

---

**WORTHING BRIDGE CLUB**

**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

**Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> March 2023 at 10.00am**

**at Byron Road**

**DRAFT MINUTES**

---

**Present at Byron Road:** Jan Adams, Alexa Baxter, Anne Bello, Betty Coldron, Janet Cretchley, Eddie Elliott, Pat Holmes, David Hughes, Debbie Hildick-Smith, John Jeffery, Eileen Perrigo, Ernie Rivett, Lynda Smith, Colin Smith, Dawn Sullings, David Underhill, Nigel Utting, Brenda Wilcox, Maureen Winn, Vaughan Bull, Avril Strong, Roger Geach, Stephen Kay, Ann Mackown, Annamarie Beresford, Angela Neale, Di Maclintock, Marilyn Craine, Robert Pepper, Denise Ireland, Alice Louis, Barbara Gordon, Ian Gordon, Annie Harris, Val Harding, Bob Cole, Jean Meneely, Mike Perle, Marie Wiley.

1. **Apologies for absence were received from:** Dick Wheeler, Gillian Skelton, Judy-Ann Cheevers, Laurence Chiswell, Chris Constable, Robert Delacour, Rosemary Tuddenham, Jane May, Amanda Clark, Sue Petitt, Sandy and Chris Reimoser, Linda Turley, Ann Button, Rob Wanders, Angela Waiton, Chris and Siobhan Mullins, Mike Percik, Peter Varley, Penny Jeffery, Cathy Hall, Andrew Cunliff, Penny Mitchell, Jack Woodard, Malcolm Wright, Jan Summers.

**Members sadly deceased in 2022:** Jane Tourell, Richard Duffield, Margaret Birch, Gillian Mayhew, Muriel Waller, Miriam Timewell, Anthony Corcoran, Pat Carter.

2. **Approval of Minutes from 2021 AGM – Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> March 2021**

The Minutes were approved and signed off by Ernie Rivett.

3. **There were no Matters Arising**

4. **Chairman's Report and adoption for 2022/23 –Ernie Rivett**

Firstly, I would like to thank our committee and others for all the hard work put in throughout the last year. I am also grateful for the financial support members have given in the usual way. Our preparation for returning to face-to-face (F2F) has worked well and to date no one has suffered through catching Covid at the club.

The drop in numbers is due I'm afraid to some of the older members passing away and others now unable to attend for health reasons and therefore it would be difficult for them to make it to the club.

Organisation of bridge at both the club, county and national levels continues to be difficult and I think this will continue for some time into the future. F2F Bridge has not returned to levels seen prior to Covid and the subsequent lockdowns. People's habits and fears have changed the whole environment.

### Financial

Alexa of course will go into the numbers in more detail but we did return a small surplus for the last year.

I must add that without the government grant of £2667 it would have been a small loss.

Hence the idea of the 60's club where any profit will replace the grant that is not available this year. More will be said regarding the 60's club later on the agenda. The final contribution of the 60's club to the finances will not be clear until the anniversary at the end of August. In the meantime the committee decided to keep that money separate to the ongoing accounts to keep it simple as money was coming in and out through the subscriptions and prizes.

The committee also decided that as things stand, we would leave table money and annual subscriptions as they were and review the situation at the end of the year. Most of the obvious overhead savings have been made over previous years but I would be interested to hear what members have to say on this matter.

We will definitely stop giving glasses to trophy winners after the Spring Festival this year.

Glasses cost us £750 at £15/glass and this year with the same number little change if any would be seen from £1,000. (Prize vouchers instead?)

Our member numbers have dropped from 280 pre-Covid, then 205 last year and this year to just over 180. This will have an impact on our financial situation. In addition, we are not seeing the same table numbers compared with previously.

We did not receive a single response from local magazines which ran free of charge advertising for several months.

### Membership

Currently the only source is through Colin's classes or from those moving into the area and seeing our website. This has had a small success.

During last year we received promotional material from the EBU which we distributed to the library, museum and shops in the area.

Also, in local magazines which ran free of advertising charge for several months. We did not receive a single response from these.

