

PLYMOUTH BRIDGE CLUB

1 Moorview Terrace, Mutley, Plymouth, PL4 7EB

Minutes of 2023 Annual General Meeting

27th April 2023

Attendees: There were 25 members in attendance.

1. Apologies

1.1 Apologies received from Brian Lupton, David Kaye, Sylvia Allkins, Ailie Henry, Christine Longden, Ali Blake, Anne Ashley, Steve Ekland, Susan Wright, Caroline Theyer and Alasdair MacNaughtan, Jane McMullin, Jim Dunn, Margaret Flanagan, Morag MacBean

2. Minutes of 2022 Annual General Meeting 5th May 2022

2.1 The minutes were accepted as a true record, proposed by Suzanne Cornish, seconded by Andy Carpenter.

3. Matters Arising

3.1 There were no matters arising from the 2022 AGM.

4. Chair's Report and Announcement of 2022/23 Cup Winners

4.1 Steve Lacey (Chair) presented the following report.

Welcome to you all attending our AGM in the club. Your committee decided it was important for the meeting to be held face to face - as we need to get more members active in the clubhouse. Generally normal life has returned and although understandably some people are still cautious about social situations, clubs across the country are beginning to return to face to face meetings.

This is not to say online bridge is going away - it will continue to be part of the bridge landscape locally, nationally and internationally. We must seek to get the best balance of both formats.

Post pandemic the club has survived - partly due to our ability to keep together on-line and due to the careful management of the club's finances.

Financially we are in a satisfactory position as we will see from the Treasurers report - more of which later in the meeting.

We are however well below our pre-pandemic level of members playing bridge. While we were regularly getting 9, 10 or 11 tables playing on Mondays and Thursdays we are now more normally getting 4,5 or 6 tables. There are various reasons for this - we are getting older as a club and we are not recruiting new younger members at a fast enough rate. Attempts to engage with the University have so far attracted little success and I guess young people 's priorities are different from when I was at school and college. I suspect families don't play card games as once they did.

So, we have a challenging situation for the new committee.

On the positive side I am pleased to say that the club continues to benefit from a strong team of members who make possible our activities week by week.

I would like to acknowledge and thank Ali's team who give up part of their weekends to deal the cards for our face-to-face sessions.

We have our team of directors who supervise and adjudicate our games on-line and face to face. I thank Bruce who coordinates our director's rota.

I also thank our team of scorers who struggle with the computer, the bridge mates and ensure our scores are uploaded on to Pianola.

We have asked for more people to step up and take training for these roles and also there is an opportunity to receive Bridge Teacher Training in Exeter this September - so please let us know if your are interested.

I would like to thank and pay tribute to our committee members who I am pleased to say have put their names forward for the new committee.

Charles has been our treasurer since before and all through the pandemic and it in no small part that through Charles's initiative we kept the club going and have survived lockdown to emerge the other side. Not all clubs have been so fortunate. Charles is stepping back from being treasurer, but we will continue to benefit from his contribution as a committee member.

Allan has volunteered to take up the post of treasurer along with his roles as membership secretary and oversight of the website. Allan has been a superb secretary who I have been able to rely on totally. I am sure the finances will be in good hands going forward. You will no doubt have noticed we have no nominations for the post of secretary, and I would encourage anyone who has minute taking skills to step forward.

I am pleased to say Mel is continuing as vice chair, I have appreciated the challenge he provides to the committee.

Bruce has provided the committee with the wisdom from his long experience as a member of this club, Gill has kept track of our room lettings and Di can always be relied on to encourage the social side of the club.

Also thank you to Toni who made a very positive contribution to the committee as a new player. Sadly for us she is busy working to support another organisation and has decided to step back from the bridge committee. I wish her well and look forward to seeing her when she again has time for bridge.

Our trustees this year have also been active - Andy has organised the club competitions and Ailee has taken a lead in the maintenance and care of the building.

Richard has led the organisation of the beginners classes and we enjoyed an intake of 12 new learners last Tuesday morning. My thanks also to Richard, for updating the Honour's boards.

In addition I thank Clare who cleans the clubhouse and makes teas and coffees for our in-house sessions.

I must also thank Eileen who has been our auditor in recent years and played a major part in our move to being a cashless club. I know this was a lot of work largely behind the scenes. Eileen has stepped down as independent examiner of the club accounts - I am however pleased to announce that Karen Murphy has taken on that role.

At present our pattern of bridge sessions is as follows:

Monday afternoon - Duplicate Session on-line via Real Bridge

Tuesday Afternoon - Social Game in the clubhouse

Tuesday Evening - Duplicate Session on Bridge Base Online run jointly with Newton Abbot Bridge Club

Thursday Afternoon - Duplicate Session in the clubhouse

Friday Evening - Duplicate Session in the Clubhouse

Your committee have and will continue to keep this arrangement under review - however you will see we will be discussing a motion proposing to change the Monday afternoon session to face to face as it was before the pandemic.

I will be interested to hear your views about this.

There are arguments both ways.

We have some members who only play in the clubhouse and never play online and opening up the Monday session would give them another opportunity to play. Also there is a social side to belonging to the club that is richer face to face than online and it means we are getting more use out of the clubhouse.

We have other members who only play on-line - either because of their health or home circumstances or because they have moved away from the area. There are other members who live a long distance from the city and appreciate the facility to be able to play from home.

In both scenarios there will be some members who are disadvantaged.

Whichever option is chosen there will be a need to provide directors and scorers for the face-to-face sessions (Online games don't need a scorer because the computer does it.)

This is one of those issues where whatever decision we make we will not please everyone. The question is which method of playing is likely to attract the most players, new or existing.

