



**Scottish Bridge Union
SCIO SC051361**

Registered Office: [Summit House, 4-5 Mitchell St, Edinburgh, EH6 7BD](#)

Minutes of the 3rd AGM Tuesday 21st May 2024 1900hrs
Recorded on Zoom

1. Notice of Meeting was read by the Chair.
2. Attendees (34) : Mike Ash, Allan Downie, Gavin Easton, Marina Evans, Robert Ferrari, Lorraine Findlay, Joan Forsyth, Fiona Greenwood, John Gunn, Sarah Gunn, Alan Goodman (Chairman), Martyn Halsall, Stephen Henderson, Margaret Hodder, Mike Hodder, Alan Kennedy, Thomson Kerr, Angus MacDonald, Eddie McGeough, Jean McLaren, Quentin McLaren, Stewart Morris, Gordon Milne, Ian Patrick, Anne Perkins, Eilidh Rennie, Dorothy Sim, Harry Smith, Janet Unsworth, Ronan Valentine, Juliet Vivers, Ann Wickens, David Wiseman, Sandra Wiseman
3. Apologies: Graham Bullock, Debbie Butler, Doris Campbell, Linda Grieve, Anne Symons, Tim Wickens, Sheenagh Young
4. Minute of the 2nd AGM

Adopted.
5. Trustees Report presented by Alan Goodman

What we have achieved over the last year is covered in the Trustees Report in the Annual Accounts, but I'd like to say a few words of both reflection and looking forward.

A year ago, I said that our biggest challenge was to ensure that our bridge clubs can survive and flourish. Although sadly a few have had to close, most clubs have not only survived but have seen members increasingly coming back to play in the clubs. What is evident from the member survey, during Covid members really missed the social

interaction of playing face to face. What has changed, however, is the increasing popularity of afternoon bridge and some decline in numbers playing in the evenings. Successful clubs must react to this changing demand but ensure the needs of working members are also fulfilled.

SBU's responsibility is to meet the needs of our members and ensure that more new people are introduced to the game of bridge. For existing members, this means providing them with support and access to both face to face and online bridge and teaching. It is important that we create a balance of tournaments and activities that provide the required social interaction, together with online competition and activities that are also demanded.

To attract new members, it is exciting to look forward to the Festival of Bridge in September, which is intended to attract new members to learn and play bridge. This will hopefully boost club membership numbers, most likely in the 45-65 age group, but will also create a challenge for clubs to provide teaching and playing opportunities for these new members.

Whilst this growth in the number of new, older players is acceptable short term, the future of the game also depends on making it attractive to younger people. There are already many excellent teaching initiatives taking place throughout Scotland (700 students learning bridge, including 140 children), but it now needs a more concerted countrywide effort. Consequently, I'm delighted to announce two major initiatives: the impending appointment of a youth coordinator and an extensive project in conjunction with Stirling University. These initiatives will address the resources necessary to offer youth programmes, and the skills and resources to market to this younger demographic.

As I said last year the changing bridge landscape has had a significant impact on our financial management, as Income from congresses, traditional tournaments, masterpoints and subscriptions has fallen in recent years. SBU volunteers gave over 8,000 hours in the last year; club members probably gave similar amounts of their time to their clubs. Without this monumental effort, we would be unable to function. Inevitably this creates a strain on our resources, and to continually rely on volunteers and getting what we need for free, is not sustainable longer term, so increased expenditure must be anticipated, and increases in income must be sought. Although we have healthy reserves, we can only use these reserves to fund small, short-term deficits for a limited period.

It has always been our intention to appoint a part time Chief Executive to manage the operational side of the organisation because it is critical that our volunteers get the necessary support, and the planning coordination to allow us to meet the needs of our members and the aspirations of the organisation. I'm delighted that Martyn Halsall from Elgin has now taken up this role.

Finally, thanks to all our volunteers who have worked tirelessly over the last year, and a special thanks to Joan Forsyth and Neil Archibald who are stepping down as trustees today. They have both been a great support to me personally as Board members and have also served the bridge community well - they will be greatly missed, although I'm delighted that Joan has agreed to actively support the youth projects. Fortunately, we have three new trustees joining the Board, all of whom are expected to bring varied and valuable experience.

