



**Minutes of the MCBA Annual General Meeting  
held on Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> May 2026 at 7:00pm  
at Ashton & District Bridge Club & Online via Zoom  
(hybrid meeting)**

**Present**

Gordon Bickley, Alan Mould, Alec Smalley, Barbara Lewis, John Holland, Michael Byrne, Raymond Semp, Ann Thornton, Rob Ferrari, Kevin Comrie, Celia Comrie, Rhona Goldenfield, Daniel Kelsall, Royce Alexander, Susan Triggs, Paul Beckwith, David Ninnis, Chris Rippin, Jenny Rippin, David Sarabowski, Irene Davies, Joy Blakey, Jeff Smith.

**1. Apologies**

Rodney Lighton, Irving Blakey, Howard Rosemarine, Sheila Wimbleton, Espen Gisvold, Roger Hopton.

**2. Minutes of Last AGM held 11<sup>th</sup> June 2025**

Paper attached: previous year's AGM minutes

**3. Accuracy and Matters Arising**

- 3.1. Accuracy  
Accepted as a true and correct record
- 3.2. No matters arising

**4. Reports from Officers**

(Paper 1 attached: Reports of Officers)

The officer reports were taken "by exception". That is, they were assumed to have been read and were not addressed unless members present wished to raise questions concerning any of them.

4.1. Chair

Gordon Bickley

In this, my first year in the role, I have tended to let things continue as they have previously done to help me learn the ropes. I am indebted to the other members of the Executive for their extensive knowledge of both current and historical aspects of county activities and the county's relationship with the EBU.

The EBU has instigated County Chairs meetings via Zoom and I have had the unfortunate pleasure of attending a couple of these without, so far, uttering a word. Each is subject-related but there is a tendency for them to go somewhat off piste at times. The worth of the meetings is not necessarily in the content discussed but hearing of the activities of other counties, particularly in the context of things which have worked well elsewhere from which we might benefit.

Members will recall that at the last AGM the decision was taken to instigate a F2F league and an online league, backed up by Newcomers leagues for those who have learnt recently and might make the transition, in time, to the F2F league. The League Secretary will report more fully on how this has worked. The time and effort which Royce puts in on our behalf is immeasurable.

Several of our clubs run teaching programmes. These really are the life blood from which we can gain additional members. The number of existing players joining our clubs I perceive to be quite low, with the national profile relating to arrivals and departures being skewed heavily towards the latter. Teaching and integrating students into supervised play, thence to other club activities really is the only way forward. Thus, I am indebted to those in our clubs who undertake this work.

Indeed, for all the high level activity undertaken by a small percentage of our members, it is clubs and their members who are the mainstay of bridge activity, not just in our county, but every single county across the county. I am regularly reminded that clubs cater for a wide range of abilities and perform a social function for many. Those who run our clubs, week in, week out deserve our gratitude.

Our county activities continue to be well organised and supported. In addition to those who have undertaken the organisation of these events it is well worth mentioning Rachel Hardcastle and Nita Shankra for taking over the Cantor Cup (an event, I understand, which was enjoyed by all) and Daniel Kelsall who has stepped into Rhona Goldenfield's shoes to run our Green Pointed events. Irene Davies has decided to step down from running the Gazette Cup and I may have inadvertently said I would run it – but I'm happy to have this contradicted!

The annual match v Lancashire was held again, this time at Manchester BC, with both the Open team and the Club team not faring very well overall. This year we participated in Divisions A and B of the Northern Bridge League and will continue to do so in 2026. Much as I would like to see a team in the C division this year, whilst it continues to be run on Realbridge playing 42/49 boards in front of a computer screen seems to be enjoyed by a decreasing number, quite understandably. Alas, the will to get 8 people together for 4 matches is lacking. Oh, for those cakes at Bradford and Ilkley!

Our members continue to support EBU activities at various levels, including the Pachabo Cup, Crockfords and the Hubert Phillips Bowl. Our team of Michael Byrne, Gary Hyett, Alec Smalley and Kieran Dyke, with Tom Slater in earlier rounds, came 2nd in the Crockfords Final and Michael Byrne was in the winning team in the Mixed Teams of the Hubert Phillips Bowl. Manchester players continue to represent England at various levels.

