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**Minutes of the Manchester County Bridge Association**

**Annual General Meeting**

**on Thursday 30th May 2024 Held at Bramhall & Cheadle Hulme Bridge Centre**

**Present**

Irene Davies (chair), Alan Mould (secretary), Kevin Comrie, Celia Comrie, Alec Smalley, Rhona Goldenfield, Bill Bentley, John Roberts, Jeff Morris, Raymond Semp. Gordon Bickley, Eve Lighthill, Ann Thornton, Barbara Lewis, John Holland, Gary Hyett, Karen Reissmann, Anne Naylor, Mike Wood, Royce Alexander.

1. **Apologies**

Rodney Lighton, Paul Beckwith, Espen Gisvold, Howard Rosemarine, Howard Stubbings, Joy Blakey, Michael Byrne, Irving Blakey, Paul Murray, Steve Mattinson.

1. **Minutes of Last Meeting (EGM) held 23rd June 2022 online via Zoom**

The minutes were presented to the meeting.

1. **Accuracy and Matters Arising**
   1. Accuracy

Accepted as a true and correct record.

* 1. Matters Arising

None not dealt with during the year.

1. **Reports from the Officers**
   1. Chair Irene Davies

**Where are we?**

It seems we survived COVID with most of our clubs intact. Face to Face bridge is slowly coming back to being the norm in most of our clubs. Though there is still a role for online bridge, particularly in the Winter months.

Our County competitions are slowly growing in size. We had good numbers at our Congress, Ben Franks Pairs Trophy, the Gazette Cup and our Green Point events.

However, we haven’t been able to get our stand-alone J high events off the ground. This is an area that needs working on.

The Cantor Cup for beginners had 14 pairs playing. We hoped for greater numbers, but this was truly a beginners competition with some of the players very new to bridge.

We have had problems in finding sufficient players to play in the online Northern Bridge League and in the F2F friendly match with Lancashire. We need to find new players who want to represent the County in these events. In my experience there are just lots of people who haven’t been asked yet.

Our League and Cup numbers are also falling each year. Hopefully the Summer F2F league will get off the ground.

**Tollemache**

Manchester County has always been blessed with more than its fair share of expert players. As a testimony to this the County won the prestigious Tollemache Cup for the second year running. Even more impressive was the fact that we fielded 2 rookies in the team who coped with the event well.

**Teaching Beginners**

We have excellent beginners’ classes taking place at Manchester BC, B&CHBC, Ashton BC, Trafford BC. This has created a real long-term potential for these clubs. Excellent work has also been done in terms of the transition from learning to attending duplicates. All our clubs should learn from this. Teaching is the key for a healthy future for bridge.

Thanks should go out to all the individuals who put so much hard work into running their clubs. They do this with no recompense and often devote hours of work each week to the basics of keeping a club going. You are the bedrock of the County’s success.

**Succession**

I am standing down as Chair at this AGM. Michael Byrne is standing down as Tournament secretary, John Roberts is standing down from the selection committee and Alan Mould is relinquishing some of his responsibilities. Thanks go to those people for all the work they have put in in their roles. We need new blood on the executive that runs the County. At present we are far too dominated by expert players. The vast majority of our members are ordinary club social players, and they need to be better represented on the exec. I know it’s difficult because many of those people are already very busy organising their clubs and teaching the new generation of players, but that balance is needed.

Finally, a big thank you to everyone who has helped me in the role of Chair over these years. Teamwork is essential to get anything done. So, thank you team.

* 1. Secretary Alan Mould

My role as Secretary has been a bit busier this year. There has been the usual succession of emails from the EBU to pass on to relevant officers and/or clubs concerning events and other matters, including ga recent flurry about the Festival of Bridge. The Executive has met considerably more frequently this year, a total of 4 occasions, and I have set up the meetings and taken notes at that.

Sadly, we had a formal complaint by one of our members against another member this year. This required me to set up a Conduct Committee which was not easy with the available people and required co-opting other members. The matter was extremely time consuming for all concerned, but the Conduct Committee resolved the matter without recourse to the Disciplinary Committee (which has not had to meet since 2012). The matter highlighted that we are desperately in need of more people to be available for the Conduct Committee. Please put your name forward if you are interested – you need neither to be a top rank bridge player, nor a lawyer, just the ability to think straight and hear the various sides dispassionately.

