

WEST OF ENGLAND BRIDGE CLUB
Minutes of the Annual General Meeting
Wednesday 15 May 2019

Committee present:

Alan Williams (Club Chairman), Bernice Horseman (Vice Chairman and Membership Secretary), Bill Ashford (Treasurer), Chris Frew (Secretary), Jan Duncan (Tournament Secretary), Alan Evans (GHS Liaison), Jen Challoner (Minister for Fun)

Members: Bridget Johnson, Tom Nolan, Carol Nolan, Laurie Barth, Margaret Young, Sue Mifsud, Sandra Cooper, Paul Brown, Andrew Clark, Julie Clark, Mary Greenacre, Steve Tomlinson, Chris King, Don Shears, Jackie Cole, Gordon Allen, David Jones

Apologies: Jane Chapman, Chris White, Michael Edwards, Pat Clowes, Richard Farrer, Dorothy Hoyle

1. Minutes of the last Meeting – 16 May 2018

A proposal to accept them as correct was made by Jan Duncan and seconded by Bernice Horseman. This was approved by all those present.

2. Matters Arising

Addressed in the Chairman's Report.

3. Chairman's Report (Alan Williams)

Alan said that this year has been dominated by the partial refurbishment of Golden Hill in the winter, something for which we have been pressing for some time. We were lucky to find a satisfactory new temporary home at the Henleaze Bowling Club, leading to a very enjoyable two months stay. It has also proved a good venue for food-based fun events, as the kitchen has a great deal of space.

With an eye to the future, we are maintaining good communications with Henleaze Bowling Club, discussing with Golden Hill the nature of our ongoing tenancy, and also keeping an eye out for other possibilities.

Alan noted with sadness the passing of three of our members during the year: Lillian Skinner, Alex Harding and Viv Stinchcombe.

A number of ideas were suggested at last year's AGM, all of which were considered by the Committee and most were implemented in some way:

- The AGM showed support for moving forward the evening session start time to 7:15pm This was implemented in September following strong support from the wider membership.
- Tom Nolan asked that the Committee minutes on the website be more up-to-date This was implemented in July; the provisional minutes are now loaded as soon as they are available.
- Clive Richards suggested we ask Thursday people why they had not moved on to other sessions; and Tom Nolan thought that we should push Wednesdays more and give prizes on a handicap basis. The Committee considered these together, and decided on an informal promotion of Wednesday evenings to the Thursday sessions, and to date that has worked very well. But the Committee

preferred the variety of the current prize structure, with a quarterly prize before handicap, and an annual prize after handicap on Wednesdays, with the reverse on Mondays.

Jane Chapman asked for a secure bike rack, and we were tasked with asking Golden Hill. Both Alan Evans and Chris Frew put this excellent idea to Golden Hill, but they do not want to take it up, despite probably being zero cost.

Alan continued: "As many of you will know, I am stepping down from the Committee today due to my chronically unreliable health, which has prevented me from carrying out my duties as well as I would have liked. I would like to thank all the Committee members past and present who have supported me so well, particularly through the last couple of years."

"It has been a privilege to be Chairman in a very interesting period of development for the Club. The most pleasing thing to me has been the success of the Thursday afternoon sessions, which is now leading to an influx of new members into other sessions. Although I floated the idea a few years ago, the project has been made a success solely by the very hard work and time given by many other members, led by Jen, who should feel proud of what they have achieved: it is quite simply the best show of its kind in town."

"And finally, I would like to thank all the members of the club for making it such a good place to play bridge. Thank you"

4 Treasurer's Report (Bill Ashford)

Bill reprised his Notes to the accounts:

4.1 Accruals and Prepayments

We owe £359 to the EBU for P2P fees for February and March 2019. Prepayment of membership fees amounted to £1075 for 2019/20. The rent arrears of £112 represents 4 months of rent rise which was only applied in April 2019. The annual fee of £180 to Pianola was paid late in April 2019 but relates to the current year.

4.2 Fixed Assets

All our fixed assets are fully depreciated. The stairlift was a gift to Golden Hill and so cannot be counted as a depreciating asset.

4.3 Income

(i) Table money increased by 17%, fuelled by significant increases in attendance on Wednesday and Friday evenings. Overall, there was a 12% rise in player numbers (and this does not include the Thursday supervised play session).

(ii) Subscription income was up this year, reflecting increased member numbers, even though new members enjoyed a special introductory rate of £5 for their first year.

