

Minutes of MC 10th February

2022@10.00am

Present: Marie Topp, Jean Hand, Fiona Noyce, Gwynn Davis, Ceri Pierce, Tony Disley, Paddy Murphy, Alan Screen

Apologies: Steve Webb

Minutes of Previous Meeting – accepted with amendments. To be recirculated.

1. Selectors Report

One selector has resigned. Agreed that there was no need to appoint a replacement until the next Council Meeting. Noted that the selectors have the power to co-opt if necessary.

The Wales and WBU Lady Milne teams will be have been selected as follows:

Wales

Joan Marray and Andrea Knox
Gill Clench and Maggie Pierce
Ceri Pierce and Mia Deschepper

WBU

Jennifer Wardell and Mrunalini Dewan
Sheila Shea and Margaret Ann Barnes
Margaret Lane and Lee Collier

Reserve Pair

Vida Halford and Glenda Roberts

The NPCs are to be determined.

2. Recruitment of Officers

There has been no success in approaching individuals to fill the posts of Treasurer and NTO or President.

There was discussion about the lack of enthusiasm for bridge at national and area level. Club / Social bridge seems to be stable but there is a large disconnect between clubs and national WBU events. Social Bridge does not need a National Organisation and the WBU needs to decide what it will offer going forward.

It was agreed that Stepbridge was a valuable service offered to members and many play on it regularly, mainly for social reasons.

Ceri to chase up a potential President.

3. CEO Report

Stepbridge UK

This is progressing with implementation scheduled for 1st March. All players have been informed of the changes and a separate bank account has been set up but has not yet activated by the bank.

StepBridgeUK will be part of the WBU (much like an area) and a proportion of all table monies will be passed to the WBU as a contribution to 'Associate WBU Online Membership' or similar.

The suggestion is that 10% of table monies will formally be paid to the WBU - the remainder would then be available for 'benefits of bridge UK wide'.

StepBridgeUK (as a part of the WBU), would have its own committee. I suggest 4 members one of whom is outside the WBU (suggest someone from the Oshwal Club - that being the largest Club).

We will need to make some minor modifications to the existing WBU constitution.

Lady Milne and Teltscher

BGB decided on Thursday that the LM and Teltscher will be held face to face as planned.

There has been lots of re-negotiation regarding a venue for the Lady Milne after the Copthorne transferred it to the Mercure in Cardiff. The Mercure eventually decided that they could not accommodate us and now the Holiday Inn in Newport has been booked.

The current agreement regarding traveling expenses for the Lady Milne is up to a maximum of £100 will be permitted, upon presentation of receipts. Players to be informed.

Several people have been approached to be match manager but no joy yet. Sarah Amos has been appointed as Chief TD.

NBO Conference

A very interesting conference. Sixty delegates participated.

Officers from European bridge organisations examined current issues facing the bridge world, including online cheating, ways to restart bridge after Covid, sexism and evidence that bridge can help prevent and treat dementia and Alzheimer's. Full details of the issues are on the EBL website.

It was interesting that many NBOs are struggling financially and those NBOs who are faring well, are ones where bridge is an official sport and funding was available from the Government.

Membership numbers

Steve has provided figures on numbers of players etc to give some indication of how many players are playing over the course of the year:

2019 approx. 96,000 player sessions and for 2021 approx. 26,000 (based on masterpoint certificates issued).

Junior Camrose

The JC is taking place online this weekend and we wish them the best of luck.

Mel reports that we are unlikely to have a junior team next year. We need to reach out to clubs across Wales for junior players and consider Freshers Fairs at Cardiff, Bangor, Newport, Aberystwyth etc.

4. NTO Report - Jean

The Welsh Cup has received 10 entries and the Cambria Cup, 6 entries.

A double elimination is not possible for the Cambria. A sub-committee will meet to discuss the format.

Action: JH

The Perry and Spickett are scheduled for Bank Holiday weekend. It was requested and agreed that this is changed to 9/10 July at The Commodore in Llandrindod.

The AGM will be held by Zoom and rescheduled for 22 May at 11am.

Gwynn suggested that a number of proposals regarding the future of the WBU should be put forward at the AGM. Tony observed that we have resources to keep the WBU going for several years – getting people to play is the problem. Most clubs do not generate new players and should consider recruiting and teaching new members.

Getting rid of the national program was suggested, but it was agreed that it is still difficult to know what will happen in the future post-covid.

5. Treasurer's Report

The bank balance stands at 21K. Refunds to the East and West for congress entry fees is being discussed. The bank is being chased regarding the Stepbridge UK account.

6. MPM Report

Steve has sent membership details to all affiliated clubs, reminding them of renewals due in April. Some have replied stating their future is uncertain. He will let us know when he has been informed of official changes

7. Area Reports

West – struggling to identify a Treasurer and President. The Celtic congress will be online as the venue has closed down. Struggling to hold a teams of eight area heat due to lack of entries.

Mid – nothing to report

East – The East Wales Congress is in two weeks' time, online. Currently have 28 teams and 40 pairs entered – which is half of last year's numbers. They felt that interest in online events was declining and that congresses need to be face to face.

There are 4 teams entered in the teams of eight area heat.

The Congress on 30/7 is to be removed from the calendar – should not be there.

North – the NWBA Committee are meeting next week.

8. AOB

Each MC member was asked to consider how the WBU should be run going forward, given the current decline.

Action : ALL

9. Next meeting

10th March at 10.00 by Zoom.