

Avon Contract Bridge Association

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting

Held on 22nd May 2016, 4.30pm at Bristol Bridge Club

1. Present: Peter Shelley, Robert Glass, David Jones, Mike Short, Sue O'Hara and those players playing in the Handicapped Pairs.

2. Apologies: Suzy Lawson, Andrew Urbanski.

3. Minutes of the previous AGM and matters arising

The minutes were approved (proposed by Gareth Evans and seconded by Delia Stephens).

The previous minutes included a suggestion that we spend some of our money on recruiting new members. We have not yet identified suitable ways of doing this but will make further efforts to do so this year.

4. Chairman's report (Peter Shelley)

Everyone was welcomed to the meeting and thanks were given to Maureen Dickens, Annie and Catherine for providing the refreshments and to Bristol Bridge Club for hosting the event.

Avon Membership has been stable. We are 'middle of the road' when compared to the size of the other English counties.

Our joint Green Point Event held in March with Wiltshire is our last such collaboration, as they wish to go it alone in future. The Committee are investigating the possibility of holding our own Green Point event next year. I will talk more about this later.

The county has had a mixed record of success this year. We failed to qualify for the final of the Tollemache Cup. However, in the Western League, the 'A' team won the 'A' division (by a decent margin), came second in the 'B' division and finished halfway in the 'C' division.

5. Treasurer's report (Mike Short)

Our income is down this year. Our entries for the League and Knock-out were down. In addition, we received less money from the March Green Point event, partly due to the number of students, who paid less money to enter. Also, the change in policy on providing teas for the Western League was more expensive.

In order to maintain our income we need to hold a Green Point event, as this is our biggest source of income. It also encourages entries to our League and Knock-out.

New costs for this year included a contribution towards an EBU teacher training course for members of our county, and increased costs due to joining Pianola.

The accounts were approved (proposed by Hilda Ball and seconded by Jan Duncan).

6. Tournament Secretary's report (David Jones)

Our competition structure has remained the same as in previous years. Sadly, the entries to our League was down by three teams, and entries to our Knock-out was disappointing at just nine teams. However, entries for all our other competitions were steady.

John Brandon-Joyce stated that, since there were only four teams in League Division II, there were very few games to play. This was unfortunate and partly due to the fact that a team withdrew at the last minute.

- The ACBA Garden Cities qualifier was won by a team from the West of England BC, but they did not progress beyond the Regional Final.
- Probably the most outstanding success of last year was the Bristol 'B' team winning the NICKO (nine matches). The team was David Jones, Tim Brierley, Robert Covill, Graham Hartley & Steve Tomlinson. This year, the West of England 'B' team has made it to the sixth round and is still going. The team is Irene Robinson, Robert Glass, Jeremy Rickard, Mike Huggins, Aidan Schofield & Jack Terry.
- In the EBU Crockfords Cup, The SMITH and JONES teams have reached the last 16. The SMITH team is Andy Smith, Cathy Smith, Ralph Smith & Steve Tomlinson, and the JONES team is David Jones, Trevor Ward, Graham Hartley, Tim Brierley & Rob Lawy.
- David Jones & Trevor Ward reached the fifth round of the Gold Cup, playing as part of the seeded DENNING team.
- Tim Brierley & Graham Hartley came 5th in the EBU National Pairs Final, having got through two previous qualifiers.
- John Brandon-Joyce & Vanessa O'Callaghan won the Bristol heat of the Portland Pairs and finished 27th nationally.
- In the Wiltshire Avon Green Point event in March, Andrew Urbanski & Suzy Lawson finished second in the Swiss Pairs. The Swiss Teams was won by a team including Peter Shelley, Nelson Stephens & Sue O'Hara.
- Peter Shelley & Jack Terry won the EBU National Masters Pairs.
- Peter Shelley, Irene Robinson, Jack Terry, Mike Huggins & Jeremy Rickard reached the final of the Hubert Phillips plate but were defeated by a miniscule margin after a great second half fight back.
- In the Cyprus Overseas Congress, Sue O'Hara & Jan Duncan won the Ladies' Pairs and Sue O'Hara & Nelson Stephens came 3rd in the Swiss Pairs.
- In the Rhodes Overseas Congress, David Jones & Jan Duncan were part of the team that won the Swiss Teams.

