****

**Annual General Meeting of the Manchester Contract Bridge Association**

**Held on Thursday 30th May 2019**

**At Cheadle Hulme Bridge Club**

**Present**

Irene Davies (chair), Alan Mould (secretary), Royce Alexander, Joy Blakey, Michael Byrne, Celia Comrie, Kevin Comrie, Rhona Goldenfield, Stephen Halstead, Ian Hempstock, Val Hempstock, John Holland, Peter Jones, Barbara Lewis, Joan Lewis, Eve Lighthill, Rodney Lighton, Kath Nelson, Michael Newman, Chris Richardson, John Roberts, Karen Sandler, Raymond Semp, Alec Smalley, Adam Wiseberg, Mike Whiteoak.

**1 Apologies for Absence**

Peter Green, Jeff Smith, Elena Rosenbaum, Marcelo Rosenbaum, Roger Hopton.

**2 Minutes of last Meeting held 23rd May 2018 at Altrincham Bridge Club**

Agreed as a true and correct record

**3 Matters Arising**

None

**4 Report of Officers:**

**4.1 Chair (Irene Davies)**

**Clubs**

* Manchester BC has now settled well into their new home. Attendances are good.
* Marple went through a difficult time due to illness but that has now been resolved and Hari Gohil is directing and scoring there.
* Cheadle Hulme BC has had an EGM to decide whether to merge with Bramhall Village BC. && members attended the final meeting and voted nem con for the merger.
* Stretford Bridge Club has benefitted from the two beginners series of lessons it has held, with 9 new members. They have also held an EBED teaching course and a Director’s course.
* Bramhall Village club have increased the number of players attending their sessions by starting a Tuesday morning session. They have been achieving 17/18 tables per session playing a more leisurely 14 boards.
* The County has held two seminars led by Michael Byrne for Northern Bridge League B and C pool players. These were well attended and very successful.

**MCBA Committee**

Kath Nelson is retiring from her role as League Secretary as of the AGM in May. We thank her for all her hard work and commitment to the job over the last 7 years. Adam Wiseberg is presently running the Higson Cup competition and is happy to take over as League Secretary in May.

Because of other commitments Ann Thornton has stopped being Tournament Secretary but has agreed to continue organising the Gazette Cup. She has built up this competition very successfully over the last few years. Thanks go to Ann for all her hard work. Howard Kay and John Roberts have taken on the organising of the Ben Franks Trophy.

Barbara Lewis has also retired from her responsibilities as organiser of the Cantor Cup, Summer and Autumn Intermediate Pairs and the stationery needed for all the MCBAs competitions. Barbara has done this work for longer than I can remember, and we thank her for all the hard work she has put in alongside running Cheadle Hulme BC. Barbara Eastabrook and Karen Jones have agreed to take over the organising and running of the Autumn and Summer Intermediate pairs. We are still looking for someone to take over the organising of the Cantor Cup.

**Membership Development Campaign.**

The Manchester County has many prestigious players and is always well represented in competitions, but we do operate in the context of a falling membership of bridge clubs and we need to address this. Central to this is finding new players and therefore teaching. Only 3 of our 9 clubs are running Beginners lessons at present. Yet we know from the evidence that there is a large potential audience out there in Manchester that we are not tapping. It is independent teachers and unaffiliated clubs that are showing us the way by having large classes for people who want to learn bridge. Our own clubs could be doing this and would reap the benefits of new members eventually coming to duplicates.

* The Membership Campaign Group has been trying to address this issue. In September Sara Miles was appointed as Regional Project Officer to work with clubs in Manchester and Merseyside and Cheshire. She had contact with Stretford Cheadle Hulme and Bramhall Village Clubs. She felt that she was really getting nowhere and so resigned in December.
* The Membership Campaign group has met 4 times. We spent quite a bit of our time directing the work of Sara and putting a bid together for £4000 from the Stockport Local Fund which was setup to combat loneliness. However, our bids have now failed twice despite coming close to approval.
* We recognised that a lack of teachers in the County was part of the problem so we organise a number of people to attend EBED teacher training courses. We now have a new tranche of teachers in the County: Ann Thornton, Victor Ridding, Howard Kay, Barbara Lewis, Irene Davies and Nicki Decent.
* We wanted to lead by example and so planned to organise a taster session and lessons at Cheadle Hulme BC organised from outside not by the club but this is impossible at the moment because of the EGM coming up at Cheadle. There are now plans to start another set of beginners lessons at Manchester BC.
* Through our work around the Stockport Local Bid we have developed a relationship with the External relations office of Manchester Airport. They have invited us to advertise our lessons and have a stall at the Afternoon Teas that they hold for pensioners in Heald Green , Bramhall and Gatley. They have also put us in touch with their retired workers section and have offered to give us IT advice about setting up Social media accounts and advertising on them. It’s a relationship I think we should nurture.
* The County has also been contacted by the private members club St James, which meets on King St in the City centre. They had a bridge club and held prestigious bridge events about 40 years ago. They want to set up a bridge section again and were asking for help. We are introducing them to a teacher, lending them some tables, giving them advice and sharing the memorabilia we have from events that they ran in the 80s. Again I think this is a relationship well worth nurturing.
* We had an approach from Cheadle Hulme Grammar School about starting to teach bridge at lunchtimes. But nothing seems to have come of this.
* At EBU level Tim Anderson has been appointed as Membership development officer. He works 2 days a week and we have access to the resources on the website. David Guild who is YCBA’s Membership Project Officer has with the agreement of the EBU been freed up to do some work in the other counties of the North. We are keen to get his input. The EBU are going to send out some new statistics on membership showing numbers at sessions per club so it will be easier to detect problems and possibilities.

**Report back from EBU Chair’s Meeting held at Young Chelsea on 15/05/19**

There were 3 items on the agenda: EBED, Membership Campaign and Finances.

EBED.

The train was late, so I missed half of this discussion. Apparently little of interest.

Membership Campaign.

Two papers from Yorkshire. One (Ron Millet’s) outlining why we should be concerned with recruiting new people rather than wooing unaffiliated clubs. The other (from David Guild) giving the statistical background to their Campaign. The average age of Yorkshire players is now 73. The County has grown its membership over the last two years. The average age of new players is 66.5. It’s clear that our easiest audience is the peri-retirement sector. This tips the scales toward more social bridge and a shrinking sector of competitive bridge. I spoke about the barriers to changing people’s mind set around the issue of recruitment.

Finances

The Treasurer outlined the financial situation. At present we are barely breaking even and therefore he outlined options to improve the financial situation. It boiled down to either a 2p rise in UM for 2020 (41p) or cuts in services or a mixture of both.

Possible cuts mentioned :

Internationals, opt-in diaries rather than opt out, masterpoints, EBED.

From the floor it was suggested that some of the £400,000 reserves could be used for increasing membership and therefore income. The Treasurer was happy with the level of reserves (3 months trading), but would consider spending some of it if there was a worthwhile project. Consensus of the meeting was that a raise of 2p on UM, which would bring in an extra £72,000pa, was acceptable with some cuts to services like the diaries, masterpoints.

**Roll of Honour**

**Llandudno Swiss Pairs**

Several Manchester players and pairs went to Llandudno for the annual Swiss Pairs on 7-8th July run by the North Wales Bridge Association. Rodney Lighton and Neil Thomas were first equal with Jason Hackett and John Sansom, also Peter Greaves finished third with Raj Gupta.

**Summer Seniors Congress**

Gary Hyett won the B final of the pairs at Eastbourne on 6th-8th July with Alan Cooke.  Gary and Alan played the Swiss Teams with John Jones and Adrian Fontes and finished third.

**NICKO**

The Cheadle Hulme team of Alec Smalley, David Barton, Rodney Lighton and Royce Alexander (also John Currie, Tom Slater) reached but lost their quarter final match to the holders, Tunbridge Wells. However, Manchester, Michael Byrne, Gary Hyett, John Holland, Alan Mould (also Michael Newman) beat Allendale. Manchester played Tunbridge Wells in the semi-final but lost.

