

Minutes of Warrington Bridge Club Committee Meeting
Saturday 20th January 2024, 930am, on Zoom

Present: Mike Dennis (chair), Jim Steele (secretary), Janet Jagan, (Treasurer), Carolyn Bailey, Malcolm Roberts, Janine Curwell, Ian Douglas

1 Apologies: Brigitte Massey, David Burrows

2 Minutes of previous meeting held 25th November 2023: accepted as a true record.
There were no matters arising not on today's agenda.

3 BWS: On-line activities

- a. **Review of weekly sessions-** attendances, costs, charges: Jim shared the current version of the rolling spreadsheet which tallies up attendances, costs, and income in our on-line sessions. Fridays are doing well, but attendance on Monday evening is weak, and those sessions are loss making. We agreed to support continuing Monday evening sessions until at least end February, to see if we can build numbers.
- b. BWS meeting held on 8th December 2023. Jim and Janet represented WBC.
 - i. Agreed to move Monday evenings to RealBridge as of 1/1/24, until end February, as a trial.
 - ii. User access now provided to Jim, so he can set up session links.
 - iii. Brierfield members – not being charged by Brierfield after 11/9/23. Getting their details for joining WBC now done, and they have been written to. So far, 3 have joined and been billed. We await around 6 others.

4 F2F Activities and Calendar

- a. The 2024 calendar has been issued, including all competition dates, improvers/charity nights, socials, etc. It is posted on the website and notice board. We discussed whether we should issue paper copies to members, and agreed we should. **ACTION Jim** (Note: complete. Copies made available from 22/1/24)
- b. Thursday morning intermediate lessons are well attended, with 20+ most times. We still need extra help to sit in at tables and help with play of the prepared hands. We agreed that Carolyn would deputize for Mike when he is away, from ~1030-noon. **ACTION Mike/Carolyn**
- c. The first Thursday morning gentle duplicate of the new teaching season, jointly with the u3a Improvers, was held on 18th January. We had 9 tables and a successful event. Next one not until 4th April.
- d. Thursday afternoon relaxed duplicate pairs are still going well, with usually 5+ tables. We agreed last time to continue, and not disrupt by doing any afternoon advanced lessons, for the foreseeable future. Jim has been running these, but now Malcolm Roberts is getting experience at doing it, which adds a very useful extra flexibility on resources; Ian Douglas is also interested in doing it. We are successfully using Bridgemates for these sessions.
- e. Monday evenings: schedule for 2024 agreed.
 - i. TD Rota: OK. The usual arrangement is for Keith Perry to do the 1st Monday in the month, Peter Jordan to do the 3rd, and David Burrows to do the others.
 - ii. Improvers/charity nights: we have 6 scheduled for the year, the first being 29th January.
 - iii. We need a rota for opening up and setting out tables etc on Monday evenings. At present it's Mike and/or Jim, with no cover if both are away. **ACTION Mike**
 - iv. Charity: Our chosen charity for 2024 is Walton Lea Partnership, for all charity events except Children in Need, and the EBU Festival of Bridge (which is Cancer Research UK). We will pick our 2025 charity later this year. Carol has suggested Warrington Onside Youth Zone.
 - v. Spring Social/ Prizegiving 11th March: need to plan for what food & drink we will provide. **ACTION Janine**

- f. Alford Hall issues
 - i. Sorting out storeroom: floor now greatly improved by Mike. Clear out/reorganize? **ACTION Mike**
 - ii. Internet reliability: now OK since new range extender provided by Alford Hall.
 - iii. Décor of Festival Suite: scope for improvement, especially flooring, curtains, and tables. We will keep in close communication with Alford management, in case we can be involved with their plans.
 - iv. Lighting on road to car park- one pole at the corner by the bridge has both lights not working. The area is dark in winter evenings. **ACTION Mike** to take this up with Alford.

5. Education/ teaching

- a. Advanced lessons – we agreed to defer these while we continue to build attendance on Thursday afternoon. We will be guided by demand. A possibility is doing it online.
- b. Low intake in this year’s beginners class: 2nd intake starts on 25th January, and we will have to see how we go. Some more people have signed up. Publicity- see item 7c.
- c. EBED Teacher Training Course in Liverpool, 10th & 11th February. Jim said he might like to attend, but there were no other takers. Jim would consider whether to book a place. (Note: after the meeting, Jim decided it was probably not worth spending the two days.)

