

MC Meeting – 2 July 2025 at 5pm by Zoom

Present: Ceri Pierce, Andrea Knox, Alan Screen, Jean Cufley, Paddy Murphy, Paul Cunningham, Steve Jarvis

1. Finance Report

Stepbridge Accounts were clarified – Stepbridge UK has its own bank account. The money shown as “Stepbridge” does not belong to the WBU but the WBU does administer StepBridge and receives 10% of participation points income for associate WBU membership. This is because the WBU must be providing a service to its members.

Gilly has been removed from the Monmouth BS account as requested.

We have £18 that was paid into the account on 15/6 but we do not know what it is for – the person is not a member.

VAT charged to the WBU for Camrose hotel accommodation by the SBU was discussed.

2. Llanbrython and Cake Club

Llanbrython was a fantastic weekend – a great atmosphere and enjoyed by all and will be back again next year. £935 profit was made with zero risk to the WBU. The profile of the WBU has been greatly raised as a result and the EBU have approached us regarding a collaboration next year.

There has been a rumour going around that the WBU was subsidising Llanbrython which is completely untrue. No subsidy was made and all Welsh players paid for themselves. The risk of making a loss was taken by our commercial partner, not the WBU.

Cake Club is going well and has been enjoyed by all. There is a full partnership desk and it is completely free. The U3A have now come on board, and EBU have shown an interest. It costs the WBU approx. £60-£70 per month. Very sociable event for members. It is held on the 2nd Wednesday of the month.

Are we doing the right things? Monmouth and Lisvane have expressed concerns – no other negative feedback from other areas. Maybe East Wales need to reach out more to these clubs. Paul mentioned that 2 EWBA members (Cardiff/Gwent) have been to play at Monmouth and clubs have been contacted by EWBA and funded classes with Brecon to recruit members.

3. Club Visit

Ceri and Andrea are visiting Monmouth Bridge Club tomorrow to discuss their concerns regarding WBU spending and to invite them to submit proposals for any support that they feel they would benefit from. It was discussed that the Management Committee set aside 10K for new initiatives. No decision was made on this yet. Noted that EWBA also has a training fund ringfenced for training equipment, room hire etc.

4. Storage

The WBU wants to keep the 6 competition tables. However other tables may be needed for the Bridgesteddfod. Steve has visited the storage unit and taken some tables away, but may need some for the Porthcawl congress in the future. He will raise it at the WWBA AGM and find out if Swansea has storage available that we can use. We need to keep approx. 25 tables for the Bridgesteddfod.

Any excess tables can be offered to clubs.

To be reviewed after WWBA AGM.

5. WBU Venues for Perry / Spickett

Having a central venue for the Perry / Spickett was discussed and the consensus was that this would be beneficial for all in order to avoid a huge amount of travel for players coming from North to South and vice versa.

Next year it will be in Sarn Village Hall. Will review this venue for suitability after the Perry next year.

6. Champion of Champions

Simon Gottschalk has offered to organise it for next year if someone else handled the logistics (presumably boards, table etc.). Venue to be determined. The current venue is Y Cwt, where the tables are stored. In order to avoid transporting tables, locating at a bridge club would save a lot of logistical problems.

This year there were 10 tables playing. Possibly Monmouth and Brecon clubs would be more suitable for players travelling.

7. IT Strategy

Andrea has been talking to Dermot from the CBAI about their membership and masterpoints software. We were looking at collaborating but it is not clear whether this would be possible.

A placement student position was discussed again. It was still considered that the WBU could not fund this as the costs are too high and also concerns were expressed that the WBU was not really set up to have an employee or to supervise one. Ceri to progress with the University. Alternatives were discussed.

IT Strategy Group – Ceri and Paul to scope out what we need. We will then investigate EBU and Irish options.

8. PGCE Update

Following a meeting with Cardiff University we have been given a PGCE course contact to discuss further whether we can provide PGCE students with a project to undertake during their teacher training.

9. DBS Checks

An organisation that can undertake Enhanced DBS checks for volunteers for a very low admin fee has been identified and an account set up with them. Ceri will co-ordinate the DBS checks. Will need to

check if physical sight of the relevant ID documents is required or if a solicitor's certified copy is acceptable.

10. Bridgesteddfod

In 2026 the WBU will try combining our main bridge competitions into one weekend, and also introduce a bridge holiday alongside it.

The date of the weekend will be 20-23 August 2026. We have been trying to identify suitable venues but hotel charges have been very high. The committee was asked if anyone knows of suitable hotels in South Wales that can accommodate 25-30 tables. EWBA are looking at similar venues for the EWBA congress. Paul will find out if they have identified any.

11. Area Reports

West – a report was circulated earlier.

The West could not raise a Spicket team and had very limited response for the

Presidents Cup, a team of 4 travelled for the Perry and enjoyed a good weekend of Bridge (Thanks to the North). The difficulty of travelling and cost is clear, last year the West held a full event and had 70 players, this cost the West £2300 to run in an independent venue. As raised previously this cost is about 8 times our annual revenue (without Porthcawl). The event in this form is clearly not feasible economically or geographically. Perhaps a smaller event (Presidents cup online?) in a central venue with areas sharing the costs on a pro rata basis could be a way forward, or an online event held on 3 days over the summer.

John Isaac Pairs and AGM

This did not run due to numbers, we will hold our AGM online this Friday and may propose that we reduce our f2f offering to 2 events a year with an online interclub league (6 matches per year) and a limited free online (BBO) tournament every 2 months to decide the WWBA pairs champions.

The future:

We have 7 clubs, only one offering evening Bridge. Llanelli is down to 2/3 tables and is being supported by Swansea (particularly Phil Skinner). If we are to survive, we need to take action teaching and participation. We may be offering to pay for club members to attend EBED course (could we organise one to be held in Wales). I note that the EBU offers 1(2) free EBED places to every club every 2 years.

Ceri to find out the costs of running a EBED teaching event in Wales to see if this is more cost effective.

12. Date of Next Meeting

Wednesday 20th August at 10am.