**Scarborough Summer Congress**

John Holland won the teams at Scarborough on the 27th July with Jackie Pye, Jeremy Dhondy and Bill Hirst and Gary Hyett was third in the Seniors Pairs on 26th July with Alan Cooke.  Gary and Alan were also third in the Swiss Pairs on 28-29th July.

**Preston Blue Point Pairs**Several Manchester pairs participated at Preston on Sunday 5th August. Rod Franks and Ann Thornton finished second, also doing well were Janet Tolan and Andy Green in fourth place and Daniel Kelsall and Wei Che Tham who were sixth.

**Summer Festival Mixed Pivot Teams**

Bernard and Rhona Goldenfield, Joy and Irving Blakey won the EBUs Mixed Pivot Teams at the EBU Summer Festival.  This year the event was held at multiple centres, the Manchester team played at Huddersfield Bridge Club on 15th August.

**Northern Midweek Congress**

Martin Taylor won the pairs at Harrogate with Justin Hackett on 21st-22nd August.

**Crockfords**

The mainly Manchester team of John Holland, Alan Mould, Michael Byrne and Kieran Dyke finished third in the eight team final of the English National KO competition which was held in Solihull on 1st-2nd September.  John and Alan were the third best pair on cross IMPs.

**Bolton Congress**

The annual Bolton Bridge Club event was held on 8-9th September.  Bernard and Rhona Goldenfield won the Championship pairs ahead of Daniel Kelsall and Wei Che Tham.

**Premier League**

The first weekend of three of the prestigious EBU Premier League was held on September 15th-16th.  The first two teams in the top division will be selected to play for England in the Camrose Trophy.  The Manchester team of Jeff Morris, John Hassett, Alec Smalley and Tom Slater (with Catherine Draper and Andrew Woodcock to play in subsequent weekends) are currently doing very well lying in second position.

**World Bridge Series**

The World Bridge Series took place in Orlando from 21st September to 6th October.  Michael Byrne playing with Mike Bell in the Lilienstein team reached the round of 32.

**Lancashire Mixed Pairs**

Ian Kane and Barbara Eastabrook won the Lancashire Mixed Pairs at Poulton on Sunday 23rd September. 

**Great Northern Swiss Pairs**

John Holland playing with Clive Owen of the North East retained the trophy at Leeds on 29-30th September.  Kath & Alan Nelson were fourth equal, Daniel Kelsall & Wei Che Tham were 13th, winning the C category prize and coming second in the B category.

**North Wales Swiss Pairs**

Manchester players were out in force at Northop on Sunday 7th October.  In second place was John Holland playing with Jackie Pye, Gary Hyett was third playing with Dan Crofts, Pauline Lang and Alan Barnes were fourth equal with Josh Clarke and Paul Murray.

**Chester Bowl**

The annual charity event at Deva Bridge Club on Sunday 14th October was well attended with many Manchester participants.  The qualifying section was won by Pauline Lang and Steve Mattinson with Gary Hyett and Peter Carey-Yard second and Mohamed and Mariam Jabber third.  In the final Keith Boulton and Nigel Pearce were second with Rodney Lighton and John Currie third.

**Autumn Congresses**

Martin Taylor playing with Justin Hackett finished third in the Two Star Pairs in the EBU congress at Daventry on 20th October. Meanwhile John Holland with Jackie Pye, Sally Brock and Barry Myers won the teams in the Scottish congress at Peebles; John and Jackie were third in the pairs final which was won by Sally and Barry.

**Lancashire Congress**

The Lancashire Congress took place over the weekend of 27-28th October in Brierfield for the Swiss Pairs and in Bolton for the Swiss Teams.  Gary Hyett won the Swiss Pairs with Alan Cooke of Bedfordshire, Rhona and Bernard Goldenfield were fourth.

**Pendle Witch Pairs**

John Stell and Tracy Capal won at Brierfield on Sunday 11th November, also doing well were Christopher Hine and Stephen Ward who were fourth winning the B category prize.

**Senior World Championship**John Holland and Alan Mould who have been chosen to play for the England senior team in the World Championships in China next September.

**Llangollen Swiss Teams**

Catherine Draper and Andrew Woodcock were on the winning team in the Welsh event on 24-25th November playing with Gillian and Joe Fawcett respectively Bernard & Rhona Goldenfield, John Holland and Jackie Pye were third.

**European Mixed Teams Trials**

The play-offs for the team to represent England in the European Mixed event took place on 8-9th Dec. at the Young Chelsea Bridge Club.  Michael Byrne playing with Fiona Brown, Frances Hinden, Graham Osborne, Sally Brock and Barry Myers won both their semi-final and final matches convincingly.  The European event will be in Lisbon in February.

**Teltscher Trophy Trials**Trials for the Senior Camrose team took place at  Solihull on 15-16th December.  Manchester players participating were John Holland in the Hackett team and Alan Mould and Gary Hyett with Sally Brock and Barry Myers. John’s team won in a close finish just ahead of the Penfold team, with John top scoring on cross IMPs.  Gary and Alan's team were a distant third.

**Blackpool Year end Congress**

Alan Mould and John Holland won the pairs event. Bernard and Rhona Goldenfield with Kath and Alan Nelson were second in the teams. Alan and Kath Nelson also won the mixed pairs.

**Blue Point Teams**

Neil Thomas, Nicholas Greer, John Currie and Rodney Lighton won at Preston on Sunday 13th January, just ahead of John Holland, Alan Mould, Jackie Pye and Jeff Smith.

**Lancashire Butler Pairs**Karen Jones and Barbara Eastabrook did well to finish fourth and win the second session prize at Preston on Sunday 20th January.

**EBU Point a Board Teams**

Manchester players did well at the Young Chelsea on the weekend of 19-20th January.  Michael Byrne won with Kieran Dyke, Mike Bell and Neil Rosen just ahead of John Holland and Alan Mould playing with Sally Brock and Barry Myers.

**Chester Congress**The annual congress at Deva Bridge Club was held over the weekend of 26-27th January.  Manchester successes included a win in the Swiss Teams for Bernard and Rhona Goldenfield playing with Tracy Capal and Peter Kaufmann and second place in the pairs for Gillian McMullan and Roger Hopton.

**Lady Milne Trials**Catherine Draper, playing with Susanna Gross of London qualified in the trials for the Womens home internationals held at the Young Chelsea on 2nd-3rd February.

**Harrogate Spring Congress**

Tom Slater and Michael Byrne were winners of the three session Swiss Pairs on 8-9th February.  They won all their nine matches and were well ahead of second place. Gary Hyett playing with Alan Cooke, who had been leading up to the final session, finished 11th. This is a first win in this event for Tom.

**Sunday Telegraph Salver**

John Holland again won this trophy for the most master points in one calendar year. This is the sixth time John has won it Gary Hyett was second.

**Lederer Trophy**

The annual invitation Lederer Trophy took place on 23-24th February at the RAC club in London. There were many international stars playing in the various teams.  Manchester players in the Chairman's team were John Holland, Alan Mould and Gary Hyett with Graham Kirby, Ben Norton and Alex Roberts

**European Mixed Teams**

The first European Mixed Teams Championship took place in Lisbon from 22nd to 28th February.  Playing for England was Michael Byrne with Fiona Brown, the rest of the team was Sally Brock, Barry Myers, Frances Hinden and Graham Osborne. The team finished fifth which qualifies them for the World Championships in Wuhan in September.

