

YORKSHIRE CONTRACT BRIDGE ASSOCIATION

MINUTES OF THE VIRTUAL MEMBERS MEETING HELD ON SUNDAY 22ND NOVEMBER 2020 COMMENCING AT 10.30 A.M.

PRESENT: N Woolven (Chairman/Leeds), J Staniforth (Secretary/Doncaster), L Millet (Treasurer/Leeds BC), J Carpenter (York) S Cordingley (Halifax), O Cowan (O Cowan Online), S Dawson (Olicana), M Dunkley (York), S Friedman (Leeds), D Guild (Olicana), J Hayton (Malton), R Jepson (Leeds), D Kayes (Leeds), C Kelly (Olicana), J Leach (Olicana), R Millet (Leeds), P Mason (President/Malton), C Maynard (Brighouse), I Newsham (Wetherby), D Parsonson (Wakefield), B Partridge (Sheffield), A Pearson (Keighley), R Pike (Sheffield), G Rickard (York), P Stout (Wetherby), M Swain (Doncaster), C Walker (Bridlington), P Wallace (Wakefield), D Wilson (Hull) and one other unnamed).

APOLOGIES: G W Jepson (Vice-President and Sheffield BC)

1) CHAIRMAN'S INTRODUCTION AND UPDATE

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the 6th Annual Members Meeting which for the first time (in line with all other meetings) was being held virtually. It was explained that the meeting was to provide a forum for members to share information and ideas with the YCBA Management Board to aid ongoing development particularly in relation to online bridge.

With regard to national issues the EBU AGM was scheduled to take place on 25 November 2020. Due to the pandemic the financial position was such that an amount of reserves were needed to support current costs. There had been a consultation with shareholders on the structure of the current UMS system in view of the reduced number of boards being played in many sessions however 80% of those consulted were not in favour of any change. The proposal for the UMS rate for 21/22 was to hold the current rate unless the financial position deteriorated further in which case it was proposed that an increase of 1p to 41p be permitted with a minimum of two months' notice to be given.

YCBA's financial position continued to be strong mainly as a result of the income raised from congresses run by YCBA on behalf of the EBU and other online competitions replacing the usual calendar of events. A total of £7k had been awarded to clubs in 2019 for technology improvements and it had been agreed to establish a further fund in 2021 to provide support for any additional costs for clubs resuming face to face bridge sessions. A message of appreciation was extended to Mike Jackson, Robin Jepson and John Hayton in developing the Online YL club teams of four which had attracted 128 teams, many more than had been anticipated.

The new website was now fully operational and the webmaster Andrew Pearson, along with David Guild and Phil Godfrey were thanked for their work in developing and maintaining the site. With regard to county teams, Yorkshire had finished second to Sussex in the Presidents Cup after leading for much of the event. The Tollemache qualifying event was currently taking place but Yorkshire was not in a qualifying position at the present time.

A final message of appreciation was extended to all YCBA club officials and YCBA Management Board members and officers for their voluntary work in providing bridge for its members.

2) MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

There were no issues arising from the previous Members Meeting or Annual General Meeting.

3) DISCUSSION FORUM

a) Online competitions

The Chairman outlined that a further 'Elevenses' pairs event was taking place on 24 November 2020 and a 'Stepping Stones' event for those graded 5 or below was being arranged and would be free of charge. Details of joint club sessions were outlined and further clubs were considering

joining together to provide events for members to play online with UMS paid and results published on websites. Anyone wishing to obtain more information about online sessions was asked to contact any member of the YCBA Management Board.

An online Waddington Shield and Yorkshire Trophy event was being arranged and would be administered by Stuart Davies. The remaining rounds of the 2019/20 Waddington Shield event would be played and the winners (if different) of the 20/21 competition would play each other to determine who would represent the county in the Pachabo event.

b) Teaching provision

Information was sought as to what teaching was currently taking place and how it had been facilitated online. Whilst those present reported that some online teaching was taking place it was a much reduced level as many students did not wish to continue online. Some classes were using a combination of Zoom with BBO. RealBridge was to be trialled, although there were drawbacks in that it was not possible to interchange students if there were not complete tables but it was easier to communicate with students when playing.

David Guild outlined the work of EBED that had been undertaken to digitise teaching manuals with Year 1 currently available and Year 2 expected to be available early in 2021. As a consequence there was no need to develop individual materials. David would arrange to contact clubs to help support the development of online teaching for bridge teachers and a YCBA working party had been established for wider support.

c) Online platforms

At the present time most competitions organised by YCBA were played on BridgeBaseOnline (BBO). However the EBU was now looking to play events using RealBridge as this was generally less costly and removed some of the ethics issues that had seemingly arisen when playing on BBO as there were a number of cheating allegations currently being considered. The length of time that disciplinary issues took was raised and it was explained that this would be an issue for discussion at the EBU AGM. Other new platforms such as Pianola, Bridgeplayer and a further one by a staff member of the EBU were in the development process along. Barrie Partridge reported that Bridge Club Live was about to launch a teaching facility using visual and audio facilities to compete with RealBridge.

4) OPEN FORUM QUESTIONS

Q: Could all players be asked to include system details under their profile?

A: YCBA league rules required that players disclose their system either by means of uploading a convention card, or using the online chat facility or within their profile. It was felt that to include within a profile was an issue when different systems were deployed with different partners and the alternative methods were equally suitable. As part of the arrangements for the commencement of a second online league (which would incorporate a knock out event for each division at the end) a zoom meeting would be held and information on how to upload a convention card and other methods of providing information to opponents would be included.

Q: Can sanctions be imposed on players refusing to provide information

A: These issues would be discussed by the Online YL committee and information sent to clubs as part of the communication to clubs for the second online league which was also to seek feedback on issues that had arisen during the first online league or improvements that could be made. It was felt that the provision of training and support would be best placed to encourage players to use the alert and explain facility.

Q: Was it expected that the online bridge events would continue alongside face to face bridge:

A: There was evidence that there would be demand for this and the county would seek to ensure that events were available where sufficient demand existed.

5) CLOSING REMARKS

On closing the meeting the Chairman thanked everyone for their attendance and David Wilson extended a message of appreciation to all involved with the YCBA administration for the support provided.