



Welsh Bridge Union

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting 04.06.17 – Llanfairfechan

In attendance President: Paddy Murphy, CE and President elect: Neville Richards,
Treasurer: Fiona Noyce, NTO: Jean Hand, CE elect: Alan Stephenson.
And 63 members of the WBU

Apologies for absence – Judith Graham-Jones, Phil Bowers, Gareth Jones, Marie Topp

1. **Minutes of the AGM held on 05.06.16** – Received: Adoption proposed by Margaret Barnes, seconded by Herbie Rowley and approved nem con.
2. **Treasurers Report** – This was presented by Fiona Noyce.

Fiona distributed hard copies of her report prior to the meeting.

Mike Tedd who stated he didn't personally disagree with the amalgamation of the World Fund into the General Fund but wished it to be minuted that a considerable balance (of the order of £50 000) of the World fund had been taken into the General Fund. It was pointed out that there was no longer any income into the World Fund and the decision to amalgamate the two was necessary and had been taken by the Management Committee and discussed at last years AGM.

Gwynn Davis commented that the disappearance of a "ring fenced" fund indicated that the Management Committee were no longer inclined to fund international bridge. Paddy Murphy responded that there was no intention to reduce funding for international bridge but that financial constraints had to be taken into account.

Tony Disley suggested that the Selectors should have an overall budget, an issue to be discussed at the Management Committee.

Gwynn Davis said there needed to be improved dialogue between the Selectors and the MC. Paddy Murphy pointed out that a representative of the selectors had been invited to attend the last two MC meetings but for whatever reason they hadn't attended. Everyone agreed improved communication was imperative.

There was discussion from the floor that the WBU should work in line with a budget. This should obviously be the goal and an issue for the MC and Chief Executive.

There was some discussion about late payment of membership fees by some clubs whose AGM was after April 1st. There was a suggestion for a two tiered payment structure, with a 20% surcharge for late payment, but it was felt that this would be somewhat heavy handed, very difficult to administer and un-necessary.

Phil Bowers in an e-mail pointed out that membership fees which become due on April 1st must be paid by July 1st and this is what has been stated in the annual the "Membership Document" for many years. Phil indicated that most clubs pay by the deadline and just a few have to be chased up after the deadline. The process as it exists works reasonably well and for the purpose of entry in competitions, the 3 month "Renewal Period" is treated as a period of grace, provided that the member has been paid up for the previous year.

Report proposed by Alan Screen, seconded by Chris Randles.

- 3. National Tournament Organisers Report** – Jean Hand presented her report. Again another disappointing year for competition entries. The mixed pairs was in danger of being cancelled with only three and a half tables these being mostly from East Wales, so I made the decision to approach that area and the competition was held in Cardiff Bridge Club and attracted nine tables. I wish to thank Helen Houston and the committee for making this possible. The event was won by Debbie and Simon Richards.

The National Open Pairs qualifier on 22nd January was cancelled and the competition became open entry but this did not improve entries. The competition was won by Mike Tedd and John Salisbury.

Both the Welsh Cup and Cambria Cup were also low entries and I believe that both competitions need to be re-assessed. Both finals have yet to be played.

The Webber Cup was the lowest entry since it began and was won by the team of Filip Kurbalija, Paul Lamford, Mike Tedd and Tony Ratcliff, however feedback from those taking part was excellent, "a very enjoyable event". I wish to thank Barbara Dawe for her hard work over the weekend.

The Teams of Eight winners was the team from Penarth.

On the plus side there were two new competitions, the Graded Masters was successfully re-instated and for this we thank Dr. Paddy Murphy for his efforts. The

overall winners were Gilly Clench and David Birt. There was also a women's weekend held in September. Thanks to Gilly Clench for making the event a most enjoyable success. The winners were Sarah Amos, Andrea Knox, Sheila Shea and Margaret Barnes.

Finally my thanks to all who have played in our competitions, the area tournament organisers, our tournament directors, members of the management committee and all who have supported me through what has been a difficult and sad year.

4. **Membership and Master-point Secretary report** - Report received from Phil Bowers by e-mail.

As we are still in the midst of renewals it is difficult to draw any conclusions. A full analysis will be completed when all renewals are in

Flint closed down last year through lack of local support. Dolgellau has similarly closed earlier this year. Caernarfon and Benllech have also closed, however their members have merged to form a new club based in Menai Bridge which wishes to affiliate.

Prestatyn and Llandudno (West Shore) are the only clubs (to date) that have opted to dis-affiliate as a result of the change to the constitution adopted last year.

The Learner Group at Lisvane has dis-affiliated.

Two new clubs have affiliated Lisvane and Pembroke.

5. **Proposed changes to the Constitution** – There was some discussion in respect to the proposed changes to wording in the Constitution to replace auditing with independently examined. Advice had been sought and a number of qualified accountants in the audience agreed this was the correct thing to do. Andy Kirkwood to remain as our "Independent Examiner" and the wording changes in line with Chris Randles suggestions would be made to the Constitution.

A second proposal was to allow proxy voting at the AGM. There was considerable discussion, in the end the vote to allow proxy voting was overwhelmingly against. It should be noted that WBU members can raise issues through their clubs, their Area Presidents who can take them to the Management Committee and Council as appropriate.

6. **Membership subscriptions** – The fees for next year would be held at the present rate with a review annually and potential for an increase in line with inflation.

7. **Entry fees** – The proposal of the MC to increase entry fees to £25 for one day events and £40 for two days was overwhelmingly rejected by vote. The feeling was an increase might adversely affect entries which are falling anyway. The proportion of entries given out in prizes to remain at the present level or be reduced at the discretion of the organisers. It was felt bridge players don't play for the prizes but for the recognition that they had performed well enough to win.

Barry Lloyd-Jones suggested staggered entries might be considered to encourage less experienced players. The MC have already committed to look at running intermediate events, perhaps alongside existing ones.

8. **Presidents Report** – Paddy Murphy thanked everyone who had helped him during his year as President. It had been a challenging but rewarding term of office and he was looking forward to being Chair of North Wales.
9. **Investing New President** – Paddy Murphy handed over the chain of office to Neville Richards and congratulated him on his appointment as the new President. Neville was also thanked for all his efforts over ten years as Chief Executive and he was presented with a small token of thanks.
10. **Election of Officers** – Fiona Noyce would continue as Treasurer, Jean Hand as National Tournament Organiser, Phil Bowers as Membership and Master-point Secretary with Alan Stephenson the newly appointed Chief Executive. The Selection Committee would remain the same with Paul Denning as Chair, Gwynn Davis, Tony Disley and Jean Hand. The Laws and Ethics Committee will be Alan Screen, Mike Tedd and newly appointed Paddy Murphy.
11. **AOB** – None
12. **Date of next meeting** – The next AGM is scheduled for Sunday June 3rd in mid Wales.

The meeting closed at 12:15