

Draft Minutes of Management Committee 22 May 2024 @ 10.00 am by Zoom

Present: Jean Cufley, Simon Gottschalk, Ceri Pierce, Paddy Murphy, Alan Screen, Andrea Knox, Keith Edwards, Steve Webb

Apologies – Mia Deschepper, Gilly Clench

1. Minutes of last MC Meeting - accepted.

2. Council Agenda

The Council agenda was reviewed. MC Report to be added.

Action CP

3. AGM

Agenda for this approved.

StepBridge Accounts will be presented at the StepBridge AGM on 1st June. Tony to be asked to provide a Stepbridge report at the AGM as well, to present how it functions, future plans and to encourage greater involvement.

There have been a lot of complaints recently and if there are lots of issues to be discussed at the AGM we should offer focus groups for each area in the very near future. It would not be appropriate to open the floor up to a general discussion at an AGM as this is not the correct forum for it. Agreed that to speak at the AGM, members should raise their virtual hand. The default will be that everyone is muted unless asked to unmute by the Chairman to speak.

The motion on suspending the Council was discussed. Alan outlined the history of the Council and Ceri outlined the current role of the Council which has been fairly redundant in recent years. The motion to abolish the council came about because its relevance was questioned by the Past President at the last AGM. The initial motion to abolish it has subsequently been changed to suspend it, so that it could be easily re-instated if required. Andrea has not yet read the constitution and would prefer to review the entire constitution and take in people's opinions before taking a view.

Keith pointed out that problems are sometimes a question of perceptions especially if members are disgruntled and that focus groups for each area are a good idea. Simon's view was that we need to make decisions and get things done – the Council is surplus to requirements but was happy that it is suspended and not abolished. Paddy agreed that we should be better at making decisions, even if they were bad decisions.

A vote was taken and it was agreed that we would proceed with the constitution change. Andrea will review it in order to form a view.

The motion on Eligibility for areas was discussed – all agreed that this should go forward.

4. Treasurers Report

The Treasurers report and the year-end accounts were circulated beforehand.

As at 08.45 on 23 April 2024 bank balances were:

WBU	£9,541.72
StepBridge	£2,225.05
Building Soc	£68,228.06

Payments due to be made in next month or two:

European Br. Lge. 1529.76 Euros approximately £1600 including bank charges and depending on exchange rate.
World Br. Fed. 1229.00 Euros approximately £1300.00 including bank charges and on depending on exchange rate.
Lady Milne Costs The CBAI – has been paid the English amount not the Euro amount. The exchange rate causes problems and has breached the cap of £340 per person. Ceri to pursue with CBAI and BGB.

Action CP

5. NTO Report

NTO and Masterpoint and Membership reports for the AGM will be produced presently.

The MC NTO report was circulated beforehand. Simon has been talking to a lot of people at clubs in the East about our national events. Entries are coming in for the Champion of Champions but there are complaints about the entry fee (which includes prize money and a buffet lunch which cost £12.). He is aware that there are members unhappy about this and one club may be refusing to put anyone forward. Simon requested that East Wales find out more about this if possible. A new venue has been located which is a Turkey Farm!

Simon has produced a facility to create a real-time ranking list which everyone was very impressed with. Each club can use this to access handicaps if they wish to run handicap events. There will be a few anomalies where players do not register their master points in Wales and they are transferred to other NBOs.

Clubs need to be informed and take advantage of this facility – Ceri and Simon to ensure that this happens.

Action CP and SG

Venues and events are booked in for 2025. Getting Tournament Directors is an issue as they are thin on the ground. The BESS entry system has been modified so that hotel bookings can be made (for the Porthcawl Congress).

There are also BACs and Cash payment options now available on BESS.

Flyers and brochures are being requested by some clubs for national events as word is not getting around effectively. Some clubs promote events very well but others do not seem to be announcing them to players. Events are however promoted via our membership database, MailChimp and also the BESS database which is expanding. Simon estimates that emails are reaching about 1200-1300 players at the moment. He would like to focus on having a good membership system for reaching members but this requires us to have their email addresses. Simon proposed Membership Mojo be implemented. CP, SG and SW to discuss further to address how this would synchronise / integrate with our existing systems.

Simon was still considering whether to stand for NTO again next year. He has received a lot of flak despite spending huge amounts of time on national events and IT systems. He also felt that our structure stops us from making decisions and that we need to change.

Steve W does not think that having a membership system would help –he was concerned that clubs would not use it as individual and would not use an online system. Simon reassured him that collection of subs would remain the same – i.e. via the club.

The MP and NTO to meet together with Ceri and possibly Andrea and put forward a proposal.

Simon's written NTO report can be read below:

5.1. NATIONAL MIXED PAIRS 2024

We had 10 tables entered. We have scheduled the event to run again in 2025. WBU made a profit of £ 367.80.