Also, I have the club advertising in the council's brochure which they distribute to shops and tourists for a number of years. Again, no response.

We have also briefly tried schools but now they are only interested in catching up after lockdowns.

I don't know what else to try unless you have any ideas of your own.

It is worth saying that we are not alone in this problem and the EBU is trying to solve it but not with a lot of success. In conversations with the clubs I have been in contact with for online matches, the replies I get are they have closed F2F sessions due to lack of support. People don't want to come out at night like they used to, and they want to play online and finally they seem to want a more social rather than competitive bridge.

### **Sessions/competitions**

The spring festival was really well supported which made it a great success especially the high number of entries to the team event, hopefully the same this year. The Hills again proved popular with members which made it worthwhile holding. Entries from the rest of the county were disappointing especially from the higher ranked players.

Club sessions met expectations but they remain the main source of regular club income.

While speaking about club sessions I have heard several comments about the movements being used. I can assure you the directors are doing their best to make each session fair but the increase in the number of times they are confronted with a half table does not make their task easy. Those comments have been noted. Howell movements cannot always be used as often there are more than one pair that need to sit.

I have managed to get interest in a limited number of online matches which I know some of you enjoy.

Support for the club Tuesday afternoon online session is very small and unless the support is increased, we will have to abandon it for the summer and review having it for the winter period. Again, I would be interested in member's thoughts.

The winter league was successful, which is our only teams event currently. We asked the question before whether members were interested in reviving the once-a-month teams event but had a very lukewarm response. What do think about this year?

I have placed a notice asking for those interested in further mentoring.

### **Maintenance**

Last year maintenance was at its lowest cost level for some years. Which was good news, whether this continues is another matter.

We have already spent £3,500 on a new duplimator and need two new safety lights plus a temperature timer/controller for the ladies' toilets. I have had the water heater looked at and it is not designed for really hot water. Temperature is controlled by flow so should be turned to maximum, lowest flow, hence the water will warm up.

The hand driers in both toilets had clogged filters now cleaned so warm air will help dry your hands. Again, they are not designed for really hot air as the high air flow is the main source of drying.

### **Future**

- We will continue to make the club safe for members to use and keeping members up to date with what is happening.
- Rest assured your committee will act appropriately in relation to whatever situations arise and in the best interests of members.
- Constant monitoring of finances is now essential.
- The outside needs redecoration.
- Spring Festival scheduled for May 14<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> more information in due course
- Resurrect teams' events.
- Hills pre booked venue, caterers and Director on Sunday November 26<sup>th</sup>.
- How do we integrate either students from Colin's classes or less experienced into regular sessions as part of keeping competitive sessions going with reasonable numbers.
- Your continued support is essential for the club to keep going and once again thank you all for the support given over the last year.

Thank you and any comments thoughts on what I have said would be welcome.

Ernie Rivett

### **The Chairman then invited comments and questions.**

Robert Pepper suggested having an evening session of BBO. ER explained that a previously run Friday evening session had closed for lack of participants. A concurrent Tuesday evening session would not affect EP's class. ER asked for a show of hands for interest but there was very little support. Lynda Smith stated that because there were often only 2 or 3 tables online, the results were just top/bottom/middle and that more tables would give a more competitive result.

Marilyn Craine asked if WBC could run a partnership desk as per the four daily EBU sessions. We use Pianola for the same function so that was already available.

An open discussion ensued about the membership/F2F situation explained in ER's address: free drinks were suggested for F2F (Avril Strong). CS stated our private parking gave us an advantage over many clubs. ER stated that the events such as Spring Festival were well attended and we were lucky to come back to F2F and compared WBC to Horsham who now largely play online.

Bob Cole asked if new players to duplicate sessions could play with more senior players without it affecting the NGS of that player. He volunteered himself as a partner as did Ernie and Roger Geach. Lynda Smith explained this was possible but difficult for the Directors to do. Nigel Utting said that Directors already apply stratification at all sessions but it was not automatic; Directors are happy to be reminded to do this. Members can look at their EBU scores online which shows how NGS is calculated depending on their partner and strength of field.

Ian Gordon suggested we set up a stand in the local shopping centre to attract members; we could piggy-back on Council events. ER to investigate.

