

Minutes of the Berwick Bridge Club Committee meeting held at 5pm Monday, 26 July 2021 online on Skype

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| Present: | Reverend Canon Christopher Smith (CS) | President |
| | Peter Calder (PC) | Vice President |
| | Paul Gipson (PG) | Honorary Secretary |
| | Tony Reed-Jones (TRJ) | Honorary Treasurer |
| | Louis Moore (LM) | Honorary Competitions Secretary |
| | Jill Connor (JC) | Committee member |
| | Sue Price (SP) | Committee member |
| | Chris Orchard (CO) | Committee member |
| | Kitty Home Robertson (KHR) | Committee member |
| | Jean Mole (JM) | Committee member |

Apologies: None

President's welcome

CS welcomed everyone to the meeting and reiterated the online protocol for the meeting.

Minutes of last meeting and matters arising

The minutes of the last meeting were approved unanimously.

Congress donation to the Samaritans

TRJ received the following email from Liz at Samaritans:

Dear Tony

Many thanks indeed to you and your Bridge colleagues for your exceptionally kind and thoughtful donation to our new Berwick & Borders Branch.

We are currently in the process of securing premises to rent and your donation will be an enormous contribution in helping to make this happen.

With thanks and kind regards.

Liz Dicken

Project Lead

Summer bridge and BBO Video Chat

PG wished to thank all the directors who have supported summer bridge on BBO, especially Stuart Breckons and Elaine Kilgour who have directed half the evenings.

LM reported that BBO Video Chat is lightly used with only two or three people active. JM, typically one of those who use it, thought it improved the social aspects of BBO and liked catching up with people while waiting at the end of the round: she wondered if people were put off by the video or just struggled with the technology?

The committee decided to continue with BBO Video Chat on Thursdays for the summer.

Berwick Congress convenor

CS has spoken to John Smithson and he is happy to continue as the Congress convenor.

Trophies

The engraving machine has broken down and CS is still waiting for the plate trophies to be completed. They should be ready in three weeks, when CS will organise delivery.

Restarting bridge at the Parish Centre

On behalf of the subcommittee CS summarised [its report](#).

Subsequently CS has spoken to Gwynneth Guthrie about restarting at the Parish Centre on Thursday, 2 September. He is waiting to hear from her about the Parochial Church Council (PCC) policy and guidelines for users of the Parish Centre.

There has been no development in solving the ventilation problems of the hall although the PCC is aware of the club's concerns. It was confirmed that wi-fi should be available shortly.

It is clear that no decision can be made until the PCC guidelines are available. It is also likely, given the rise in Covid-19 cases in Berwick-upon-Tweed, that the subcommittee will be more cautious than the government regulations require. The subcommittee will meet as soon as the PCC guidelines are available.

In this context, the committee discussed the proposals made in the report.

If bridge does not restart at the Parish Centre in September, then we shall split the club calendar into September-December and January-May. This provides an option of restarting bridge in January. PG will provide a sample calendar.

PG covered some of the challenges in running hybrid (joint face-to-face and online) events: he mentioned that there would be a minimum number of online pairs to make this viable. TRJ expressed concern about table charges in a hybrid environment: the committee asked TRJ to comment on the minimum viable table count at the Parish Centre, assuming that online players did not subsidise this.

League teams policy

On behalf of the subcommittee PG summarised [its report](#).

The Committee agreed with its recommendations and asked the subcommittee to implement them.

Cashless club

On behalf of the subcommittee TRJ summarised [its report](#).

The Committee agreed with its recommendations and asked the subcommittee to be ready to implement them, subject to bridge restarting at the Parish Centre.

AOCB

There has been no progress on finding someone to host the club's dealing machine.

The meeting closed at 6pm. The next meeting will be on Monday, 23 August at 5pm on Skype.

Restart subcommittee notes of a meeting held on Monday, 19 July 2021

Introduction

Given the fact that there are still so many unknown factors related to the Covid pandemic, the group felt that it was impossible to recommend a specific course of action at this point. What we have done therefore is to provide various scenarios for the Committee to consider, and, hopefully, about which it can make some choices. The scenarios below reflect the unanimous views of the members of the subcommittee.

Commencing Face to Face Bridge (F2F) on Thursday, 2 September is deemed to be too risky by the Committee.

1. Continue to operate as now on an Online basis. However, given hopefully an improvement in conditions, plan to restart some F2F bridge in the New Year.
2. If that is the agreed action to consider rejigging the Club competitions so that half are played in the first four months of the season and the other half in the latter four months.

F2F Bridge resumes in the Parish Centre on September 2.

Three options to be considered.

