the previous view that TD's will receive a free session, but not others (eg scorers, and people who carry out other duties)
- d. Action from AGM on club funds and expenditure: discussed under 3c above. The Committee agreed to discuss at upcoming meetings how much surplus we should seek to retain, and how to use our funds, in the light of members responses to the email that Jim will send. (see 3c).

10 Encouraging attendance

Brenda Newton is confirmed as co-opted to the Committee. We discussed what areas she was most interested in, and she said how to bring in u3a and new players into the Club and encourage them to play in our regular sessions, including Monday evenings.

The Committee discussed this issue. Carolyn volunteered to draft a survey to get feedback from members about what is encouraging / discouraging them from attending our F2F sessions, especially Monday evenings. **Action Carolyn**

11 Scoring systems

In the light of recent problems/ glitches, the Committee had a detailed discussion about the issues with our present system, ie Scorebridge and Bridgemates, and how we might improve or change. We recognized that many clubs use exactly the same combination, but that there is also a range of alternatives. We agreed the following actions

- i. Discuss with Paul Matthews next Saturday how they are getting on with Scorebridge/Bridgemates, and what problems, if any, they encounter **Action Jim**
- ii. Discuss with Deva what problems, if any, they encounter with Scorebridge/Bridgemates **Action Mike**
- iii. Ensure our Bridgemate software on the laptop is up to date **Action Jim**
Note: after the meeting, Jim checked on the Club laptop. The Bridgemate software version was quite old (3.7.6), so he updated to the latest version (3.9.9), which should fix some bugs.
- iv. We are aware that Cheltenham use EBUScore + Bridgemates. Jim offered to enquire about their experience, but we decided to hold fire on that at present.
- v. We discussed a system that uses smartphones instead of Bridgemates (BriAn), but decided to park this for now.
- vi. Bridge Gem: Ian will set up a demo of the system with a view to trying it out, on a Thursday afternoon to begin with. We are aware that we can operate with more than one system in parallel, so the trial will not involve any commitment to change. **Action Ian**

12 AOB

Jim commented that Warrington u3a are presently having difficulty getting a new chairman and secretary to take over as of their AGM on 5th June, as their constitution limits the term of any individual. We need to be aware of developments as it could impact our Beginners/Improvers lessons.

13 Date of Next Meeting

Provisionally Saturday 1st June, 930am, on Zoom.

Jim Steele
Club Secretary
21/4/24