**Bristol Bridge Club (charity no. 1167959)**

**2019 Annual General Meeting**

**Thursday 4th July 2019**

**Grenville Hall, Oldfield Road, Bristol BS8 4QQ**

* The Chairman, David Jones welcomed all the members present and called the meeting to order at 18.30 pm
* Present: 49 members

**Apologies:**Irene Robinson, Mike Forrest, Martin Holcombe, Pat Clowes, Nick Chapple, Jane Barrett, Sue & Ray Griffiths, Nigel Edwards, Coral Harrison, Mike O’Brien, David Beacham, Margaret Alner, Cathy & Andrew Smith, Mike Elliott, Judy Hall, Simon Croucher

1. **The minutes** of the 5th July 2018 AGM for Bristol Bridge Club were approved: proposed by Hilda Ball and seconded by Jan Duncan.
2. **Matters arising**: none
3. **Chairperson’s Report:**

David Jones gave his report to the meeting as follows:

 “Bristol Bridge Club has had a year of steady consolidation. This time last year the club was still examining the possibility of moving location but that option is now discounted and would probably only change if parking issues became more difficult.

This year there have not been any major capital works on the building but we have carried out repair work to the gutters and some work on the floor in the main playing area .We will be addressing the question of the flat roof at the rear shortly which requires some repair work.

There has been a decline in overall table numbers this year with Tuesday and Thursday evenings most affected so the Trustees will be looking at the reasons for this fall and addressing the issues. Encouraging players from other sessions to play on those evenings is one goal and more widely developing players from the classes to play in club sessions and more getting new blood into the club and increasing the membership.

On the teaching side Stephen Royal has again run beginners courses on Mondays and Wednesdays.

In addition we have hosted two Fast Track courses this year run by Lorna Watson & Sue O'Hara. There has also been some ad hoc teaching courses given during the year.

Stuart King and David Turner have attended the Club Directors Training Course so you will shortly be seeing some new blood in the area of directing.

On the bridge front we re-established the Bridge Sub Committee this year under the Chair Irene Robinson and they have successfully restarted the Premier Pairs on the 4th Tuesday of the month with butler rather than match point scoring and support has been good.

The club is most grateful to everyone who supports it and carries out functions and duties .Foremost is Stephen Royal our Club Manager. I should also like to mention the Board of Trustees who have helped the novice Chairman considerably this year including Mike Forest the Treasurer, Ralph Power Membership Secretary and Phil Seymour Health and Safety and the guardian of the fabric of the building have been especially pivotal.

We are also very grateful to Annie Tyas and the bar staff for supporting and maintaining the catering and bar so excellently .Annie and her team have provided some superb buffets this year at Sunday events.

Others to extend thank you to include Margaret Alner& Ray Westwood for board duplication, Jo Luton welfare matters and all our directors and teachers. My apologies if I have missed anyone out.

Two Trustees are standing down Jan O'Brien and Irene Robinson and we would like to thank them both very much for their contributions to the Board.

It is traditional for me to mention successes achieved by members during the last year.Foremost are Trevor Ward & Peter Shelley who will be representing England in the World Senior Championships in China in September where the captain of the team will be David Jones.

Bristol Bridge Club reached the National Final of the Garden Cities Teams of 8 following their win in the South West Regional Final (Mike Huggins,Rob Lawy, Steve Tomlinson,Ralph Smith ,Trevor Ward,Peter Shelley, Chris Dixon,David Jones,Mike Letts & Andrew Urbanski ) .

On the Avon County competition three very fine achievements.

Many congratulation to the teams led by Eric Page and Alun Thomas for reaching the Avon Knock Out teams final (the only time in 30 years that two league 2 teams have contested the final) scattering the league one teams en route and congratulations to Eric, ColinOakley, MikeBrady, Alan Williams & Mike Davies for their win.

Congratulations also to Jan Duncan for her fine win in the Avon County Pairs and to Cherry Scott & Jackie Cole for their win in the Ladies Pairs.

On the club competition front I will announce the winners of the club competitions for this year.