NATIONAL MIXED PAIRS PAIRS FINANCIAL SUMMARY					
ENTRY SUMMARY					
Entry Fee per pair:	£ 50.00	Total Tables:		10	
Received:	20	Total Pairs Entered:		20	
Individual Pairs STRIPE payment:	18	Individual Pairs Direct Payment:		1	
Combined Pairs STRIPE payment:	0	Combined Pairs Direct Payment:		0	
Stripe Fee:	£ 0.20	Stripe Commission %:		1.5	
INCOME					
Entry Fees:	£ 1,000.00	Discounted Fees:	£ 50.00	Total Revenue:	£ 950.00
EXPENDITURE					
				Prize Fund:	£ 180.00
				Directors Fee:	£ 155.10
				Venue Fee:	£ 230.00
Stripe Combined Fee:	£ 0.00	Stripe Individual Fee:	£ 3.60	Stripe Fee:	£ 3.60
Pairs paying with Stripe:	18	Stripe Pairs Revenue:	£ 900.00	Stripe Commission:	£ 13.50
				Total Expenditure:	£ 582.20
PROFITABILITY					
Gross Profit Margin:	38.72%			Total Profit:	£ 367.80

5.2. TELTSCHER 17-19 MAY 2024 – STIRLING

England won, with Scotland second. The Welsh team finished in third place.

There were very few matches shown on Real Bridge with commentators and also very few spectators.

To get more spectators, maybe BBO should be used.

The WBU should be more proactive about arranging commentators to cover ALL Wales matches!

These International events can be used to promote bridge in Wales ... possibly an opportunity we are missing out on.

5.3. CHAMPION OF CHAMPIONS 2024 23/06/2024

Entries are trickling in. We need 10 tables and it really down to the clubs to embrace this event.

5.4 CLUB TEAM OF 8 2024. 16 June At GBA.

We have commitment from 4 teams at the moment. Hoping for at least 8. No teams from WWBA, MID or NWBA yet.

5.5 PREMIER LEAGUE 2025 (GBA)

We are hoping for 10 teams again. Revenue £4,400 approx.

5.6. PORTHCAWL CONGRESS 1-3 NOVEMBER 2024

We have emailed all WBU members on WBU membership database, all bridge players on the BESS database and all MAILCHIMP subscribers. The BESS entry system has been extended to handle hotel bookings. We have some initial entries and hotel bookings, fully paid.

5.7. LADY MILNE TRIAL 2025 (LM to be played on 11-13 April in England)

The WBU Mentoring initiative should guarantee a good turn-out for the trial.

Provisionally scheduled for 18-19th January 2025 at CBC. To be confirmed by the “Selectors”.

5.8. TELTSCHER TRIAL 2025 (TT to be played on 16-18 May in Ireland)

Recent experience suggests that there may not be enough interest to hold a trial. A decision for the “Selectors”.

5.9. PROMOTION OF WBU EVENTS AND CONGRESSES

In the absence of a proper membership system and as a temporary measure, I have built some mailing systems around the current membership database. However, the quality of data in the membership database (in regard to email addresses) is poor so we can reach only around 50% of our members by this method. Also, I am incurring costs as I now only use my “AUTHSMTP” subscription (around £60 p.a.) for WBU related emailing. I have suggested that we move our membership system to a package like MEMBERMOJO. This will have many benefits for a very low outlay of £300 p.a.

5.10. PROFITABILITY OF WBU EVENTS AND CONGRESSES

The WBU needs to make a profit on bridge events in order to pay for its overheads. Membership subscription alone (at the current levels) is not enough. In the main, the events we run are not profitable. Teams’ events being a possible exception. Our 3 congresses (Porthcawl, Llandudno and EWBA) are generating minimal return for the WBU and risk for the AREAS that are trying to keep them going. Should these events be successful, they will still not benefit the WBU financially.

5.11. BRIDGE PLAYING POPULATION

There has been a gradual decline in the number of experienced bridge players playing competitive bridge over the last couple of decades. This is set to continue. There has also been a large increase in “retirees” wanting to learn bridge and to play regularly at our bridge clubs. This too will continue if we (individuals and clubs) can offer teaching and “supported play” follow-up. These “new” bridge players are generally prepared to pay £20 WBU membership and we need to make this process easy for them. Holiday bridge is also on the increase and the WBU needs to look at partnering-up with holiday companies in some way.

5.12. WBU MASTERPOINT RANKING LIST (INCLUDES HANDICAPS)

With help from Steve Webb and Peter Holmans I have created a “Real Time” WBU members ranking list. This includes generating a “Handicap” for any clubs that wish to hold “Handicap” events. You can try this out on <http://mpmlive.welshbridgeunion.info:453/mpranking.php>.

