

NOTES OF THE YCBA MEMBERS MEETING HELD AT BRADFORD BRIDGE CLUB ON SUNDAY 27 NOVEMBER 2016 AT 11.30 A.M.

PRESENT: N Woolven (Chairman/Leeds), P Godfrey (Vice-Chairman/York), J A Staniforth (Secretary/Doncaster), L Millet (Treasurer/Leeds), J Latham (Assistant Secretary/Harrogate), S V Davies (Tournament and Yorkshire League Secretary/Bradford), G W Jepson (Vice-President/Sheffield), A Baxter (Harrogate), P Baxter (Harrogate), J P Hayton (Malton), R Jepson (Leeds), E Latham (Harrogate), C Maynard (Wakefield), P Maynard (Wakefield), R Millet (Leeds), R Pike (Sheffield), R Turner (Sheffield), P Wallace (Wakefield), M Watson (Wakefield) and D Waxman (Sheffield).

APOLOGIES: P G Mason (President/Malton), J O' Sullivan (Wakefield) and T Crebbin (Membership Secretary/Harrogate).

1) CHAIRMAN'S INTRODUCTION

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the second annual Members Meeting following the decision at the 2015 Annual General Meeting to replace the Council representative's meeting with a meeting open to all members. A message of appreciation was extended to Bradford Bridge Club for hosting the event.

2) MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

a) Members Meeting – 28 November 2015

As a result of a suggestion from members present an event had been arranged entitled 'Play without the Expert' for players currently graded Jack and below on the EBU's National Grading Scheme. The event had been very well received and would become an annual event. Georgina Wooler was thanked for organising the event on behalf of YCBA.

b) Annual General Meeting – 10 June 2016

There were no issues arising.

3) NATIONAL UPDATE

- A hearing was to take place in the new year to determine whether an appeal against the decision of Sport England to recognise bridge as a sport could proceed.
- A decision from HMRC to determine whether bridge could be exempt from vat was awaited.
- The EBU Tournament Committee was to be replaced by an advisory group to the Chief Tournament Director but the Laws and Ethics and Selection Committees would continue to be elected by EBU Shareholders.
- Ian Payn was re-elected as EBU Vice-Chair unopposed, Heather Dhondy and Darren Evetts were re-elected to the EBU Board. Alan Mould, Paul Hackett and Ollie Burgess were elected to the EBU Selection Committee.
- There had been a small in-year loss for the past two years and the EBU treasurer was seeking measures to break-even in future years, the level of reserves was still substantial but an amount had been set aside should an appeal hearing progress.
- P2P would increase to £0.37 and the club affiliation fee to £36 for 2017/18.
- The latest version of Convention Card (reference 20b) was required to be used from 1 April 2017,

4) COUNTY UPDATE

- The financial position was currently very good with an income approaching £30k in reserves although this did include a small amount of entry fees for future events. The Great Northern Swiss Pairs was a good source of revenue with 98 pairs competing.

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- The county was now administering three former EBU Congress events the latest being the Harrogate Spring Congress at the Cairn Hotel in February 2017 with a meal between sessions on Saturday included in the entry fee. Income levels were being monitored to ensure that the county remained within the limit for not charging vat.
- Two heats of an EBU simultaneous 'Gentle Duplicate' event on 27 December 2016 would be held at Leeds and Sheffield Bridge clubs
- There was a vacancy for a County Youth Officer and anyone interested in undertaking all or some of the role was asked to contact YCBA Officers. David Waxman was a now a member of EBED (English Bridge Education and Development) so resources and support including contact details of other County Youth Officers was available
- The Board would begin to consider succession planning as there was a need to continue to recruit volunteers to support the work of the Board in organising events and administrative requirements to ensure the continuing success of the county.
- The dates for next season's Yorkshire league fixtures would be available in the next few weeks after finalisation by the Yorkshire League Committee

5) BRIDGE DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

- A training event with David Bakshi had been arranged for 11 December 2016 at Wakefield BC aimed primarily at players competing in Divisions 1-3 of the Yorkshire League at a cost of £10 per delegate with YCBA meeting the remaining cost. A request was made for a similar event to be arranged for players competing in lower divisions of the Yorkshire League with possibly shorter sessions prior to Congress events using hands from the previous day.
- Huddersfield BC had hosted a teacher training event which YCBA continued to fund a club's second delegate. The EBU teaching programme was to be revised from September 2017 following the establishment of an Advisory Group by EBED to review how the management of teaching bridge could be developed.
- There was no national Junior Teach-In event in 2016 but two regional events took place. It was expected to resurrect the national event in 2017 at the beginning of September at Loughborough University with a similar programme but incorporating some recreational non- bridge activities.
- Two Yorkshire schools participated in playing against members of the House of Lords which had been a successful day. However it was felt more support was needed from teachers to develop these events. Many efforts had been made to engage schools to introduce bridge there had been only a modicum of success. An open afternoon was taking place at Sheffield BC on 11 December 2016 which was free of charge.
- Declining membership was now a key focus nationally and YCBA had been awarded a grant from the EBU to pilot a membership drive and volunteers were being sought to work across the county to establish initiatives to attract new members. The age profile of members was continuing to increase with well over 20% over the age of 75. Whilst the number of people attending bridge classes was in excess of 400 only a small number of the people joined bridge clubs and became playing members. It was noted that those attending classes at Doncaster Bridge Club were required to be paying members of the club (normally a half yearly subscription being payable in the first year) and participated in simple duplicate sessions with a view to graduating to full sessions at a later date.

6) COUNTY MATCHES

The county had been less successful than in previous years and did not retain the Presidents Cup for what would have been an unprecedented third time and the Tollemache team had narrowly missed qualifying for the final stage needing a loss of 11-9 in the final match but losing 15-5 against the second placed team.

7) PUBLICATION OF YCBA NEWSLETTER

Views were sought from those present as to the value of a regular newsletter circulated electronically to those that wished to subscribe which was around 50% of the total membership. Almost everyone present indicated that they personally read the newsletter and found the content interesting. A

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request was made for members not to unsubscribe as this ultimately removed all details from the Pianola database therefore preventing any further electronic communication via the Pianola system. The frequency of the newsletter was discussed and it was agreed to produce the letter on a quarterly basis rather than every two months in order to maintain the quality of each edition.

8) OPEN FORUM

The following issues were raised by members attending:

Q: Could surplus funds be used to reduce the cost of entry fees particularly events for less experienced and able players?

A: Really easy events were being arranged at a cost of £10 + food and the forthcoming EBU was £8 including tea/coffee. Swiss and stratified events also provided opportunities for less able players to compete with other players of similar abilities.

Q: What could be done to encourage new players to enter competitive events as many were fearful of playing against players of a much higher standard?

A: It was accepted that this was difficult but the introduction of several events for less experienced players including a one day event at all of the YCBA Congress events was aimed at encouraging new players to take part in competitive events.

Q: As only 20 people were in attendance at the meeting would it be possible for more members be involved if webinar sessions were introduced?

A: A variety of formats were being trialled and the next Annual General Meeting would take place on the Saturday of the Yorkshire Congress and any suggestions as to how engagement with members could be improved was always welcomed.

Members responded that ease of access and car parking facilities were important when considering venues.

As there were no further questions the Chairman declared the meeting closed and thanked everyone again for their attendance and their contributions which were valued.

DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting is the Annual General Meeting which will take place on Saturday 3 June 2017 at the Cairn Hotel Harrogate at 11.30 am which will be the Yorkshire Congress event.

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