Madge Kirk Trophy: Susan & Des Ruzala

Everett Cup: Andrew Urbanski, Alan Williams, Eric Page, Colin Oakley, Mike Brady

SpielmanCup: Steve Tomlinson & Ralph Smith

Ladies Pairs: Sheila Hodges & Paula Keaney

MensPairs: Gareth Evans & David Jones

Janet Haynes:Lindsay Harrison and Paula Keaney

Bernard Shannon:Lesley Hood & Colin Lennox

Samuels Trophy: Sue O’Hara, MikeBrady, Sandra Cooper & Oli Noel

Hockey Cup: Cathy & Andy Smith (3rd win in a row in this event so maybe they should keep the cup)

City Cup: Jo Luton & Simon Croucher

Austwick: Keith McIndoe

Mendela: Andrew Urbanski

HelmoreSalver: Mike Clew & Nick Chapple

Curtis Cup: Mike Letts & Jane Hague

Phil Jones Bowl: Terry Butler & Tony Zaffiro

Afternoon Cup: Simon Rye

Thank you very much.”

Faith Stinchcombe asked, “How many students play in the club?”

The Chair replied,” Stephen Royalalways encourages the students to play in the club but we do need to increase the number of students who become members.”

Caroline Druganasked , “Could evaluate the students future actions via a questionnaire?”

Alison Simmonds observed that, “Some students learn here and then play elsewhere and the question is why.”

Brian Nicols asked whether the decline in numbers was a national or a club issue.

The Chair replied, “The EBU have recognised the trend of declining numbers and need to also ‘get a handle’ on tournaments.”

Barbara Fowler observed that it is an age related problem.

Brian Nicols asked, “Do we have links with education. Could we offer a student discount? Could club members visit educational establishments and promote bridge?”

The Chair confirmed that this is a subject that will definitely be on future agendas.

1. **Treasurer’s Report:**

The Chair read out the Treasurer’s report in his absence as follows:

**Bristol Bridge Club – AGM – 4 July 2019**

**Treasurer’s Report**

“Firstly, please accept my apologies for not being able to attend this year’s AGM, my first as treasurer. Unfortunately, this date coincides with my departure for an orienteering meet in Latvia.

The Trustees’ Report and Financial Statements have been circulated to members, so most should have had an opportunity to review the financial position of the club. The purpose of this report is to draw your attention to the significant financial implications of the report, and hopefully to answer any questions you might have.

**OVERALL FINANCES AND NEXT YEAR’S FEES**

The overall state of the club’s finances is very healthy, with over £80,000 in the bank at the end of March. As reported in the financial review contained within the Trustees’ Report, this should be comfortably sufficient to deal with the club’s likely outgoings.

No change in subscription or table money prices were made for the current year (2019-10) and I am recommending that no change be made to either membership subscription rates or table money prices for the next year (2010-11).

**INCOME**

Bridge income is slightly down on the performance in 2017-18, by about 6%. This reflects the fall in participation (and therefore table money) at the club. Fortunately, this year, this has been compensated for by the first gift aid claims the club has made in respect of membership subscriptions for the past two years, amounting to £3,300 on tax reclaimed.

We have, for the first time in recent memory, benefited from a small amount of interest income, as a result of moving a significant proportion of our funds from NatWest to The Hampshire Trust Bank. We now have about £65,000 on deposit with them, so next year’s interest income should be in excess of £1,000.

**EXPENDITURE**

The fall in bridge expenditure is entirely due to the reduction in supplies (cards, scorecards, etc), which are ordered in bulk, so this is not a surprise.

It appears that overheads have increased by 33%, although this is not as serious at it may appear. The cut-off between last year and this for cleaning was not very precisely applied, so the costs in this year’s accounts covers 61 weeks of cleaning, whereas last year’s spend covered 48 weeks. This explains a significant proportion of the apparent increase. We will also continue to experience steady increases in the weekly charge for as long as National Minimum Wage rates increase by more than inflation.

The depreciation charge relates to the replacement of the air conditioning units, which will be written off over 5 years.

The training costs related to two courses for members to learn how to use the club’s defibrillator.

“Other costs” include the costs relating to a monthly licence for our accounting system (which has enabled the club to take the payment of wages to our staff in house), Christmas decorations and other sundry supplies. I am not sure where these items appeared in the 2017-18 figures.

