

MC Meeting – 15 October at 11am by Zoom

Present: Ceri Pierce, Andrea Knox, Alan Screen, Jean Cufley, Paddy Murphy, Paul Cunningham, Peter Milewski

Apologies: Steve Jarvis

1. Teacher training and mini-bridge initiatives

The meeting discussed several initiatives to promote bridge education, including:

- A partnership with Cardiff Met University to provide bridge lessons to PGCE students. Sophie C is delivering a mini bridge lesson to 28 PGCE students in November followed by another two sessions with 90 PGCE students in each in January. The aim is for them to teach minibridge when they go into schools to do teaching practice.
- A new Friday mini-bridge session on RealBridge has been set up for children and parents/grandparents
- Resource needs and costs for these teaching programs are being quantified
- Andrea to arrange another print run of minibridge leaflets. Agreed to retain the advertising on them to save on redesigning costs.

2. EBL Youth Seminar

Three delegates are to be sent to the EBL Youth Seminar that's being held in November. Two are paid for by the EBL with the WBU meeting certain limited costs of the third.

3. Bridgesteddford

Andrea provided an update on this. Not 100% happy with venues identified to date. Investigations are on-going. Members of the MC were invited to put forward suitable venues in their areas. The event is definitely happening!

4. Masterpoint license fees for Congresses

The meeting discussed the license fee structure for Welsh Congresses like Porthcawl and Llanbrighton. It was agreed that the standard fee for Porthcawl and Llandudno and similar would be 12% of profits to ensure that the WBU fee did not become a barrier to these congresses continuing. This cap would not apply to Llanbrighton which is to be a fully commercial venture.

Minor amendments to the Masterpoint Handbook to allow Llanbrighton to be a specially delegated a Category A-star Congress was requested and approved, noting

it would not otherwise meet certain minimum board criteria due to it being two separate one day events. This is to be applied to the Llanbrython Swiss Pairs and Swiss Teams only.

Andrea confirmed that the Llanbrython Congress will be held at The Metropole in Brighton in 2026 and, following detailed negotiations, it is now fully backed by the EBU and run as a joint venture with the EBU and Oliver Cowan albeit remaining under the auspices of the WBU. This means in 2026 the EBU will be fully supporting and advertising it and it should become a flagship event.

5. Equipment and technology investments

The committee agreed to allocate up to £15,000 to refresh equipment for clubs, including new playing cards and bidding box inserts. They also discussed adopting new bridge technologies like tablets for bidding and the Bridge Owl camera system, pending further research on costs and compatibility. Ceri to relay to Bridge Great Britain interest in the use of tablets and Bridge Owl initiatives, subject to costs. To use in the Camrose series, the cost for bidding tablets would be the cost of a tablet for every player (£80, £90 per tablet) plus a cost from LoveBridge of £400 per event. It was viewed as an investment in the future.

6. Placement Student

The possibility of engaging a placement student was discussed. However due to the WBU not being set up to deal with employees, it was agreed to not proceed as we cannot deal with the associated legal, tax and health and safety issues. It was noted that the MC were grateful for the offer and regretted not being in a position to accept.

7. WI

Andrea has been liaising with the Women's Institute board there and there's three or four clubs who might want to do a sample learn bridge session or sessions with us. Waiting to have the details firmed up, then we can work out what we can offer them in terms of training, sending someone in to help teach, going to show them how to play bridge, etc.

Recruitment of existing groups of friends as a strategy to recruit new members could be great as existing groups of friends may be more likely to join and stay.

8. EBED

Andrea also reported that she has now been invited to become an EBED trustee, (English Bridge Education) and she has accepted this position. It is not remunerated. This will assist the WBU in building closer relationships with EBED and widen our knowledge of available resources.

9. Financial Report

The treasurer's report showed the WBU is now in a strong financial position, with around £104,000 in reserves. The group agreed to maintain a £90,000 cushion, but to proactively spend on initiatives that will benefit and grow the Welsh bridge community and be seen to be giving back to club members.

10. Premier League

Disappointment was expressed regarding a perceived lack of sociability / camaraderie / team spirit at the recent Premier League event, noting that the description of 'cliquey atmosphere' had been mentioned by a number of participants and may deter future participation. The majority of captains had not even replied to an email inviting teams to go out for dinner together, even to say no! This made arranging any group outing difficult.

The group discussed ways to foster more camaraderie, though acknowledged that some may prefer to spend their time discussing the results with their teammates etc or simply to spend time alone and that it is difficult to force people to be more friendly!

Gwent to be booked for the 2nd Premier League weekend in 2026. Accessible venues for the 1st weekend requested, location TBC but likely West or Mid Wales.

11. Calendar planning and event scheduling

The committee set provisional dates for the 2023 Premier League events (September 26-27 and October 17-18) and discussed considerations around scheduling the Porthcawl Congress to avoid conflicts.

12. AOB

Ceri to email to decline a placement offer, employment issues being the primary reason – the WBU is unable to engage employees due to legal and tax obligations.

Peter asked if Check if Eastern Area events open to non-Eastern members. Paul to check and report back to Peter Milewski.

13. Date of Next Meeting

14th January at 10am