In addition to our Executive and our clubs are others who undertake tasks on behalf of all of us and deserve our thanks. Rodney Lighton maintains our website very efficiently and we continue to be grateful to Espen Gisvold who looks after Manchester Events, even though he would welcome a volunteer to relieve him of these duties!

4.2. Secretary Alan Mould

The Executive has met once this year, but there have been frequent email conversations dealing with a number of issues. There has been the usual correspondence from the EBU.

One jarring aspect is that our number of shareholders has been reduced from 3 to 2. This is because the EBU “cleansed” its database of members and removed anyone who had not played in over a year. The net result was the “loss” from MCBA of several hundred members. Can I please urge all clubs to stocktake their membership data held by the EBU, removing people who no longer play for whatever reason and making sure that new players are in the database. Thank you.

The county has sadly received a formal complaint this season concerning two of our members. A Conduct Committee was raised in line with the Schedule of Disciplinary Procedures. The Conduct Committee determined that the complaint was justified and issued a “verbal warning” which was accepted by all parties. The matter is thus now closed.

Can I make a plea for any member to step forward and get up a role within the county. In particular, Espen Gisvold resigned as webmaster of the bridgewebs website at the last AGM and there was no one to replace him. He has kindly continued to perform the role this year, but the county cannot lean on his generosity forever. We are desperate for a new webmaster. Please contact me if you have an interest in this role.

4.3. Treasurer Joy Blakey

The finances of the County remain stable. There are currently no debtors or creditors. Day to day running of events, entries to National events and other financial activities are all well controlled. It is pleasing to see new young people coming forward to run different events, all understanding the necessity of full disclosure of financial matters.

Once again, the running of the Manchester Congress was outsourced and all we had to do was receive some income from the event.

In June our One Year Fixed Rate Bond will mature and it is my intention to reinvest the net amount of £11,000 for another year and put the interest earned into the current account.

My thanks and gratitude to Howard Stubbings for so carefully scrutinising my book-keeping, record keeping and my tournament reports and for miraculously producing the accounts which are attached.

4.4. Membership Secretary Gordon Bickley

There has been a small drop in the numbers provided by the EBU when the figures of 1,198 and 16 members who pay directly and the 58 student members are added together (1,272 compared with 1,322 last year). The overall number includes 94 members whose primary club of allegiance is outside Manchester. Also, the figures include all players who show Bury as their club of primary allegiance, which for MCBA purposes is outside our area. It may be possible for some of those individuals (the 94) to change their club of primary allegiance and this is something I will be addressing. Given our urban setting, there are players who may even have primary membership in Lancashire, Cheshire, Yorkshire or Derbyshire. Trying to establish the precise numbers is far from simple arithmetic. To give but one example of reconciliation problems, our list of members includes a person with an allegiance to Hemel Hempstead BC whose home address is in Paphos. Of course, there are others with MCBA allegiance who no longer play or reside in our area. Swings and roundabouts.

During the year the EBU informed us that the number of members with primary allegiance had dropped below 1,000, the effect being that our shareholders dropped from 3 to 2. The EBU figures were queried and we received satisfactory explanations. Some work is still required with clubs to ensure that their membership lists are up-to-date, an action to be undertaken over the summer months. Given the uncertainty in the data it is difficult to wholly reconcile the numbers.

To continue the theme from last year's report, the latest figures show that we now have five members with an NGS ranking of ace of spades. With regard to Masterpoint rankings we have 28 players with a Grand Master ranking, 17 of whom are Premier Grand Masters.

	TOTAL	TOTAL	TOTAL	TOTAL	TOTAL	TOTAL	TOTAL
Type of Member	23/2/21	19/10/21	8/5/22	7/5/23	11/5/24	21/5/25	6/5/26
P2P	1396	1435	1485	1307	1249	1283	1198
DIRECT	45	42	39	31	27	19	16

STUDENTS	20	0	5	39	41	20	58
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- 4.5. League Secretary Royce Alexander  
 The previous three AGMs debated whether the main League should continue with a Default of Online (which it did in June 2023) or change to a Default of Face-to-Face (which it did in May 2024), or change to separate F2F & Online Leagues (which it did in June 2025). The 2025 AGM minutes include a record of the long debate before this decision was taken.

