Bristol Bridge Club (charity no. 1167959)

2018 Annual General Meeting

Thursday 5th July 2018

Grenville Hall, Oldfield Road, Bristol BS8 4QQ

* The Chairman, Mike Letts welcomed all the members present and called the meeting to order at 18.40 pm
* Present: 50 members

**Apologies**: Martin Holcombe, Lorna Watson, Pat Clowes, Antony Alderson, Juliet Alderson, Bonnie Balfry, Eric Blencowe, Judy Hall, Dorothy Nunn, Mary Oliphant, Gill Stevenson, Mary Tobin, Betty Smithson, Jacky Baker, Marion Blackhall, Christine Dean, Jan O’Brien, Anne Huddleston, Sue Lowe

The minutes of the 29th June AGM 2017 for Bristol Bridge Club were approved: proposed by Gill Davies and seconded by Sandra Cooper. John Brandon Joyce pointed out an error in the Chairman’s Report: We were the 5th largest Club in the Country not in the County.

There were no Matters Arising.

**First AGM of Bristol Bridge Club as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation**

1. **Mike Letts gave his Chairperson’s Report to the meeting as follows:**

“It’s been a very busy year, our first full year as a charitable incorporated organisation.

I have had the honour to be your chairman for two years and vice chair prior to that. Previously I had 2 years on committee. The new constitution allows for the chair to stand for 3 years. However, I decided it was time for some new blood and skills to become trustees.

I should like to take this opportunity to thank the trustees for their support and a great deal of hard work and commitment. Everyone has undertaken various specific tasks on several sub committees, all done on your behalf. Please remember, they do this for you, the members – not for themselves.

A good deal of our membership has a number of skills which would be very useful to the running of the club. Should any of you feel you would like to get involved, you would not need to become a trustee but you could attend subcommittee meetings in an advisory capacity.

In particular, I should like to single out our treasurer, Mick Brown, who after 4 years of running our finances, has decided to step down as a trustee. Despite the amount of time and pressure the role demands, he has delivered great service to the club, always with good humour.

In addition to your trustees, a great deal of work is undertaken by others:

Of course, the club should be indebted to Stephen Royal who not only deals with the day to day running of the club as manager, but in addition he directs and teaches several times a week and his beginners classes are really important in bringing in new members. Please show your appreciation.........

A big thank you too, for Annie Tyas who works tirelessly as your catering manager. Apart from serving you all every time she works here, she has all the shopping to do as well as organising the staff in her absence. Also a thank you for the refreshments this evening. A big thank you please.

A special thank you too for Hilda Ball who, in addition to her various duties as a trustee, puts in a huge amount of time to all the Christmas activities which we all enjoy.

A thank you too, to Brian Sharples and Mike O’Brien who always offer to give a hand when help is asked for, particularly with Christmas decorations.

Also to Marion Brown who has helped the board greatly in providing a link with Annie the catering manager. Thank you very much.

Thanks too, to our card dealers: Margaret Alner and Ray Westwood. This is quite a time commitment – so many thanks to them.

Also a big thank you to all our tutors and directors, without whom, we’d struggle to play.

A big thank you to Sue Lowe who has undertaken the role of welfare officer over many years. She has always kept us aware of people who are ill or have other problems and sends out cards and flowers as appropriate.

I am delighted to tell you that Jo Luton has offered herself to take over this important role, so please contact her if you are aware of anyone who has problems.

Finally, a big thank you to all the members who have been trained in the use of the defibrillator. Happily we have not had need of them this year, quite remarkable when you consider the stress that partners put us under!

At this point, I should like to celebrate the success of our members at the bridge table.

Earlier in the year, Peter Shelley and Trevor Ward, with team mates, entered the trials to represent England in the European Seniors championship. They won the 2 session trials and duly represented England recently in Ostend. At one point, they looked likely to win a medal but results went against them on the final day. However, they hung on to finish 8th of 22 teams and in doing so, qualified for the world seniors championship to be held in China next year.

David Jones was their NPC and I’m sure his incredible skill and experience helped them to achieve this brilliant result. Congratulations please.