The new committee will have a number of other serious challenges. I have already talked about the decline in membership and the need to attract more players. We also need more people to score, direct and teach bridge. Our club competitions also need to be reviewed. Because of the reduced number of players and the tendency for people to play with different partners - the pairs competitions have become less viable - so what do we do instead?

We are also going to face an increase in costs. At present we are enjoying a fixed energy deal which finishes this year. We can expect a large increase in our monthly payments as well as other costs as inflation raises all prices.

There will be implications for the fees we charge members - so be ready for a likely proportionate increase in table money.

I hope you agree a session at Plymouth Bridge club provides great value for money and will need to react to the times.

We move forward positively with I hope your support.

On a sadder note I take this opportunity to mark the passing of Jo Davis MBE. Jo was a regular player in the afternoons and took her turn at directing sessions. Jo was a very gentle and unassuming person and she will be missed by us all. Her funeral will be at Weston Mill next Friday. 5th May. May she rest in peace.

Competition Winners 2022/23

Summer Cup	Sue Gregory
Tudor Summer Cup	Malcolm Jones
Alan Hughes Cup	Suzanne Cornish & Allan Simpson
Mayflower Cup	Sue Gregory
Mayflower Tudor Cup	Sue Gregory
Mayflower 400 Cup	Ann Preston
Winter Cup	Andy Carpenter
Tudor Winter Cup	Robert Kilby
Rupert Shiner Salver	Suzanne Cornish & Allan Simpson
Beryl Edmonds Cup	Will Reader & Charles Greenlees
Individual Trophy	Sue Gregory

5. Treasurer's Report

5.1 On behalf of Charles Greenlees (Treasurer) Steve Lacey (Chair) provided the following report.

The Club is in a reasonably healthy financial position having reopened its doors and having received government grants. The numbers playing at the club F2F and online though have dropped but we are at least breaking even and in fact making a small profit overall. We have good reserves in the bank and it will be up to the new committee as how we can benefit from the rises in interest rates. I would like to thank Eileen Clout for all her work on the accounts over many years and for Karen (Murphy) for taking over that role midway through this year.

Karen has prepared the accounts, copies of which are available here today, and I believe a link to them has been sent to you by email. Karen has worked out the tax due and will submit the Company Tax Return CT600 online. The amount shown in the accounts is the maximum though it may well be much less as there are some items which we can set off against it.

Income:- Members Subscriptions remain pretty level but table money is down about £800. Room rental is up considerably but revenue from teaching is however well down on 2021. Overall income is nearly £1500 down.

Expenses:- Premises costs are up owing to mainly due to higher cleaning costs, the current fixed deal on gas & electricity finishes this summer. EBU UMS costs though are well down reflecting the fewer numbers that are playing. Now that refreshments are funded by the club these too are up. Overall costs are similar with the £1000 extra depreciation being the difference, this resulting from the purchase of the air purifiers.

Cashless:- This continues to work well though without a lot of hard work by Eileen & Allan, aided by myself it wouldn't. Most members now pay seamlessly into the correct account with the correct reference but there are some who continue to pay into the incorrect account and/or with an incorrect reference.

If you are not sure of the account or reference required it is very simple to find out, go to the front page of the Plymouth Bridge Club website, there is a box on it asking if you want to receive an email of your balance and statement of activity. Both the email you receive and the statement contain the correct bank account details and how the reference should be written.

I am standing down as Treasurer this year having been doing it since April 2016. I have enjoyed doing it even though it has been very time consuming and hope that Allan relishes the challenge. I will support him in whatever way he needs to ensure a seamless transition.

5.2 Richard Ayres asked what percentage the energy costs were in relation to the premises costs. As the treasurer was unable to attend the AGM, Richard was advised that it was probably in the region of 20% but a more accurate figure would be provided.

Post Meeting Note - For 2022 out of the £5413.00 for Premises Costs, energy costs equated to approximately 16%.

5.3 There was some discussion on the need to increase membership fees but agreed at the Chair's suggestion that this should be left to the Committee to decide.

6. Motions for Discussion

6.1 To re-open the club on a Monday afternoon for Face 2 Face bridge.

6.1.1 Diane McGregor, as motion proposer opened discussion saying that it was time now to return to F2F bridge on a Monday afternoon.

6.1.2 Richard Ayres considered that doing so was high risk and if changes were made it would be difficult to retract if the change did not work.

6.1.3 There was more discussion on the pros and cons and perceived obstacles stopping members from changing to F2F from online on a Monday afternoon. However the general consensus was that for the move to be a success a hosting arrangement was critical. Richard Ayres considered that it would be unwise to have another F2F session until the Thursday afternoon session was fully hosted.

6.1.4 The Secretary read out correspondence received from members who were unable to attend the AGM in person.

6.1.5 The Chair then put the motion to the floor with the following result:

- In favour of returning to F2F - 12
- Not in favour of returning to F2F - 4
- Abstentions - 8

6.1.5 The Chair stated that the topic would be discussed at the next Committee meeting on the 22nd May.

Post Meeting Note - Rachael Walters agreed to organize a host rota for Monday and Thursday F2F sessions.

7. Election of Officers

7.1 The following nominations were tabled:

- a) Chair - Steve Lacey
- b) Vice Chair - Mel Melville-Brown
- c) Treasurer - Allan Simpson
- d) Secretary - Vacant

7.2 The positions of Chair, Vice Chair and Treasurer as above were unanimously agreed.

8. Election of Committee

8.1 Nominations were received from the following:

- Charles Greenlees
- Diane McGregor
- Gill Seymour
- Bruce Foster
- Sue Gregory

8.2 There being no need for a ballot the above nominations were unanimously agreed.

9. Any Other Business

9.1 Nil.

The Chair thanked everyone for attending and the meeting closed.

Prepared by:

Approved by:

Allan Simpson Position - Secretary	Steve Lacey Position - Chair