

MC Meeting – 14 January at 10:00 by Zoom

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

Apologies: Steve Jarvis, Paddy Murphy

1. Finance Report

There is currently £26,431 in WBU current account and £70,028 in the Building Society

New Treasurer will be required as Jean will be stepping down at the AGM. Jean is happy to continue to do the StepBridge accounts if the new treasurer does not want to do both. The Junior budget was presented.

There will be expenses coming through in the coming weeks for cards and bidding box inserts, plus NPC costs. NPCs are paid their accommodation costs, but no travel. We will potentially have 8 NPCs to pay for this year, following the vote at the AGM in 2025.

2. Constitution

The President can currently serve two terms. Andrea has offered to stay on for longer if the Areas wish for her to do this in order to continue developing relationships and projects with the other NBOs and the existing ventures within the WBU such as Cake Club, Strictly, Llanbrighton, Bridgesteddfod, the teaching voucher scheme and junior growth projects and other new ventures. This will require that the constitution to be changed. The MC members were in agreement with this. West and East Wales Areas are having a meeting soon and will revert back with the view of the areas ASAP.

3. Playing Cards

Designs for WBU playing cards were reviewed and 2 selected. We need to estimate how many packs to order. Andrea will obtain costs for 5,000, 7,500 and 10,000 packs. We would like to have them ready for when we host the Camrose in March.

We also need to know how many bidding box inserts and what style. We would like to have their old club cards back to recycle them and use them for teaching etc.

It was noted that ideally the WBU funds should not drop below 80K as the result this or any other expenditure and this could be assessed once the quote for the playing cards was received.

4. TD Training

A proposal to offer one free place on a TD training course per club per year was approved. Ceri to discuss with the TD trainers to obtain their views. This is part of the outreach to clubs project so each affiliated club receives direct benefits from their membership and builds relationships between clubs and the WBU.

5. Laws and Ethics

The committee has a call with an EBU expert to discuss analysis of BBO play statistics later this week. This is part of our WBU policy review for dealing with any allegations of online collusion and understanding how this is dealt with by other NBOs.

6. Juniors

A few of the juniors are going to play in the Barcelona congress. The WBU is paying entry cost (30/40 euros per player).

The EBU Spring Camp is coming up, but there has been no uptake other than Andrea and her eldest grandson! All areas are asked to publicise. Ceri to send out the poster for club notice boards.

7. Chepstow Archway

Chepstow are reviewing their club membership at their AGM in March.

8. Cake Club and Strictly come Teaching

Cake Club usually has 9 -11 tables and is very good for beginners/learners but equally enjoyable for experienced players wanting a friendly afternoon practice. U3A members join us and is now expanding at the request of U3A to include a friendly Zoom hand discussion the week afterwards which Andrea co-ordinates with U3A and runs. It is cost-effective (<£100 per month) and has a regular group of attendees. It is free to play and Areas are encouraged to remind their clubs about this. It is the 2nd Wednesday of each month at 2pm on Real Bridge and there is a full partnership desk so single players are guaranteed a friendly game.

Strictly last year had 78 players, but only have had a handful of entries so far this year (albeit entries came very late on last year). We are conscious that there is a date clash this year which arose after the Strictly date was set and this is affecting around half the players who entered last year so and it was proposed and agreed to move it to later in the year and invite EBED / EBU to hold it with us as a joint event. Website to be updated.

9. Area Reports

East – arranging to move the Feb congress in 2027 to Chepstow and make it more sociable.

Feb 26 Congress is being directed by Sarah. Her cases now reside at the Gwent and dealing is required. The EWBA dealing machine is not working properly and the East are reviewing whether to buy a new EWBA machine or pay a club to do it.

The format of the Perry/Spickett/Presidents has been queried. Sarn Village Hall has been booked in Mid Wales for 2026 near Newtown (7-10 miles outside). Feedback will be sought after this to see if it should be a permanent venue. Costs will need to be reviewed – potentially venue costs being split between the areas. Each area is responsible for their own arrangements with players.

West – have been running an online club league which has been going well and a free BBO session every 6-8 weeks for beginners to play with mentors. Andrea to request details from Steve J. Swansea club are doing well. If anyone else has any good people who could help on the WBU MC, please put their name forward.

The Porthcawl congress made a small profit. The West are discussing how to run it this year and may seek to involve Oliver Cowan.

10. Bridgesteddford

We are still looking for a venue. There is a potential venue in Cardiff. Wedding and Holiday hotels will be full but Conference hotels should be available. Suggestions requested. To be discussed at the next meeting. Marine hotel in Aberystwyth may be an option.

11. Schools Bridge Update

A session was held at Cardiff Met before Christmas to a class of PGCE primary school students with Maggie and Sophie and Paul. There is another one tomorrow at Cardiff Met with another group of Secondary PGCE students. Andrea visiting Crickhowell School next week, introduced via EBED. Maggie is also supporting Llanishen school and minibridge online sessions on Friday afternoon. DBS checks are required for 2 other volunteers.

12. Date of Next Meeting

25th February at 10am