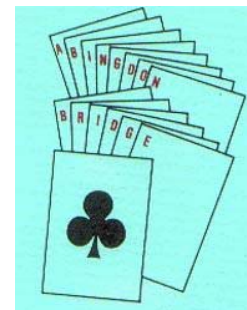


ABINGDON DUPLICATE BRIDGE CLUB



Minutes of a meeting of the committee held on Monday 21 September 2009,
7.30pm at 6 Champs Close, Abingdon

Present: David Walton (DW)(Chair); Mike Baker (MB)(Secretary); Jean Moore (JM)
Brian Moore (BM), Graham Simpson (GS), Ian Van Maanen (IVM), Andrew Speyer (AS)(Treasurer),
Gordon Carroll (GC).

1) Apologies for absence: Keith Sadler (KS)

2) Minutes of 20th April 2009.

DW made a small correction to a date (from 2008 to 2009) and then these were accepted.

3) Matters arising from the minutes

Referred to under separate agenda items

4) Premises for Wessex league matches

DW offered an apology as it is now too late to arrange an alternative location for league matches until next season (2010). It was agreed to discuss this in April 2010 with a view to deciding whether or not to use the Hadland Road venue from September 2010. DW believed a lockable cupboard was being constructed to allow the storage of bridge tables at the venue in the future.

5) Len Salmon Trophy

Sunday 28 November 2009 has now been agreed as the date for the fixture with Wallingford, with the game to be held at Roke village hall. There is a small concern that refurbishment work to be done at the hall would affect the fixture if it overruns. The issue of catering for the event was raised as it is Abingdon's responsibility. JM agreed to organise the catering but felt she would need help with the cakes. Both IVM and MB offered to help with this and DW offered to help with the sandwiches. DW noted that the trophy is currently broken and that we must investigate whether it is broken in the same place it was recently repaired or if this is separate damage.

Action -
JM/DW

6) Treasurer's report

AS advised that attendances have been marginally higher than last year by approximately 1 person per week on average. Should the rest of the year continue in the same vein AS projected a surplus of around £200 for the year. DW asked what the current balance is and AS confirmed it stands at around £1100 plus the amount in the deposit account (of around £3 000)
GC provided a quick report regarding membership, which now stands at 81, including 5 life members. This is higher than in recent years despite 4 cancellations this year. GS considered that should the membership rise further then providing seating for all could prove difficult at times (e.g. the Christmas party). DW added that it was necessary to look at the maximum number of tables the room can safely contain. The current maximum number in the room is 12 with the possibility of 2 in the foyer (which would have disadvantages). The matter will be discussed further at the future meeting in November 2009. DW also pointed out we only have 12 tables, if 4 are stored at Hadland Road and suggested it was worth purchasing 2 more, should they be required.

7) Club correspondence

MB confirmed that all matters received by email were circulated at the time of receipt to all other committee members. It was agreed by the committee that it was fine to continue circulating information in this way in the future.

8) "Pay to play" contract

DW felt it would be best if everyone gave brief details of their views on the issue of whether to sign up to the "pay to play" contract or not. GS politely declined to offer his opinion. IVM had significant concerns over the contract we would be entering, including 11 clauses which place obligations on the club by the EBU. He felt the agreement was one-sided in favour of the EBU and that it was not inconceivable that individual members could be liable for possible costs. AS is in favour of "pay to play" as long as it is without risk to the club. He felt the club should ensure it is protected in case of any financial problems with the EBU and he cautioned against using direct debit to pay the EBU. BM felt we had no choice but to accept and felt we could always decline to continue after a year if things were unsatisfactory. JM queried IVM's point regarding possible financial liability to the club and also the £10 cost for teams per person. She felt confident that any EBU financial problems would not affect the club. GC agreed with JM and had full confidence in the EBU. He felt the changes were being made a mountain out of a molehill and that it was essential the club remained affiliated to the EBU. At worst he felt we should sign up and review it in a year's time. GC had no fears of using Direct debit to pay for "pay to play". MB felt that with bridge member numbers falling nationally something had to be done and this strategy was worth a try. He felt that the scheme may well be workable and that non-compliance by clubs could wreck it and that we should not share that responsibility. Right or wrong, we should give the EBU our full support for what is a fairly low amount of money per session (29p). DW was not too concerned about the contract and could see an exit from it, if required. He also doubted the legal liability IVM referred to and felt individual members would not be held accountable. DW agreed with previous comments by BM, GC and MB but also shared a concern with AS over using Direct debit.