**Eric Howarth Swiss teams**

Raymond Semp and John Parsons with team mates Tracy Capal and David Flacks were second in this event

**CumbriaCongress**The following Manchester players were successful in the Cumbria Congress from 15th-17th March.  Ladies Pairs 2nd Joyce White with Babs Matthews, 3rd Karen Jones and Barbara Eastabrook.  Mixed Pairs 3rd Steve Mattinson and Pauline Lang.  Championship Pairs 2nd Rhona and Bernard Goldenfield.  Swiss Teams Winners Catherine Draper and Andrew Woodcock with Michael Prior and Keith Ashcroft, 2nd Joyce White with Babs Matthews, Tim Matthews, Ian Reeves, 3rd  Steve Mattinson, Pauline Lang, Rod Franks with Margaret Howe.

**Hubert Phillips**John Holland, Alan Mould, Jeff Smith and Jackie Pye have reached the final of the Hubert Phillips with a good win over Heather Dhondy's team.  This team has now reached the final in two of the last three years.

**Portland Pairs**  
Michael Byrne won the EBU's Mixed Pairs event playing with Dinah Caplan of London at Richmond on 24th March.  At 86 years old Dinah becomes the oldest ever winner of the Portland Pairs.  Bernard and Rhona finished 13th, with John Holland and Jackie Pye 14th.

**Teltscher Trophy**

John Holland played for England Seniors on the weekend of April 5th-7th in the home internationals in Edinburgh.  The rest of the team was Norman Selway, Paul Hackett, Gunnar Halberg and David Mossop. England won by a large margin, with John and Norman second in the Butler rankings.

**Lady Milne**

Catherine Draper played for England in the women's home internationals in Ireland on the weekend of April 12th-14th with Susanna Gross, Sally Brock, Gilly Cardiff, Nicola Smith and Yvonne Wiseman.  England won the competition with Catherine and Susanna heading the Butler rankings.

**Preston Blue Point Pairs**

Nearly half the field were Manchester players at Preston on 14th April.  Best Manchester result was achieved by John Holland with Jackie Pye who were second.  Jeff Morris and John Hassett were third.

**Easter Festival**

In the Easter Festival at Ilkley John Holland and Jackie Pye finished third in both the Mixed Pairs and the Swiss Pairs.  John and Jackie then teamed up with Alan Mould and Michael Newman to win the Swiss Teams on Sunday concluding a successful tournament.  Tom Slater's team was second.

**Schapiro Spring Fours**

The Penfold team containing Alan Mould and John Holland lost in the semi-finals on the Tuesday.

**Congratulations to All**

**Comments:**

Ashton BC has voted to affiliate to the EBU and MCBA.

No tournament secretary for next year, but a number of people running different events.

EBU Chair’s meeting. 22 people present.

P2P will rise by 2p next year (2020), 2p (2021), 1p (2022).

**4.2 Secretary (Alan Mould)**

I was formally elected for the first time at last year’s AGM, having been accepted into the post subsequent to the 2017 AGM.

After the flurry of activity around the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)) that came into force on 25th May 2018, this has been a very quiet period in this role.

The main communications from the EBU have been

* a letter from the chair of the board (Jeremy Dhondy) asking counties views on abolishing the May shareholders meeting and therefore only having one a year. The stated reason for this was that the attendance is very poor (22 out of 39 counties at the last one), but one suspects that finance is also a driver. This was dealt with by the officers who were unanimously of the view that the May meeting was an important part of the democracy of the EBU and if attendance was poor, the board should look to making the shareholders meetings less dull. I wrote back accordingly, but to no avail, since at the AGM of the EBU, the Board announced that the result of the survey most counties were happy to abolish the May shareholders meeting and replace it with a chair of counties meeting.
* The EBU AGM took place in November, and the copious papers arrived by email and were forwarded to our shareholders. I will leave the shareholders to comment on that, except to share that the County instructed its shareholders to vote for Mike Bell to the Selection Committee. He was duly elected, along with David Burn, and replaced Peter Hasenson.
* There have been a number of communications related to various competitions, including the Tollemache, the Garden Cities, the Pachabo, and our own county events, but nothing out of the ordinary.

The one item of note is that for the first time since 2012, the County received a formal complaint against one of its members. This was received by the chair who passed it on to me as Secretary. The Constitution requires the formation of a Conduct Committee when any formal complaint is received, and this was organised by myself as Secretary. The Conduct Committee dealt with the matter; and determined that the Disciplinary Committee did not have to be called. The matter is thus now closed.

**4.3 Treasurer (Joy Blakey) (accounts attached separately)**

The accounts for the year ending 31st March 2019 are available in the form of

1. Income and expenditure account
2. Balance sheet
3. Notes to the accounts
4. Auditors report.

(Papers 2a – 2d))

**A loss for the year of £743.92 is recorded.**

It should be noted that :

The main source of annual income for the county comes from our League and Cup entries and P2P payments received from the EBU.

Our outgoings in the form of expenses are high. With the exception of the two green pointed events, **every other tournament, including the congress, has made a loss.** The seminars we run also make a loss. This year we did not incur expenses for the county match against Derbyshire as it was hosted by them but next year this will be an additional expense.

Besides running our tournaments, the county’s expenses continue with team entries to the Tollemache (plus a small contribution to the players’ expenses) Northern Bridge League, Garden Cities, President’s Cup, Pachabo, Corwen and county finals. Additionally there are the usual expenses for P2P fees, stationary and equipment, handbook, website maintenance etc.

Whilst we have reserves in the building society at the year end, £2,500 of this has been transferred to the county’s current account at Nat West to provide appropriate working capital.

There has been a lot to learn but I have enjoyed my year in office and am particularly pleased to have achieved on-line banking for the county. Everyone is now paid efficiently by BACS and bank statements can be read on line by me (several times a day if necessary). The convenience of paying into our account by BACS is apparent as a huge percentage of league entries are made that way and hopefully 100% will be achieved next year.

My thanks go to all the tournament managers, (Rhona Goldenfield, Barbara Lewis, Susan Triggs, Ann Thornton, Irene Davies and Jeff Smith), who have unfailingly delivered to me the completed tournament income and expense sheets. Also my thanks to Howard Stubbings for all his help with the accounts – not only super-efficient but very patient too!

**Comment**

Loss is actually £583.12, not as reported in the report.

The report was delayed because of problems with the EBU accounting system, in which we were overcharged for the Congress.

JB was thanked for her work, particularly in introducing online banking.

**4.4 League Secretary, Higson Cup Secretary and Goldstone Convenor**

**(Kath Nelson – League, Higson Cup – Adam Wiseberg,**

**Roger Hopton – Goldstone)**

**League**

69 teams entered the League this year (64 last year). I set up the Divisions as follows:

11 in Division 1

10 in Divisions 2,3, 4 & 5

9 in Divisions 6 & 7.

Unfortunately *Bridge Under Troubled Water*'s captain (Div 6) had surgery and no one else in the team was prepared to take on the captain's job, so the team withdrew early in the season. Rather a poor show…

I was very pleased that several new teams entered Division 7. Two of the teams have struggled at the bottom but pressed on and I admire their determination and tenacity. Well done!

All but one match was completed by the end of April. As per every year there were the usual difficulties, with teams frantically trying to set up last minute matches.

All matches should be arranged before the middle of April with the last 2 weeks for catch-up, for those matches previously cancelled. Try to avoid subs either too strong or too weak as this will have a knock-on effect to the rest of the division. Of course, starting your matches in September will avoid most of these problems.

The Cup/Plate proved difficult to manage and I was grateful to Adam for offering to take over which he did with aplomb.

Many of the lower teams seems focussed on getting through to the Plate whereas in the past it was considered an honour to play the higher ranked teams and aim to play in the Cup.

I have dealt with 3 instances of bad behaviour in matches from teams this season. Two teams took my admonitions on the chin and the situations were quickly resolved. However, one team denied bad behaviour and created all sorts of difficulties, not handled to my liking - obviously time to hand over to someone else.

Good Luck to my successor, Adam!