7. Motions to be discussed

1. The Committee proposed the following change to the ACBA constitution:

“We propose to change the number of ACBA Committee members required for a quorum at our meetings from six to four, because that is the best that we have been able to manage over the last twelve months”

The motion was proposed by Gareth Evans, seconded by Jan Duncan and carried, with one vote against and three abstentions.

2. The Committee proposed the following change to ACBA membership rule:

“In order to avoid ambiguity and misunderstandings regarding our current rule for being an ACBA member, we propose that we change the rule from ‘A player becomes a member of the ACBA by either playing at one of its affiliated clubs, or by joining the EBU directly and nominating Avon as its county of primary allegiance.’ to ‘A player will automatically become a member of the ACBA if they are a member of the EBU and they a) play in at least one of our competitions, or b) their county of primary allegiance is Avon’.”

Gareth Evans proposed an addition to the end:

“or c) is a member of an ACBA affiliated club”.

This new motion was put forward, proposed by Gareth Evans and seconded by Nelson Stephens. It was carried, with one vote against and five abstentions.

8. Election of Officers and Committee

The following Officers and Committee members were re-elected:

Position	Name	Proposed by	Seconded by
Chair	Peter Shelley	Jackie Cole	Mike Letts
Vice Chair	Robert Glass	George Whyte	Gareth Evans
Treasurer	Mike Short	Ralph Smith	Sue Lovell
Secretary	Sue O'Hara	Jan Duncan	Hilda Ball
Tournament Secretary	David Jones	Gareth Evans	Hilda Ball
Committee Member	Suzy Lawson	Gareth Evans	Josephine Mitchell

Peter stated that we would still welcome new Committee members if anyone was interested.

9. Any other business

i) Future Avon Green Point Event

The Committee have investigated the possibility of running our own Green Point event, in May or June 2017. Support from county members is a pre-requisite to move forward on this.

Peter Shelley described the progress that had been made to date. Various venues have been considered. The favourite is a hotel at Aztec West, which has good access, decent parking and a nice ambiance. The down side is that it can only accommodate 35 tables. The Castle School in Thornbury and Thornbury Leisure Centre have also been considered.

Christine McFarlane suggested that we consider holding a novice event on the Friday.

Concerns were raised about whether we would make a profit with only 35 tables. Robert Glass stated that the Committee would put out a questionnaire to the membership to solicit their views on the event.

Peter concluded that there were no major objections to taking this project forward and that the Committee would therefore progress it. However, support would be needed from the wider membership in order to implement it.

ii) ACBA Championship Pairs

The ACBA Championship Pairs competition has been poorly supported over the last few years. It used to be played on Sunday (normally in February), but for the last two years it has been held on two Thursdays a month apart. The first Thursday is a qualifier and the second Thursday is an all-play-all six or seven table final.

David Jones proposed that we should revert back to a two-session final on a Sunday. There was a general discussion about the merits of the different formats. Ralph Smith thought it very poor that we did not hold *a decent competition*, and that we should hold heats at all of our affiliated clubs where possible, with a final on a Sunday. Robert Glass pointed out that there were difficulties in clubs holding separate events alongside their normal bridge and that they tended to merge it with their normal bridge, meaning players would play who did not particularly want to play in the competition. Only Bristol BC is big enough to hold a separate heat alongside a normal duplicate night.

The Committee will decide on the format for the new season in the light of the discussion.

10. Presentation of trophies and prizes

Trophies and prizes for the winners of our events were awarded to those present.

Competition	Trophy/Prize Winners
Mens' Pairs	Tim Brierley & Graham Hartley
Ladies' Pairs	Cathy Davies & Pat Chant
Mixed Pairs	Clive Pengelly & Nora Mallett
Championship Pairs	Andrew Urbanski & Mike Letts
Championship Teams	Vanessa O'Callaghan, John Brandon -Joyce, Simon Rye & Keith Rayford
League Division I	Graham Hartley, Tim Brierley, Mike Elliott, David Jones, Rob Lawy & Trevor Ward
League Division II	Mike Best, David Birt, Tony Disley, Phil Felman & Simon Richards
League Division III	George Whyte, Jan Duncan, Bernard Mitchell, Alun Thomas, Alan Millichamp & Richard Farrer
Knock-out	Graham Hartley, Tim Brierley, Rob Lawy & Trevor Ward (post AGM result)
Knock-out Plate	Robert Glass, Mike Letts, Jeremy Rickard & Andrew Urbanski