Overall, it's been a challenging year, but because of the enthusiasm and hard work of our army of volunteers I remain very optimistic about the future of bridge in Scotland.

6. Election of Trustees

In accordance with Clause 31 of the Constitution, three new Trustees are proposed: Robert Ferrari, Jean McLaren and Ronan Valentine. These three were duly elected.

7. Resolutions

All 15 Proxy Votes were all in favour of the Chair casting their vote.

- a) In accordance with Byelaw 1.1, The Trustees propose that the Annual Membership Subscription remains at £12 from 1 September 2024. Proposed by Allan Downie and seconded by Jean McLaren.

This motion was carried unanimously.

- b) In accordance with Clause 11.1 of the Constitution, The Trustees propose that Liz McGowan be appointed as an Honorary Member. Proposed by Alan Goodman and seconded by Anne Perkins.

This motion was carried unanimously.

8. Statement of Accounts given by Sarah Gunn, Acting Treasurer and Chair of the Finance Committee.

<https://www.sbu.org.uk/images/content/AGM/2024/SBU-signed-accounts-for-the-year-ended-31-August-2023.pdf>

These were posted on the website and members are invited to email Sarah Gunn directly with any questions on the financial statements treasurer@sbu.org.uk.

The main point is, although we have significant reserves, we make it clear to all our members how we rely hugely on volunteers, for tournaments, congresses, education, membership, masterpoints, IT and governance. For example, prior to 2020 many national tournaments were organised and directed by local convenors – these are now centrally organised and usually just by the tournament convenor. The trustees recognise that relying on a few volunteers to provide nearly 8,000 hours of their time every year may not be practically and financially sustainable. Members are really engaged in what we are doing, but it does involve a huge amount of time. The introduction of a CEO in April 2024 is a paid post and allows the trustees to focus on the governance of the organisation and to allow the operational activity to be separate. The Reserves should be available to kickstart future projects, as we work towards increasing our income to cover these new initiatives. One such initiative is the Festival of Bridge, which is supporting clubs to increase local awareness of their activities as well as reaching new audiences and encouraging people to learn bridge, which we hope will gather pace towards September.

There were no questions from the floor. Alan Goodman recommended the Trustees' Report to Members, as a record of the variety of activities carried out by the SBU during the year to 31 August 2023.

9. Election of Independent Examiner

The Trustees propose that Henderson Loggie be re-appointed as SBU's Independent Examiner.

Proposed by Sarah Gunn and Seconded by Allan Downie.

10. Trophy Winners and International Representation

<https://www.sbu.org.uk/competitions/resources/honours-database/search-by-season>

Congratulations were offered to all those who had won a trophy this past year.

A question was raised about why The Bobby Allan was not part of the Easter Pairs this year. Historically it has been allocated to the Easter Pairs. Mike Baron is to have a dialogue with Eddie McGeough about this.

11. Any Other Competent Business

The Members' Survey

The recent Members' Survey summary has been published on the website. The full survey is available as well.

Harry Smith observed the survey stated that no-one under the age of 45 had contributed. It was known that at least four did so and therefore this is inaccurate. It is thought that ScotInform, who conducted the survey, have rounded their numbers, or it could be that individuals were not prepared to divulge their age (as was the case with 2% of the 1000 respondents).

A wish to see significantly more information was expressed, and a much more detailed, serious analysis; the membership being entitled to this information and its accuracy. The Chair pointed out that the two-page summary on the website would be sufficient for most members, but the full PowerPoint summary of the results is available to members on request. The summary note makes this clear.

If the full PowerPoint summary requires any further detailed analysis, we can get it done, although this may incur an extra cost.

Youth

There are two initiatives to encourage youth participation. There is a plan to appoint a Youth Co-ordinator and for that person to liaise with those who have previous experience. We now have much better representation across the country and generally a good handle on what is going on. There is confidence about this future appointment which Joan Forsyth is to support. The need to deliver is foremost in our thoughts.

The other initiative is collaborating with Stirling University which is researching how to get children interested in bridge and building it into something practical; creating a tool kit/resources. We will be building on the experiences in Norway and the United States. This started a few weeks ago and is primarily being driven by the University.

The meeting closed at 1955hrs.