**Trophy winners this year were as follows:**

The Phil Jones Bowl: Tony Zaffiro and Terry Butler

The Everett Cup: David and Stephen Turner, Andrew Urbanski and Steve Tomlinson

The Hockey Cup: Andrew and Cathy Smith

The Spielman Trophy: Mike Huggins and Andrew Smith

The Curtis Cup: Steve Tomlinson and Christine King

The Janet Haynes Trophy: David and Daisy Bickley

The City Cup: Not Yet Completed

Bernard Shannon Trophy: Cynthia Roberts and Andrew Urbanski

Ladies Pairs: Vanessa O’Callaghan and Sandra Cooper

Men’s Pairs: Tim Brierley and Graham Hartley

Christmas Swiss Teams: David J Griffith and Chris Griffith, Anne Aylett and Isobel Larcombe

Helmore Salver: Sue O’Hara and Nelson Stephens

Mendela : Pat Chant

Austwick Cup: Richard Blacknell

Madge Kirk Trophy: Brian & Christine North and Phil Lidstone and Kevin Hodgkinson

Whilst mentioning the Curtis Cup, a plea to you to keep supporting this event. Bob generously donated a legacy to ensure this event should continue and it is very important to his family that it is successful.

Once again, thank you for allowing me to be your chairman.”

1. **Treasurer Mick Brown gave his report concerning the Trustee’s Report and Financial Statements as follows:**

“I sent you by e-mail the financial review as it appears in the Trustee Report and also information comparing this last financial year with the previous one. I hope you have had a chance to digest the information as I am only going to give a brief summary.

The overall outcome for the year was a surplus of just under £18000. This is somewhat lower than the previous year. There was a decrease in income from Table Money and Tuition, a new dealing machine was purchased at over £2000 and a larger amount of maintenance work was carried out. However the club is in a relatively strong financial position to face future eventualities.

The other thing I would like to bring to your attention is the revaluation of the premises from £450,000 to £750,000. This is based on the market value of the land and brings the net assets to over £800,000.

That is all I have to say apart from wishing the new treasurer well in dealing with the financial affairs over the coming years. “

Irene Robinson queried where the balance sheet was. It is on page 11 of the Trustee’s report.

Mike Edwards queried why the council tax had been reduced by a quarter. It was explained that this was because of our charitable status.

1. **Club Manager’s Stephen Royale gave his report as follows:**

“The club continues to thrive. The club was once the 5th busiest in the country based on the number of player sessions in the year to March 31st. In the current ranking we are now 8th, but I don’t think that this reflects a marked decline. Some of our sessions have had lower numbers, especially some evenings, but the daytime sessions are as busy as ever. More of our members have now retired I suspect. The Christmas Swiss team’s event is still as big as ever and the Curtis Cup is always popular. We are grateful to Bob Curtis who left money in his will so that his event could continue. By contrast, members do not seem as keen on entering our trophy competitions or on giving greater priority to being able to play in the final if they qualify. The dates are in the calendar which comes out a long time ahead

Last weekend we had 11 tables for the Italian Evening when a meal was provided before the bridge. We have done a few of these bridge and supper evenings before and they are usually popular. By contrast the Sociable Saturdays have attracted quite a low turnout. People always bring a lovely spread of food for the buffet.

The Premier Pairs has been cancelled. We are still open to suggestions about an alternative format for a top players’ competition that might generate the required interest.

We have kept the same format of tuition for club players this past year and lessons have been well attended. The numbers in the beginners’ classes are only just self-financing and we would like to attract more people. Most new recruits come from word of mouth recommendations, so we hope that you will persuade your friends to give it a try when classes start in the autumn. A leaflet will be available to give out to people who you think might be interested in learning to play bridge. Please take one to show your friends.

We have had problems again with the card dealing machine this year. Earlier in the year we had a new machine which proved unreliable. The latest model of a different make seems to be working much better. The hand records are smaller print, but this is a small price to pay for having a machine which works reliably.

It takes a lot of work to keep a club like this running, most of which is done by a small number of people who work very hard on your behalf. Please speak to me if you have some time that you can spare to help the club. Everyone could help in a small way by leaving their table tidy at the end of play. Take your mugs back to the kitchen and do not leave dregs in the bottom of the mug. Better still put your mug in the dishwasher. Glasses do not go to the kitchen but should be left on the worktop in front of the bar as they get washed in the bar.

There is no table money for the bridge after this AGM. The winners are awarded the Bernard Shannon Trophy. There will be a draw for partners, mixing a strong player with a less confident player in accordance with Bernard Shannon’s wishes to mix up different sections of the club. There was a motion about the bridge after the AGM at the 2016 AGM that was approved. It stated that arranged partnerships are not allowed. The draw for partners will go up on the whiteboard. I want to get playing as soon as possible. Rather than say what conventions are allowed, the stronger player should just play what the less confident player is used to and not play any new convention that they have never played before.”

