

Minutes of the Committee meeting held at 5pm, Tuesday 8 September 2020 online on Zoom

Present:	Reverend Canon Christopher Smith (CS)	President
	Christine McCreath (CC)	Past President
	Tony Reed-Jones (TRJ)	Honorary Treasurer
	Paul Gipson (PG)	Honorary Secretary
	Louis Moore (LM)	Honorary Competitions Secretary
	Peter Calder (PC)	Committee member
	Jill Connor (JC)	Committee member
	Sue Price (SP)	Committee member
	Penny Davidson (PD)	Committee member

Apologies: Jo Rowley

1. President's welcome

CS welcomed everyone to the first meeting of the new Committee. In these strange times his focus will be on the well-being of the club and continuing to help it thrive. Keeping the sense of community in the club is important.

2. Minutes of last meeting and matters arising

The minutes of the last meeting were approved (JC proposed and LM seconded). There were no matters arising except for items already on the agenda of this meeting.

3. Status of the 2020-21 season

- Any plans for re-opening?

The Committee's priority is the safety of club members, realising that it is a high risk community and that face-to-face bridge is testing for social distancing guidelines.

At this time the Committee does not believe that the club will open again in 2020 and thinks it is unlikely that there will be any face-to-face play in the 2020-21 season due to the coronavirus pandemic unless there are dramatic changes to the current situation, such as the availability of a vaccine.

PG commented that a few clubs in the UK have opened their doors and are playing with perspex screens, which are available at a reasonable price (~£60 plus VAT). These largely address social distancing guidelines but would severely reduce the capacity of the Parish Hall for bridge purposes. The manageability and storage of such screens is seen as challenging. These clubs are playing with each table using its own set of boards, requiring many board sets and extensive duplication.

The task to restart face-to-face bridge can be seen by the EBU's 14-page Risk Register template for its clubs (<https://tinyurl.com/y56nyebk>).

TRJ mentioned that this would all be dependent on the availability of the Parish Hall, which is currently closed to the public.

Action: CS to speak to Ian Guthrie about hall availability.

- Competitions

The 2019-20 remains suspended. If we can restart face-to-face bridge then the Committee would probably follow the example of the East District League, but will discuss this at the appropriate time.

It is possible that competitions with similar formats will be run online.

- League teams update

The East District has extended last year's league to this season, making a 2019-21 season. They are hoping to play matches, face-to-face, affecting promotion and relegation before Summer 2021.

PG expects this depends on the ability of the Melville or Carlton club to provide a safe playing environment.

- Do we need a calendar?

There are no plans to publish a calendar until face-to-face play resumes.

- Will there be a Christmas party this year?

No. The Committee is not planning a Christmas party due to the coronavirus pandemic.

The Committee is keen to have an opening party when face-to-face bridge resumes.

- When will we make a decision about the 2021 Congress?

The Committee expects to make a final decision in December. It is unlikely that it will be cost-effective to run the congress with perspex screens, so the congress is unlikely to be viable unless social distancing guidelines are severely reduced or removed. This would also be dependent on the availability of the Rugby Club and catering.

4. Online bridge discussion

PG distributed a discussion paper prior to the meeting.

There was an extensive debate of the main two options: becoming an SBU Virtual Club and looking at RealBridge. Although RealBridge had a lot of support from many who have used it, there was concern about its broadband requirements and the necessity for more modern computer laptops or iPads. Although the Committee will keep a watching brief on RealBridge, there was a feeling that it would not be sufficiently inclusive.

The Committee decided that it should pro-actively pursue becoming an SBU Virtual Club. The main tasks for the Committee are to identify members who would be happy to run tournaments and to establish a timetable for events. PG stressed that BBO competence is more important than knowledge of the laws for running events on BBO.

Action: PG to survey members about online play, preferred times and days.

Action: LM and PG to ask members about being online directors

5. Inclusivity - involving members who are less comfortable with online activities

Action: CS to telephone all non-email members and advise them on club activities.

6. SBU and club subscriptions update

TRJ reported 58 members had already paid their subscriptions. He is waiting for responses from 42 members but expects that a couple will not renew for health reasons.

7. AOCB

- None.

The meeting closed at 6.20pm.

Next committee meeting is on 29 September at 5pm on Zoom.