

Minutes of the Committee meeting held at 5pm Monday, 8 March 2021 online on Zoom

Present:	Reverend Canon Christopher Smith (CS)	President
	Christine McCreath (CC)	Past President
	Paul Gipson (PG)	Honorary Secretary
	Louis Moore (LM)	Honorary Competitions Secretary
	Peter Calder (PC)	Committee member
	Jill Connor (JC)	Committee member
	Len Hutton (LH)	Committee member
	Sue Price (SP)	Committee member
	Penny Davidson (PD)	Committee member
	Chris Orchard (CO)	Committee member

Apologies: Tony Reed-Jones (TRJ)

1. President's welcome

CS welcomed everyone to the meeting and reiterated the rules of the meeting.

2. Apologies for absence

TRJ apologised for missing the meeting but a cancellation appointment at the dentist had come up and, unfortunately, it now clashed with the meeting. He prepared and distributed a financial update for the Committee.

3. Minutes of last meeting and matters arising

The minutes of the last meeting were approved unanimously.

○ Pianola Play

There has been a second Pianola Play test session, which suffered a variety of problems but Pianola were pleased with the level and quality of feedback provided by the Berwick players.

A further test is being run this Friday (2pm) as Pianola has largely finished the user interface development. This test will also feature a playing director.

○ Slow play

PG and LM had run a short trial using the BBO unlocked feature, which did not enforce a time limit on the play of a hand. This was not a success, largely due to the number of tables and faster players ended up waiting longer to find available pairs to play. There were also more rematches, so the virtual club has reverted to a clocked seven minutes per board.

CS asked about the etiquette of online play, especially with respect to public chatting about hands after the play of the hand. The use of the Chat Manager was also noted as a potential way to speed up the introductions at the start of a round.

Action: PG to remind the online players about etiquette.

4. BBO revenue update

TRJ reported that we have been receiving revenue for the virtual club tournaments, although this has been provided by the SBU and not BBO at the moment. This is due to an issue that the SBU is working through with BBO.

The SBU believes that BBO should be charging VAT for competition entries, although this is yet to be resolved. This will reduce our expected revenue but that is more than offset by the SBU-BBO split being kept at the 2020 levels for 2021.

TRJ reported that the club has received £667 for the first three months of operation as a virtual club on BBO.

5. Berwick Congress

The Berwick Congress has been arranged for Sunday, 25 April starting at 1pm. Paul is directing and there is no need to pre-register.

CS will welcome everyone at the start of the event and close the congress at the end.

6. League teams

The Committee agreed a new selection policy and plans to brief the membership at the AGM.

CO, LH, SP and others reinforced that the key to delivery of any policy will be establishing who is interested in playing for the club, given that matches will probably be played in Dunbar or Haddington, and who is willing to drive to the matches. Although a similar activity was started in March 2020, so much has changed since then that it is simpler to restart.

CS will lead this activity following the AGM, assuming that the East District has made plans for resumption of the league. Concurrently the Committee will formalise the policy based on feedback from the AGM.

PC asked about the possibility of an online league, but nothing has been heard from the East District about this and PG thought it unlikely.

7. AGM preparation

It was agreed that the AGM will be held on Zoom on Tuesday, 25 May at 6pm. Eric and Sue Price have agreed to host the event, for which the Committee is grateful. There is a plan for online bridge after the AGM.

PG reminded the officers that he would need their annual reports prior to the meeting so that they could be included with the minutes.

The Committee intends to propose a Vice President and three Committee members, as well as current officers if they wish to stand for re-election, but club members will be

invited to propose their own candidates. CS asked the Committee for suggestions for these posts.

Len Hutton and Peter Calder have completed their Committee terms and are ineligible for re-election as Committee members. Chris Orchard, who was co-opted this year, is eligible to stand for election as a Committee member. Len, Peter and Chris are also eligible to stand for Officer positions.

Christine McCreath will stand down from her position of Past President but is eligible for other positions.

Nominations for Officers and Committee members, and for member motions, will close at midnight on Tuesday, 18 May 2021.

Possible Committee motions and/or topics for debate:

- League teams and selection policy
- Restarting bridge at the Parish Hall
- PG said that he and TRJ had been discussing the feasibility of moving the club to a cashless environment when we return to the Parish Hall. It would be inappropriate to discuss this given TRJ's absence and it was deferred until the next meeting.

8. AOCB

PG noted that the SBU reduced the annual membership fee from £10 to £8 at an Extraordinary General Meeting last night.

CM appreciated the President phoning club members who are not playing online bridge.

PG confirmed that some Committee members are receiving spam email about advertising. This is the cost of having publicly available email addresses and is why club email addresses are used by the Committee members.

Having been in charge of the club's dealing machine since it was purchased, Terry Harris has indicated that he wishes to retire as our computer dealer. The Committee will seek a replacement, but wishes to express its thanks to Terry for his tireless and exemplary service.

The meeting closed at 6pm.

The next committee meeting will be on Monday, 19 April at 5pm on Zoom.