

Minutes of the 87th Annual General Meeting held via virtual conference call, Tuesday, 25th May 2021

Council	Joan Forsyth	President	Present
District Chairmen	D Wiseman	Chairman of Ayrshire District	Present
	A Kennedy	Chairman of Central District	Present
	A Perkins	Chairman of East District	Present
	T Wickens	Chairman of Highland District	Present
	A Coles	Chairman of North District	Present
	R Thomson	Chairman of South District	Present
	P Hodgson	Chairman of West District	Present
	C Dempsie	Secretary	Present
	S MacDonald	Treasurer	Present

In attendance: M Ash, H Smith, J Robertson, F Abbott, S Chapple, B Short, G Bailey, E McGeough, A Goodman, R Frame, M Hammett, D Sim, G Martin, Ian Hunter, B Campbell, B Allan, S Wiseman, M McGinley, L Findlay, M Hodder, A MacLeod, L Simpson, F Greenwood, S Punch, L McGowan, W Whyte

Based on attendance the meeting was quorate (quorum =)25.

1. Notice of Meeting

The Secretary read out the Notice of Meeting.

2. Apologies

Apologies had been received from P Gipson, S Green, J Palmer and C Goode.

3. Minutes of 86th Annual General Meeting and Matters Arising

Adoption of the Minute of the 86th Annual General Meeting was proposed by M Ash, seconded by W Whyte and passed *nem. con.*

Matters Arising:- Paul Gipson's query over publication of Council minutes. Council was not minded to publish minutes, but President should update members on outcomes

4. Minutes of the Extraordinary General Meeting

Adoption of the Minute of the Extraordinary General Meeting was proposed by P Hodgson, seconded by A Kennedy and passed *nem. con.*

5. President's Report

The President, Joan Forsyth, had issued her report prior to the meeting to all those attending. The report is detailed in full at the end of the Minute. The president invited the floor to put forward any comments or questions.

G Bailey asked if online tournaments were going to continue in the 21/22 season once F2f bridge is allowed.

A Coles / J Forsyth responded that, as referenced in the President's report, all regular SBU tournaments were diarised to be played online until April/May 2022. The Council and Tournament Committee will be looking further to the future, to consider which might be played F2F and which are more suitable to continue to be played online.



6. Treasurer's Report – S MacDonald

Prior to the meeting, the accounts for the period of 1st September 2019 through to 31st August 2020 had been made available to members.

Scott Macdonald, the new Treasurer introduced himself saying some people may know him as a member of the New Melville in Edinburgh and that he was getting to know members and club representatives quite quickly.

He took over from George Plant in September last year after George's 5 years and the handover was well planned and executed. As you would expect from George he has been very professional and helpful and has given him great support and guidance during the transition. He was very grateful to him for that.

The main message was that the financial condition of the SBU remains very healthy and all compliance is up to date.

2020 produced a surplus of £7,948 before Corporation Tax. (CT £699). Given the effects of covid on our planned activities, the results were quite satisfactory.

Subscription income trended down as membership numbers decrease and magazine subscriptions reduced.
(memo 2019 - 5,707, 2020 - 5373, 2021 - 4,950)

Master point income was down significantly from the previous year but that year was exceptional; due to a large back payment from the EBU for congresses. (10,927 vs 24,092)

Expenditures were up from the previous year due primarily to some costs incurred for both the Euro Team events plus some final payments for player expenses at the Venice Cup.

Council expenses were higher with 2 years funding of the Postgraduate student at Stirling University. Education and Schools was down as the mini bridge and Kelsey did not take place.

Covid certainly disrupted things for us.

With face to face bridge ending in March last year, many Clubs and Districts took the opportunity to become virtual clubs under the SBU National Bridge Organisation contract with 52 Entertainment and their BBO offshoot.