Meanwhile, entries were being taken for the 2025 Summer F2F League. 13 entries were received, but 2 withdrew without starting, so there were effectively 11 teams (the same as in 2024) in 2 Divisions playing F2F matches between May & September.

The main 2025-26 Manchester League (now F2F) received 13 entries, but then two changed their minds leaving 11 teams. For the long winter period, playing just 4 or 5 games did not seem enough, so I devised and offered to the teams 6 options. Overall they preferred the option whereby Division 1 had five teams playing 8 matches home & away and Division 2 had six teams playing 5 matches.

The new 2025-26 Manchester Online League received 20 entries who were grouped into 3 Divisions. There was one withdrawal halfway-through (for understandable medical reasons) that was dealt with using the Mould formula in order to complete the league table.

In the previous season, the single Manchester League (with F2F Default) had 30 entries, but 3 withdrawals. So entries were slightly better this year.

The Newcomers League attracted 13 teams (the same as the previous year) and we had one division of 7 teams and another division of 6 teams.

The winners of these competitions were:

F2F Summer League Division 1: Grasshoppers

F2F Summer League Division 2: Ashton Aces

Manchester League Division 1: St Titus (unless they lose their last match 29-1 or worse)

Manchester League Division 2: Petersfield (unless "Win with a 2" score 59/60)

Manchester Online League Division 1: Inverted Minors

Manchester Online League Division 2: Help!

Manchester Online League Division 3: Trafford Tigers (who scored 94.41 / 100 VPs)

4.6. Higson Cup Secretary Paul Beckwith

The following is my summary of the event overall including the qualifying rounds and the Finals.

The number of teams entered this year was down again this year (from 22 last year to 19 this time round).

Accordingly, the teams played in 6 round robin groups to give everyone 2 matches and qualify the 1st placed team for the Cup and the 2nd placed into the Plate (one group had 4 teams so an extra match, with 2nd and 3rd into the Plate).

The main bugbear for this phase was that it is no longer possible to give the teams handicaps based on which league division they are in as with only 2 F2F divisions and 3 online divisions it is clear that the standard varies a lot now within any given division, and therefore this year a subjective rating was allocated by myself at the outset (something I would prefer not to have to do).

In any event following the previous year's principle of seeding a strong team into each group, most of the seeds then won through to contest the Cup, which produced two finals with not that much handicap to be added to the match scores on the day, and an event that I think the majority enjoyed.

However, from an administration point of view, the above does seem somewhat contrived and as in previous years the adding of the handicaps to the individual match scores at the end is a messy process which can lead to errors on the day, when the pressure is on to produce a result.

I think the time has come to have a rethink about what we want the Competition to be in the future.

Starting from the standpoint that sufficient teams are still enthusiastic for a multi team event at the end of April, then I would suggest that with the numbers we are now seeing there is hardly any need to have a qualifying process. If we ran the event as two competitions with open entry for the Cup, and a limit on the Plate based on no team having a player above a set grade (possibly as a Jack high event or similar) then I would say you could dispense with handicaps altogether.

If the numbers looked as if they might be too many in either, then a single KO round might be appropriate.

4.7. Goldstone Trophy Secretary Roger Hopton

15 teams entered the Goldstone for the 2025/2026 season

One match wasn't played and a walk over given

Other than that all matches were completed on time

There are questions to be considered:-

1. Not having the final at a venue paid for by the league.
2. The final should be the same format (online/F2F) as the rest of the competition.
3. Whether the Goldstone should have the same online or F2F matches as the Pachabo for which it is qualifying for which currently fluctuates between on line and F2F.
4. Whether there should be a prize for the winning team

4.8. Green Point Secretary

Daniel Kelsall

The two green pointed events this year attracted 17 tables. These entry numbers are similar to last year and resulted in a modest profit in each case. Both events benefitted hugely from Joan Lewis's help and support.

