

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE GAUTENG BRIDGE UNION
held on SATURDAY MARCH 13th 2021 on Zoom

1. ATTENDANCE

Deirdre Ingersent – GBU Chairman

James Grant – GBU Secretary

Jackie Solovei – Committee member

Peta Feinstein – The Links

Val Bloom – JBC Chairlady

Rob Stephens – The Links

2. APOLOGIES

Tor Meyer – GBU Treasurer

Lorna Speller – Orchards

Jocelyn Morris – Rivonia Club

Joe Israeli-Zindel – GBU Vice Chairman

3. WELCOME

Deirdre welcomed everyone to the meeting .

4. MINUTES OF THE 2019 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

These minutes were taken as read and accepted.

Proposer: Peta Feinstein Second: James Grant

5. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Once COVID became a household name not only here in South Africa but throughout the world, the whole face of bridge was changed. With live bridge no longer possible BBO came into its own. Casual bridge started up and then The Links began their regular tournaments of 21 boards on every day of the week. Robert Stephens is to be thanked for his hard work in this department. He was patient getting our bridge players online and released regular instructions via WhatsApp messages mostly advising people on changes, payments etc. Robert was thorough in his work and it is largely through his efforts that bridge, a game we all love, has been played in these difficult times. Many smaller clubs were able to start their own competitions on BBO. Undoubtedly many of our players just enjoy a social game on BBO, or teams, which can be set up relatively easily by anyone. In fact teams has enjoyed new lease of life thanks to BBO. We, as administrators of the game, were involved in teaching many of our members how to use BBO.

At this point I would like to thank the committee for their hard work during this past year, especially James, Tor, Stephen and Jackie. James and I have had many phone calls where we have discussed a myriad of bridge related issues. James contribution to bridge in South Africa during 2020, and it is ongoing, has been huge and he has done much research into BBO, and now RealBridge, a similar online experience which more accurately simulates one's club as you can both see and speak to your partner and opponents. His passion for the game is infectious and I thank you for helping me along the BBO road. Tor has handled the finances competently as always and has been busy sorting out money from events we have held and subscriptions. Jackie has proposed ideas to enlarge the BBO opportunities available. Stephen continued with the newsletter which was much appreciated with more people opening up their computers. To play on BBO, the newsletter was being more widely read. Joe had a quieter year as sponsorship has been forced to take a back seat. We realise money is not so flush in COVID times with investments not as good and some people forced to take a pay cut or being retrenched.

And now to the sad part; we have lost many people during this tie. Most well-known perhaps, Gill Brown and Stephen Rosenberg. Gill's Northerns Club was legendary, a well-organized set up operating with several sections, a lovely atmosphere and fantastic teas. And Gill's contribution to bridge over so many years was famous, her act irreplaceable; she will be sorely missed. Then Stephen, always so cheerful and likeable, well known as the regular Saturday afternoon TD at Orchards and for our newsletter which was always brim-full of interesting articles researched so lovingly by Stephen. We will keep the newsletter going but this will be a hard act to follow. May their dear souls rest in peace. And also Peter Maybury, Paul Van der Wal, Lindsey Greer, Denyse Hoffman, Marion Gordon, Jennifer van Dongen, Anne Routier and I am sure others whom I haven't heard about personally. They will all be greatly missed in our bridge community. May all rest in peace.

This year the GBU has already held a very successful Open Teams event which attracted a large entry of 32 teams from all around the country. The one advantage of BBO is that with no travel costs or accommodation needed; these kinds of events are attracting more participants. We will follow this up with a one day Open Pairs event in the not too distant future.

Sadly Orchards as a club and bridge venue is no longer. It was decided by Lorna, Betty, Lily and Debbie that it would be an unwise decision to renew their lease when it was due recently. To keep Orchards going with no income and yet expenditure every month was an expense and with so much uncertainty as to when live bridge could recommence it seemed the only option. However there is an online option and the Northerns Bridge club will be continued by Lorna when live bridge is allowed.

Proposer: Val Bloom Secoder: Peta Feinstein

6. TREASURER'S REPORT

In the absence of Tor with load shedding problems, the financial report was presented by James. No questions were raised.

Proposer: Peta Feinstein Secoder: Val Bloom

7. ELECTION OF OFFICE BEARERS FOR 2021

Deirdre reported that the existing committee were happy to remain in their existing roles

Chair – Deirdre Ingersent

Treasurer – Tor Meyer

Secretary – James Grant

Vice Chair – Joe Israeli-Zindel

Members – Jackie Solovei

James raised the need to attract younger members to this committee especially given that the GSC had recently shown renewed interest in supporting our endeavours in introducing bridge into schools. Schoolchildren would be far more readily convinced that this game was appealing to young people if they were addressed by young people.

A number of names were put forward which Deirdre would pursue.

8. GENERAL

- a) James announced that Senior trials would be held next month at a date yet to be determined.
- b) The growing need to redesign our website was discussed – another good reason to have younger blood on our committee.
- c) An equitable solution for identifying regular overseas players at our daily tournaments and paying membership fees was agreed on.
- d) A lengthy discussion ensued on what bids should be banned in our tournaments. It was finally resolved by a proposal from Rob that we allow certain bids to be used but he would post them together with an acceptable defence strategy on the web.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 11.30am.