

Minutes of the Virtual YCBA Bridge Development Committee meeting held on Wednesday 7 April 2021 commencing at 10.00 am.

PRESENT: Lesley Millet (Chair), Nick Woolven, David Guild, Pauline Stout and Brian Davison.

IN ATTENDANCE: Julia Staniforth (YCBA Secretary).

1) Apologies for absence and declarations of interest

Apologies for absence had been received from Phil Godfrey, Ron Millet and Rowena White. There were no declarations of interest.

2/3) Minutes of meeting held on 15 February 2021

The minutes had been approved by the Management Board and the following matters arising were considered.

a) Online competition/payment entry form

Lesley reported that the webmaster was progressing work to develop the form but a decision was awaited from Stripe as to whether they would be willing to offer a contract for processing payments as these were not extended to gambling organisations. World Play would offer a contract but the former was preferred. There would be an ongoing monthly cost regardless as to whether any actual payments were processed and it was pointed out that there were few if any transactions during the months of July and August with the first event in the new calendar year the GNSP at the beginning of October. It was agreed that a total cost of up to £500 per annum would be affordable.

When the new online entry form was available a flyer would be produced for sending to clubs to display and referring to the availability of the entry form on the website.

b) Website development

Some developments based on previous agreements had taken place although it was felt that the changes made did not fully reflect what had been proposed. It was agreed that the main heading looked less prominent and that the text should be made bolder.

Any further changes should be decided at the next Management Board meeting.

4) Online teaching initiative for new bridge students

David reported that 308 students across ten clubs were currently taking part although only 120 had currently registered with EBS. Concerns were raised regarding the quality of the materials provided by EBS which contained discrepancies with the 'Red Book' and not all students had the same opportunity to practise declarer play. It was accepted that this had been a pilot and all issues had been raised with EBS. In return EBS had responded to the issues and in particular had refunded any students who had been charged for materials due to failing to include the required discount code when they registered.

It was proposed to start the next course of ten lessons on 4 May 2021 the week after the completion of lesson ten and those registered with EBS would pay the £5 monthly fee in return for the receipt of the materials. Any further costs to students would be at the discretion of clubs with a recommendation of £5 per lesson. Brian reported that a practise play room had been set up using 'Bridge Play' and Brian would make the details available to enable all students to use the facility.

There was some possibility that not all ten clubs currently involved would be able to continue and Oliver Cowan may be able to offer support to ensure the continuation.

Lesley was to contact Zoom to enable a second host to be added to the Zoom account as currently it required her to be present for all the presentations and this would not be feasible for the duration of the second series of lessons.

Discussion took place on payments for presenters and it was agreed that a fee of £40

be payable to those that undertook the work as part of their own business arrangements. In other cases charitable donations could be made. A new rota of presenters would need to be arranged and David would undertake this. It was recognised that the presentations to date had been of excellent quality and very well received.

YCBA would continue to fund the practise play platforms and Lesley would arrange this.

Discussion took place as to whether a tournament could be organised at the end of the second set of lessons. However it was recognised that there was no scoring facility on Bridge Play and so RealBridge may need to be used. It was agreed to discuss this further at the next meeting.

5) Stepping Stones and further events for Improvers

A charity Stepping Stones event had been arranged by Oliver Cowan in conjunction with Horsham Bridge Club at a cost of £5 per player and YCBA was arranging a third event on May 22 but comprising 16 boards with a commentary and Zoom meeting at a cost of £5 per pair. It was agreed that there should be a continuation of '5' and '9' high and that Realbridge should be used in view of the ethical benefits. It was noted that BBO were developing video facilities and it was agreed that further discussion take place at the next Management Board meeting on the latest developments to online bridge playing platforms.

6) Potential resumption of F2F bridge sessions/support to bridge clubs

Nick reported that twelve responses had been received from a recent communication with club chairmen regarding views on the reopening of clubs for F2F bridge. A number of the twelve were intending to reopen as soon as practicably possible with only a small number expressing reservations due to meeting in public premises. The latest data from the EBU was available relating to club online activity which denoted seventeen of the thirty five clubs were currently active. However it was known that several on the remaining clubs had arranged online sessions via other established online clubs. It was expected that some clubs would not be financially viable when reopening and grant funding would be available to assist where felt appropriate but ultimately some smaller clubs may not continue.

Ron was asked to ascertain if the EBU were producing a risk assessment and would advise on issues such as testing and vaccination requirements. It was recognised that online sessions were likely to continue.

7) Any other items/future items

a) County Youth Officer report

Rowena had attended a meeting of the Youth Advisory Group (YAG) and was now a permanent member of the group.

There were no national guidelines for young people playing online bridge but it was recommended to use Realbridge and for parents to take responsibility for checking activity. 'Hool' (similar to MiniBridge) was being trialled in schools and EBED were producing a video to be sent to schools. Rowena was hoping to work in schools in the autumn as part of enrichment activities and it had been suggested that the focus should be on the social rather than the technical aspect.

Rowena was thanked for the report and discussion took place that the current position seemed to reflect that only the more elitist schools were engaging with bridge and there needed to be a means of incorporating mainstream schools as well.

b) Maintenance of membership data

David reported that there were still difficulties with maintaining the database as no new members had been added, it is possible to add new members manually but this was a time consuming process. It was known that clubs were now considering collecting membership fees although actual club membership numbers were unlikely to be finalised until F2F returns. At this point there may be a need to arrange a complete download of the EBU

database and manually adjust those that had previously unsubscribed. David and Julia would look at this at a later date.

8) Date and Time of Next Meetings.

The next meeting date to be determined at the next Management Board meeting.