I wish to make a couple of observations in this report:

Firstly, the 2023 EGM voted down the proposed changes to the Constitution, one of which was the scrapping of Council. Several people at the EGM were outraged that this was a reduction in the democracy of the organisation, whereas as the Executive saw it as removing a clearly broken part. This year the chair decided that she would hold two personal meetings that were Council and invited any member or club to turn up and discuss any issues they wanted, which she would then refer to the executive. Despite extensive publicity to all members **NOBODY CAME**. I cannot see what more proof is needed that Council simply does not work and is not fit for purpose. I am all for the democracy of the organisation, but the members have said very clearly that Council is not the way forward.

Secondly, Irene has sadly decided to step down as chair of MCBA after a long period. She has worked tirelessly for the Association and has always taken on far more than just the chairing of the meetings. The Association owes her a huge debt of gratitude. I don’t know how we are going to replace her and at the time of writing there are no candidates for chair. If you have any interest in this, please put your name forward or approach Irene (or even me) to see what it involves. I cannot emphasise enough again that being a top ranked bridge player is entirely unnecessary for the role (indeed it might be seen as a hindrance – we need the executive to represent the views of the majority of the members).

Finally, I am looking to reduce my own involvement in the Association as I simply do not have the spare capacity anymore. I am relinquishing the role of membership Secretary (more on that below) and would like to relinquish this role as well. All the above comments about what is required stand for this role as well – organisational skills and the ability to herd cats are the main requirements. If anyone is interested, then please contact me for more information. If no one is available I will reluctantly take on the role for 1 more year, but I give notice that I will stand down in 2025.

* 1. Treasurer Joy Blakey

I attach the Accounts for the period 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2024. There has been nothing remarkable in what I think was a rather quiet year. We have paid entries for all the usual competitions – Tollemache, Corwen, Garden Cities and Northern Bridge League etc. The GP events were, as ever, successful. There were no volunteers as in previous years to run the flagship event of the Manchester Congress so it was decided to ask Oliver Cowan to take over the organisation – accounts relating were not my figures but those given to me. Once again, we had no income from UMS contributions. We have recorded a very small loss. The investment of County funds (£14000) with Cambridge and Counties BS, which gave us interest of approx. £500 gross, will mature in June and it is my intention to re-invest for a further 12 months.

My thanks to Howard Stubbings for his help and thorough examination of my record keeping and for producing the Accounts.

Howard Stubbings Peter Green Joy Blakey

* 1. Membership Secretary Alan Mould

This will be my last report as membership secretary as I am standing down at the AGM. I am grateful to Gordon Bickley who has agreed to take on the role.

I give below the data from the EBU as of 15th November 2020, as of 23rd February 2021, as of 19th October 2021, as of 8th May 2022, as of 7th May 2023 and as of 11th May 2024.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Type of Member** | **Total**  **15/11/2020** | **Total 23/02/2021** | **Total**  **19/10/2021** | **Total**  **8/05/2022** | **Total**  **07/05/2023** | **Total**  **11/05/2024** |
| P2P | **1405** | **1396** | **1435** | **1485** | **1307** | **1249** |
| Direct members | **44** | **45** | **42** | **39** | **31** | **27** |
| Students  (People on the EBED register as learning bridge) | **21** | **20** | **0** | **5** | **39** | **41** |
| Total from spreadsheet | **1470** | **1461** | **1477** | **1529** | **1377** | **1317** |

As can be seen from the figures, we are continuing to lose members. The figures are down by 60 over last year, and by 212 at the peak in 2022. Frankly, this does not surprise me as numbers continue to “normalise” post pandemic and members have left clubs or not renewed membership. I see this as a clear reflection of the reduced numbers in club games and at county events. I strongly suspect this pattern of reduced numbers is repeated across the country. The number of MCBA affiliated clubs has dropped by 1, the Adam Wiseberg Bridge Club having disaffiliated from the EBU, which would explain a lot of this year’s drop as that club had a significant number of members who were not members of any other club.

Dealing only with the data of 11th May 2024, of the 1317 members, 1249 are Pay to Play, 27 chose to be Direct members and 41 are student members on the first or second year of a student course, 32 of which have a primary club of B&CHBC. As I have reported before, this does not really reflect the number of students, since many clubs do not register their students as student members in the EBU. The chair has reported above that in addition to B&CHBC there are also strong teaching programmes at Manchester, Ashton and Trafford, but these are not seen in the members download.

