

Minutes of the Welsh Bridge Union Annual General Meeting 2nd June 2019

1. **Apologies**

Apologies for absence were received from Jean Hand, Jean Cufley and Judith Graham-Jones.

2. **Minutes of the Last Meeting**

The minutes of the meeting of 3rd June 2018 were accepted as a true and accurate record of the meeting with no amendments.

3. **Matters Arising**

There were no Matters Arising from the minutes of the previous meeting.

4. **Treasurer's Report**

Fiona Noyce (FN) presented the Treasurer's report which has been available for download from the WBU web site and so was not reviewed in detail.

FN asked that all cheques sent to the Union be made out in full to Welsh Bridge Union as those made out to WBU will no longer be accepted by the banks (due to new fraud prevention rules). Those present were asked to spread the word to their clubs and contacts.

There has been some confusion over where cheques should be sent for entry fees to Simultaneous competitions. They should be sent to the WBU treasurer. Only entry fees relating to eCats' charity competitions should be sent directly to eCats.

The WBU has received a Corporation Tax filing notice from HMRC. FN will seek an exemption since the union's income from interest falls below the £1k threshold.

Simon Gottschalk (SG) enquired about the effect of the WBU's turnover having reached the VAT threshold limit. FN replied that as "mutual traders" the WBU does not need to register for VAT and this had been confirmed with Andrew Kirkwood (the independent examiner of the WBU accounts). Also, some income received from Bridge Great Britain (in respect of Patrick Jourdain's bequest) does not count as it is not related to normal bridge activities.

Simon Richards (SR) enquired as to why the figures for UK & Overseas Receipts and Expenses showed big differences between the 2019 year and the previous year. FN explained that this was the difference between when the WBU hosts national competitions vs participating in those hosted by another HBO.

Adrian Trickey (AT) enquired why Andy Kirkwood signed as *Acting* Independent Examiner. FN replied that she was not aware of any significance of "Acting" in that title but would enquire.

5. **National Tournament Organiser's Report**

The National Tournament Organiser's report was presented by Sarah Amos (SA) due to Jean Hand's unavoidable absence. The main points were:

- * Competition entries were generally low.
- * The Champion of Champions was a great success. Congratulations to the winners, Julian Pottage and Tony Ratcliff.
- * The National Open Pairs will be reinstated next year, run as Sim Pairs in each area.

- * The Mixed Pairs had 26.5 tables and was won by Ceri Pierce and Eric Cummins – well done!
- * The Webber Cup was won by Paddy Murphy, Mark Roderick, Gary Jones and Paul Lamford with Filip Kurbalija's team in second place, winning the Philip Angel Trophy.
- * The Graded Masters section 1 was won by Filip and Di Kurbalija. The other flight had 23 tables and was won by Alan Heath and Rob Forman.
- * The Teams of Eight competition was won by the team from Llanfairfechan.
- * The Welsh Foursomes is being held this September. Contact Jean Hand or Paddy Murphy for details.
- * The Welsh Cup was won by John Salisbury's team.

Jean extended her thanks to all the Area Tournament Organisers and those who worked behind the scenes to make the tournaments work and to all those who participated.

Gwynn Davis (GD) enquired if there is a review of the WBU's competitive programme currently underway. SA replied that nobody is specifically tasked with that but that the programme should be kept continuously under review to maintain the highest possible levels of participation. A new working party, looking at the whole of the WBU's organisation, structure and purpose will undoubtedly have this on its agenda.

6. **President's Report**

SA reported that it had been a very busy year. She had taken on the Presidency a year ago with the original hope of handing on the position now with the organisation in a better state and while she was not certain that had been achieved, there were certainly many positives.

Competitions are going well with the use of simultaneous play and regional heats to cut down the amount of travelling required by competition entrants. The newsletter has been a success, as has the revised presentation of certain areas of the web site.

SA reported that there is much to be optimistic about in the levels of bridge playing and teaching all across Wales: there is great talent and enthusiasm out there. The number of players overall is rising, although the numbers playing competitively appear to be falling. So the WBU needs to find ways to raise participation levels to keep itself relevant.

