

West of England Bridge Club

Minutes of a Committee meeting held via Zoom on Thursday 13th May 2021

‘Present’: Alan Evans (Chair), Bridget Johnson, Chris Frew, Bill Ashford, Jane Chapman, Bernice Horseman, Jan Duncan, Dinah Moore.

Apologies: Laurie Barth, Jen Challoner, David Jones

1 Minutes of previous meeting (9th July 2020):

These were agreed.

2 Actions arising:

None not covered elsewhere.

3 Present Situation:

3.1 Financial Position. Bill spoke to the Year End Accounts for 2020/21, previously circulated. He said that although we had made a loss due to the pandemic, and the reported loss looks unduly rosy because of the likelihood that previously-paid membership fees will be carried forward, nevertheless our reserves mean that our position is fundamentally strong. Bill noted that the monthly retainer we have been paying RAFA was reduced by RAFA on their initiative, which reinforces his view that our relationship still seems very good.

3.2 Background. Alan summarised the stages of lockdown easing, as presently timetabled, and reprised the EBU advice on preparation for the resumption of face-to-face (F2F) bridge (which we will follow).

3.3 State of Venue. Alan, Chris (and Phil Seymour) visited the RAFA Club on 30th April and were impressed with the various improvements that RAFA has made. They thought ventilation would be a particular issue, but were satisfied by the demonstration of the capacity of the two existing fans to bring in fresh air. However, we will commission a full and professional Risk Assessment covering how we use the premises, as advised by the EBU, and commit to implementing its recommendations before restarting F2F sessions. **Action: Alan Evans** to approach John Cockram. Bill said that we particularly need to know whether the number of tables needs to be limited, and whether players should book in advance.

3.4 Jane Chapman’s appointment. RAFA Club had suggested that one of our Committee members should join their Club Committee to grease the wheels of cooperation. Jane Chapman volunteered, and has subsequently been voted on to the RAFA Club Committee. Jane was asked to find out about the carpeting plans for the playing area. **Action: Jane.** Also, Chris said the rear access needed a handrail on the concrete steps; perhaps we could contribute to the cost. **Action: Jane**, in the first instance to see how RAFA feels about the need for a handrail.

4 Potential Reopening.

4.1 Furniture and Equipment. Table coverings, bidding boxes, BridgeMates, boards, computer etc are divided between Alan and Chris’s houses. Whether they are all ready for action will only be known when we try and reassemble. A trial, two table session was mooted, involving Committee members, to ensure it all hangs together in the new

location (using RAFA Club's wifi). **Action: to be organised.**

4.2 What needs to be bought? Several things: (i) a Directors' cupboard; **action: Alan** to specify and source (ii) tables; **action Alan** to determine number required, and source folding tables (iii) stackable chairs: discussion centred on whether to use RAFA chairs already in place (can they be moved out if necessary? **Action: Jane** to check), and whether to use our own small stock of blue cloth chairs. In any event, more chairs need to be bought; a potential model was identified in our previous Committee meeting. To be resolved.

4.3 What is the demand? Bristol BC sent a questionnaire to all their members; we will do similar, but positively seek members' thoughts. **Action: Alan** to devise and promulgate. **Action: Chris** to ask BBC for their analysis of their members' responses.

4.4 When should we aim to reopen? There are sufficient uncertainties, not least whether the government will slip from 21st June, to make fixing a date now unwise. We need to relocate stored equipment, recommission the system and network, acquire a new cupboard, tables and chairs... Discussion concluded that we should move in when allowed, hold at least one trial session of two tables involving Committee members/volunteers, iron out teething problems *entre nous*, with a view to reopening to the general membership early July.

4.5 What pattern of sessions should we start with? The survey results will help us decide, but we agreed no 'big bang' restart event, nor Bastille Night; we will ease into a full set of playing sessions. Directors need to be confirmed; presumably Alan, Bill, David Jones and Gareth Evans. Also, Improver-coaches for Thursdays. **Action: Alan** to confirm.

4.6 How do we tell/involve our membership? The questionnaire will start the process; further email contacts will be necessary.

4.7 Mechanics of dual membership. Discussion concluded that we are insufficiently clear as to how RAFA works now. Bill would be happy to move the Membership Year to coincide with RAFA's Membership year if that will make admin more straightforward. **Action: Chris** to have an initial meeting with RAFA Club Chairman to gain more clarity. Dinah counselled particular care in explaining to members that they also need to belong to the RAFA Club. Make members' subs all-inclusive, and explain that membership of RAFA is necessary to meet licencing conditions. Bernice pointed out that WoE Life members would still need to pay for RAFA membership.

4.8 From when should we start paying more, then full, rent? Carried forward.

5 Any Other Business

Chris suggested we stir interest in bridge among existing RAFA members by sponsoring bridge lessons. He suggested Gareth might do it; Jan said David Jones would do it.

6 Date of Next Meeting:

Thursday 3rd June, 2:00 pm, via Zoom.

Agreed

Date