Of the 1317 members, 1274 have primary allegiance to MCBA and 43 secondary allegiance. Of the 43 secondary allegiance, all bar one are P2P, with the 1 direct member living way outside the county boundaries.

Under the EBED category the following are listed:

* 14 people listed as “EBTA” (i.e. teachers) which is 2 down from last year (and well down from the height of 28 pre-pandemic), all of which are Pay to Play. However, one has left the area for London this year and so we will have lost another teacher.
* 36 people are listed as “BFA Year 1”, and 5 as “BFA Year 2”, agreeing with the total of 41 student members.
* All others are listed as “None” under the EBED category.

The data download from the EBU includes details of NGS grade and MP rank. The AGM may be interested to know that the county has 3 members who are ace of spades, 46 members who are aces (up from 4 last year), though 11 are secondary members, and 18 premier grand masters (the same as last year), though 6 of these are secondary members.

**Club Numbers**

I have in the past given club numbers, but I don’t think anyone found them useful. It is difficult to disentangle the primary and secondary club status to get accurate numbers, and clubs keep their own records. Suffice it to say that all MCBA affiliated clubs are represented on the EBU download.

* 1. League Secretary Royce Alexander

After a 23 year break, I resumed the role of MCBA League Secretary at the 2023 AGM.

The AGM debated whether the League should continue to have a Default of Online or whether it should change to a Default of Face-to-Face, or whether separate Online & F2F Leagues would be best. It was eventually agreed that we should survey ALL members to find out what they really wanted.

A survey was sent out, 73 replies were received, and the results were presented on 13 September to the subsequent MCBA Executive meeting. The meeting had a lengthy discussion of the various options (as documented in the public minutes) and decided that the League should continue as a single structure with a Default of Online.

Also, a Summer F2F League was suggested and approved.

The entry fee was simplified to £50 per team for the League and (if wanted) Higson & (if wanted) Goldstone.

From 15 September (very late by usual standards), entries were accepted and by 30 September I had 35 teams. 36 teams would work well (spread over 4 divisions), and over 40 teams would work well (spread over 5 divisions), but 37, 38, or 39 teams would NOT work well. Also, I had to get the League started before going on holiday a few days later. So when the 36th team entered, I closed entries and created 4 divisions of 9 teams each.

The season has run fairly smoothly with few problems (and just 1 withdrawal from Division 1 for understandable reasons).

The Division winners are:

1. St Titus, or The Griffins, or Inverted Minors

2. The North Star

3. Four Dummies

4. The Transfers (unless Manchester Misfits get nearly 19VPs from their last match)

The Summer F2F League received entries from 11 teams by the closing date of May 12th and has been set up with 6 teams in Division 1 & 5 teams in Division 2 playing F2F matches between May & September.

A 12th team submitted a late entry on 21st May, but I’d already had to set the League Divisions up, and so I was sadly unable to accommodate them.

I will ask for feedback as the Summer F2F League ends to decide what to do next year.

For 2024-25, I plan to open entries much earlier, get League Divisions 1, 2 & maybe 3 up & running early, and then have time to try to assemble more teams and maybe get Division 5 back again.

* 1. Higson Cup Secretary Paul Beckwith

The hoped for increase in team numbers by including cost of entry in with the League, and simply requiring teams to tick a box for League only, or for League and Cup did not significantly materialise.

24 teams this year as against 20 last year, of which 2 were non-league teams, and from the remainder one team claimed to have inadvertently ticked the wrong box, and so conceded their 1st round match.

Of the teams contesting the Cup final, all got there by playing a 2nd round match. It was a different picture for the Plate final, where only 2 of the 6 matches to get to the final were actually contested, the other 4 being conceded, although one of these then withdrew to leave a 5 team Plate final.

The finals day itself ran as smoothly as last year, due largely to the use of a well experienced Director with all the ability needed to run a 2 section event with different numbers in each, and not a little advance preparation on my part, plus a full day on hand to see things ran smoothly, and then to transfer the raw data to come up with the Handicap results for each.

I think that all who took part enjoyed the day.

**As for the bigger picture - is it worth the effort?**

I think that may be for others to judge, but one observation I had was that despite the use of the Discrete VP table, the Plate event was ultimately decided by one large defeat for a team having a particularly bad day. The Cup was much closer.

**Alternatives available if the format was to be changed?**

Assuming continuation of the Handicap ideal.

There could be a case for a straight knockout, in which case awarding the Cup to overall winners, with the Plate going to runners up?