Green Point Swiss Teams

The annual Green Point Swiss Teams event saw seventeen teams compete on Sunday 27th July 2025 at Altrincham. The event was organised by Rhona Goldenfield and directed by Stuart Davies. The team of Rhona Goldenfield, Raymond Semp, Joy and Irving Blakey were undefeated and won the event by 5 VPs.

Green Point Swiss Pairs

The annual Green Point Swiss Pairs was held at Altrincham on 28th February 2025 with 34 pairs competing. The event was organised by Daniel Kelsall and directed by Jonathan Lillycrop. Congratulations to Nick Woodcock and Sue Fjortof from Preston who won by a fair margin remaining undefeated over their seven matches.

4.9. Tournament Secretary

Ann Thornton

Ben Franks

The Ben Franks Trophy was held on Sunday 7th December 2025 at Bramhall Village Club. A good entry of 27 pairs played 2 sessions. The event was directed very efficiently by Jeff Smith. The winners were Martin Taylor and Justin Hackett. The top 4 pairs qualified to represent Manchester in the Corwen Trophy to be held on May 30th and 31st 2026 in Telford (previously planned for Nottingham). MCBA extends its thanks to Barbara Lewis for organising another successful and enjoyable Ben Franks event, to everyone involved and to BCHBC for their support.

Cantor Cup

The Cantor Cup was held on Sunday 22nd February 2026 at Bramhall Village Club. The event was very well supported with 24 pairs entered (12 tables). The event was directed very efficiently by Nicholas Greer. The winners were Jean Grylls and Sue Syder (BCHBC), in second place were Joanna Powell and Caroline Cairns (A&DistrictBC) and in third place Usha Murugan and Anne Jerroid (TMBC) and accurately

reflects the diverse entry and representation from clubs across the county. There was positive feedback from players, the many helpers involved and from the Cantor family. MCBA extends its' thanks to Rachel Hardcastle and Nita Shankar for their well organised successful event.

#### The Gazette Cup

The Gazette Cup, the county's inter club teams of eight competition which qualifies for the EBU's Garden Cities, event was held on Sunday 15th March 2026 at Altrincham. The event was directed very efficiently by Jonathan Lillicrop. There were 12 teams entered with good representation from clubs across the county. The winners were BCHBC, Team Lighton: Tom Dessain, Rodney Leighton, Alec Smalley, Tom Slater, Michael Byrne, Gary Hyett, Gideon Harvey and Daniel Kelsall: in second place BCHBC, Team Thornton: in third place TMBC, Manchester Morris. MCBA extends its' thanks to Irene Davies for her organisation, to ABC for their support and to everyone involved in making this event so successful.

- 4.10. Congress Secretary Barbara Lewis  
The MCBA congress was held on January 3rd and 4th 2026, organised in conjunction with Oliver Cowan (for the 3rd time). The venue was a new one, the Manchester Airport Hotel, Wilmslow.

41 Pairs played on Saturday and 17 Teams on Sunday. 13 pairs entered the Kevin Comrie cup on Sunday. This was fewer players than 2024 - 47 pairs, 24 teams, 21 KC pairs: (2025 was held on-line due to the sudden unavailability of the hotel venue that had been booked).

The Airport hotel, car parking and playing area were all excellent. There were a few housekeeping issues that can be resolved for the 2027 Congress.

Oliver recruited the main TD and brought most of the equipment and boards: some tables came from a local club.

The Kevin Comrie cup was run by Brian Perry who brought his own equipment and a set of boards, and prizes for this event were donated.

The same venue has been booked by Oliver, for January 2nd and 3rd 2027. The congress will continue to be black pointed.

- 4.11. Chair of Selectors Alec Smalley  
The 2025-26 Selection Committee continued to be:  
Alec Smalley (Chair), Royce Alexander (Secretary), Robert Ferrari, Catherine Draper, Phil Taylor, Roger Hopton

Numerous emails were sent out to determine players' availabilities and a few meetings were held via ZOOM to discuss, select and re-select teams for the various events.