(iii) Supervised sessions on Thursday afternoons continue to increase in player numbers and the club benefits from contributions by Jen in addition to reimbursement of rent.

(iv) "Other income" reflects money received for board dealing, but this is partly offset by expenses paid to the dealer. However, as we now provide boards for Henleaze bridge Club, this shows a small net profit.

(v) Interest received from the Hampshire Trust Bank was up from £422 to £494 due to a small increase in the interest rate and the compounding of previous interest.

(vi) "Other Income" includes £319 Xmas Party raffle sales, sale of packs of cards (£12) and income from Excel BC for board dealing (£417).

4.4 Overheads

(i) Rent was higher because we spent two months at Henleaze Bowling Club during redecoration of the premises at Golden Hill.

(ii) We made a gift to Golden Hill of the stairlift at a cost of £4800. In addition we bought new cabinets for storage at a cost of £335.

(iii) The 3 events during the year (Bastille, Xmas party and Burns night) were all well attended (40, 56 and 64 players) and made a small net profit overall.

(iv) Sundries refer to the cost of van hire for the move to and from Henleaze Bowling Club.

4.5 Profit

Due to the stairlift purchase, a trading loss was recorded. If this was an "asset", it could have been depreciated in the accounts and a profit would have been recorded. However, as it is a "gift", not an "asset" it is treated as a one-off expense.

4.6 Acknowledgements

Bill thanked Irene Robinson for auditing the accounts.

A motion to accept the accounts was proposed by John McClaren, seconded by Tom Nolan, and approved by all those present.

5. Membership Secretary's Report (Bernice Horseman)

Bernice reported that the current membership of the Club stands at 194, comprised as follows:

- 13 Life members
- 110 paid up members
- 71 paid to 31 March 2019

The increase in membership is due to the inclusion of the previous 'Daytime' members in the 'Ordinary' membership of the Club. It has been very pleasing to welcome so many 'afternoon players' to the evening sessions.

Bernice said she was hopeful that at least half of the 'unpaid-up' members will continue their memberships.

Golden Hill has now made many renovations to the Clubhouse and hopefully some of the ex-evening players will return on hearing of the improvements. We even have a stairlift now so the staircase is no longer an insuperable obstacle.

When Bernice finished her report, John McClaren rose to remind the AGM that Bernice was today

retiring from the Committee that she has served with distinction since January 1987; over 32 years. His encomium was warmly endorsed by all present, and a presentation was made of a souvenir crystal trophy and flowers, to much applause.

6. Tournament Secretary's Report (Jan Duncan)

The club holds 5 regular sessions each week. Along with the regular Monday, Wednesday and Friday nights we run a very successful supervised (non competitive) session on a Thursday afternoons as well as a gentle (competitive) duplicate on a Monday afternoon with about 6 tables.

The club has maintained all of the existing club competitions and the winners of those competitions were as follows:

Pairs Championship was won by Chris King and Steve Tomlinson.

Moorstone Cup (handicap Teams) was won by Andrew Urbanski, Suzy Lawson, David Jones and Jan Duncan

Preddy Cup (Teams Championship) was won by Mike Short, Gareth Evans, Gina Playle and Honor Hopley

Nick Barham-Hall trophy was won by Sue Lovell and Keith Rayford

Mixed Pairs was won by David Jones and Jan Duncan

Club Individual was won by Bill Ashford

Lewis Morton Trophy (Handicap Pairs) was won by Tony Gammon and Irene Robinson

In the Avon events the following successes were achieved by club members:

Avon Mens Pairs was won by Andrew Urbanski and Mike Huggins

County Pairs by David Jones and Jan Duncan

Avon Knock Out Teams was won by Eric Page, Colin Oakley, Alan Williams (and Mike Brady)

In the Avon Leagues:

League 3 was won by Gill Davies, (R Blacknell), Mary McKenzie, Gerry Gowling, Ken Griffin and Michael Wigmore

League 2 and 1 are still not completed

Avon Handicap Pairs was won by David Jones and Jan Duncan

There were no Nicko teams or Garden City team entered this year but we hope for nominations for this coming year.

7. Golden Hill Liaison Officer's Report (Alan Evans)

The main development this year has obviously been the refurbishment at Golden Hill. After lengthy planning Golden Hill Sports carried out the changes during October and November last year. The bridge club moved to Henleaze Bowling Club for these two months, where we were well accommodated in a venue that clearly works well when not in use by bowlers (but would be a different matter in the summer months). We returned there for the two Christmas events and the Burns Night event in January, but the Bastille Night event in July will be held at Golden Hill.