With these numbers that would require 4 rounds plus a final.

Input from an organiser would be reduced, though calculation of handicap difference for each round could be a little more work.

A smaller venue required and could even be scored manually.

I'm afraid I haven't crystallized these thoughts into a conclusion, but it's stick with what we have or  something like the above.

* 1. Goldstone Trophy Secretary Roger Hopton

There were 23 entries for the 23/4 year versus 27 the previous year.

3 walk overs due to problems playing the matches on time or team issues.

Overall went well.

Final is between St Titus and The Griffins once again.

No changes proposed.

* 1. Green Point Secretary Rhona Goldenfield

The teams July 2023 had 19 entries.

Winners were John Holland, Gillian Whyte, John Hassett and Adrian Thomas.

The Pairs March 2024 had 38 entries (19 tables).

Winners were Tom Dessain and Rodney Lighton

Events were held at St Peters. Stuart Davies ran both events and I have booked him and the hall for 2025.

It was decided at the last exec meeting to increase the entry to £22.50 up from £20.

So far on May 1st for July there are 5 entries (hopefully more by the time of the AGM).

I do try to give out a fair proportion in prizes including to Non experts.

As usual my thanks go to Joan Lewis who does a tremendous amount to help me with the organisation.

I also give grateful thanks to our President Kevin and Celia who always help by being the standby pair, so we don’t have a half table.

Comments

Now 11 teams in GP July event.

* 1. Tournament Secretary Michael Byrne

Ben Franks

This was held on Sunday December 3rd at Manchester Bridge Club. 21 pairs took part, with two drop out pairs on the day. The event was run by Nicholas Greer, and there was a lot of support from the host club, many of whose members took part. I did a lot of work contacting people with “save the date” emails and this increased entries from 12 pairs to 21.

Winners were Eddie Thornton-Chan and Tony Hodgson with a fantastic score of 65.29%. The other qualifiers for the Corwen Trophy were Rhona Goldenfield/Kath Nelson, Alan Mould/John Holland and Rodney Lighton/Tom Dessain

Cantor Cup

This was run by Susan Triggs, and I was very grateful that she took this on. The event attracted 14 pairs, which was a good attendance in the context of having to find people that were willing to play but satisfied the entry requirements (of being beginners or new to competitions).

Gazette Trophy

This was held on Sunday 4th February at Manchester Bridge Club following the unavailability of Altrincham bridge club. 8 teams of 8 competed (64 players in total) but only 3 clubs were represented out of the 12 we have in Manchester which is a great shame.

The winners were Bramhall and Cheadle Bridge Centre A who won by nearly a match, special shout goes to Manchester C that came joint 3rd, this featured a number of long standing members of our association as well as some less experienced members of the club, which was heartening to see.

(BCBC A team went on to scrape through the Garden Cities regional qualifier in May on a split tie, they will play in the final on Saturday 1st June.

I am stepping down as Tournament Secretary this year. Although I enjoy running and contributing to the competitions, I am not normally able to attend them. This year I was away playing bridge in America during the Ben Franks, playing in trials during the Gazette Trophy, and playing in the Lederer during the Cantor Cup (all of which is work). I don’t think this is a long term sustainable plan so I must reluctantly let someone else take over.

* 1. Congress Secretary Barbara Lewis

The Manchester Congress returned to face-to-face on January 6th and 7th 2024, after 3 years on-line.

It was held at the Cresta Court hotel in Altrincham and was organised and run by Oliver Cowan in conjunction with MCBA representatives.

The Pairs attracted 23 ½ tables and the Teams 24 tables. A non-expert pairs held on Sunday afternoon was supported by 10 ½ tables. No students/juniors played – disappointing.

The TD for the main events was Stuart Davies. Stuart and Oliver brought all the tables, cloths, bidding boxes, bridgemates and all the boards/cards - that Stuart had dealt. The non-expert event was directed by Victor Ridding with tables, boards and bridgemates from Bramhall.

The weekend was generally excellent, and the bridge deemed to be successful. There were a few issues to be dealt with before 2025 relating to ’housekeeping’ at the hotel and the poor behaviour of some of the players.

Oliver Cowan has agreed to organise the congress for 2025. This is now on the EBU calendar for 4th and 5th January. Once again, it will be a black pointed congress with multiple pairs on Saturday and for the first time Swiss teams on Sunday. The Cresta Court hotel has been booked for the event.