**Kath Nelson was thanked for all her work over the years and presented with a small gift in recognition of her service to the County.**

**Cup**

48 teams entered the Cup and 8 from Division 1 received first round byes. Any entrants from Divisions 6 and 7 received free entry.

Draws were made by the EBU automated system.

Twelve of the winners received byes to the third round. The remaining eight teams played their second round matches against the seeded teams who received byes in the first round. Twenty teams were drawn against each other with no seeding for the third round resulting in a ten team all play all final. Two teams conceded their matches in the second round. Both were because they were unable to field a team in the final due to holidays or other bridge commitments.

Losers of first round matches who were eligible (Div 3 and below) went into the first round of the Plate. The winners of that round were joined in the second round draw by eligible losers from the second round of the Cup. Seventeen teams were eligible to play in the second round of the Plate. One was given a bye to the final but were unable to field a team and so the final was contested between eight teams.

The finals took place on April 28th at Altrincham Bridge Club’s venue in St Peter’s Church Hall in Hale.

The Cup was won by Agamemnon and the Plate by Monton Misfits.

The directors were Henry Bissell (Cup) and Joan Lewis (Plate). Particular thanks go to Joan Lewis who set up both playing areas, cleared up afterwards and spent most of the following day entering names and numbers into the EBU system in order to ensure that the correct masterpoints were allocated.

Several teams were unable to field teams for the final from their original line ups. I formed an impromptu sub-committee of me, Alan Mould and Michael Byrne to examine the current rules carefully and it became apparent that, if a player is not cup tied (has not played for a team in the cup in the current season) then they are eligible to play for any team in the Cup only provided that the relevant registration fees are paid. The rule regarding substitutes doesn’t apply to anyone fulfilling these criteria. Six out of the ten Cup finalists and two out of the eight plate finalists were only able to field teams by registering additional players who had played in the league for other teams.

I set up the EBU system to allocate masterpoints for matches prior to the final. Hopefully they will appear in players’ masterpoint history in due course.

**Comments:**

Questions were raised about why both Cup and Plate were not in the same room, and why the room was cold.

AW agreed that the cost was excessive this year and will not be repeated next year. It was due to a combination of circumstances. AW is looking to move it into a MCBA club so that it benefits the club.

Questions were also asked why the Cup and Plate were not playing the same boards. JL responded that in the past boards have been compromised by playing the same boards and people wandering from one event to the other.

AW was thanked for taking over half way through.

**Goldstone Cup**

The entry this year was 18 teams, 4 fewer than last year, which means there are only 2 preliminary games this year. I think the entry was partially affected by the teams suddenly realising they must have Manchester players only in their team.

For the draw this year, it didn’t seem fair choosing the lowest ranked teams playing them against each other and then putting them against the first and second ranked teams in the main second round. So, this time I seeded the 4 best teams and drew all the other teams for the remaining places and also drew the slot the preliminary round would feed into the main draw.

All matches were played within the one week deadline of the target dates, the final is between St Titus and New Connections to be played at CHBC on Thursday 23rd May.

No matches have been conceded.

The competition has run well, and I do not propose any changes for next year.

**4.5 Membership Secretary (Karen Sandler)**

**Member Analysis May 2019**

Because the EBU database is totally irreconcilable, I have decided to analyse the data further. It will make it even more confusing, but will illustrate why the data is so incorrect.

Firstly, I will do a simple, but direct comparison with the March 2019 figures.

**March 2019**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| P2P | **1325** |
| Direct members | **54** |
| (Teachers - EBTA | **25)** |
| (Juniors (under 25) | **17)** |
| Fast track student | **1** |
| Total from spreadsheet | **1383** |

**May 2019**

P2P 1323

Direct 54

Student 2

Total 1379

However, the total on the database is 1382.

These are the only categories on the database, and I cannot find any missing lines. Short of analysing every part of every record, there does not seem to be a way of reconciling these figures.

So, then I decided to analyse the membership by club, of only the primary club memberships, and only the major clubs, and only those who are PTP or direct members. I wonder if these figures can be reconciled against actual club membership?

Somehow, I doubt it, but I do not have access to these figures from the clubs.

Altrincham Bridge Club 205 Bessies 33

Bolton 2 Bramhall 104

Bury 30 Cheadle Hulme 82

MBC 353 Marple 60

Prestbury 79 Stretford 68

Trafford 248

I thought there were more registered clubs than this, but these are the only ones in the Manchester area on the EBU spreadsheet. Is this ringing alarm bells for the committee over the state of the data?

**Comment**

EBU is aware membership data is unhelpful.

ID has been sent number of P2P sessions per club over the year.

There is a decrease in the number of P2P sessions.

YCBA has found that only 70% of members are actually active members (ie those that ever actually play).

JB receives the P2P monthly receipts from the EBU. JB has no way of checking these in any way. The amounts vary from £90 to £300 over the months.

JB was asked to ask the EBU why there is such variance.

**Action: JB to contact EBU about monthly P2P receipts**

**4.6 Tournament Secretary (Ann Thornton)**

No report submitted.

**Comments**

County only events are not as popular as there is a smaller pool of players that can come.

Need more personal contacts to get people in.

**Barbara Lewis was thanked for her tireless work over the years and presented with a small gift in recognition of her service to the County.**

**Ann Thornton who is also standing down, was also thanked for her long service to the County and a similar gift will be presented to her in due course.**

**4.7 Congress Secretary (Irene Davies)**

**Congress numbers 2014 - 2019**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Year | Pairs | Teams | Nov 1 | Nov 3 | Total players | **Profit £** | **Loss £** |
| 2014 | 74 | 36 | 14 | 12 | 344 |  | **367** |
| 2015 | 68 | 29 | 14 | 20 | 320 |  | **685** |
| 2016 | 65 | 29 | 19 | 14 | 312 |  | **945** |
| 2017 | 73 | 38 | 13 | 17 | 358 | **279** |  |
| 2018 | 66 | 33 | 15 | 14 | 322 |  | **209** |
| 2019 | 64 | 26 | 17 | 18 | 302 |  | **625\*** |

\*V&A forgot again to charge for parking so loss actually **£405**

**Feedback**

There were 30 responses to the questionnaire. Some email responses and verbal responses. Of the 30 questionnaire responses only 4 didn’t like the changes to timings on the Saturday. Overall the responses showed a high level of satisfaction with the event.

The main areas of concern were:

* The temperature and lighting in one area at the back of the room.
* The slow refreshing of beverages.
* The roadworks that made getting to the hotel and parking difficult.
* The pace of play being too slow and there being a sit out in the teams on Sunday.

The issues of the cold and dark area at the back of the room, and the slow refreshing of beverages have been raised with the hotel who are attempting to address them.

**Venue**

The number playing in Saturdays Pairs was similar to previous years. Only 26 teams was well down on previous years. This was a matter of concern and much thought was put into why this was. A lot of energy was put into looking for other possible venues. The Manchester Met’s Business school being the most appropriate alternative. But as the V&A knew we were looking elsewhere they dropped their price for the weekend by £850. As a result, the committee decided to stay with the V&A for the 2020 Congress.

**We also decided to :**

* Offer free entry to Congress to under 21s. Try to get sponsorship to cover this.
* Offer a welcome drink and a welcome to club players playing at Congress for the first time.
* Ensure that the dates of Congress are in player’s diaries early on and Michael will work on his network of players early on.
* Offer a team mate finding service. Jeff already does this but we should make it clear in our publicity that we do this.
* Look into having an automatic reply when players enter giving them details of parking etc.
* Look into block booking parking spaces at the NCP Spinningfields car park at a cheaper rate.

We also discussed the doubts that had been aired about the **directing** of the event. JL had complained about the late decisions on the number of boards that needed to be duplimated, there was a refusal to use the timers despite the fact that we had organised them in advance and the decision to have a sit out in the teams. ID will look to see if there are any other available alternatives for the 2020 Congress. JL said she would definitely not take charge.

