

Draft Minutes of MC 15 Oct 2020 @ 10am

Present: Marie Topp, Fiona Noyce, Jean Hand, Gareth Jones, Simon Gottschalk, Ceri Pierce, Neville Richards, Paddy Murphy, Alan Screen, Steve Webb.

1. Apologies – None.
2. Minutes of 1 Oct accepted.
3. Treasurer's Item - Maintaining WBU 'Mutual Trading' status

The concept of mutual trading is an important one to the WBU, because being classed as such by HMRC we are not liable to pay tax on 'trading' profit. Any surplus is used for members in the promotion, development and the opportunity to participate in the game of bridge in Wales. Ownership of the common fund by the members is necessary for mutual trading and the contributors (i.e. members) must control the use of that fund. If it is controlled or owned by anyone else the mutual principle cannot apply.

Under such criteria the non-membership (unaffiliated) BBO based 'virtual clubs' is not mutual trading because the WBU does not control that area of revenue – it is merely a platform for moving money from BBO to a private bridge club. In addition, as BBO deals only with the WBU, not with Clubs, and the WBU then distributes the income they gather from BBO player entries back to Clubs, then the WBU turnover is artificially increased.

It was concluded that in order to maintain our mutual trading status, our members need to be affiliated, otherwise we need to be able to distinguish between our mutual and non-mutual sides of trade.

Recommendation: virtual clubs that are operating under the WBU agreement with BBO (or similar) should become affiliated. This will be progressed under item 4.

Clarification on the financial arrangements for the NW Congress and the Penguin Club to be sought at the NWBA meeting tomorrow, and reported back to Fiona.

Action PM

It was agreed that when online events are held, then the organiser is responsible for paying directors fees, and that the organiser should be invoiced for such, not the WBU.

4. Online Bridge

Online bridge sprung up almost overnight at the beginning of lockdown and is likely to be here to stay even when Covid is no longer a threat. The structure, management and organisation of online bridge needs to be reviewed urgently in order to have clear procedures in place. It was noted that online bridge is well suited to a 'pay at point of entry' system now that Clubs are closed and cannot collect WBU subscriptions. If coupled with automatic affiliation for players when they play in a WBU club/area/national event, this would potentially resolve both subscription and affiliation issues. This needs to be considered and Clubs provided with guidance.

Marie suggested that a small working party will meet to make recommendations on how to move forward in a clear and organised way, reporting back to MC in two weeks. All online platforms will need to be considered as they each operate differently.

Agreed that the members of this group would be Ceri, Neville, Steve and Paddy. Ceri to set up a meeting ASAP.

Action CP

5. AOB

An email has been received from a member querying what should happen with WBU membership collected by Clubs prior to the lockdown and the suspension of membership subscriptions for the remainder of this year. Agreed that this was up to the Clubs what they did with the money that they hold. Ceri to email the member with this information, and Club Treasurers to make them aware of this issue.

Action CP

Related to this it was commented that regarding any membership subscriptions received by the WBU, the Clubs have the option of it being held until next year, or having it refunded. Lisvane has requested a refund and this has been paid.

A complaint has been received from a member regarding comments made by another member, and has been referred to the Laws and Ethics Committee for consideration.

Action CP

6. Date of Next Meeting - Thursday 29th October at 10.00am by Zoom.