



## MIDLANDS COUNTIES WORKING GROUP

### MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY, 21 JANUARY 2016

At West Midlands Bridge Club at 10.30 am

**Present:** Nicky Bainbridge (*Chairman*)  
Clare Batten (*Nottinghamshire*)  
Dean Benton (*Leicestershire*)  
Linda Curtis (*Staffordshire & Shropshire*)  
Jim Parker (*Derbyshire*)  
Michael Thorley (*Warwickshire*)  
David Thomas (*Worcestershire*)  
Mike Willoughby (*Worcestershire*)  
Chris Cooper (*Minutes*)

**Apologies:** Graham Brindley (*Nottinghamshire*)  
Arnold Chandler (*Derbyshire*)  
Jude Currie (*Warwickshire*)  
Darren Evetts (*EBU Board - Warwickshire*)  
D. Pollard (*Leicestershire*)  
Robert Proctor (*Oxfordshire*)  
John Withers (*Staffordshire & Shropshire*)

Alan Wearmouth wished to be taken off the attendees. N. Bainbridge to check if there would be a substitute in future.

**NB**

1. **Minutes of Meeting held on 8<sup>th</sup> October 2015**

These had been agreed by email.

2. **Matters Arising**

a) IT User Group

There were several issues regarding this matter, in particular with regard to email addresses. Dave Thomas would request this to be put on the agenda at the EBU meeting.

**DT**

b) Calendar and Events

The EBU to be requested to leave some weekends free in their calendar so that Counties could arrange their own events and get larger attendances.

Mike Willoughby would produce a document to show how to co-ordinate dates.

**MW**

Nottinghamshire have one day a month designated for events.

Worcestershire have one date free for events.

Nicky Bainbridge suggested a County Sims event but Dean Benton said there was so much bridge already.

Nottinghamshire said that their Teams of Four League is collapsing because of dropping numbers, as less experienced players do not want to play the better players. They have a Wednesday afternoon competition for players who are learning.

Shropshire have got more Teams of Four where players are attracted by having a second division.

Mike Willoughby pointed out that there is plenty of bridge being played in groups but groups which are not in clubs. We need to stimulate players.

Some counties to run events for newer players.

It was agreed that there is a national problem where clubs give lessons, but then it is difficult to get these players to join clubs.

c) Midlands Improvers Event

This to be held on 19<sup>th</sup> June in three venues – Derbyshire and West Midlands have agreed to hold it, but Cheltenham have yet to agree. Nicky Bainbridge to check with Cheltenham.

**NB**

This event would be for players of an NGS of less than 8 and with less than five years' experience. There would be a 2.30pm start, 12 boards before tea and 12 boards after a tea break.

There is pressure to get this event advertised in time. Clare Batten would produce a poster this weekend. She would email the Counties and ask them for a contact name to put on the poster. Nicky Bainbridge would put the poster on the website, send the poster to clubs and get the event advertised in the next EBU magazine.

**CB/NB**

Overheads at the venues would be different but it was essential to have the same price per pair. £20 was agreed as a realistic figure.

Darren Evetts had agreed to arrange the hands and commentary but we needed to check that he had agreed at £10 per head. He had also volunteered to do the overall scoring to obtain the one winning pair.

**NB/DB**

There would be prize money at the event (amounts to be determined when total costs, revenue and surplus are confirmed); with a Cup for the overall winner (Darren Evetts said this would be donated by the EBU).

There will be local heats for the competition if the Counties desire, otherwise direct entry.

**ALL**

d) Abbey Smith's Group

Completed.

e) Data from EBU

It was agreed to make the request to Darren a little clearer. The Group was not looking for any IT development. The Group is looking for clarification on the process for a member to change their county of primary allegiance. EBU members need to understand that their county of primary allegiance will not change automatically even, for example if they change address or if their primary club changed county of affiliation. Change to primary county of allegiance is made only on request by the player directly to the EBU. The Group requests that the EBU publishes this information on the web site, and that the information should be made clearly available with text, or with a link to text, on the page in the members' area where members can update their personal details.

NB/DE

3. **Improvers Pairs**

This has been covered in 2(c) above.

4. **Regional Support Officer**

The concept that there should be an officer to liaise with the EBU came from a working group. Some Counties are already stretched financially and do not wish to have further financial burden. Looking at club websites, there are more unaffiliated clubs than there are EBU affiliated clubs. It was pointed out there is already a Liaison Officer at the EBU Headquarters. The consensus was that the Counties feel there is no significant support for a Regional Support Officer.

5. **Best Practice for County Associations**

Nottinghamshire had sent a survey round the County and had received about 50 reviews. There were some recommendations on how to improve quantity of members, some feel that bridge is for the elite only.

Derbyshire are holding a one-day event in Bakewell for affiliated and non-affiliated clubs. They are trying to find ways to recruit more players.

Dean Benton said they hold four sessions a week, two duplicate, one semi-duplicate and one for just bridge.

It was felt we need to grow membership from club level upwards. Also to look at more afternoon bridge sessions which are proving popular.

ALL

All Counties have different priorities.

5. **Report on National County Working Group on 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2015**

This was not well attended, only six people being present. There is now a recommendation to hold the meetings by Skype.

It was felt that Skype would not be suitable for our meetings as more information could be exchanged in person.

EBU are better financially than Counties through the P2P (Universal Membership) money.

The cost of EBU events is one reason why there are fewer attendances.

The point was raised that the EBU Shareholders are not given much financial information prior to the meetings and that the accounts are not very clear. The EBU is having to hold contingency funds against the ongoing Court cases.

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**6. Any Other Business**

There was no other business. There had been no paper from Darren Evetts.

**7. Date of Next Meeting**

Thursday, 19<sup>th</sup> May 2016, at 10.30 a.m. at West Midlands Bridge Club.

The meeting closed at 12.25.