

StepBridge UK AGM
1st June 2024 @ 11am by Zoom

Present : Tony Howarth, Ceri Pierce, Alan Screen, Jean Cufley, Neville Richards, Glyn Williams

Apologies : Derek Roberts

1. Minutes of the last meeting – to be confirmed.
2. Financial Report

Financial Accounts have been circulated in advance. A loss of £966 was made for 2023/24.

3. Operational Report

Tony noted that operationally the accounts do not quite reflect the actual situation because of the advance ordering of Participation Points. The estimated financial situation is that operationally there is a deficit of £739.

The table money for the StepBridge UK games was increased from £1 to £1.25 on 1/3/24. This should enable StepBridge to break even by the end of 2025.

Attendance numbers are stable – around 34 tables per week for the UK games (Sun Mon Wed and Fri).

Club revenue has increased from 50p to 60p since 1/3/24. This has not affected club attendance numbers. There are two clubs regularly using StepBridge plus one other occasional club. Mid Glam is expected to increase revenue and Monty is stable. There are also two other clubs Lisvane and Barry Vale that use the platform free of charge for teaching as agreed with StepBridge HQ (Epko).

The reason we have gone from breaking even last year to a deficit this year is due to :

- a. Masterpoints are now issued and there is a cost associated with that
- b. A payment of £300 pa was made towards to the WBU Treasurer's Honoraria to reflect the volume of work that is required to carry out the finances

Prizes were awarded on a trial basis for two months last year for the StepBridge UK games, but this was dropped as the cost was not being covered. It would be nice to resume this at some point but will depend on income. Clubs make their own arrangements re– eg Mid Glam award Participation Point Prizes. It was noted that Mid Glam charge £1.50 table money instead of £1.25 so this is why they may be able to award prizes (Clubs can charge whatever they chose as table money).

There have been no additional increases in expenditure. The Server cost has remained at £5,000 pa. The long term view was discussed with Epko and he has agreed to maintain this pro rata for the next six months. He recognised that we are running at a loss and the situation will be reviewed following the table money increase.

There is still a team of 13 directors running the StepBridge UK games who are paid £10 per session. It was noted that BBO is more expensive than StepBridge.

Alan is concerned that at 8 tables a night we are just about breaking even. If that drops then we will be losing money without the additional support from club games.

Tony proposed that we maintain the table money at the current rate. It is not intended to make a profit. StepBridge meets a need for all the players who use it and they are very loyal. There will be a committee meeting in the Autumn to review table money. Tony asked that the meeting permitted the committee to make a decision regarding table money in August which was agreed. Glyn commented that the committee should not be afraid to increase by small amounts more frequently to avoid a large increase.

Tony is meeting with Epko in September to review the server costs

4. Motions

Tony proposed that we promote the use of the web version of StepBridge, rather than using the app. Some enhancements have been made on the web platform which have been impressive. Ceri is to raise this at the WBU AGM and the use of the web platform will be promoted via the website and mass email from StepBridge.

It was noted however that TDs still need to use the app version.

It was confirmed that the app and web can both be used in the same tournament – it is the user's choice as to which they use.

Glyn asked if the web version was better on the iPad/tablet than the app. Tony to review.

5. AOB

Neville noted that StepBridge needs more promotion and enthusiasm within the WBU. Ceri to mention this at the AGM and encourage people to give it a go.

It was confirmed that teaching clubs are not charged (imposed by Epko at the outset).

Ceri – noted that based on 30 tables / week, broadly speaking, it costs 80p per player to play on StepBridge . If we start making a deficit then we should be aware that RealBridge charges are - 20 boards 30p per player, 21-32 boards 40p per player etc, so half of the cost.

The meeting closed at 11:40am.

6. Date of next meeting – to be determined in line with the WBU AGM.