LIST OF WBU NATIONAL EVENTS & CONGRESSES (EXCLUDES AREA EVENTS) Last updated 20/05/2024

DATE	VENUE	EVENT	EVENT CODE	DIRECTOR	ENTRY FEE
2024	ONLINE	CAMBRIA	CAMBRIA24		£48
2024	ONLINE	WELSH CUP	WCUP24		£48
07/03/2024	CBC	NATIONAL PAIRS (CANCELLED)	WBUNP24		
08/03/2024	CBC	NATIONAL TEAMS	WBUNT24	SARAH AMOS	£100
28/04/2024	GBA	NATIONAL MIXED PAIRS	WBUNMP24	SARAH AMOS	£50
16/06/2024	GBA	CLUB TEAMS OF 8		SARAH AMOS	£96
23/06/2024	PENDOYLAN	CHAMPION OF CHAMPIONS	WBUCOC24	SARAH AMOS	£60
13-14/07/2024	CARMARTHEN	PERRY,SPICKETT,PRESIDENTS			

1-3/08/2024	LLANDUDNO	LLANDUDNO CONGRESS		SARAH AMOS	
09/2024	ONLINE CLUBS	WBU SIMUL JUNIOR FUND RAISER			
28-29/09/2024	GBA	PREMIER LEAGUE 1	WBUPL24	SARAH AMOS	
19-20/10/2024	GBA	PREMIER LEAGUE 2	WBUPL24	SARAH AMOS	
01/11/2024	SEABANK	PORTHCAWL PAIRS		SARAH AMOS	£5
01-03/11/2024	SEABANK	PORTHCAWL HOLIDAY	WBUPH24	SARAH AMOS	£80
01-03/11/2024	SEABANK	PORTHCAWL CONGRESS	WBUPC24	SARAH AMOS	£60
PROPOSED DATES FOR 2025 – DETAILS TO BE CONFIRMED					
2025	ONLINE	CAMBRIA	CAMBRIA25		
2025	ONLINE	WELSH CUP	WCUP25		
12/01/2025	CBC	HK TEAMS		SARAH AMOS	£60
18-19/01/2025	CBC	LADY MILNE TRIAL (PAIRS)	WBULM25	SARAH AMOS	£100
1-2/2/2025	CBC	TELTSCHER TRIAL (PAIRS)	WBUTT25	SARAH AMOS	£100
8-9/02/2025	GBA	EWBA FEBRUARY CONGRESS	WBUFC25	TBA	
8/03/2025	TBA	NATIONAL PAIRS	WBUNP25	TBA	£50
9/03/2025	TBA	NATIONAL TEAMS	WBUNT25	TBA	£100
27/04/2025	GBA	NATIONAL MIXED PAIRS	WBUNMP25	SARAH AMOS	£50

6. Masterpoints and Membership Report

Membership

The response to renew subs is still sluggish but has improved. Present standing is 900 memberships renewed. Still awaiting returns from:

Archway (Chepstow), Barrivale, Penarth, Brecon, Vale of Glamorgan, Radnorshire, Mold, Ynys-Mon, Llandudno, Tenby.

And payment from:

Swansea and Barrivale L.G.

Masterpoints

Income has increased to £2,260 (Jan-April 2024) from £1,207 in the corresponding period last year. This gives a projected Masterpoint Income of £6,780 compared with £4,200 for 2023.

7. AOB

Chepstow Archway Club have sent an email requesting that the club is permitted to remain affiliated to the WBU without 100% membership. They do not issue masterpoints.

This was discussed at some length and several solutions that would apply equally to all clubs were debated. Steve proposed that if a club does not issue masterpoints, they can remain affiliated if either 50 or 70% (to be determined) are WBU members, or some such similar proposal. This would enable clubs who do not issue masterpoints to remain affiliated and may help other clubs such as Sully and Pembroke to re-affiliate. A small club category may also be a helpful idea.

Alan and Paddy outlined the history of this and what happened when this was implemented in the past.

We would require a constitution change to do this. In the meantime, to be as pragmatic as possible and to help Chepstow it may be possible for them to have their non WBU members to play as 'visitors' for now, until the issue (which will require an SGM) can be resolved. Ceri to contact them and also apologise for the delay in responding officially.

Action CP

East Wales - Keith requested that dates for focus group discussed earlier be published at the AGM.

West Wales - Steve reported that he was receiving responses from everyone regarding accommodation for the Perry / Spickett / Presidents Cup and would need a few final details regarding catering. It was noted that no double rooms are available. Accommodation bookings need to be made directly with the Halliwell. Saturday night numbers required as soon as possible and payment is by card only. The West is not supporting players financially apart from meals on Saturday night. Their income is only £340 / year and cannot cover costs to host the Perry and Spickett. It would cost 3-4K to 100% fund players and would need an income of 800-900 pa which is not feasible. In Mid Wales all players fund themselves. It was confirmed that there is no financial support for the Presidents Cup anymore.

Steve J is now away for three weeks and won't be at the AGM.

The Chair thanked all members of the MC for their contributions.

8. Date of Next Meeting

To be determined after the AGM by the new Management Committee – around mid / end June.