**ASSETS**

My report has already covered the major changes in the balance sheet relating to the monies we hold on deposit with the Hampshire Trust Bank and the replacement of our air conditioning units.

**THOUGHTS FOR THE FUTURE**

As referred to in the Trustees’ Report, the trustees are considering whether the efficiency of the club’s cash handling can be improved by the use of technology. Currently the club handles cash of about £100,000 per year, which has implications for security, insurance, financial risk and the safety of those being required to handle this cash.

Trustees plan to research the alternatives before recommending a solution for the club. However, this is only likely to be successful if a significant majority sign up for the chosen solution. Options that have been selected by other clubs include (1) use of debit/credit card readers, (2) monthly direct debit payments in arrears, (3) standing orders based on players expected frequency of playing, with regular reconciliations and (4) the issuing of vouchers which can then be exchanged for playing sessions. I am not suggesting that this be discussed at any great length at the AGM but would be interested to hear people’s views before we decide which options to investigate.”

**Mike Forrest**

**30thJune 2019**

Daisy Bickley said, “Membership fees and table money have not been increased for a number of years – maybe it would be better to make gradual small increases on a regular basis.”

Alison Simmonds commented, “We could have reduced fees for new members or a long trial period.”

Colin Lennox observed, “People are not joining clubs generally.”

The Accounts were approved unanimously: proposed by Stuart king and seconded by Margaret Randell

1. **Club Manager’s Report:**

Stephen Royal gave his report as follows:

 **Club Managers Report to the AGM**  **July 4th 2019**.

“The club continues to thrive but attendance has dropped a little more. The club was once the 5th busiest in the country based on the number of player sessions in the year to March 31st. Last year I reported that we had dropped to 8th. In the current ranking we are now 9th. Tuesday and Thursday evening attendance in particular has been lower. I would like to see members giving greater priority to trophy competitions and being able to play in the final if they qualify. The dates are in the calendar which comes out a long time ahead.

The Christmas Swiss Teams is still as big as ever. The Curtis Cup is always popular and we have introduced an extra Sunday session in the Spring to go with the Sunday in September.

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The Premier Pairs has been brought back. Promotion and relegation have been dropped. The aim now is to get the strongest competition that is available.

The numbers in the beginners classes make them only just self-financing and we would like to attract more people. Most new recruits come from word of mouth recommendations, so we hope that you will persuade your friends to give it a try when classes start in the autumn. A leaflet will be available to give out to people who you think might be interested in learning to play bridge. Please take one to show your friends.

The “Fast Track” beginner’s class on 6 Saturday mornings did eventually attract enough support to make it viable. Following on from that, we introduced a “Supervised Play” session from 10am to 1pm on a Saturday morning which is open to all. The main focus is on playing hands with advice given. If you know of people who might benefit from that, let us know and we will give them more details.

There is no table money for the bridge after this AGM. The winners are awarded the Bernard Shannon Trophy. There will be a draw for partners, mixing a strong player with a less confident player in accordance with Bernard Shannon’s wishes to mix up different sections of the club. There was a motion about the bridge after the AGM at the 2016 AGM that was approved. It stated that arranged partnerships are not allowed. The draw for partners will go up on the whiteboard. I want to get playing as soon as possible. Rather than say what conventions are allowed, the stronger player should just play what the less confident player is used to and not play any new convention that they have never played before.”

Stephen Royal

Sandra Cooper asked about ‘Friendly Thursdays’

Stephen replied, “We tried ‘Friendly Thursdays’ but after the initial night they were not successful. Less confident players should be encouraged to play on a Tuesday or Thursday by ideally partnering with someone they know.”

Gloria Simmonds said, “Whenever she came to the club, everyone was very friendly.”

Ralph Power stated, “Charity Gift Aid has recovered over £3500. The decline in numbers is a very serious issue. The ‘big thrust’ for the next 2 years is going to be trying to address this issue. Asking why and what we can do? Maybe - when we play regular sessions, we know each other and therefore new members or visitors need to be made to feel particularly welcome.”