The Finance Committee manage this contract on behalf of the SBU and channel net proceeds back to the 54 participating Clubs and districts. (memo Covenant 3.8% and 70/30 split)

Uncertainty with respect to the VAT treatment of revenues received under this contract caused us to obtain a professional opinion on this matter. The outcome of this was that BBO were deemed to be liable for VAT on the revenues under this contract.

While we work this issue with BBO, we are currently withholding equivalent VAT amounts from our distributions to Clubs and Districts to both cover current month liabilities plus claw back prior months liabilities.

Through April 2021 the overall financial figures for all the 57 SBU virtual clubs are

Total revenues £201,792 (Clubs 164,623; D9,542; SBU 27,627)
Required VAT reserves £34,970
Actual VAT reserves £25,154
liability outstanding £9,816

BBO are currently taking professional advice on VAT.

Adoption of the Accounts was proposed by T Wickens, seconded by H Smith and passed *nem. con.*

7. Annual Subscriptions

The Chair of Member Services (W Whyte) proposed on behalf of the Council that for the 2022-2023 season, annual membership subscriptions should be the same as for the 2021-2022 season. Members were reminded that annual



subscriptions are decided more than a full year in advance. The charges for next season, 2021-2022 were decided at the Extraordinary General Meeting which was held in March 2021.

Thus for the current season (2021-2022), and the next season the annual subscriptions remain the same; namely

Adult membership via a club £8
Junior membership via a club £4
Direct membership £13.

The motion was put to vote with the following results:

In attendance	For – 18	Against – 4
Proxy	For – 14	Against -1

There was a number of people who abstained from voting.

The motion was carried.

8. Motion B – Proposed by M Hammett and seconded by N Cartwright

1. “When playing online bridge:

In order to achieve a greater standardisation and an acceptable equitable working code unless players comply with the following simple rules they are not to be awarded any masterpoints in any particular competition where they do not as a bare minimum supply:

(a) Their first and surname as described in the register of their host club (eg blank, private, or even just a single generalised first name such as John or Mary deemed as being of insufficient identity)

(b) On meeting their opponents at the beginning of a round give as a minimum description of their system:

(i) Its generally accepted descriptive name

(ii) the high card point range of an initial No Trump bid

(iii) a brief description of the partnership’s carding agreements (eg standard or reverse attitude)

(iv) all other specific conventions and partnership agreements must be alerted.

M Hammett addressed the AGM stating that he felt there was a disadvantage of playing online on the BBO & Realbridge platforms as their names do not appear and you do not know who you are playing against. He likes to prepare for his games and likes to know who he will be playing against. There should be a minimum amount of information given as stated in part 1 of his motion.

Anne Coles responded stating that it is desirable for people to disclose their names, it is not mandatory. Also as there are people playing from all over Scotland and some from England, it may mean that their names do not mean anything to you. People are asked to state their system in the carding convention. There is no penalty for people not giving information but the SBU would continue to request that people give a stated minimum amount of information, as TDs did announce at the start of each match.

Several other members stated that they introduced themselves with their Christian names only. Giving names out may also cause a problem for the protection of junior members.

M Hammett felt there should be a penalty if people did not supply information, ie with holding masterpoints. W Whyte responded stating that Clubs purchase masterpoint certificates to award at tournaments and therefore it would not be part of the SBU remit. G Milne also stated that it would be practically impossible to withhold/ deduct masterpoints from players.

G Bailey did say that there can be technical difficulties and this can be hard to legislate and enforce people to play a system as mistakes can be made.technically that it is difficult to legislate people make wrong bids/



L McGowan stated it was impossible to police information offered in each round of competition. It is hoped that good behaviour wins out each time but the TD is available to assist with any complaints or problems at the time of play.

M Hammett asked if an online TD can force people to fill out their details. JF replied saying you can ask them.

The motion was put to vote with the following results:

In attendance	For – 1	Against – 28
Proxy	For – 4	Against -12

The motion was not passed.