### F2F Friendly vs Lancashire

This annual friendly match at Manchester Bridge Club on June 29<sup>th</sup> 2025 involved a 6 pairs Open team and a 6 pairs Jack High team.

The open team was Rhona Goldenfield/Kath Nelson, Irving and Joy Blakey, Eddie Thornton-Chan/Tony Hodgson, Michael Hart/Pearl Fielding, Raymond Semp/John Hassett, Neil Thomas/David Barton. Joy and Irving were the best pair on cross-imps.

The Jack High team was Ann Thornton/Peter Green, Ann Wood/Dee Connolly, Howard Rosemarine/Adrian Shiers, Rachel Hardcastle/Phil Kemp + morning session Anne Naylor/John Commons, Usha Murugan/Graham Hobbs, afternoon session Bruce Moreman/Brian Thompson, Stephen Dauncey/Jackie O'Donnell. Ann and Dee were Manchester's best pair on cross-imps.

Lancashire won both events comfortably, but the Jack High match introduced several Newcomers League players to County level bridge.

### Presidents Cup

Having withdrawn from the previous year's competition, Manchester returned to this annual inter county teams of eight held online on RealBridge on the weekend of 12-13th July, 2025.

Manchester finished fifth of the seven teams. Pairs participating were Leslie Klein/David Barton, Roger Hopton/Eddie Thornton-Chan, Joy & Irving Blakey, Kath Nelson/Rhona Goldenfield, Gary Hyett/Raymond Semp, Royce Alexander/Raymond Semp, Richard Acaster/Gil Fletcher. Leslie and David were our best pair on the cross imps.

### Northern Bridge League

Having fielded just one B team in 2024, Manchester entered A & B division teams again for this inter county teams of 8 event played on Realbridge on 4 Saturdays from July to October.

With availabilities stretched at times, some completely new partnerships were created. Both A and B teams eventually finished 5<sup>th</sup> in their Divisions

In the A division, the pairs were Rhona Goldenfield/David Barton, Raymond Semp/Robert Ferrari, Rhona Goldenfield/Kath Nelson, David Barton/Robert Ferrari, Joy & Irving Blakey, Karen Reissmann/Irene Davies, John Stell/Andy Green, Royce Alexander/Raymond Semp, Andy Brocklehurst/David Sarabowski, Royce Alexander/Peter Foster, Roger Hopton/David Fussell

In the B division, the pairs were Eve Lighthill/David Sarabowski, Karen Jones/Barbara Eastabrook, Ann Thornton/Chris Hine, Gordon Bickley/Ann Farquhar. Eddie Thornton-Chan/Tony Hodgson, David

Fussell/Roger Hopton, Karen Reissmann/Irene Davies, Richard Acaster/Gilbert Fletcher, Alan Tranter/Andy Burnett

#### Tollemache Qualifier

The inter counties teams of eight Qualifier was played on RealBridge over the weekend of November 8<sup>th</sup> - 9<sup>th</sup> 2025. Manchester finished 7<sup>th</sup> in their group (with 4 teams qualifying).

Michael Byrne/Gary Hyett, David Barton/Alec Smalley, and Rhona Goldenfield/Kath Nelson all played throughout, with the 4<sup>th</sup> pair role being covered by Gideon Harvey/Daniel Kelsall, Catherine Draper/Andrew Woodcock, Neil Thomas/Rodney Lighton/Alan Mould.

#### Future Matches:

##### Friendly vs Lancashire

Sunday 28 June, 2026: F2F friendly vs Lancashire at Bolton Bridge Club

1 Open Team of 12 + 1 Jack High Team of 12+.

##### Presidents Cup

We intend to field one team in this inter county teams of 8 event played on Realbridge over Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> – Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> July 2026.

##### Northern Bridge League

Saturdays July 11, August 15, September 12, October 17 on Realbridge

We will enter A & B teams and (if there is enough interest) a C team in this inter county teams of 8 event

#### **Comments**

MB raised comments about the Selection Committee and in particular the Tollemache. For the Tollemache the selectors stated remit is to select the best team, but instead they select the team from those who say they are available. They should select the strongest team.

BL: you end up with the same team.