Following everyone's opinions there was a brief discussion about when it would start (April 2010) and the likely cost (36p per person including County subs, less 16p per person with the abolition of master point costs) and the need to review the amount we charge per person for Tuesday evening sessions. It was agreed to review the table fee in January 2010. There then followed a vote which carried 7:1 in favour of signing up for "pay to play" on behalf of Abingdon Bridge Club. It was agreed not to use Direct debit to pay the EBU and to have bi-monthly statements. DW then asked about sessions exempt from the "pay to play" charge. The Christmas party is exempt as it is not duplicate and we have the option to exclude the Len Salmon Trophy match from "pay to play", which was agreed. Rough figures were needed to be provided to the EBU in respect of members and number of tables per year. These were given as 80 and 450 respectively. DW then completed and signed the relevant form to enable the club to sign up.

9) Bridgemate/Bridgepad.

GC asked about the general viability of using Bridgemate and GS believed we should be looking at Bridgepad, a competitor of Bridgemate. There was a question of whether names of bridge players could be added before the movement started (which would be time-consuming at the start of the evening) and IVM confirmed he didn't do this until after the movement started, when using Bridgemate at another club. It is not essential to have the players' names input in order to run the movement but having the names in does limit the chances of errors as it makes it obvious which player should sit where. JM felt the expense of Bridgepad was a big drawback and IVM felt the work involved to start it was a big drawback. GS confirmed the director need not operate the Bridgepad software and DW and JM were concerned as to who would be the operators. GS offered to be one of a number of operators, maybe in a rota system and he offered to cost it all out. DW had a concern over having the right people there at the evening to sort out any anomalies that may arise.

GC felt we have the benefit of people (IVM and himself as examples) who have used the system before and could train up others. There was a question mark over the length of time needed to charge the equipment and GS offered to look into this. The committee agreed to look at GS's costings before taking any further action and to consider Bridgepad instead of Bridgemate

Action –
GS

10) Rules and arrangements for the new Teams competition

GS proposed the rules to be as per Wallingford's competition where a team is nominated at the start of the year and then scores points for each of the 4 evenings of teams play (if there are 10 teams the winners get 10pts, down to 1pt for last place). All 4 members of the team specified at the start pick up points but if one or more is absent on a particular evening the team can still pick up points from the remaining original members. For example if there are 10 tables and the winners have only 2 of their original players then the team scores 20 points towards the trophy. DW felt this was a disadvantage to any team that couldn't make one of the fixtures and suggested 3 of the best 4 scores should be used. There were discussions over whether points per player or per team were best, whether there could be an individual competition within the team format and whether 3 scores or 4 were best. It was put to the vote and GC's suggestion was carried by 5:3. AS suggested there should be help getting teams formed.

Action –
GC

11) Recent OBA meeting

AS related the details of the recent meeting. There is a new chairman – John Briggs, a new secretary – Sandra Nicholson and a new treasurer – Dinah Lintott. There are certain amendments in the offing which will need further development. The OBA has no knowledge of the "pay to play" levy the County is to charge being agreed at 3p. It was considered more likely to be 6p or more. AS also advised that 3 clubs were likely to be disaffiliated (Highworth, the Menagerie and the University) from the EBU. It seems likely the levy on leagues under the "pay to play" scheme is likely to be around £20 per team.

12) Purchase of new Laws of Duplicate Bridge books for Directors

The question was asked if new books should be purchased for all current directors, making 8 books in total. DW intended to this and it was agreed. It was also agreed to contribute £10 towards a book already purchased by a club member who had recently completed a director's course.

13) Rep on the Long Furlong Management Committee.

GC advised that KS has volunteered for this already and it was suggested KS was contacted, to confirm this is correct.

Action –
GC

14) Any Other Business

1-There was a request to check if the cost of coffee money for bridge matches at Hadland Road is £1 per person per match. After a small discussion it was agreed that the figure of £1 per person per match is correct.

2-BM raised the issue of unwashed cups left in the kitchen at the end of last Tuesday's evening bridge. DW agreed to remind everyone to wash their cups, at bridge on 22 September.

3-GS advised the committee that the Scorebridge membership is up for renewal and that he was happy to renew it on behalf of the club. There was a question mark over whether the membership would change under "pay to play".

4-DW asked if we should change the website and if there was anyone who would like to take over the running of it. It was agreed to add this item to the agenda of the next meeting

The meeting closed at 21:31