2. "When playing online bridge:

The time allotted be exactly the same for each individual board (for eg say seven minutes each board instead of a round of fourteen minutes for a two board round or twenty-one for three boards etc). Even should this technically not be achievable at the moment, that the SBU liaise with the software providers towards building in such a feature (ultimately and hopefully for each individual player to be separately timed by a system akin to chess clocks, ie the individual's clock stops on the bid or play of a card, thereby automatically starting the next player's clock.)

M Hammett stated that a clock time should be appointed towards partnerships and individual since some hands may need longer time on them and people spending too long should be cut off.

Anne Coles responded that during Club, District and SBU F2F tournaments time has not been strictly used. In some tournaments clocks are used. If you feel opposition are dragging their heels, you can ask the TD to watch time and award penalty if required. BBO time is per round not board and it gives table logs which the TD can access. A Coles could not recall ever being asked for time.

R Frame said online tournament TDs can and will award an adjusted score for any unfinished boards.

G Bailey also stated that no penalty is given if internet connection breaks. TDs do an excellent job and legislating would be difficult to do.

The motion was put to vote with the following results:

In attendance	For – 28	Against – 1
Proxy	For – 15	Against -1

The motion was not passed.

9. Presentation of Trophies

The trophies were not presented it not being a f2f AGM. A list of the winners had been issued prior to the meeting. A few of the winners were in attendance and the president congratulated them, and added names for events held after the publication of the list. The President also highlighted the international players and their success over the past season.

The President's Award this year was given to Brian Short. Brian has been instrumental in leading the team who have been involved in developing procedures in proving online cheating.

In addition the president gave 3 one-off prizes to:

A Brodie-Allan – for training TDs, observing games and her help in setting up online bridge for the SBU

A Carmichael – for her huge amount of work in updating the Masterpoint Policy handbook and online masterpoints updating

Gordon Milne – for the sorting out of all the problems when downloading files for the results of tournaments and awarding of masterpoints.

10. Any Other Competent Business

Mike Ash raised the following points:

- Requested the Council consider their method of communication and feedback to members.



- Felt that the SBU were slow off the mark with their tournaments when the pandemic hit. However now there were many tournaments and all being run successfully on various online platforms
- Can the Council start thinking now what the SBU will do in the future, get feedback from members as to their thoughts of the future of bridge and clubs what their intentions are to encourage f2f and online bridge.
- Review of tournaments including which can be run online and those that cannot.

JF responded that the Council had in place a Working group looking at the [way forward, "Towards the New Normal"](#). She referenced the President's report which had been sent to all those attending the [AGM in which she had outlined the Council position on his last two points](#). Mike alluded to the updates on the EBU Home pages. JF had explained that the postulated Government advice in England for the continued pathway out of Lockdown allowed consideration of a carefully managed return to f2f bridge by clubs within a given timescale, but this was not yet the case in Scotland. JF reminded those present that the last communication from the Scottish Government to her was that the rules applying to any bridge playing, irrespective of the setting, were those applying at any given time to domestic settings. She had recently written to the Government seeking up to date clarification, and had received a holding response.

Mike Hammett asked why SBU exclusively use the BBO platform. G Milne stated that many clubs Realbridge and it's entirely up to the Clubs which platform they use.

F Greenwood responded stating that when the SBU first started running tournaments online the only platform available was BBO. The SBU now also use Realbridge.

Several members gave M Hammett some tips on BBO of where to find details of play and how to change his name.

11. Election of Office Bearers – 2021/22

As there had been no other candidates nominated, the Council proposed

- | | |
|------------------------|-------------|
| 1. President | J Forsyth |
| 2. President Designate | A Goodman |
| 3. Secretary | C Dempsie |
| 4. Treasurer | S MacDonald |

12. Election of Auditor

MacKenzie Kerr, Chartered Accountants Proposed by S MacDonald and Seconded by W Whyte

13. Noting the seven Vice-Presidents, being the Chairmen of the seven Districts

These nominations were accepted by the meeting *nem.con*.

The meeting closed at 8.40 pm.