Michael Byrne has agreed to work with me organising Congress this year with a view to possibly taking over the following year. I will write a detailed job description for Congress Secretary.

**4.8 Match Secretary (Michael Byrne)**

Northern League

Manchester just narrowly failed to do the clean sweep in all 3 divisons, winning the A and B divisions outright and drawing the C division, with the trophy awarded to Yorkshire on a split tie.

In the A division, Manchester won match 1 before struggling to find form in matches 2 and 3. They went into match 4 only 5 VPs ahead of Yorkshire 2 but in the final match they won all their matches and the margin was a very comfortable 31 Victory Points. Well done to: Rodney Lighton, John Holland, Alan Mould, Gary Hyett, Dave Barton, Leslie Klein, Alec Smalley, Tom Slater, John Currie, Irving and Joy Blakey, Michael Newman, Alan and Kath Nelson, Pete Foster, John Roberts

The Manchester A2 team were competitive in some matches but a slow start in match 1 meant they finished 6th, just 3 Vps off Lancashire.

In the B Division, Manchester started well with a win but suffered a slump in match 2. They recovered well by winning matches 3 and 4 by huge margins to emerge very comfortable victors. Well done to Eddie Thornton Chan, Tony Hodgson, Victor Ridding, Janet Tolan, Melvyn Pelham, Rod Franks, Howard Stubbings, Dhun Dhaji, Eve Lighthill, Howard Kay, Andy Green, Dave Sarabowski, Steve Mattinson, Jeanne and Ron Bayly, Gillian McMullan, Neil Thomas, Herbet Potts, Sylvia Massey, Sam Herman, Chris Hine, Stephen Ward, Nicholas Greer, John Parsons.

In the C Division, Manchester won the first two matches to put themselves in the lead, but the large amount of teams in the division meant that it was hard to open up any serious lead. A tight 3rd match left them still winning but the final match proved a struggle and Manchester emerged join winners with Yorkshire NW, the latter being awarded the trophy as a result of the head to head result.

The C2 team were competitive in most matches finished mid table in some, and ended the year 7th out of 8, just a few behind the pack and 60 VPs ahead of 8th.

In the A and B division Manchester goes through to the national finals to be held on Sunday June 16th.

The league will restart again on Saturday 13th July. Two matches 17th August (B division) and 21st September (C Division) are going to be held at the new venue of Altrincham Bridge Club.

Once again Manchester will have 5 teams in the Northern League, 2 A teams, 1 B team and 2 C teams following the successful debut of the second C team.

Tollemache

The Tollemache qualifier was held on November 17th/18th. Manchester went with its policy of selecting 4 pairs that has proved reasonable in recent years. The team started appallingly but all 4 pairs grit their teeth and got the job done and the team qualified by 1VP, after Middlesex lost a frivolous appeal which cost them 2VPs. It should be noted however that the team didn't know they had qualified since the result of the appeal was not known until the Monday night, which led to some friction and difficult journeys home.

In the final a slightly different team was selected due to my absence captaining the U20 team at the Peggy Bayer trophy in Belfast. (On a personal note this was very difficult since I have never missed a Tollemache qualifier or final since records began). The team was further changed by the illness of Gary Hyett, and a new look team was brought in with mostly regular partnerships, only one pair remained the same from the qualifier. The team were competitive in the final and finished 3rd overall, in the final match they needed to beat Merseyside and Cheshire 19-1 to win the trophy, in the end they drew the match.

(According to the league table drawn up by former Manchester Secretary Michael Newman Manchester have now overtaken Middlesex to become the 3rd most successful county in recent years. We have still not won the event though, since splitting from the North West in 1987)

Qualifier: Michael Byrne (cap) / Michael Newman, John Holland / John Hassett, Alan Mould / Gary Hyett, Catherine Draper / Andrew Woodcock.

Final: Michael Newman / John Holland, Alan Mould (Cap) / Ollie Burgess, Catherine Draper / Andrew Woodcock, Jeff Morris / John Hassett

Presidents Cup

The Presidents Cup was held in Spondon, at the East Midlands Bridge Centre on 30th June-1st July. Manchester were the only county that took advantage of David Stevenson’s offer to enter a second team and this proved to be enjoyable for all the players concerned. Manchester were 2nd and 3rd overnight but the A team turned on the heat on the Sunday and overtook Lancashire to win by 3VPs. In a feat of unbridled hilarity, the wrong team was announced as winners, as the director read out the session results instead. This meant the players went home thinking they were second, and the wrong county were awarded the trophy!

Playing for Manchester A were: on Saturday John Holland/Alan Mould, John Parsons/Nicholas Greer, David Barton/Leslie Klein, Andy Green/David Sarabowski; on Sunday John Holland/Rodney Lighton, Leslie Klein/David Barton, Tom Slater/Alec Smalley, Kath & Alan Nelson.

Playing for Manchester B: on Saturday John Stell/Peter Jones, Eddie Thornton-Chan/Tony Hodgson, Steve Mattinson/Rod Franks, Howard Kay/John Roberts; on Sunday Jeanne & Ron Bayly, Roger Hopton/David Fussell, Paul Beckwith/Wei Chei Tham, Dhun Daji/Howard Stubbings

The Presidents Cup will be held this year in Bradford on June 29th/30 and Manchester have confirmed their entry of two teams as we did last year. Discussion has taken place about the make-up of both teams to ensure everything goes smoothly.

Corwen Trophy

Manchester was represented by 4 pairs, and John Holland retained the trophy he had won n 2017, this time in partnership with Alan Mould, a great result from one of Manchester's leading players. The other players to represent Manchester were Eddie Thornton Chan/Graham Currie, Phil Taylor/Ross Allen, Paul Murray/Peter Grauer.

This year 4 pairs have accepted the invitation and will represent Manchester on June 1st and 2nd.

Pachabo Cup

Manchester was represented by 4 of the 6 players that had won the Goldstone Trophy a few weeks earlier, (Michael Byrne/Michael Newman, Rodney Lighton/John Holland). They were lying 2nd overnight but took the lead after the morning session, an early night benefiting all the players. They retained it in the last session to give Manchester the Trophy once more, meaning that Manchester have finished 1st or 2nd in each of the last 5 years.

Derbyshire Match

Manchester won the annual match against Derbyshire by 13 IMPs. This was held in Spondon on Sunday 17th June. Well done to: Barbara Eastabrook/Karen Jones, Gordon Bickley/Ann Farquhar, George Leigh/Sally Bray. Wei Che Tham/Daniel Kelsall, Joan Lewis/Roy Higginbottom, Howard Stubbings/Dhun Daji.

National Inter County League Finals

These were held on June 24th and the Manchester A team finished a disappointing joint 2nd, just 7 VPs behind new winners Devon. The team was; John Holland/Gary Hyett,  Rodney Lighton/John Currie, Michael Byrne/Michael Newman, Tom Slater/Alec Smalley.

B and C team seminars

These were held this Spring at Cheadle Hulme Bridge Club. The C team seminar was held first on Sunday March 17th, there were 28 attendees and the feedback was generally positive. The B team Seminar was held on March 30th with a similar turnout and once again feedback was generally positive. It was nice to see some new faces that hadn’t been able to come previously, and at least one attendee changed his county of allegiance in order that he be able to attend, so that must be considered a big win.

**Comments**

MGB thanked Barbara Lewis for her support with the B & C team seminars.

**4.9 Green Point Secretary (Rhona Goldenfield)**

July 2018 teams had a full house with 25 teams. Rob Dixon and Joan Lewis ran it. Winners were R. Allison P. Richmond and the Wattleworths

We gave refunds of £2 per player to 65 players because of the problem with the boards the previous year and made a profit of approximately £300.

The pairs in March this year had 24 tables was run by Ken Johnson and Joan Lewis. Won by S. Woodcock and S. Clarke. Profit approximately £350.