The GHS refurbishment consisted of improvements to the staircase, including the installation of the stairlift, paid for by the bridge club, new facilities in the ladies toilets, changes in the kitchen and in an enlarged and separated bar area, and primarily a new look for the main room, where carpet tiles have been replaced by a new floor, the walls have been cleared and repainted and (more recently) the doors/windows have been replaced. The shutters are now simpler to operate, there is new lighting and the insulation is better, solving previous problems of inadequate heating in winter. GHS aim to hire out the room for other events, and wish the room to be kept as clean and tidy as possible. We therefore replaced the previous director's cupboard with a new pair of cupboards (the third belongs to the Henleaze Bridge Club, who meet here on Tuesdays); they are of our choice but in practice are proving a little smaller than ideal when we have to pack everything away. GHS do not wish to allocate us any more space in the main room, though we have a specific space in the kitchen for tea things etc for our afternoon sessions. The old noticeboard at the top of the stairs has been replaced by one (of their choice) in the room. Our bookcase has also been removed at Golden Hill's request. The books and a few miscellaneous items are being stored by Committee members. There are plans to install blinds on the windows in the next few weeks.

After the refurbishment GHS changed the till system on the bar. This happened at a time of a sustained increase in the number of players on Fridays, so by mutual agreement GHS now provide bar staff on a Friday evening.

Looking to the future, GHS hope the room will be used more by other parties and would like the refurbished facilities to generate an appropriate financial return, so we may have to consider renegotiating our lease agreement and rental charges with them.

GHS are entitled to usurp a few Friday evenings in the year for their own use.

8. Fun Events Officer's Report (Jen Challoner)

Jen reported that all the Fun Events and the Christmas parties are becoming increasingly popular and because of this we have needed to hold these events at the Henleaze Bowling Club where we can accommodate more people. At Christmas we had sixteen tables, and fourteen on Burns' Night. Another change has been the catering as Julie Lee and Damien can no longer help us. Jen, with a dedicated team of volunteers, now cater for all the events, and so far the feedback has been very favourable. Many thanks to Annie Frew, Lesley Reed, Carol Nolan, Vicki Lucas, Bernice, Jan Duncan, Dorothy Hoyle and Tom Nolan. We hope to continue doing this and new volunteers would be welcome.

Jen proceeded to extol the efforts of the West of England Wandering Minstrels. The pantomime written by our resident playwright Laurie Barth and his faithful assistant seemed to go down well at

Christmas and a new Christmas play is in the process of being written. Auditions will take place in September for the thespians among our membership.

Finally, the Thursday Improvers session has proved a great success, with many of the players moving confidently in to the Monday afternoon and Wednesday evening sessions. The Thursday Improvers session has a dedicated group of members helping: David Jones (who also gives a short lesson), Alan Evans, Laurie Barth, Jane Drew, Bill Ashford, Bernard Mitchell and myself. Thank you all. The session is very friendly; we usually have 8+ tables , sometimes even 11. And everyone who starts, continues attending. Maybe it's for the sweets!

9. Motions submitted for Discussion

None

10. Election of Officers and Committee

Chris Frew reported that he had received only one nomination for four of the Officer roles, and no nomination for the fifth (Vice Chairman). As the Committee is limited to eight people in total this would allow for four 'Ordinary Committee members'. As only four nominations have been received. Chris therefore suggested that the new Committee should be elected *en bloc*. This was formally proposed by Jackie Cole, seconded by Don Shears, and agreed by all members present. The Committee for 2019/20 will therefore be:

Chairman: Alan Evans

Treasurer: Bill Ashford

Secretary: Chris Frew

Membership Secretary: Bridget Johnson

Ordinary Committee Members: Laurie Barth, Jen Challoner, Jane Chapman, Jan Duncan

11. Any Other Business

The meeting expressed its sadness that persistent ill-health had obliged Alan Williams to stand down as Chairman (for the second time). Chris Frew made a short speech of thanks, warmly endorsed by the meeting, and presented Alan with a gift and memento.

During a general discussion, Laurie Barth asked if he should infer that relations with GHS are strained? Alan said that the GHS trustees wish to generate more income from renting the clubhouse and are unhappy with aspects of the current Lease Agreement. This will be an early issue for the new Committee.

The meeting concluded at 19.15.

Signed.....

Date