SA extended "huge thanks" to everyone who had worked hard for the WBU over the year and highlighted, in particular, the efforts of Phil Bowers (PB) over a period of 8 years who, at this meeting, would be handing over the role of Membership and Master Points secretary.

SA was delighted that David Newman would be taking over the Presidency with effect from this meeting.

7. **Membership and Master Points Report**

PB reviewed his 8 years as Membership and Master Points secretary. He was pleased to have achieved a transition from old mechanisms to (almost) universal use now of electronic reporting from the clubs. He thanked the club secretaries, Chairs and members for their support and looked forward to the new incumbent receiving similar levels of support.

PB's contribution was acknowledged by popular acclaim from the meeting and again in response to a vote of thanks proposed by Anthony Stevens.

8. **Proposed Amendment to the WBU Constitution**

Brian Quinlan (BQ) proposed an amendment to the constitution such that the organisation is mandated to hold only the very minimum amount of personal information (i.e. Name and Partial Post Code) in respect of each member as this would be compliant with GDPR regulations.

PB expressed the view that the WBU needs contact details for all members. Club members should be asked to give their express permission for the data to be shared with the WBU when they provide the information to the club. Only one club has interpreted GDPR in a more restrictive way and it has caused a few problems. Communication from the WBU to players (who have affiliated via their clubs) is handled via MailChimp and being present on the MailChimp list is an opt-in choice that is separate from becoming a WBU member.

It was stated that data can be handled in any reasonable way necessary provided appropriate permission is obtained from the individuals that data pertains to.

FN stated that as a "club and association" the WBU does not need to register with the Information Commissioner's Office but does need to identify an individual to be the Data Officer to deal with data queries and concerns raised by members. That individual is the Membership secretary.

BQ stated that the WBU is unnecessarily holding personal data about individuals who will never participate in WBU events and holding unnecessary data is contrary to the expectations of GDPR.

AS disagreed and pointed out that efforts have been made recently to run events specifically to attract players who don't normally participate in events.

Neville Richards (NR) pointed out that even the club which does not provide full data to the WBU demands that data from its own members as a pre-requisite of joining.

Gilly Clench (GC) sometimes uses her "Women's List" to distribute important WBU information.

Tony Disley (TD) wondered whether the meeting was qualified to make a decision in the absence of an independent expert opinion but it was generally expressed that a constitutional change had been proposed and therefore must be voted on by the meeting.

PB said that no constitutional change was needed because the constitution already allows constituent clubs to provide partial data if they choose to do so.

There was some discussion as to whether the proposed change implicitly had Management Committee approval but it was explained that this was not the case and that it had simply been proposed and seconded by a member in the normal way.

SA put the proposed amendment to a vote. Only one vote was cast in favour of the proposed amendment. All other votes were cast against. Abstentions were not counted.

9. **Investiture of New President**

David Newman (DN), from the West Wales Bridge Association, was invested as the new President of the WBU and was presented with the ceremonial chain of office by SA, the outgoing President.

DN thanked SA for her work as President and stated that the bar had been set at a high level for him to follow. He made a plea to all those present to “talk up” Welsh bridge instead of talking it down. We should all be positive about the game, the clubs and the experience of playing bridge.

He made reference to the “working party” that the Council had, that morning, decided to institute in order to determine a way forward for the WBU as an organisation. The members of that working party will not have a monopoly on good ideas and it will be vital for all members of the WBU to feel free to contribute their ideas. Until such a time as a distinct communication channel is established for the working party, members should communicate directly with DN.

10. Election of Officers

Steve Webb (SW) was the only nomination to fill the post of Membership and Master Points secretary vacated by PB. SW was duly elected, unopposed, to the position and was congratulated by DN.

SA welcomed Dennis Backer (DB) who has taken on the role of Junior Coordinator. DB described the approach he is trying to follow with regards to accessing schools as the source of potential junior playing talent. All research (with other NBOs) indicates that a bridge playing culture can only be sustained in a school if there is an active member of staff who is a bridge player and is willing to support the activity. A lively discussion of possible approaches followed.

11. Date of Next Meeting

The next AGM will take place on Sunday, 7th June 2020

The meeting ended with a vote of thanks to Sarah Amos as the outgoing President which was supported by popular acclaim.