

Minutes of the WBU Annual General Meeting
11th October 2020 @ 12.00am
Held by Zoom

Present – Over 55 people attended the AGM online by Zoom Meeting.

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies received from Judith Graham Jones.

2. Minutes of the Last Meeting

The minutes of the meeting of 2nd June 2019 were accepted as a true and accurate record of the meeting with no amendments.

3. Matters Arising

No matters arising.

4. Treasurer's Report

Fiona Noyce made her Treasurers Report, and presented the accounts which had been distributed prior to the meeting:

The financial statements for the year ended 31st March 2020 represent the cyclical nature of the WBU activities as determined by the bridge calendar of events.

The profit in the year of £6,645 is mostly due to the cancellation of three major national competitions and explains why the operating expenses were considerably lower than the previous year.

Affiliation to the international bridge organisations, which is calculated on membership numbers, had been paid in full. The discounts available from the EBL and WBF will be taken in this financial year. However the BGB increased their subscription by £100.

The sponsorship of £400 was arranged with E-cats who lowered their charges on an Autumn SIMS, and the Air Ambulance received a donation of £2,200.

The distribution of competition prizes continues to be a slow process and thanks were made to the team captains who helped with this task.

The significant difference recorded in the UK & Overseas Receipts across the two years is due to the movement of any revenue generated by the national events into the Operating Activity and Events heading. This change to the presentation was discussed and agreed by the management.

A question from Ray Kemp requesting clarification of the Operating Income headings in the Profit & Loss has highlighted an area that does not give a clear and fair view of the revenue received. The notes to the accounts include a detailed breakdown of the operating expenditure under note 3, a breakdown for the operating income is missing. So in addition to the income as recorded in the trading account, which is not part of the statutory requirements but acts only as an informative record, Fiona proposed in the future to include an additional note on revenue, which should redress this matter.

The capital carried forward of £115,487 will need careful consideration if the WBU is to develop and succeed in the future. It is my hope that all who play bridge under the Union will join with the management and support all objectives and necessary changes in the future.

Questions were invited:

Clarification was sought by John Thomas regarding Clubs who have already paid their WBU subscriptions for this year. Fiona stated that a refund of these may be requested by Emailing her. Lisvane have already requested one. Steve Webb has details of which Clubs have paid and will email Fiona with the details. Fiona asked that anyone else requiring a refund should send her an email. Clubs who hold money from members can either hold onto it until next year, or refund it.

Adoption of the Accounts:
Proposed: Alan Screen
Seconded: David Newman.

Approved.

5. Appointment of Independent Examiner

Andy Kirkwood was re-appointed as Independent Examiner.

6. National Tournament Organiser's Report

The National Tournament Organiser's report was distributed prior to the meeting and presented by Jean Hand. The main points were:

This year there has only been one face-to-face competition played, this being the Mixed Pairs held as a Sim Pairs across each area in February. Congratulations to the overall winners: Di Knight and Peter Nixon who played in the North.

The Champions of Champions was due to be played in March but due to the onset of Covid was cancelled.

One thing that has happened due to the Covid situation is the number of players who now play their bridge online has increased significantly - BBO, Penguin Bridge, and the very popular Stepbridge. As we do not know when things will be back to normal this seems to be a suitable alternative. However, Jean acknowledged that a lot of our players miss the social aspect of playing in a club.

Jean extended her thanks to the Area Tournament Organisers for their hard work and to the Management Committee for their continued support.

7. Past President's Report

David presented his report.

The biggest highlight of his Presidency was undoubtedly the Junior Camrose and Peggy Bayer Trophies. Thanks were given to Gilly Clench for recruiting Junior players at the Freshers' Week at Cardiff University which enabled Wales to field three teams (two Junior

Camrose and one Peggy Bayer) where we had no teams at all prior to this.

The biggest disappointment was the lack of support from the Management Committee, (with the exception of Geoff Evans) and the resignation en-bloc of the Selectors. He hoped that these Selectors would serve the WBU again at some point in the future, as they were of a high calibre and had much experience to offer.

Other positive aspects of this time were Mike Tedd's wise counsel, the revival of the newsletter and the appointment of a new CEO. The frequency of the Management Committee meetings has increased and there is better support of better players and finally the invitation to the Club Christmas Dinner by Irene Delahunty!

8. Membership and Master Points Report

Steve Webb presented his report which was distributed prior to the meeting. The main two points highlighted were:

1. Clubs are currently closed due to Covid and therefore no membership subscriptions have been collected as membership has been deferred for 12 months.
2. Master Point revenue is almost non-existent

Masterpoints for online events and what to do if Clubs are still closed next year will need to be addressed along with a review of how we collect membership subscriptions for next year.