1. Hold one F2F competition per week and one weekly competition Online.
2. Hold the usual Tuesday and Thursday Competitions in the Parish Centre and add an Online competition on another weekday.
3. Hold 'hybrid' competitions on Tuesday and Thursday, with members either playing F2F or online. This was, in the group's view, the 'dream ticket'; members realised, however, that this option might well be the most difficult to achieve. (See PG paper circulated on 'Challenges')

Given the provisional nature of the present situation, members thought that there was little point in exploring the practical implications of restarting F2F at the moment. All, however, are prepared to reconvene as a subcommittee in order to produce - for the Committee's final appraisal & decision - a set of practical proposals which would govern the running of competitions in the Parish Centre.

CMS.

19.07.2021

League teams subcommittee

We received 17 responses from the questionnaire we sent to club members.

It is likely that the unknown status of the East District League has meant that a representative response has not been received. If the league were definitely happening in September then I would expect a more positive response, but at the moment there are insufficient players for a single team.

There is sufficient interest to run teams in the Scottish Online League and SBU Bronze League.

It is the recommendation of this subcommittee that the club should:

1. Assume that the East District League will be postponed for the 2021-22 season.
2. **Pay the entry fee of one team** into the Scottish Online League 5 that runs from September-December 2021. This is expected to cost £144.

The subcommittee will pick up to eight players for the team and ensure that partnerships have system cards. We recommend that the team picks its own captain.

3. **Pay the entry fee of two teams** into the SBU Bronze League 7 that runs from September-December 2021. This is expected to cost £140.

The subcommittee will pick up to six players for each team and ensure that partnerships have system cards. We recommend that each team picks its own captain.

The subcommittee intends to support all three teams equally and will help them as required.

Cashless Bridge Club – Implementation of Pay in Advance to play

This paper is the work of the subcommittee formed following the general Committee meeting of 7th June 2021 and the agreement at the AGM to go forward with a “pay in advance to play” system for the 2021/22 season. The subcommittee’s remit was to flesh out the proposals contained within the cashless bridge paper at the AGM.

The practical issues considered were, size of payments, frequency of payments, methods of communication, frequency of communication and data protection issues. Our conclusions and recommendations are highlighted below, the implementation of the new system is predicated on face-to-face bridge recommencing at the Parish Centre in September 2021. If this does not happen or indeed, we implement some form of hybrid arrangement, then contingency arrangements have been considered and are explained below.

Statistical analysis carried out for the last two “full” seasons showed that on average the number of games played by members was 30 – suggesting a figure of £60 (£2 x 30) as the amount to set – however the distribution for both years shows some players playing fewer than 10 games with others as many as 60. These factors have been considered while deliberating a fair amount to charge.

Throughout this process the main aim is to keep the process as simple as possible while being equitable to as many members as possible, we believe that our recommendations achieve these objectives.

Recommendations

Amounts

There will be three payments in the season, the first on 1 September, the second on 1 January and a final payment or refund at the end of the season to settle each player’s account.

The first payment will be £30 and will be added to the annual club membership fee of £1 plus the annual SBU membership fee of £8 giving a total of £39.

The second payment will be £30 on 1 January. But this payment will be only for those members who have played at least 15 games by 31 December.

The third and final payment in May will be for members to settle their account and for a few members a refund will be made.

Communication

The Treasurer will send an email (letter in a few cases) at the end of July to explain to all members the new system being implemented and explaining the new policy. This will then be followed up at the end of August with the usual annual notification of membership fees due for the club and SBU along with the request for the first “pay in advance to play” figure of £30. Further emails / letters will be sent in January and May to ensure payments are made.

Controls including data protection

The treasurer will maintain a detailed spreadsheet which will, if required, provide each member with their balance at any point in time – in effect like the BBO\$ balances which members playing online will be already familiar with. This will also be used to ensure the correct billing of amounts to members each January and the settling of accounts – whether they be in debit or credit - in May of each year. The spreadsheet will interface with Pianola. Only information necessary to perform these functions will be held on the spreadsheet ensuring we comply with data protection rules.

What if f2f bridge does not return in September or a hybrid form of bridge is introduced

If face to face bridge does not return to the Parish Centre in September and we continue to play online bridge then the introduction of this new system will be delayed a year.

If, however, it is decided that we will play a mixture of online bridge and face to face bridge this will complicate matters, but we would not expect to make any initial pay to play charge for those who will primarily be playing online.

What do we advise if guests come to the club?

Over the last number of years, we have received a few visitors to the club, but their numbers are exceedingly small. This issue was raised at the AGM and the options are to take cash from the visitors or allow them to play for free (assuming they may be holiday makers). The subcommittee concluded that the numbers are likely to be so small and the amounts in monetary terms immaterial, so we recommend the visitors play for free.