

Minutes of Wells City Bridge Club AGM held at St Thomas Church Hall on 8th May 2025

The Annual General Meeting of the WCBC was held on 8th May 2025 at St Thomas Church Hall at 6.00 pm with 33 members in attendance

Charlie opened the meeting by welcoming everyone and thanking them for attending.

Apologies were offered from Rosie Shaljean, Andrew, Johnny, Ian and Carole, Barbara Spencer Jones, Barbara Mabbut, , Gordon and Jo, John and Lyndsay, Nic and Denise and Erica

1. Minutes of the last AGM: The minutes of the 2024 AGM were accepted as an accurate record. Proposed by David and seconded by Charlie.

2. Matters Arising: There were no matters arising.

3. Election of Officers: The present officers and committee members of Chairman, Charlie Sutton. Treasurer, Janette Norris. Secretary & Website, Carol Baron, Partner Liaison, Rosie Shaljean, and Committee Member, Lyndsay Hewitt are all willing to remain in post for this coming year, although Janette has indicated she wishes to stand down at the end of this year. Dick Crane has agreed to come onto the committee in the role of Deputy Chair. There being no further volunteers or nominations the committee were duly elected. Charlie thanked Dick for his willingness to assist in a role which is important, particularly for the occasions that Charlie is not able to be at bridge.

4. Treasurer's Report: Janette began by explaining a little about the balance sheet.

Copies of the end of year balance sheet have been on the web site and I have distributed some this evening

The income (subscriptions, table money and charity donations) was £4961.69.

The expenditure during year £4950.56.

Resulting in a small surplus of £11.13

Just to itemise a few expenses:

- Hall Hire is over £2177 which is just under half of the income
- Technical equipment included 2 new tablets, carrying cases and new cables
- Social event expenses are lower than previous year as we now provide the food ourselves.

The Club has generously given Charity donations totalled £1136.09 - raised for Children in need, Wells Foodbank, Coda Charity and memorial donations.

The bank balance at year end was £4761.48.

The £3 table money and £5 subscriptions have effectively produced a net balance and I therefore recommend that the weekly fee remains at £3 and subscriptions at £5.

This will ensure that the club retains reserve funds to meet any changes in hall fee or venue.

Thanks To Roy Rowe who has again audited the accounts. As a token of the Clubs appreciation a donation will be made Roy's chosen charity.

The acceptance and approval of the accounts was proposed by Mike B and seconded by Sheena.

The agreement of subscriptions and table money was proposed by Phil and seconded by Valerie.

Janette confirmed that it was her intention to stand down at the end of this term and invited any club members who may consider volunteering to take over to speak with her.

Janette also explained that the process of changing banks from Lloyds to NatWest was not working as well as had been hoped and it was intended to reinstate the account at Lloyds for future banking needs.

Charlie added that it was intended to have 3 evenings free of table money this year, starting with tonight (the AGM) also the evenings of the winter and summer socials.

5. Chairman's Report:

Firstly I need to report that two members have died during the year, Stephen and Norah, Don attended Stephen's funeral which I wasn't able to get to. For Norah's funeral Paul, Mary and myself attended. It was a lovely service at Wookey Church and afterwards at the Golf Club which really did give Norah a fitting send off. Her taking up bridge in her later years got a mention. The committee have decided to set aside £100 so that we can make a charity donation of £25.00 for any similar occasion, let's hope there are not too many of them.

I think we have had a most successful year with a number of new members joining ranging from people who are new to learning the game to some more experienced players. I hope you are enjoying your bridge with us and if you've played at other clubs with different ways of doing things which you think we could benefit from please let us know and we can consider them. We have one such suggestion for you to consider later on.

Our table numbers have increased so that despite the hall fees increasing (which they will again next January) we have more than covered our costs and as Janette has said we've also bought a new laptop, a couple of new tablets, aluminium boxes to make it easier to transport (and store) the boards, and I've just received another new set of boards so that we now have 3 usable (i.e. can go through the dealing machine) sets.

During the last year we've had two social events, one last summer which was a charity evening with money going to The Wells Food Bank. We donated £580 to them. Also the ever popular Christmas/New Year social where we just play fun bridge with a quiz, and lots more food for those that haven't eaten enough over the Christmas/New Year festivities!

A number of pairs also took part in the event organised by Street and Coxley as part of the EBU's 'Bridge-it's a big deal' festival. There were 80 pairs playing and we had a couple in the top 10. We took part in the Children in Need charity event in November and also played in the Michael Coda cup, the local charity event, earlier this year. So those two coupled with our own charity event in the summer means we are still trying to 'do our bit' to help charities. Also at least a dozen members went to the Andrew Robson day at Street, so hopefully you're incorporating all those tactics he taught us! Even if we don't notice the benefits immediately I think as a club it's good that members want to do this as it shows a positive approach to trying to improve.