1. **Resignation of Trustees:**

Mike Letts has resigned as Chairman and Trustee

Mick Brown has resigned as Treasurer and Trustee

1. **Election of Trustees:**

Continuing trustees:

Hilda Ball, Mike Forrest, Joanna Galpin, David Jones, Jo Luton, Jan O’Brien, Sue O’Hara, Phil Seymour

New Chairperson nomination: David Jones proposed by Mike Letts and seconded by Hilda Ball

New Treasurer nomination: Mike Forrest, proposed by Joanna Galpin and seconded by Jo Luton

New Trustee nomination: Irene Robinson, proposed by Mike Forrest and seconded by Mike Huggins

New Trustee nomination: Ralph Power, proposed by Hilda Ball and seconded by Phil Seymour

All nominations were accepted unanimously by show of hands with none against.

Mike Forrest will continue as Membership Secretary for the time being but we are looking for someone to fill this post before the end of the membership year.

1. **Proposed change to the Constitution**

Clause 9.5 (a) of the constitution currently reads:

The CIO may require members to pay reasonable membership fees to the CIO. If this is the

case then all members (except honorary life members) of the Club will pay an annual

subscription, the amount of which shall be decided at the Annual General Meeting of the

Club. Subscriptions shall be due for payment by 1 April and must be paid by 1 June. Unless

the Committee decides otherwise, any member whose subscription remains unpaid after

the second date, shall be treated as a visitor until his or her subscription has been paid in

full.

It is proposed that the date at which members who have not paid their subscription be

changed from 1 June to 30 April.

Supporting statement: The date at which members are entitled to reduced renewal

subscriptions was changed from 30 April to 31 March at the latest renewal, at the

suggestion of the membership secretary. This change seeks to be consistent with that

change, by also making this date one month earlier.

1. **Mike Letts reported on the possible Bristol Bridge Club Relocation as follows:**

“As my final task, I should like to apprise you of the position regarding the possible relocation of our club.

Last year, we discovered that the British Legion club in Long Ashton was on the market. The board viewed the premises and it was clear that, whilst not perfect, it could provide plenty of space, a good deal of parking and in a location which would suit a good proportion of the membership. The club was purchased by a developer and it transpired he was (is) very interested in buying our club.

We had hoped that a swap with cash adjustment might be possible, however, in meetings it was clear that no cash adjustment would be forthcoming, therefore, because Long Ashton would need a very large spend to bring it to our required standard, it was decided not to proceed. We feel that we should look for premises which could be serviced at a figure close to what we could achieve from the sale of this building. F.Y.I this figure is in the region of £650k - £800k depending on costs and planning consent. The developer is still very keen on this site and we could sell to him should we find premises. This could be a good option as we might avoid sales commission and we would probably be able to stay here whilst we renovate new premises.

Additionally the two agents with whom we have had meetings are very enthusiastic about the likelihood of achieving a good sale.

Finding premises has proved quite difficult. There is very little on the market, certainly within our budget.

Last year, we formed a property subcommittee chaired by Phil Seymour and we have worked tirelessly to make a move a reality.

We received a good deal of suggestions of venue from the membership but none were suitable due to cost, lack of parking or unavailability. We felt that the council must have several potentially suitable properties but we have struggled to get substantive dialog with them. We will keep working on this and hope to achieve a breakthrough.

So that’s where we are. The sub-committee will keep working to achieve the right move. Rest assured, they will not propose a move to anywhere which provides lesser premises nor in an unsuitable area.

Of course, we have not given up on staying in these premises. We are still hoping to have discussions with the council re-creating parking in the areas under the flyover.

I have received a good deal of correspondence from our neighbours complaining of a variety of things, some with little merit and plenty with justifiable issues. Certainly, if I came home from work after 7pm and had to park several streets away, I would not be happy. We should be sympathetic to this and the more able bodied of us could perhaps consider parking 5 minutes away and all of us might try more car sharing.

However, we will always have issues with our neighbours. Additionally we still have to maintain an old building. No firm estimates have been obtained due to the possibility of a move, but we do have a significant issue with our floor plus increasing damp problems. Add to this, the fact that the club will need decorating in the next couple of years, one could be looking at a spend of £50,000. This of course needs to be weighed up in consideration of relocation.

The subcommittee would welcome more input from the membership and also assistance from people with relevant skills and contacts. Please contact Phil Seymour or David Jones if you have something to offer.

I hope you find this helpful.”

Barbara Fowler stated that the purchasers of the Long Ashton site were having problems with planning consent so it may be worth us revisiting this site.

Brian Nichols stated that other organisations, that he had belonged to, had relocated to sites outside the city had found a dramatic drop in membership over the years.

Mike Forrest reiterated that we were just one entity not a charitable corporation.

John Brandon Joyce queried whether as such we could take out a mortgage. It was confirmed that we could.

Mike Huggins stated that when the current club was purchased in the early 70s a considerable amount of money was raised from the members. Mike Letts responded that we had done a similar exercise to provide refurbish the club more recently.

1. **AOB:**

None

**There being no other business the meeting closed at 7.20 pm**