GB: I agree with Michael.

RA: We did select the team, but that was not the team that played. Someone who was available was no longer available. The line up was very bitty. It is very difficult.

JB: They charge a fortune for all these events and are not giving a service to the players.

AS: If you just select the strongest team then you end up having 2 or 3 meetings instead of 1, as players who said they couldn't or don't want to play just decline.

AS: 3 of the SC members are here and have noted the feeling of the meeting and will take it on board.

ST: Very pleased to see in Gordon's report about all the work that people in local clubs are doing. This group should do a lot more to support the local clubs – we should be doing more of that.

GB: We need to support the local clubs. 95% of our nearly 1000 members only want to play in clubs.

ST: The EBU do try to have meetings ever so often about how to support the clubs. The county should be doing things like that.

GB: What examples do you have in mind?

ST: Wide range of things such as expertise such as improving websites and using Canva.

BL: Mary Cousins of the EBU is doing this. The EBU have much more knowledge of this.

AS: If its local knowledge then we can hope.

GB: We will do whatever we can to help any club in the county. Please ask us.

Best point of contact is the secretary (Alan Mould).

DS asked for the Ben Beever trophy to be promoted on the county. Send copy to AM.

GB raised the issue that the county only has 3 county directors. No one any higher than that.

A lengthy discussion ensued about whether the county should be willing to pay people to go on the county level director's course (the fee is £275). It was pointed out that the course concentrates on the rules and judgement calls, and nothing is done on the IT issues – how to set up movements etc.

JS offered to have people shadow him at an event or to provide a presentation to the county on these matters.

The meeting thanked him warmly for the generous offer.

The meeting felt that if the county was paying the fee then there should be an agreement to run a certain number of MCBA events for a certain number of years.

It was agreed that:

**Action:** That MCBA canvas for members who wish to go on the county director's course with MCBA to pay the fee. In return such members will agree to run a number of MCBA events in the future (to be determined).

4.12. Match Secretary Royce Alexander  
Report the same as Chair of Selectors

4.13. EBU Shareholders Alec Smalley, Jeff Morris, Alan Mould  
I attended the AGM of the EBU on 26th November 2025 (on-line).  
The chair reported on the cleaning of clubs' membership databases (which MCBA has asked clubs to do) – this reduces numbers of non-active players.



**7. Election of President** (Paper 5 attached: MCBA AGM 2026)

**8. Election of Executive** (Paper 5 attached: MCBA AGM 2026)

- 8.1. Chair
- 8.2. Vice-chair
- 8.3. Secretary
- 8.4. Treasurer
- 8.5. Membership Secretary
- 8.6. League Secretary
- 8.7. Green Point Secretary
- 8.8. Tournament Secretary
- 8.9. Congress Secretary
- 8.10. Higson Cup and Plate Secretary
- 8.11. Goldstone Trophy Secretary
- 8.12. Publicity Secretary

**9. Election of Other Officers** (Paper 5 attached: MCBA AGM 2026)

- 9.1. EBU Shareholders
- 9.2. Schools, Youth and Teachers Liaison Officer
- 9.3. Webmasters
- 9.4. Accountant
- 9.5. Selection Committee
- 9.6. Conduct Committee
- 9.7. Disciplinary Committee
- 9.8. Tournament Committee

### **Comments**

DS to contact David Fernley about taking over from Espen Gisvold.

**10. Motions tabled Before the AGM**

None received

**11. MCBA Events in 2026-27 (Face to face or Online Default)**

- 11.1. League  
RA spoke to the league.

Summer league. Taking entries. So far 11 teams (had 13 last year). Start from June 1

Main league

Last year it had dropped to 30 teams and was worried it would drop to 15. There is just a divide between teams who want F2F and those who want online. So set up parallel leagues to "stop the rot". 3 online divisions (21 teams) and was 13 F2F but dropped to 11 - bad number. Div 1 played 2 x RR. Second division has an ability gap but the numbers are not big enough to do anything else. Sure there are F2F teams out there and RA hopes to contact them over the summer. These teams have been pushed out over Covid and online issues. If in a year's time it is not working I will think again, but would like to have a year to try and get more teams.