1. **Election of Trustees:**

**Continuing Trustees:**

David Jones, Mike Forrest, Phil Seymour, Ralph Power

**Re-election of current Trustees:**

Jo Luton proposed by John Hollingdale and seconded by Simon Croucher

Sue O’Hara proposed by Mike Forrest and seconded by Jan O’Brien

Hilda Ball proposed by Sue O’Hara and seconded by Jan O’Brien

Joanna Galpinproposed by Rosie Kniftonand seconded by Bonnie Balfry

**Resignation of Trustees:**

Jan O’Brien has resigned as Secretary and Trustee

Irene Robinson has resigned as Trustee

**New Trustee Nomination:**

Alison Simmonds, Proposed by Ralph power and seconded by Phil Seymour

Ralph Power introduced Alison to the room. She has been a member of the club for many years. Alison has a background of compliance in the Stock Exchange and is highly skilled in the field of IT and websites

Dr Caroline Drugan, proposed by Ralph Power and seconded by Alison Simmonds

Ralph Power also introduced Caroline to the room and confirmed that she too had been a member for many years. Caroline is a dentist and has developed acareer in dental education. Caroline is interested in developing the educational aspect of learning bridge and willing to speak schools ,universities and other local authority providers and possibly introduce summer holiday activities

All nominations were accepted unanimously by show of hands with none against.

1. **Proposals:**
2. Sue O’Hara to be awarded Life Membership of the Bristol Bridge Club proposed by David Jones and seconded by Phil Seymour.

The chair supported his proposal by saying,

”Most organisations have one or perhaps two people in them who are modest ,quiet ,industrious over performers with a wide ranging skill set and without whom the body in question would perform considerably less well. Bristol Bridge Club has Sue O'Hara who fits the above description perfectly and is therefore the Board of Trustees unanimous nomination for life membership.

I have known Sue O'Hara for a long time and during the whole of that period she has served on the Club committee and then the Board of Trustees when we became a charity .She has been the Chair and Vice Chair and a member of the Committee for in excess of 20 years by my calculation .It is not a coincidence that this has been a period of growth and success for the club on almost all fronts .

Sue's contribution to Bristol Bridge Club has been multi-faceted since in addition to her executive contribution on the Board and previously the Committee she is a regular Director in afternoon sessions ,has supported Fast Track teaching courses, has been the Webmaster in charge of the club web site for almost its entirety and updates it on a weekly basis .The Web Site is as a consequence very well laid out with excellent information.

Sue has a skill for technology and its use and application much greater than most. Sue also takes on those jobs which others somehow prefer not to however small.

Sue has taken responsibility for the organisation of many bridge events held at the club including many national ones over the years and is excellent at liaison with other bridge organisations including the EBU!

Sue is also a member of the Avon County Committee and has been instrumental in the organisation of the successful Green Point Swiss weekend which is held in May each year.

Sue also finds time to play regularly at the club and in county, local and national events and is a very competent player (if a little cautious in the bidding ! ).

I do not believe there is anyone who commands more respect and who is more deserving of the award of Life Membership.”

A show of hands accepted the proposal unanimously.

b) Colin Bond proposes that, “Any individual member of BBC at the age of 80, continuing membership to the age of 85, shall then be entitled to play bridge without paying table money.  One could suggest this is called 'Honorary Life Membership' but any such name should not cause this proposition to not be approved.

These members were entitled to their state pension at the age of 65, and then were entitled to free tv licence at 75 (until next year).  This proposition introduces recognition of our venerable members reaching a further milestone in their life.”

Colin was asked to clarify the age limits in his proposal.

Colin said,” It means you must be a member at 80 to qualify at 85 and not just joined the club at 84 and three quarters.”

Sue O’Hara commented,” We need to know the number of people who qualify and at the moment we have no age records. Therefore we do not know the cost to the Club.”

Caroline Drugan said,” We can ask members their age”

Hilda observed that,” Members belong to many clubs and they drive and attend many places. £4 table money and £30 per year is not much.”

Colin replied, “It was not so much about cost but recognition of loyalty.”

Jan O’Brien said, “The Treasurer is also concerned about the cost of such a proposal as we do not have the supporting figures available at the moment. In his absence he asked that he is able to ‘reserve his rights’ concerning any decision made this evening.”

Colin chose to withdraw his proposal but requested that Trustees find out how many members may be eligible and the resulting cost.

1. **AOB:** none

**There being no other business the meeting closed at 7.15 pm**