

MC Meeting - September 18th 2024 at 1.00pm by Zoom

Present: Ceri Pierce, Andrea Knox, Alan Screen, Mia Deschepper, Paddy Murphy, Tony Haworth (part), Sooz Neesom (part)

Apologies: Steve Webb, Jean Cufley, Steve Jarvis

1. Junior Update

Freshers Fair and student bridge lessons

Sooz provided updates on the Freshers Fair, including that the student society has taken ownership of the event, with a rotating schedule of students staffing the stand on 26th September. The bridge lessons will be held at the Cardiff Bridge Club on Tuesday nights, using the "Learn Bridge in 24 Hours" book and led by Sooz. Sooz requested confirmation of someone to deal the boards for the lessons, and is addressing student concerns about late nights and transportation by organising lifts back home for them.

Supporting Juniors in West Wales

Sooz requested help finding a bridge teacher in the West Wales area to provide lessons for three juniors of varying ability. The group discussed options for finding a local club or teacher to work with them. Sooz will obtain more details on their availability and location. Ceri will then contact suitable clubs in the West for assistance.

Action SN/CP

2. Disciplinary policy and website content removal

The meeting discussed an issue with a past disciplinary case, where despite us physically deleting PDF content related to a suspension, it was still appearing in Google search results. The search results were further scrutinised and Simon G offered to investigate further and remove any remaining links / files. If this action proved to work, then a formal process for handling disciplinary matters and archiving related content going forward will be documented and implemented as follows:

All suspensions within the jurisdiction of the WBU have to have a start date and an end date, with a period of 2 weeks from the start date before publication to allow for appeal. On expiry, the notice will then be moved to the password protected archive and the PDF password protected.

3. Standing Order for President and CEO

It was agreed that if an urgent change needs to be made, and both the President and CEO are in agreement that it can go ahead immediately and be ratified at the next MC meeting.

4. Llanbrython Bridge Congress

Andrea provided an update on the new Llanbrython Holiday Bridge Congress event being organized in partnership with Oliver Cowan in June 2025. Due to EBU rules, the event will not be able to award green points, but will instead have its own "dragon points" system. The group discussed the branding

and marketing approach to make this a fun, Welsh-focused event. Andrea reported 7 tables have already entered (and as at 1st October 2024 15 tables have now entered). There will be a limit of approximately 30 tables.

5. Strictly Come Teaching online event

Andrea provided an update on the Strictly Come Teaching online event, noting that while the initial launch had limited interest, she plans to ramp up promotion closer to the January event date to try to get at least 20 tables participating. The goal is to pair experienced players with newer players to provide a fun, social introduction to competitive online bridge. Ceri to circulate the poster again.

Action AK/CP

6. Calendar and event planning for 2026

Ceri discussed compiling a calendar of events for 2025 / 2026, including reaching out to the area NTOs to get their input on dates. A draft calendar will be sent out with a list of dates to avoid clashing with the EBU and each area asked to fill in their events on it.

The group also discussed potential venues and dates for the 2026 Premier League, aiming to rotate the location to be more accessible for players from different areas.

As most players in the Lady Milne trials are from the South Wales area it was proposed and agreed that the trials for the 2026 season remain in South Wales.

Proposed and agreed that both weekends of the Premier League will be held in the Mid for the 2026 season. Alan will talk to Theatre Hafon and Elephant and Castle in Newtown (assuming 8 to 10 teams), and Ceri to contact the Commodore and Metropole for room hire and room rates.

In 2026 Mid Wales will hold the Perry and Spickett in Newtown on either May 9/10 or May 16/17 May. This may clash with AGMs, so areas need to have advance warning of this.

Action CP

7. Financial update

A financial report was submitted prior to the meeting and Alan an update, noting that prudent cost-cutting measures have the WBU on track for a surplus this year.

Andrea visited Mold Bridge Club and reported that they were most hospitable and friendly and welcoming and have now sorted their IT issues efficiently and updated and paid Masterpoint arrears and this matter was now resolved and the committee thanked them for their efforts.

The group also discussed an issue that has arisen at the Selectors meeting with the removal of funding for international team selection, where players may be less willing to participate if they have to pay their own way, leading to potential team dynamics challenges.

It was noted that the StepBridge Account is being supported by two clubs – Mid Glamorgan online and Monty – The StepBridge committee will meet soon to discuss increasing national events entry fees from £1.25 to £1.50.

The criteria for free entry to WBU National face to face events was discussed. It was agreed that any WBU member who is eligible for Welsh representation aged under 25 or a full-time student under 30 may have free entry to WBU National events, with the exception of the Dragon Pairs because of its semi-commercial nature. This will need to be considered by the organisers when costing events.

This policy will be reviewed after 12 months.

Also, at Monty Bridge Club on StepBridge every Tuesday, WBU members under the age of 25 are free. Members should Register through the StepBridge website and contact Alan for help if needed. The process will involve applying for temporary membership on the StepBridge website and choosing a moniker.

There is also a hardship fund available for those who need it - criteria for hardship is if a member is on benefits, or if there are other mitigating circumstances. Applications should be made to the CEO.

Early bird entries (entry fee only) 10% reduction were also discussed to encourage people to enter events early – the more that are seen to enter, the more inclined others are to enter. Ceri to get Simon G's views on this.

8. Women's Bridge

A Women's League has now been set up with 9 teams and matches played on a specific date each month (last Friday?) where possible. There is a sit out in the schedule at the moment so if another team comes along, they will probably be able to enter. Entry is £32 per team – Ceri will set up the matches on RealBridge if they chose to use that platform. Face to Face matches are also encouraged.

The schedule and results will be published on the WBU website - Mia will send the info and the results to the webmaster.

The Lady Milne trials were briefly discussed and it was emphasised that all pairs need to know that if they are selected that they have to pay to play which is currently up to £400 per person plus travel.

The policy is that any outstanding debts to the WBU must be paid before a member can play in an international event, as they will not be in good standing. Similarly, payment for the upcoming event must be made before a place is confirmed.

8. Lottery Update

The application was rejected as it did not meet their community objectives sufficiently. Ceri to review the feedback and re-apply.

9. Area Reports

The Mid held an event last weekend with 7 tables and are planning their next on for the end of November

The West circulated a report in advance:

The Swiss Pairs was held on Sunday 15th September with 12 Tables and a profit! Won by Tony Howarth and Kevin Maddox. The move to Bancyfelin (5 Miles West of Carmarthen) obviously did not

affect numbers, and was a very good venue. Our next event (Vince Bevan Pairs Sunday October 13th) will also be held there, after which we will review venues.

There are over 45 rooms booked at the Seabank for the Porthcawl Congress, so a loss on venue hire will not be made. Now we need to maximise participation in the events. As a reminder, the Green Pointed events are £40 pp each (Friday evening and Saturday for Pairs, all day Sunday for the Swiss teams).

The "Holiday" relaxed events are £30pp for all day Sunday Swiss Teams (including a light lunch) and £10 pp per session on Friday evening and Saturday

Please promote!

10. AOB

The Cambria format was queried by a member due to problems scheduling matches. Ceri to send them the rules.

11. Date of Next Meeting

Tuesday 15th October at 11am by Zoom.