So far have 13 teams entered for July. Henry Bissell will direct with Joan Lewis.

The venue is booked for both events in 2020.

**Comments**

Number of teams entered for July is now 23 (3 spare places).

RS asked if we could we get the Congress green pointed?

ID responded that it is very expensive (EBU fees would raise from £2.08/table/session to £7.64/table/session).

At chair’s meeting there was a discussion about doing away with the pens, certificates etc for masterpoint awards, which would apparently save £12,000 per annum.

**4.10 Chairman of Selectors (Alan Mould)**

At the 2018 MCBA AGM, Steve Mattinson stood down and John Roberts was elected unopposed to the Selection Committee, meaning the Committee now consisted of Roger Hopton, Alan Mould, Michael Newman, John Roberts and Adam Wiseberg.

The Committee met four times (June, July, August and December). In between time there was frequent email correspondence.

At the first meeting:

* Alan Mould was elected chair for the year, non com.
* The selection policy was updated in line with the wishes of the AGM. Specifically, it was confirmed that the A1, B and C1 teams should be competitive in that division; the A2 team as strong as possible whilst not compromising A1 or B; and the new C2 team should give a chance for as many pairs as possible to play for the county.
* The new Committee captain’s report pro-forma was finalised and is being sent to all captains.
* Teams for the Derbyshire match, Inter Counties super final (A division), the President’s Cup A team and the new President’s Cup B team were selected.

At the second meeting, teams for the Northern League rounds 1 and 2 were selected.

At the third meeting, all captain’s reports were reviewed; teams for the Northern League rounds 3 and 4 and the Tollemache qualifier were selected.

At the fourth meeting, the Tollemache qualifier captain’s report was reviewed, the team for the Tollemache final was selected, the use of the MCBA captain’s reports reviewed, and the role and interface between the match secretary and the Selection Committee reviewed.

**Results**

In the Derbyshire match, MCBA won by 6 imps, reversing last year’s result which was a small loss.

In the Inter Counties super final (A division), London was missing for the second year running meaning a 4 team final, and Manchester came second for the second year running, this time to Dorset.

The President’s Cup was something of a shambles. Lancashire was announced as the winner, but the following day the director discovered that he had erroneously given out the penultimate session scores as the final scores, and in fact Manchester had won by 3VPs. Since Lancashire had already been presented with the trophy and the result was up on their website, this unsurprisingly caused some bitterness. The Committee also discovered that a regulation in the President’s Cup was that you could not play more than 12 players over the weekend with the prior permission of the Director (apparently because the scoring programme cannot cope with it!). This regulation was unknown to the Committee or the match secretary, and a search of M&CBA’s website and the director’s website revealed no trace of the regulations. Fortunately, this has all died down now, but in future we need to ensure that the match secretary informs the director that MCBA will always have more than 12 players in each team. There were considerable complaints from players about the venue, and to be fair, Spondon is a complete pain to get to – impossible by public transport and well over two hours by car. However, the President’s Cup circles round the areas year by year, so it is what it is. On the plus side, this year for the first time, counties were invited to send a second team. Only Manchester took up this offer (again causing grumbling from the other counties for reasons I have no understanding of). The new B team was warmly received by everyone who played in it and judged a great success.

The Committee has had the usual problems with the Northern League, but thankfully, availability has been better this year, and so some of the real difficulties of previous years have not been encountered. Despite the concerns of some (including the chair of selectors) that we would have problems getting out a C2 team, this has proved groundless and we have been able to field the full 5 teams (20 pairs plus reserves for each of 4 Saturdays). The results have been more positive than last year:

* The A1 team won the division, after leading by a mere 5VPs from Yorkshire 2 after round 3, but a massive last round saw the lead stretch to a deceptive looking 31 VPs.
* The A2 team will always struggle and after a promising first couple of rounds (including beating Manchester A1 19-1!) finished its consistent place of bottom.
* The B team had a complete roller coaster of a season, finishing first, last, first with a HUGE score and first on the four rounds, despite the teams all being comparable in strength. That added up to them finishing first overall by the huge margin of 52 VPs.
* The C1 team had a cruel fate. It was 12 VPs ahead of Yorkshire NW going into the last round. A poor last round, and a good one from Yorkshire NW, saw the teams level on VPs, but Yorkshire NW won the split tie on head-to-head matches. Very bad luck to all those who played in the Manchester C1 team.
* The new C2 team finished seventh out of eight, a long way clear of eighth (Westmoreland) and in touch with sixth. This is actually almost identical to the performance of last year’s C team. The Committee understands that players enjoyed the event.

In the Tollemache qualifier, Manchester had, for the second year running, been in the “Group of Death” and was actually lying bottom overnight. A great second day meant they pulled up to third, but a successful appeal by Sussex against Middlesex saw positions 2 and 3 reversed so Manchester was in the final. In the final, the team finished 3rd behind Cambs & Hunts and Berks and Bucks having recovered from a disastrous first day when it was lying 7th.

The Committee has seen some confusion this year with reserves being unaware that they were reserves, captains being unaware that they were captains, and the captain’s pro-forma not being circulated to captains. The Committee has been working with the match secretary around these matters of communication and is hopeful that everything is now sorted.

On a personal note as chair, this has been a particularly pro-active and hard working committee with everyone taking on responsibilities and roles. I would like to particularly point out Adam Wiseberg, who single handedly brought the C2 team in the Northern League into existence and brought a number of new players and pairs into playing for the County.

**4.11 Publicity Officer (Jeff Morris)**

Tried to get someone to open Congress. Local MP cancelled at last moment.

Tried to get Andy Burnham involved. JKM has managed to get an introduction through Farooq Engineer. If we had successful players in the world championships that would be an opportunity.

JKM will invite Andy Burnham to attend opening of Congress.

**Action: JKM to invite Andy Burnham to attend the opening of Congress.**

**4.12 EBU Shareholders (Rodney Lighton, Jeff Morris, Michael Newman)**

Report below is from Alec Smalley

Main item is a report of their AGM, November 2018, attended by myself, and Jeff Morris

A lot of the content of the AGM is published on the website or has no relevance to MCBA. Below are condensed notes as to fact and my own thoughts/comments in italics. The bullet point numbers are the Agenda item no.

2. Awards – the one to note is Liz Dale at Stamford Bridge (near Peterborough) who have had 1,700 children, predominately secondary school ages, through their Youth academy in 2 years.

*She will give advice as to how – but I assume it is mainly hard work.*

7. Membership – stagnant for few years but last 2 years very slightly down, also noted that there are a lot of inactive members, participation down.

Membership campaign discussed with Tim Anderson managing it, with recent retirees the primary target. 7 counties only have been in contact/signed up with the EBU.

*I believe we are one of the seven with Merseyside and Cheshire but if not we should be in contact with Tim. On a personal note I think the recent retirees are a good recruitment area for clubs, but they just want social bridge rather than MPS/NGS and EBU politics.*

9. Accounts – £30k “bonus” last year for the release of the new Blue Book.

*As this is a club necessity shouldn’t it be a not for profit exercise? With one copy free to all affiliated clubs?*

The worst performing area was The Warehouse on-line and direct to clubs with only 50% buying from the EBU.

*I have offered help with the online stuff – as I have been selling card tables amongst other things on line successfully for many years.*

15. Fees – They are trying to cut out the 19p and 0p sessions that occur so as not to have to raise the 38p charge….P2P is being raised to 39p.

16. EBED – Andrew Petrie is the retiring Chair – Donna Wright the CEO spoke about several irrelevant subjects but one of their key projects is teaching with training, tools, support and programs – the programs can be downloaded from their site for a fee and you are encouraged to pay the fee and not photo copy for multiple teachers, so as to help the charity to develop more. Reference was made to the successful Yorkshire beginners’ lessons.

They also have a bookshop and a biannual Sim Pairs to help raise funds.