Steve welcomed further queries via email.

Comments on Steve's report:

About 15/16 online clubs in Wales are issuing master points. Any clubs/areas who issue them are charged for them. Some clubs do not issue master points and are not charged.

Some clubs have chosen not to issue master points for online games, as they feel it is unfair on their club members who do not or cannot play online.

Masterpoints on Stepbridge are free until December, but will be charged after that when Stepbridge change their charging policy (currently free).

Some clubs are bearing the cost of master points, but have no income.

Subscriptions will be reviewed by the Management Committee very soon and ratified at an EGM as the situation is quite complex and no decision can be made or pre-empted until then.

9. Proposed Amendment to the WBU Constitution

An amendment to the constitution was submitted to recognise online clubs: Changes are in red.

3.1 A club, playing duplicate bridge at least once per week, with an identifiable playing location within Wales, **or playing online**, may apply for affiliation to the Welsh Bridge Union (WBU). An affiliated club is automatically deemed to be affiliated to the Area Association of the WBU within whose boundaries it

lies. If a club is an on-line entity only and has no identifiable location, then these clubs may affiliate directly to the WBU. A club may apply to the WBU to affiliate to an appropriate Area Association and this needs to be approved by the Area Association as well as the WBU.

3.2 The club must provide its name, its playing location (if applicable) and the names of the club Secretary, Chairperson and Treasurer. The club must also provide the names of all its bridge playing members. Where the club has a member's consent to do so, it should include the member's postcode, telephone number and email address.

Proposed: David Newman

Seconded: Fiona Noyce

Approved.

10. Investiture of New President

Marie Topp was invested as the new President. Due to Covid, and the meeting being on Zoom, she presented herself with the ceremonial Chain of Office!

Marie thanked everyone who had worked with her for doing such a good job, and thanked David Newman for his help. She welcomed Ceri Pierce to the team who will take over from Neville as CEO following a handover period, and thanked Neville Richards for his valued help, along with the Management Committee.

Anyone who wished anything to be raised with the WBU, should contact herself or Ceri.

11. Election of Officers

The current Officers were all willing to stand again this year and no new nominations had been received, so a proposal was made to vote them back in en-bloc.

Proposed: Gwynn Davies

Seconded: Irene Delahunty

Approved.

12. AOB

Andrew Mountain had seen details of perspex screens for use in clubs in Bridge Magazine and suggested that members should be informed of this.

Gwynn Davies pointed out that because of Covid a new era of bridge tournaments is here and probably here to stay. This provides an opportunity in Wales and suggested that a review of WBU competitions be carried out – which could be quite radical if we so wished.

Ceri Pierce agreed that such a review is required and is in the pipeline, along with reviewing the additional opportunities that online bridge presented given that there are no geographical barriers in place.

Helen Houston agreed - online bridge has essentially been born out of chaos with no joined-up thinking. A review should include Area Tournament Organisers and the lack of communication that has occurred since Covid needs to be addressed. She also suggested that a National Welsh

Club was needed.

Tony Haworth added that the Management Committee should set up an assessment of on-line bridge platforms.

Andrea Knox set up the Penguin Club an online social bridge club to stop people being lonely and isolated during lockdown which has been a huge success. Two thirds of members had never played online and much effort was made helping people to get set up properly and playing online, many of whom had never used a computer before.

Paddy Murphy suggested that a small committee be convened to thrash out a plan.

Marie Topp confirmed that the Management Committee would take this on board.

Maggie Pierce stated that the elderly had derived huge benefits from online bridge and that the younger population also needs to be looked at and encouraged to learn and play bridge online and she is intending to look into this further.

Richard Plackett pointed out that online bridge had been used in the past for online training and to prepare for International matches. He would be very happy to assist the Selectors with this if required.

Jean Hand thanked Laura Woodruff for the two newsletters that have been produced since she took this on. More material is needed and anyone with any articles should send them to Laura.

It was confirmed that the newsletter will be produced approx. every two months.

Marie thanked everyone for coming to the WBU's first Zoom based AGM and hoped that members would continue to support her and the Management Committee whilst they worked through some challenging issues and moved the WBU forward.

13. Date of Next Meeting

The next AGM normally takes place on the Sunday of the Perry and Spickett in June, but no dates have been set for this yet due to the uncertainty that Covid has placed on us. A date will be set when the situation is clearer.