



**NOTES OF THE MEETING OF THE MIDLANDS COUNTIES WORKING GROUP
AT West Midlands Bridge Club ON
Thursday 8th October 2015 @ 10.30am**

PRESENT

Oxfordshire	Robert Procter (RP)	Co- Chairman
Gloucestershire	Alan Wearmouth (AW)	Co- Chairman
Derbyshire	Arnold Chandler (AC)	
Derbyshire	Jim Parker (JP)	
Nottinghamshire	Clare Batten (CB)	
Worcestershire	David Thomas (DT)	
Worcestershire	Mike Willoughby (MW)	
Warwickshire	Mike Thorley (MT)	
Leicestershire	Dave Pollard (DP)	
Staffs & Shrops	John Withers (JW)	
Northants	Nicky Bainbridge (NB)	

EBU Board (Warks) Darren Evetts (DE)

1. Apologies

Were Received from Judith Currie (JC), Warwickshire, Graham Brindley (GB), Notts, Linda Curtis (LC), Staffs & Shrops, Dean Benton (DB), Leics

2. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

Minutes of the previous meeting are on the EBU website: these had been approved by e-mail

3. Matters Arising from the Previous Minutes

NB raised the topic of an IT User Group and it was agreed that the following was fed back to the EBU: -

- RP had heard that the EBU considered that there was no need for a user group. He had also heard that the Chairman was dealing with the question of whether one was needed or not.
- Some IT problems had arisen – the upgrade of the LMS was cited as an example
- The Group considered that a User Group was needed and urged the EBU to reconsider if they thought otherwise.

NB also raised the topic of the cost of support for Pairscore. This is used by c 100 clubs plus most counties and the EBU as against some 500 clubs using Scorebridge. She raised the question of why the costs of EBU support for Pairscore should be borne by all members

rather than simply those that chose to use it? The group agreed that the reasons that EBU resources were used for this purpose, and the cost of those resources, should be made known.

AC gave an update on Blue Points, saying that counties can now award them for Division 1 Teams of Four and Teams of Eight.

4. Calendars & Events

In an effort to co-ordinate county calendars a number of dates were discussed: -

Worcs run their Championship Pairs on 6th March

Derbyshire run their Championship Pairs semi on 13th Jan (Weds) and the final on 31st Jan.

Warks run their Championship Pairs on 24th April. Also Midland Counties Congress on 8-10 Jan, Teams of 8 on 31st Jan and Coventry Congress on 8-10 April.

Notts will run their Championship Pairs on 9th or 16th April.

Leics run their County Pairs final on 24th April and a charity swiss teams on April 10th

Oxfordshire run their County Pairs Semi on 7th Feb and the final on 24th April. Also the Oxford Congress on 11th -12th June, Swiss Pairs on 29th November, Swiss Teams on 6th March and Mixed Pairs on 8th May.

Gloucs run their Championship Pairs final on 17th April.

Staffs and Salop run their Championship Pairs Final (Bearn) on 24th April.

Northants run their Championship Pairs on 3rd April.

RP asked if it might be better for the EBU to provide dates on which there were no EBU competitions. DE said this was a good idea in principle but geographic considerations worked against it.

It was agreed that all counties should send their important dates to MW (mike.willoughby@btinternet.com) for collation and circulation with the minutes. (A schedule of the most significant dates is appended for convenience – MW)

ACTION: ALL

A discussion ensued as to which events were most popular. It was generally agreed that unevenly matched matches and events were unpopular and increasingly people were reluctant to travel far. There was also a consensus that “series” events, whether teams or pairs, tended to be well supported – a good example being Derbyshire’s summer swiss teams, played over 12 sessions over 24 weeks at 3 x 8 board matches per night.

DE reported that the Warks Championship Pairs had been revitalized by holding the qualifying rounds in the clubs. RP reported that Oxford’s P2P numbers were reasonably stable, although they were supported by Abbey Smith’s increasing numbers.

All were asked to feed back to MW whether or not they had regular county nights to MW who would include the information with the minutes.

AC reported that Derbyshire had a regular Wednesday County night.

DT reported that Worcs had a regular Monday County night.

AW reported that Gloucs had a regular Monday County night.

ACTION: ALL

There was some discussion of the effectiveness of the NGS. It was felt to be useful for handicap events: however, actual grades could be imperfect where there was little diffusion.

5. Midlands Improvers Event

It was not clear whether the Northern Counties were able to persuade players to travel far to the regional finals, which were held in three venues on the same day. RP asked for details of the Yorkshire event and DE committed to providing minutes relating to it for circulation with the minutes of the Mids CWG meeting.

ACTION: DE

It was agreed that it would be important to target unaffiliated clubs and for teachers to encourage participation and also, if possible, attend the final. DT said that Worcs would find it very hard to run a qualifying round unless it was on a Wednesday evening. JW emphasized the importance of a social, non-competitive atmosphere, ideally with hand copies being provided. On the question of costs (Yorks having charged £10 per head), it was suggested that some clubs may be able to provide accommodation free of charge. CB suggested that the venues should be Derby, West Midlands and Cheltenham and a date of 19th June was decided upon for the final.

It was agreed that the criteria for participation should be an NGS of less than an 8 and having been playing for less than 5 years. The event would consist of 24 boards with a half time break for refreshments and there should be a hosted discussion afterwards.

CB agreed to write some notes for each county to circulate to its clubs.

ACTION: CB

6. Abbey Smith's Group

RP reported that Abbey Smith's club, of which she was the proprietor, was extremely successful, mainly due to the professional way in which it was run. NB reported similar success at her proprietary club. JW emphasised the importance of good conduct. Notes from Abbey's presentation were circulated to the meeting.

RP said that he would write to the two largest clubs in Oxfordshire to ask for their impressions of Abbey's presentation and feed those impressions back to the EBU for use at the next Chairman's meeting or elsewhere.

ACTION: RP

7. Items for National Group

Some had already been raised.

8. New Chairman

NB was proposed by AC and seconded by MW. The meeting asked her to accept the Chairmanship and she did so. DE proposed a vote of thanks to RP for his Chairmanship.

9. AOB

AC raised the question of availability of club data to counties. Clarification of the position was needed and it was agreed that the topic would be put on the agenda for the next CWG meeting. DE asked JP to send him details of the club that had not been able to get its own data from the EBU in order that he could investigate.

ACTION: JP/DE

AC questioned whether the counties of primary allegiance held by the EBU were correct since they followed the initial club membership unless the member instructed the EBU to change it – no mention of this was on the members web page. DE said that he would investigate.

ACTION: DE

DT said that Worcs were prepared to take over the administration of the Dawes League. It was agreed that the other counties would welcome this action.

10.Date of Next Meeting

NB proposed the 3rd Thursday in January, which was accepted.

Midlands CWG
Most Significant Dates Only

31st Jan – Derbyshire Ch Pairs and Warks Teams of 8

7th Feb – Oxon Ch Pairs Semifinal

6th March – Worcs Ch Pairs

3rd April – Northants Ch Pairs (Eden)

10th April – Notts Ch Pairs

17th April – Gloucs Ch Pairs

24th April – Warks Ch Pairs, Leics Ch Pairs, Staffs Ch Pairs (Bearne), Oxon Ch Pairs Final