6. Finances/ publicity

- a. Accounts for 2023: nearly ready at the time of the meeting; after the meeting, Janet produced a set of accounts ready for auditing. The financial position is sound, with a modest surplus for the year. Ian thanked Janet for her hard and efficient work in managing our finances.
- b. The Committee discussed likely cost increases, especially room rental from Alford Hall. Our view is that provided Alford Hall rental increase is reasonably modest, we will be able to sustain subscriptions and playing fees at the present level; that is the recommendation we will make at the AGM.
- c. Bank mandate: now sorted.
- d. Publicity:
 - i. Ian Douglas volunteered to take Committee responsibility for publicity. All Committee members present expressed their thanks and approval.
 - ii. Advertising the courses (beginners/improvers/intermediates): our website already displays this. The information on beginners and improvers courses is also on the Warrington u3a website.
 - iii. A revised poster, advertising the new beginner’s course starting in January 2024, and the “turn up and play” on Thursday afternoons, has been put up in key locations in December. Mike is still in the process of going round coffee shops etc in Stockton Heath to offer flyers, and to ask to put up posters. **ACTION Mike**
 - iv. Freebie “Essential Guide” booklet: We will do our best to ensure that WBC has an entry in the Local Groups section in all the 11 Warrington editions, which covers 110,000 homes. **ACTION Ian**
 - v. Writing copy on u3a/WBC bridge for a local newspaper article: previously discussed but still not actioned. We will need to consult Andrew Young.
- e. Expenditure- proposals/plans:
 - a. Publicity sign (on metal posts) at Alford Hall: we have Alford agreement. The previous meeting had agreed on a design and layout; this is in hand with Mike, who will proceed to order, including installation. **ACTION Mike**
 - b. Publicity banner: We expect to pay £48 for a 2m x 1 m banner, plus cost to display for 6 months, at Stockton Heath Tennis Club. In hand with Mike. **ACTION Mike**
 - c. New tables: we will order when needed. OK for now.

7. Membership

- a. Update on current position
We now have 121 members: 67 Full, 31 New Player, and 23 On-line, after deducting those we know are not continuing in 2024. However, there are a further 11 members who haven't yet responded to the request to pay their 2024 subscription, so we can expect more losses.
- b. Recruitment drive/ advertising: see 6d.
- c. Brierfield on-line members: see 3b iii

8. Competitions/ trophies

- a. 2023 winners: Jim shared the winners list as follows:

Monday F2F Scratch

Winners: Peter & Rita Jordan, 59.29%

Runners-up: Keith Perry & Stuart Hunter 58.98%

Monday F2F Handicap

Winners: Keith Perry & Stuart Hunter 53.20%

Runners-up: Carol Bingham & Kate Ward, 52.59%

Friday on-line scratch

Winners: Bob James & Stuart Hunter 57.06%

Runners-up: Steve Bentley & Tony James, 54.77%

Friday on-line handicap

Winners: Steve Bentley & Tony James, 51.84%

Runners-up: Helen Wright & John Burke, 51.38%

Jordan Vase, Handicap XIMPs Pairs (played over 5 sessions)

Winners: Peter Harrison & David Gartside +15.89

Runners-up: Steve Bentley & Tony James, +14.96

Elizabeth Bennett Memorial Trophy (Handicap pairs)

Winners: Cynthia Simpson & Geoff Fisher, 61.26%

Runners-up: Mavis Whittle & David Burrows, 60.71%

Most Improved Player of the Year:

Winner: Kevin Wood, NGS +4.16 (if continuing his membership into 2024)

Runner-up: Jakub Mitke, NGS +3.36 (to 63.78%, and the grade of A ♦)

- b. Prize giving
 - i. Trophies: we need to gather the trophies together before the prizegiving at the Spring Social on 11 March. **Action Mike**
 - ii. Prizes: we did not discuss, but need to agree whether we are awarding vouchers. For 2022 we gave M&S vouchers.

c. **2024 Competitions**

The Committee agreed the following for 2024:

- i. Elizabeth Bennett memorial trophy, one-off session annually, handicap pairs. Monday 1st July
- ii. Teams (Jordan Vase): Cross-IMPs scoring (ie akin to teams scoring). Five dates for 2024 are 26/2, 29/4, 24/6, 30/9, and 25/11. Handicap pairs, best 3 of 5 to count. The Handicap system will be as last year.
- iii. Monday Evening best average of the year: scratch and handicap, pairs (ie 2 competitions). 12 appearances minimum in order to count.
- iv. *(No Friday evening on-line competition for 2024).*
- v. Best average of the year Thursday afternoons: individual scratch prize. 12 appearances minimum in order to count.
- vi. Most improved player over the year, based on precise (ie to 2 decimal points) NGS grade on 1/1/24. Caveats: (1) if a player has no grade, but acquires one during the year, their start point is their first grading. (2) exclude on-line only members (Note: Jim has downloaded and saved a table of NGS grades at 1/1/24, so we have the starting data).

9. 2024 AGM

- a. We confirmed the date of Saturday 2nd March 2024, 1030am, on Zoom.
- b. Committee members: Brigitte is standing down from the committee at the AGM. Ian Douglas has been co-opted. The usual AGM process of inviting proposals for members of the Committee will be followed. In the absence of any proposals, we will propose re-electing the present Committee en bloc.

10. AOB

Carolyn raised the question of new EBU rules on announcing, etc. We agreed that a short announcement at the start of Monday sessions, at the discretion of the TD, would be sufficient. David will be asked to consider.

11. Date of next meeting

This will be held on Saturday 9th March 2024 at 0930, on Zoom.

We will deal with any pressing matters in the meantime by phone/email, eg accounts, AGM preparation, Spring social preparation, prizes & trophies.

Jim Steele
Club Secretary
24/1/24