

West of England Bridge Club

Minutes of a Committee meeting held via Zoom on Thursday 9th July 2020

‘Present’: Alan Evans (Chair), Bridget Johnson, Chris Frew, Bill Ashford, Jen Challoner, Jane Chapman, Bernice Horseman, Jan Duncan, David Jones.

Apologies: Laurie Barth, Dinah Moore

1 Preface

Alan had circulated a background briefing to provide a context for this meeting. It read: ‘The last committee meeting was on 19 February. On 16 March, at very short notice, the club was closed by GHS as a result of the pandemic, and there has been no play since. An agreement was reached with the RAFA club following a meeting there on 11 March between Alan, Chris, Dinah and Mike and four committee members from RAFA. The agreement has been refined by email discussion; it still awaits signature, but is sufficient for us to have arranged and paid for redecoration of the new playing room at RAFA following their repair and updating of lighting etc. Our lease with GHS expired on 30 June, and on 1 July our equipment was removed, some taken to RAFA, some stored by Chris and Alan. So with the new location settled, but the club still closed, we need to consider the items below.’

2 Restarting play at the Club.

Alan said that we need to take serious note of ongoing advice from the EBU, who currently state that bridge at conventional bridge tables is not possible within current Government social distancing guidelines. Nor do the Government or EBU offer any timetable for when this might change.

Committee discussion showed a general expectation that restarting play, even with an enhanced disinfection regime, was months away.

The RAFA Club have said that they will be open for general use, albeit with special Covid-19 arrangements, on or by 1st August.

We are also concerned that some members will not return until they personally are sure it will be safe to do so, and this may not be before Spring next year. Were we to open early, there would likely be greatly reduced playing numbers, which – if we were then paying full rent – would lose more money than not playing.

Additionally, Jen said that she and Laurie would not feel comfortable about attending the Thursday Improvers classes until next year.

Committee concluded that we could not, and should not, expect to restart bridge sessions for some months, so we can defer detailed consideration of playing arrangements to a future (Zoom) meeting.

3 Equipment and Furniture

3.1 Tables. Alan has recommended a particular model, as used by Somerset County Bridge Association, and their purchase was agreed in principle.

3.2 Chairs. Chairs, and their comfort, is a matter of great concern for some. Chris has saved four of the blue cloth chairs that we used at GHS and will relocate them to the RAFA Club at some point. We will need to purchase more chairs, as the RAFA Club-owned stock is insufficient for a full house. Bridget has found these: <https://www.trentfurniture.co.uk/products/all-industries/harrow-steel-stacking-chair-with-silver-frame-81>

Alan promised further consultation before we make any purchase.

3.3 Director’s cupboard. We have sold our old cupboards to GHS for £250. (Bill is chasing up this payment.) We will buy new cupboarding, probably from IKEA, nearer the time of our

moving in. In the interim the contents are at Alan and Chris's homes.

4 Agree payment proposal to the RAFA Club

Alan said that the current situation is: we have a settled Room Hire Agreement with the RAFA Club, though it is as yet unsigned because the Start Date is not known. The RAFA Club have, like us, spent a considerable sum to get the lower ground playing space ready for our use. They will be ready for us to occupy by 1st August.

Alan recommended that we offer a monthly 'retainer' payment to the RAFA Club from 1st August and this was agreed. A Negotiating SubCommittee of Alan, Chris and Bill was agreed to conduct any face-to-face negotiations, make the offer and implement the payment.

5 Membership matters

Bridget outlined options for collecting the balance of membership subs and refunding those who paid for their unusable membership period. The principle was agreed that those who renewed prior to lockdown should not be financially disadvantaged as against those who did not renew.

We deferred consideration of the mechanics of cross-membership of WoEBC, the RAFA Club and the RAF Association – as envisaged in the Room Hire Agreement – until a later meeting.

6 Communication

Alan will write a Newsletter to all current and recent members to update them on our situation and current thinking.

7 Date of Next Meeting:

To be agreed.

Agreed

Date