* 1. Chair of Selectors (John Roberts, sec)

The current committee is John Roberts (Secretary), Catherine Draper, Roger Hopton and Alec Smalley. Adam Wiseberg resigned as chairman at the end of August last year and the committee decided to operate without a chairman for the remainder of the year until the next AGM. Catherine, Roger and Alec are all prepared to stand for next year, but John is resigning from the committee as from the date of the AGM (30th May). There are therefore two vacancies on the committee which need to be filled.

The absence of a Match Secretary for the MCBA has also posed problems. The work of the Match Secretary has been done as far as possible this year by the Selection Committee.

***Availability of Players***

The main issue faced by the selectors over the past year has been the lack of availability of players. This started with Covid but has not improved since the end of the pandemic. Both on-line and F2F events have been affected. It has been difficult to get adequate availabilities for county events but particularly the NBL and the Presidents Cup. This is expected to continue as both of these events will continue to be on-line. The Manchester Lancashire match, although F2F has also proved difficult. Only just enough players were available to produce the 6 pairs required for the open event. Th Jack High event was a lot worse, attracting only 2 players.

Since the last report to the AGM in May 2022, the Selection Committee has been involved with selection for the following events :

***Tollemache Qualifier and Final***

The Committee selected teams for both the Tollemache Qualifier and final. The qualifier was played on-line on the Realbridge platform in Nov 2023. Manchester won their group and thus qualified for the final, which was held face to face in February 2024 in Coventry. The team selected for the final was:

Allec Smalley (Capt) and Tom Slater

John Holland and Alan Mould

Jeff Morris and John Hassett

Phil Taylor and Nicholas Greer

Rhona Goldenfield (Travelling Reserve)

The selectors are pleased to report that Manchester, for the second successive year won the event. They won 6 of their 7 matches and drew the other. The Committee extends its congratulations to all the players.

***Corwen Trophy***

The Ben Franks Trophy is the qualifying event for this, so the selectors are only minimally involved. The top four pairs with Manchester allegiance qualify and in the event of non-availability the next highest placed pair qualify, with the proviso that they must have scored at least 50% in the Ben Franks qualifier.

In last year’s event three pairs qualified to play. Martin Taylor and Justin Hackett were our leading pair, finishing 23rd of 87 pairs. This year’s Corwen will be held face to face in Staffordshire on 15/16 June. The 4 leading pairs in the Ben Franks are all able to play and were therefore selected. They are :

Eddie Thornton Chan and Tony Hodgson

Kath Nelson and Rhona Goldenfield

Alan Mould and John Holland

Rodney Lighton and Tom Dessain

***Inter-County National Bridge League Finals (C Division)***

Manchester won the C Division of the Northern Bridge league last year. As a result, they will play in the Inter-County National Finals on June 2nd 2024. The event will be played on the RealBridge platform.

The teams that has been selected is :

Gil Fletcher (Capt) and Richard Acaster

Gordon Bickley and Ann Farquhar

Sally Leigh Judith Dunkerley

Karen Jones and Ann Thornton

***Manchester Lancashire Match***

This is proposed to be two teams of 6 pairs. One team to be an open team of the best available players. The other team would be 6 pairs with an NGS rating of around Jack high or lower.

The open team has been selected, but not enough players have made themselves available for the Jack high team. The Selection Committee is looking at ways of attracting players.

***Presidents Cup***

Last year the Presidents Cup was held on-line over two days on June 24/25 2023 on the RealBridge platform. Because of the low availability of players, Manchester fielded only one team and will do the same this year.

Last Year Manchester finished second of 8 teams well behind the winners, Yorkshire.

This year the event will be held on 6/7 July and the committee is in the process of selection. It is expected to be difficult to find available players .

***Northern Bridge League***

The Northern Bridge League is set to continue on-line (RealBridge) during the months of July to October 2024. Because of availability difficulties last year, Manchester has decided to field only one team this year (in the B Division). Selection for the first two matches (July and August) will start soon.

**Comments**

Lancashire match now happening. Lots of clubs have pairs playing.

Presidents Cup – will have to withdraw. There are 3 events in 3 weeks (Lancs match, Presidents Cup, NBL).

Due to Irene at least 10 names have been added to the C division.

KR: It is at club level who encourage people to apply for the county.

JR: We need people with club contacts on the SC.