GB: Ashton BC team in the 2<sup>nd</sup> division don't want to play again because of the chasm in Div 2. We have the Newcomer's league – could these be Divs 3 and 4 of the F2F league.

Discussion ensued of players too experienced for the Newcomers and teams with 2 many pairs (10-11 or so).

RA: Attractive in principle for Newcomers A to become Div 3, but don't know whether this would scare them off or not. Newcomers Div B had not played teams before, so teachers help them calculate the imp's score. Don't know these people.

MB: Avoid double RRs.

AS: I like the double RR.

**Action:** Clubs to be encouraged to get teams to play in the league.

**Action:** Maintain online and F2F leagues for 2026-27 season.

11.2. Higson Cup and Plate

PB: The numbers have declined so much that the numbers are no longer viable for the event as is 19 teams this year.

Propose one event one Sunday this year. Plate (say) jack high and Cup open.

Handicap to be scrapped.

Get invitation out early enough to determine fields.

**Action:** PB proposal agreed. Exact details to be determined by PB.

11.3. Goldstone Trophy

AM: Reminded the meeting of the proposed changes by the Goldstone secretary.

A short discussion ensued in which it was clear the meeting was strongly in favour of a default F2F throughout for the Goldstone.

**Action:** GT to be default F2F throughout. The final not necessarily to be played in a MCBA affiliated club.

11.4. Ben Franks Trophy

AT: F2F at B&CHBC.

11.5. Green Point Events

DK: All booked. Looking for entries.

The meeting offered a vote of thanks to DS for his work.

11.6. Congress

DS: Oliver Cowan is not happy doing this. Not happy with the behaviour of some of the players. We are a shoestring budget compared to everyone else and we need to put our charges up.

JS: The main complaint was that people left on Saturday and he had to clear up debris on the Saturday night. We need someone from Manchester to supervise Oliver Cowan.

BL: I have taken responsibility to run the Congress this year. These issues will be addressed.

JS: The Kevin Comrie Cup had no visibility. Something else to be looked at.

**Action:** BL to liaise with Oliver Cowan to ensure congress runs smoothly.

- 11.7. Intermediate events including the Cantor Cup  
Cantor Cup was hugely successful. Issues with MBC were worked through and sorted out. Event organiser will be Rachel Hardcastle. Event to be run at MBC in 2026-27.  
The meeting offered a vote of thanks to Rachel Hardcastle (and Nita Shankar) for all their work.

- 11.8. Gazette Trophy  
ID will run it again next year but thereafter would like someone else to take over.  
MB: Event was very good but the prize giving was an embarrassment.  
GB: Point taken.

**Action:** F2F@ABC.

- 11.9. Lancashire matches  
RA: Has set up pages ready to receive availability for Lancashire match on 28<sup>th</sup> June – 6 pairs for open and 6 for Jack high.  
1 team in Presidents Cup on 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> July  
12<sup>th</sup> July is first day of NBL – hope to have A, B and C teams in the NBL.  
Emails coming out tonight or tomorrow to A, B and C pools.  
GB: SC looking after open event in Lancashire, GB to look after Jack high.  
JS: The last few years the NBL has been online. Is there a substantial Manchester contingent that would want it F2F. I have not heard Manchester's views.  
AS: We have said that every year. We will say it again.

- 11.10. Other events  
GB: has a proposal to mirror the EBU National Pairs idea. Anyone who got over 55% in a specific period gets together in a F2F final. Thoughts?  
AT: Who would be the event organiser and is it in the Tournament Secretary's remit.  
CR: Should we have a qualifying event at the club for those who got over 55%.  
The meeting was broadly in favour of the idea.

**Action:** The Exec to thrash out details for such an event..

## 12. Any Other Business

AM asked for clubs to ensure their membership lists agrees with the EBU database and to add it any new members are missing.

AS: You should upload student sessions. Check if there is a charge.

AM appealed for someone to become bridgewebs webmaster. DS offered to approach Dave Fernley who runs the MBC bridgewebs website.

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

Remitted to the Exec.

Meeting closed at 21:15