The new Chair also spoke but mainly about governance and repeating Donna’s summary of their activities.

*I hadn’t realised that there are ways to help EBED i.e. first looking for books on their site before others such as Amazon and switching to their SIMs. Maybe someone should look at the first program with regard to the membership drive. Ann Thornton recently went on an EBED course. Beware if you go to the teaching section on the website* [*www.ebedcio.org.uk*](http://www.ebedcio.org.uk) *it has a rather harrowing photo at the top.*

19. Selection Committee

*If all internationals barring youth are decided by trials why do you need such a large committee? Surely just 2 or 3 to sort the calendar out.*

Additional report from Jeff Morris:

Alec's report is very comprehensive.

However ,there is one area which needs to be highlighted and that is the abolition of the second Shareholders meeting in May 2019. You might remember that the attendance of shareholders at the May 2018 meeting was only about 30 which led to Jeremy Dhondy suggesting that the May meeting be abolished. He took a straw poll and there was a two thirds majority of those present in favour of retaining the May meeting. Jeremy said he would consult the counties and Alan duly received something from the EBU to which he responded to the effect that Manchester was in favour of keeping the May meeting. The next thing we hear is that Jeremy Dhondy gives a VERBAL report at the AGM saying that as a result of the consultation the May 2019 meeting will be discontinued and that instead there will be a Chairman's meeting. There were a number of counties that were unhappy. It emerged that 21 counties had responded to the consultation and that thirteen counties were in favour of discontinuing the meeting and only five counties wanted the meeting to continue and three were indifferent. This according to Jeremy was good enough reason to dispense with the May meeting. I asked why this matter was not on the Agenda as a proposal from the Board and there were others in the meeting who had sympathy for my view, but after a considerable amount of ducking and diving and some planted contributions from friendly (to Jeremy) counties the abolition of the May meeting was confirmed. Instead the replacement meeting will now be of Chairmen and one other (usually secretary).

Personally, I am not sure if this new arrangement is better or not, but I am not very happy at the way the Board has achieved their objective of getting rid of the May Shareholders meeting. In my view it should have been on the Agenda as an item for discussion with the results of the consultation available before the meeting. Then every county would have had an opportunity to discuss the matter fully at a management or council meeting before attending the AGM. One of the Shareholders present was Jeffrey Allerton who noted that he had not responded to the consultation as so many were against Jeremy's proposal at the May 2018 meeting that he did not think that it was important. Other delegates reported that they knew nothing of the consultation. In my view the Board have pulled a fast one on the Shareholders. They did say that any 15 shareholders can demand a shareholders meeting at any time to discuss a particular issue. It might be worth bearing this in mind.

One further point. We have three shareholders and thus three votes at the AGM. If a shareholder is not going to attend we lose a vote if the shareholder has not asked for a proxy to be appointed in sufficient time. I am not sure what the time period is now but Mike Newman informed the EBU on Tuesday morning that he wanted Alec Smalley to be his proxy and that was deemed insufficient notice.

**4.13 Schools, Youth & Teachers Liaison (Jeff Morris)**

Hard work with schools.

Set up discussion with a new master at MGS, who has set up a lunchtime bridge club. Would like help from MCBA players.

Spoke with CH school.

Produced a document that will go out at the Didsbury Festival advertising taster sessions for schools bridge.

**Comments:**

Other areas have festivals?

Has been suggested that we sit down and look at these.

Janet Tolan has taught a course in bridge at The Laurus Academy (as an elective).

BL is prepared to produce a list.

**Action: CC and BL to do work on this.**

**4.14 Webmaster (Rodney Lighton)**

The web site continues to receive in excess of 50 visitors per day.

Thanks to those who have provided reports, results and photos for the site.

Thanks also to those who have sent in deals for deal of the week and to John Holland for checking the deal of the week articles.

My other area of responsibility is running the Player of the Year competition which has gone smoothly this year.

**Comments:**

Rodney was thanked for his work on the website, and the speed of information going up.

**5 Player of the Year and League Division Winners**

The Player of the Year award for 2018/19 has been won by John Holland.

In the Intermediate category the award has been won by Adam Wiseberg.

League winners:

Division 7 Ashton United

Division 6 Double Trouble

Division 5 Monton Misfits

Division 4 Astrazeneca Stars

Division 3 Petersfield

Division 2 Proteus

Division 1 St. Titus

Presentations were made to those winners present.

CR Richardson spoke about how nervous they were entering the Legaue, but how much they had enjoyed it. Ashton BC has 6 sessions a week plus a beginners session. The club hopes to see some of us there soon.

ID and AM will come and play at Ashton.

Astrazeneca Stars thanked KN for all her hard work.

**6 Election of President**

Note: All elections were unopposed and therefore no record of voting was taken

Eve Lighthill

Proposed: RS Seconded: BL

**7 Election of Executive**

**7.1 Chair**

Irene Davies

Proposed: BL Seconded: JR

**7.2 Vice-Chair**

Michael Byrne

Proposed: AW Seconded: MJN

**7.3 Secretary**

Alan Mould

Proposed: ID Seconded: RG

**7.4 Treasurer**

Joy Blakey

Proposed: RG Seconded: KC

**7.5 Membership Secretary**

Karen Sandler

Proposed: AM Seconded: AW

**7.6 Tournament Secretary**

The role has been split amongst a number of people so this role was not formally elected.

**7.7 Congress Secretary**

Irene Davies

Proposed: RG Seconded: BL

ID stated this was her final year.

**7.8 Match Secretary**

Michael Byrne

Proposed: JB Seconded: KC

**7.9 League Secretary**

Adam Wiseberg

Proposed: KS Seconded: RG

**7.10 Green Point Secretary**

Rhona Goldenfield

Proposed: AM Seconded: JB

**8 Election of Other Officers**

**8.1 Publicity Officer**

Jeff Morris

Proposed: RG Seconded: KC

**8.2 Schools, Youth & Teachers Liaison Officer**

Jeff Morris

Proposed: JB Seconded: JL

**8.3 Auditor**

It has been proposed that Howard Stubbings prepares the accounts and Peter Green is the auditor. This is because Joy Blakey is not an accountant.

Proposed: CC Seconded: RG

**8.4 Selection Committee**

AW, MJN, PR, AM and RH were elected nem-com.

**8.5 Conduct Committee**

Eve Lighthill, Alec Smalley, Sid Travers, Kevin Comrie, Michael Byrne and Alan Mould were confirmed as on the Conduct Committee (the committee has no fixed size).

**Action: AM to write to confirm that all wish to remain on the Conduct Committee**

**8.6 Disciplinary Committee**

Joy Blakey, Rod Franks, John Holland, Rodney Lighton, Kath Nelson were confirmed as on the Disciplinary Committee (the Committee has no fixed size).

**Action: AM to write to confirm that all wish to remain on the Disciplinary Committee**

**8.7 EBU Shareholders**

JKM, MJN and AS were re-elected nem-com.

**8.8 Tournament Committee**

This is an open Committee so no elections were necessary. All MCBA members are encouraged to attend the meetings.

**8.9 Handbook Editors**

Graham Winn & Susan Triggs

Proposed: ID Seconded: EL

**9 Motions tabled before the AGM**

9.1Motion 1

“That the entry fees for the MCBA league be increased from £35 to £40 per team and that the entry fees for the Higson Cup be increased from £15 to £20 per team. Entry for the Higson Cup and Plate would remain free for teams in Divisions 6 and 7.”