Second Lancs match scheduled for November will now take place next year.(Lancs did not want it this year)

* 1. Match Secretary (Position vacant)

Subsumed into Selection Committee report above.

* 1. EBU Shareholders Alec Smalley, Jeff Morris, Alan Mould

AGM EBU

 -took place on 29th November 2023 at Royal National Hotel London

35 County Delegates attended.

Various awards made Gillian Fawcett -Silver Award

Clive Owen -Bronze Award

Sandra Claridge -Tony Priday Award

Lesley Millet -Dimmie Fleming Award

Chairman's Report

Ian Payn had resigned as Chairman during 2023 and Adrian Darnell had taken over and submitted a Chairman's report to the meeting. Main features- Accounts show a surplus of almost £25000 and disciplinary cases relating to cheating have dropped. New inexperienced player  procedure has led to a number of players accepting a sanction without publicity and without costly and time consuming hearings.

Board Elections

Three places on Board were contested by five nominations.

Result- current directors Adrian Darnell, Paul Gibbons and Ian Sidgwick were all re-elected and David Parry and Nicky Bainbridge who have been critical of the policies of the EBU Board failed to get elected.

So as David Parry was not elected to the Board there was only one candidate for Chair-Adrian Darnell was duly elected and similarly as Nicky Bainbridge failed to be elected to the Board Tony Russ was elected as Vice Chair.

Mention was made of a planned

FESTIVAL  OF BRIDGE in collaboration with clubs and counties for September 2024

MEMBERSHIP DEVELOPMENT -Tim Anderson who is currently part-time will be retiring from this role at the end of 2023.

Date of Next AGM

Wednesday 27th November 2024

**Comments**

JKM: Things have been happening since the AGM. The EBU have fallen out with EBED. JKM went through the history of the dispute.

AM: It is difficult to ascertain what actually happened given the differing reports from the two sides.

* 1. Publicity Officer Position vacant

No report

* 1. Schools, Youth & Teachers Liaison Post Vacant

**Comments**

JKM reported on youth. Joan Bennett (youth matters for the EBU). Running quite a lot of things online. Was hoping to get Tom Dessain to get Manchester Grammar involved.

Also grandparents and children online league

JKM has Joan Bennett’s contact details.

Weekend event for players under 21.

* 1. Webmasters Rodney Lighton & Espen Gisvold

**News website**

The MCBA web site is visited on average this year by 49 people per day, this is slightly up on last year.

Thanks to those who have contributed deals for the Deal of the Week feature.

The Player of the Year competition is not yet complete at the time of this report, but John Holland will win the expert category and Barbara Eastabrook and Karen Jones will be joint winners of the non-expert category.

I intend to change the scoring for the expert category next year to reflect the general reduction in entrants that we have had for events.

**Results & Registration website**

The site has been redesigned to get the same look and feel as the main MCBA web site. It is now use solely for the purpose of Registration to events, presentation of Results and as a database for emailing members about registration to events. Since last year’s AGM over 45 bulk emails have been sent. The frequency has fallen and is now at a more sustainable level of 2 or so bulk email shots sent a month.

4.17 Festival of Bridge Espen Gisvold

The county is at the moment planning two events - Twin Town Tournament and a promotional event at the Trafford Centre. The suggested SIMS has been canceled as EBED has a Festival of Bridge SIMS 2nd - 5th September and the clubs will be encouraged to join these events.

**Twin Town Tournament**

15 French clubs have been contacted, and two have replied that they will participate. I’m working on calling every French Club. The French Bridge Federation has been very helpful in creating our French promotional material. Shireen Mohandes of RealBridge has been instrumental in creating the English promotional material. I have every reason to believe that we will get a good turnout for the event.

**Promotional event at the Trafford Centre**

At present we have managed to recruit 5 volunteers to play and one to be an “usher”. Before we can progress with this event, we need 3 more to play and one more as an “usher”. As soon as this is in place, the work with the event will proceed. Until then the event is hanging in the balance.

The main events of the festival are to be run by the clubs, and most clubs are planning some sort of activity. The EBU map (<https://www.ebu.co.uk/festival/map>

**Comments**

ABC, MBC, Bramhall, and Besses are doing things for the festival of Bridge.

1. **Player of the Year and League Division Winners**

The Player of the Year has been won by:

* Expert Category: John Holland
* Non-expert Category: Barbara Eastabrook and Karen Jones

The League was online by default and had 4 divisions. The winners were:

* Division 1 The Griffins
* Division 2 The North Star
* Division 3 Four Dummies
* Division 4 The Transfers

Irene was presented with a gift from MCBA for her long service. KC gave a speech outlining her contribution for the county and thanks for her tireless work.