Pat Holmes asked if provision of tea/coffee/biscuits was costly, or could perhaps be removed. A voluntary donations box will be discussed at the next Committee meeting.

#### **5. Honorary Treasurer's Report for 2022-23 – Alexa Baxter**

There was a surplus at the end of the year of £1,595. However, we received a business rate grant of £2,667 so there was effectively a deficit of £1,072. At the end of last year there was a deficit of £3,900.

We now have online banking for the club account and we have taken out a business savings account with Nationwide. £20,000 was moved into this in January 2023, and we are receiving interest of about £40 a month on this.

The nett operating income, which is the bridge related income (table money, room hire, subscriptions) less costs (P2P, prize/host vouchers, directors, fees for use of the card reader), has increased. However, it is still much less than pre-Covid, because the number of tables is down by about a quarter.

The overheads were higher in 2022. Some of the overheads are fixed costs which are due regardless of whether the club is open, such as insurance and the security system, and these increase each year. Other costs have increased because the club has been open, such as wages for the cleaner, electricity costs, and costs for engraving of trophies and provision of engraved glasses for winners. The cost of the glasses has increased substantially. The person who used to provide them did it as a hobby and therefore at a reasonable cost but he is no longer available and we have to buy them from a company.

During the year there were 1,840 tables, from both online and face to face sessions, compared to 1,371 during 2021. The online sessions only averaged about 2.5 tables. The Friday sessions were cancelled and the Tuesday sessions have been very poorly supported since October, with many sessions having fewer than 2 tables and so unable to run. The face-to-face sessions increased from 719 tables to 1799 tables and averaged 5.43 tables in 2022, though so far in 2023 the average has increased to 5.8 tables in January and 5.9 tables in February.

A lot of members paid their 2023 annual subscriptions in December and these are shown as a current liability. The liability for charity tombola etc is the amount raised during December by donations, the tombola and the book sale. This amount has been distributed between three charities, Worthing Food Foundation, Turning Tides and Alzheimer's Research UK.

The 60s Club was launched in September. The current balance is shown as an outstanding liability in the accounts, as the club bank account is used to receive the monies and pay prizes/expenses. However, at the end of the year, in August, the surplus will be transferred to the club.

At the moment I see no reason to increase table money or subscription levels (though we have increased the visitor table money to £5). We can't compare 2022 with 2021 as we were only open for part of that year. At the end of this year, we will be able to compare the figures to the full year 2022 figures and have a much better idea of whether any increases are needed.

Alexa Baxter

#### **Comments on the Treasurer's Report**

ER stated that lower energy costs than predicted for 2021/22 will be balanced out by this year's increased charges. ER has calculated that the minimum membership to remain solvent is 140.

Bob Cole will enquire at an alternative engraver he is aware of through his bowls club to see if we can reduce the cost of prize glasses.

#### **6. The Honorary Treasurer's Report and audited accounts were adopted unanimously.**

#### **7. Appointment of Independent Auditor**

Angela Neale was reappointed Independent Auditor.

#### **8. Election of Officers**

##### **Nominations for the Committee were as follows:**

Chair - Ernie Rivett

Vice-Chair – Eileen Perrigo

Honorary Secretary – Debbie Hildick-Smith

Honorary Treasurer – Alexa Baxter

Committee members: Judy-Ann Cheevers

Robert E Pepper

Lynda Smith

Nigel Utting

Chris Constable

**All were elected unanimously**

**9. Election of Conduct Committee Chairman**

Valerie Benson was elected unanimously.

**10. Any other business**

- a) Ann Bello asked that microphones were used in future meetings/events for those with hearing difficulties.
- b) Ann Bello also asked if we had a recycling bin. Alexa B stated the council required us to pay for one so the bin outside the door is mixed refuse.

**The next AGM will be on Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> March 2024 at 10.00am**

---

**Presentation of Trophies**

The list of 2022 winners appears on the website.

**Winter League Handicap Teams Results**

Alexa Baxter  
John Hardy  
Angela Neale  
Anne Goldsworthy  
Tilly Hennings