Finally, some thanks to all those people who make the club run:-

Carol looking after the membership and the website, and Carol is more than happy to spend time showing anyone that struggles how to use the website. It is important to keep an eye on what is put on there as well as your weekly results.

Janette for looking after the finances, and Roy for auditing the accounts.

Rosie helping people find partners and collecting money each Thursday if John is away, also John for collecting the table money.

Dick, Valerie, and Glenn who take on the sometimes thankless task of directing - whilst still trying to enjoy playing - not always easy!

Johnny and Mike F. who between them look after the equipment and scoring as well as Janette, Jules, Ian and Carole and Mary for also scoring.

Ruth who took on the task of organising a team to play in the County League. The results

were much better this year than last, and I hope all those that played enjoyed playing and that we can continue to put a team in next year.

Mary and Sheena for taking over the refreshments and who have made sure there are refreshments each week and organised us onto a rota, and all those who take their turn on the rota. It is the one thing everyone can do even if you feel daunted by directing (easy peasy) or scoring (pretty easy if we don't mess up the system!)

And of course all of you who turn up to play regularly, put tables out, clear up etc.

Club Ethos :

As a club what we try to achieve is a mix of three elements.

- Firstly providing a club with competitive play (but without being too cut-throat about it!).
 - Secondly a relaxed friendly atmosphere so newcomers feel welcomed and are made to feel at home quickly (but without being too noisy during the evening, a very difficult balance for directors to achieve).
 - Finally an ethos which encourages all members to improve their bridge, either by providing some in-house lessons (a little more about this later), encouraging people to have lessons with Caroline, and to attend days like the Andrew Robson day. Also to help less experienced players during the evening - again a difficult balancing act so as not to interrupt the flow of the evening or distract other tables.
- I think we manage those three things pretty well most of the time which is what makes us a successful club.

That is really it for my report unless any of you think there is anything important I've missed that should be noted.

6. County League : Ruth reported that 33 teams entered the County League last winter and were divided into 4 divisions. The Wells team were placed into Division 4, and ended the tournament in 4th place in that group, doing well considering we were bottom last year. Ruth thanked everyone who played on the team. She is willing to continue as team manager next winter as long as club members wish to play. The league is played approximately one Friday evening a month between Sept and Feb on RealBridge, and she will be asking for names of volunteers later in the summer. Charlie thanked Ruth for organising the teams again this year.

7. Teaching. Charlie said that he felt the lessons which he organised this year had been successful and well attended, and offered to try to organise more later this year.

8. Charity Evening 2025: Heads Up, The Lawrence Centre, and The Connect Centre have all been suggested as charities to support this year. Members were asked for further nominations but none were made. A brief explanation was given of each charity and a vote resulted in Heads Up being accepted as the chosen charity for 2025 receiving 19 votes, the Lawrence Centre 5 votes and Connect Centre 4.

9. Table Placing: A suggestion has been made that we consider implementing drawing for table placements on club nights. This would entail members choosing a card at the beginning for the evening to decide which table and direction (N/S or E/W) they started at. Charlie suggested we try it as a way of encouraging people to not always play in the same direction. A general discussion of the pro's and con's followed. A vote to try the system for a trial period of three months was agreed.

Action: Review in August.

10. Hall Rental Costs: Dick asked whether the hall rental cost might be negotiable as he felt given the facilities it was quite high. Charlie replied that in his opinion it was doubtful, but the club could possibly write to the PCC to ask.

11. Presentation of Annual Awards: The presentation of the following awards followed.

WCBC Shield: For the pair with the highest overall average. At least 10 weeks of play is needed to qualify:

Charlie Sutton and Phil Collins

Pairs Award – NGS 8 and below: For the pair with highest average and having NGS 8 or below. At least 10 weeks of play is needed to qualify:

Don Tuff and Rosie Shaljean.

Pairs Award – NGS 5 and below: For the pair with highest average and having NGS 5 or below. At least 10 weeks of play is needed to qualify:

Dick Crane and Johnny Heriz-Smith.

Chairman's attendance award: Made for the best attendance of the year.

Dick Crane.

Simon Loveday Award:

For a person or pair who contributes the success and running of the club and at the same time successfully improves their bridge.

TBN.

12. Vote of Thanks:

A vote of thanks to the Charlie and the whole Committee was made by Yvonne on behalf of the members of the club, and Carol made a presentation to Charlie on behalf of the club members to show their appreciation for his support, hard work and leadership over many years.

The meeting closed at 6.45 and was followed by duplicate bridge with 10 tables in play.