Proposer: Joy Blakey, MCBA Hon. Treasurer Seconder: Alan Mould

Rationale:

1. The fees for entry to the League and Cup have not increased for several years.
2. The increase is quite modest, and even allowing for the increase, the lLague fees are equivalent to £1 table money per  player per match and the Higson Cup fees are equivalent to a maximum of £2.50 table money per player per match, reducing if teams get further in the competition.
3. The primary income for the county comes from League and Cup entries and P2P monies collected from the EBU. We pay several thousand pounds a year for teams to represent our county in the Tollemache, Pachabo, Corwen, President’s Cup, Northern League, County Finals, etc. Most of this we can cope with notwithstanding losses on several of our tournaments, but the Higson Cup and Plate finals lose approximately £500. By raising the League and Cup fees we should be able to break even.
4. Entry for the Goldstone Cup would remain free to all divisions and the losses pertaining to the cost of the prize money, final and entry to the Pachabo would continue to be absorbed by the county (approximately £400 in total).
5. The fee for extra players would remain at £5.
6. The fee for county affiliation would remain at £6.

**Comments**

MJB pointed out that there are hidden costs for the League and the Cup as matches are not free to hold.

EL said the increases were neither here nor there, and players will not notice any increase.

AS felt tournaments should break even and County reserves should be used for attracting new members.

Passed nem-com.

9.2 Motion 2

"That the County forms a small working group to consider:

1. What level of reserves it is sensible for the county to hold?
2. What the excess reserves should be spent on.

Proposals to be brought to the first Council meeting after the AGM.”

Proposer: Alan Mould Seconder: Joy Blakey.

Rationale:

1. The County has in excess of £10,000 in funds in the bank, and has had for many years.
2. An organisation such as MCBA, without any liabilities such as buildings or equipment, does not need this level of reserves. It therefore seems reasonable to determine what level of reserves are prudent and to put forward proposals as to how to spend the remainder for the benefit of MCBA members.

**Comments**

EL felt the proposal seemed eminently sensible.

AS felt the reserves are not enough for any big project.

ID commented that at the chair’s meeting, the treasurer of EBU spoke. EBU has £400,000 reserves which is 3 months trading, and that is an appropriate reserve for an organisation like the EBU. He was asked if he was willing to dip into those reserves for things such as recruitment drives, which would in the end get more members. He agreed that was possible.

MCBA have about 10 years of trading in reserves.

For: 20 Against: 2

Passed

AS, RS, KS, JB, AM, ID volunteered to be on the Committee.

**Action: AM to convene the first meeting**

9.3 Motion 3

“That the Higson Cup and Higson Plate become a handicap event in the knockout rounds, with a sliding scale of handicap according to the following formula:

When two teams play each other, the higher division will start with a minus score of IMPs following this scale:

Division 1 - 2: 10

Division 2 - 3: 5

Division 3 - 4 : 5

Division 4 - 5 : 5

Division 5 - 6: 10

Division 6 - 7: 10

This means if a division 1 teams plays, they will start level if the opponent is another division 1 team, 10 imps down (div 2), 15 down for division 3, 20 for 4, 25 for 5, 35 for 6 and 45 for division 7.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Lower Ranking Team Division | Higher Ranking Team Division | | | | | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 2 | -10 | - | - | - | - | - |
| 3 | -15 | -5 | - | - | - | - |
| 4 | -20 | -10 | -5 | - | - | - |
| 5 | -25 | -15 | -10 | -5 | - | - |
| 6 | -35 | -25 | -20 | -15 | -10 | - |
| 7 | -45 | -35 | -30 | -25 | -20 | -10 |

In addition:

* The Plate will operate on the same scale, and as before it won’t be open to Division 1 and 2 teams.
* Entry into the Plate will occur if lower division teams lose their first match or win their first match and lose their second, in keeping with many other national competitions.
* The Higson Cup will be 3 rounds of knock out followed by an all play all final. Matches in round 1 and 2 will be 24 boards (or 32 if both captains wish to play more), and round 3 will be 32 boards (or 24 if both captains agree). In the Higson Plate all matches will be 24 boards (or 32 if both captains wish to play more) leading to an all play all final. Handicaps will be adjusted pro-rata for 32 board matches.
* The Cup and Plate finals will not be handicapped.
* The draw will be open with no teams seeded.”

Proposer: Adam Wiseberg Seconder: Michael Byrne

Rationale

1. The Higson Cup is Manchester’s oldest competition, having been run since 1938. Originally titled the Infirmary Cup it was renamed in 2001. However, entries have been declining rapidly in recent years, now with 40-50 teams playing it has less than half the entrants that it did in the early 2000s, similar to the league, but not the same. [At the moment MCBA runs two knock out competitions. The other is the Goldstone Trophy which attracts 18-20 teams and is run on a straight knock out basis, with 4 teams seeded apart. This is a qualifier for a national final and is designed to make sure the two strongest teams play each other in the final. This method works well, as the two teams seeded 1 and 2 have met in every final since 2012, except for this year where the 4th seed beat the 2nd seed]
2. With more and more bridge available the gap between the top divisions and the lower division is growing wider, and the prospect of giant killing occurs rarely. In the last 16 years only 7 teams have shared the trophy, (2 of those teams no longer exist). Each year the final is between a core of Division 1 teams along with those Division 2 teams that have avoided the big names in the draw. (Very rarely do any division 3 or lower teams ever make it to the final.)
3. Many of the lower division teams only enter to gain access to the Plate competition and concede early matches which they know they will lose.
4. Matches in the knock out rounds are normally not close and there are a lot of walkovers.
5. On occasion some teams reach the Higson Cup final without playing a match, and often some teams only have to play one match.

This proposal is therefore designed to add interest and restore this historic competition to its former glory, and that a fun competitive element is returned to Manchester’s premier knockout event. The aim of this handicapping is to try and make this competition more competitive and allow any team on their day to beat any other team regardless of status or division. Hopefully the final will see a new mix of teams in it and allow new players to win the Higson Cup. It will also mean that the matches themselves have more significance and more interest; even when the higher division team wins, they will have had to earn it and work for their victory. The lower division teams will go into the matches knowing that they will have a chance of winning no matter what their opponents do. A free draw will also pit some Division one teams against each other in early rounds, meaning that the final is not made up of the same teams every year.

**Comments**

RG asked what happens if it is a team is not in the league?

MGB said a suitable handicap will be provided.

CR commented that as a div 7 team, this is a very attractive idea. What about div 1 teams? Response was in favour from MGB and AM.

The final will not be handicapped, but possibly could be so in the future.

KN read out a statement from Jeff Smith opposing the motion.

RS asked about the various handicaps between divisions. MGB replied that it was felt that there was a bigger gap between div 1 and div 2, than between 2 and 3, and between 3 and 4.

AS felt that the final had to be handicapped as well.

AW wants to avoid lower division teams conceding because they have no chance.

RS asked about seeding. AW replied that he wished to remove seeding from the event.

IH felt the novelty of playing div1 teams would rapidly wear off.

VH felt that there was only 1 way to find out if this works. Try it.

MGB said the proposal was aimed at bringing more excitement to the Cup.

Formal Amendment: “The final should also be handicapped”

Proposed: AS Seconded: RS

For: 21 Against: 3

Carried

Main motion (with incorporated amendment)

For 19 Against:1

Carried

**Action: AW to form a working group. AW, MGB, AM, BE, RA, JC volunteered to be on the group.**

**10 Membership Working Group Report**

Dealt with under chair’s report.

**11 Keeping Bridge Alive Initiative**

(MCBA AGM 2019 Paper 4)

BL & JB did not feel that it should be supported by crowdfunding.

ID commented that the feeling of the meeting was that it should be down to individuals to decide if they want to make a contribution to the initiative. No dissent from this view.

**12 Any Other Business**

12.1 MJN asked about the proposed A pool seminar. MGB replied that it is a work in progress.

12.2 KS felt we should have some handicap events. It was decided to discuss this in tournament committee. It is possible to handicap the Ben Franks for example and therefore have two ranking lists.

12.3 JKM reminded the meeting that MBC is running the Michelle Brunner Memorial Trophy on 20th June 2019.

**13 Date and Venue of Next AGM**

May 2020.

ID thanked everyone for their attendance.