1. **Election of President**

Kevin Comrie was elected unopposed.

1. **Election of Executive** 
   1. Chair

No nominations.

* 1. Vice-chair

Alec Smalley was elected unopposed.

* 1. Secretary

Alan Mould was elected unopposed.

* 1. Treasurer

Joy Blakey was elected unopposed.

* 1. Membership Secretary

Gordon Bickley was elected unopposed.

* 1. League Secretary

Royce Alexander was elected unopposed.

* 1. Green Point Secretary

Rhona Goldenfield was elected unopposed.

* 1. Tournament Secretary

Ann Thornton was elected unopposed.

Barbara Lewis will run the Ben Franks

Irene Everett will run the Gazette Trophy

Susan Triggs will run the Cantor Cup

* 1. Congress Secretary

Barbara Lewis was elected unopposed.

* 1. Higson Cup and Plate secretary

Paul Beckwith was elected unopposed.

* 1. Goldstone Trophy Secretary

Roger Hopton was elected unopposed.

* 1. Publicity Secretary

Espen Gisvold was elected unopposed.

1. **Election of Other Officers** 
   1. EBU Shareholders

Alec Smalley, Jeff Morris and Alan Mould were elected unopposed.

* 1. Schools, Youth and Teachers Liaison Officer

Raymond Semp volunteered to take on this role. He was elected unopposed.

* 1. Webmasters

Rodney Lighton and Espen Gisvold were elected unopposed.

* 1. Accounts Preparer

Howard Stubbings was elected as accountant.

* 1. Handbook Editor

This post was wound up at the last AGM.

* 1. Selection Committee

Roger Hopton, Catherine Draper, Rob Ferrari, Philip Taylor and Alec Smalley were elected unopposed.

AS pointed out that what is needed on the SC was people who were involved in the clubs. This SC is dominated by people involved at the higher levels.

RA volunteered to be match secretary. The meeting thanked him greatly. RA was proposed and seconded as a selector.

The above 6 were elected unopposed.

* 1. Conduct Committee

Irene Davies, Gordon Bickley, Royce Alexander, Jeff Morris, Mike Wood, Alec Smalley, Michael Byrne, Kevin Comrie and Alan Mould were elected unopposed.

The Committee has no fixed size.

* 1. Disciplinary Committee

Joy Blakey, Rodney Lighton, John Holland and Espen Gisvold were elected unopposed.

The Committee has no fixed size.

* 1. Tournament Committee

This committee is now defunct.

1. **Motions tabled Before the AGM**

None received.

**Raymond Semp had to leave at this point and thus the meeting became inquorate. All further items were therefore discussions and any votes indicative only and non-binding.**

1. **MCBA Events in 2023-24 (Face to Face or Online)**
   1. League
      1. F2F or online default

RA spoke of the history of last year and the survey that was done. Responses from 73 people. 3 camps: F2F, online, either. Exec considered various options. Voted by 4-3 to keep online default. Numbers have still come down. Down to 36 teams. Idea of summer F2F league – vote was 6-1.

AM proposed the default be F2F. GB and AS agreed.

GH suggested that people playing was important, not the format.

JS suggested a newcomers league again which will be F2F. The meeting thought this would be a good idea. A discussion as to how to arrange this took place. Suggestion is to start the work now and work over the summer.

Action: To arrange a newcomers F2F league for 2024-25

Indicative vote on 2024-25 general league:

Default F2F: 8, Default online: 6.

* + 1. Summer League

11 teams entered.

* 1. Higson Cup and Plate
     1. F2F or online default
     2. Future of the Event, including handicap

These decisions were deferred to the Executive.

* 1. Goldstone Trophy

No change to this year (online by default until the final, which is F2F in a MCBA club)

* 1. Ben Franks Trophy

F2F

* 1. Green Point Events

F2F

* 1. Congress

F2F

* 1. Intermediate events including the Cantor Cup

F2F

* 1. Gazette Trophy

F2F

* 1. Lancashire matches

F2F

* 1. Other Events

None

1. **Any Other Business**

None raised.

1. **Date and venue of next AGM**

Deferred to the Executive.

A vote of thanks was given to the chair.

Meeting ended 21:45