

Sussex County Bar Billiards Association
2020 Annual General Meeting
Held By ZOOM
18th August 2020

Opening Address – Stuart Carruthers

Welcome to the Sussex County Bar Billiards Association Annual General Meeting for 2020. Due to the ongoing COVID-19 restrictions for the first time this meeting is being held remotely via Zoom. I would like to thank you all for attending, in what is far from ideal conditions, and hopefully the technology will work correctly. In order to avoid background noise and people talking over each other I will be muting everybody during the meeting, if you would like to raise a point at any stage please use the “raise your hand” facility or send a message using the instant messenger. I have not run a meeting of this exact nature using Zoom so please bear with me as I try to coordinate everything correctly.

We will also be planning on using the virtual hand and messaging to both propose and second nominations and for any votes that are required. Again, this is far from the ideal way we would like to run this but does provide a solution that provides what is needed.

As Jean has mentioned from announcing the AGM the normal reports will not be read out during the meeting but have been circulated beforehand via the website, probboards and sent to league secretaries. These will be taken as read but there will be a chance for any queries on these to be raised during this meeting.

1. **Register Of Attendance** – Stuart Carruthers, Jean Brackenridge, Matthew Knight, Tony Jenner, Martin Cole, Kevin Tunstall, Jim Millward, Colin Green, Elizabeth Lancaster, Huw Lincoln, Kevin Stoner, Ric Bithell, Bill Harrison, Iain Tarrant, Joe Oakley, Alan Brackenridge, Phil Oakley, Ian Griffen, Graham Sparksman, Mark James, Rick Cunningham, Nigel Senior.
2. **Apologies For Absence** – Ros Appleby, Trevor Appleby, Jan Smith
3. **Minutes Of AGM 2019** – Proposed: Phil Oakley, Seconded: Kevin Tunstall As a true record.
4. **Matters Arising** – None
5. **Chairpersons Report** (Stuart Carruthers)

I would like to start by thanking the committee for all their hard work during the past year. The last few months have seen many difficult decisions had to be made and I thank them for their views and timely responses. Having a committee who can provide different perspectives and challenge each other is certainly a positive and hopefully leads to better outcomes.

I would also like to thank everyone who helped and assisted during the Sussex events over the past year; from setting-up the tables, running the administration desk to selling raffle tickets.

Congratulations are offered to the winners and runner-ups in all of the competitions that have been held over the past 12 months. A high-quality Sussex Championship weekend was held in January and the decision to play the Captains and Over 50s following the B Team One Day Inter League in February certainly seemed to be successful.

Sussex have had a good year in National competitions, and to highlight one I would like to congratulate the Sussex County A team for their success in the County Championship last September. Usually at this point I would look forward to a successful year ahead and wish you all good luck in any upcoming matches. However, at this current time that message feels slightly redundant.

As well as the rest of society Bar Billiards is facing much uncertainty and a difficult period ahead.

While the regulations and guidelines remain ambiguous, views across the county differ as to how and when we can resume playing.

The fact we are having to hold this AGM remotely via Zoom shows the impact COVID-19 is having on our lives. I think every one of us wants to get back playing in a safe and secure environment; the difficulty is that means different things for different people.

The idea of returning to playing in exactly the same way we did before the lockdown may prove impossible. Unfortunately, some venues, teams and individual players may never return to playing

our great game; and some of the current guidance and restrictions may stay in place for a long time and may eventually become the “new normal”. The future of table supply may also prove an issue with Tarratt’s looking to reduce their involvement in bar billiards.

It is therefore up to all of us to try and establish a “new normal” for bar billiards. This may involve trying new formats for competitions and being more flexible in how the current rules of leagues and competitions are enforced to encourage playing. An example may be allowing greater flexibility in the player short rule to get all legs played rather than having a walkover.

It is also up to all of us to respect the views of others and to try and make everyone feel as safe and secure as we possibly can when playing bar billiards.

This is probably the most difficult period having ever faced Bar Billiards and while I believe we can emerge as strong as before this will take hard work, patience, flexibility and concessions from all of us to be able to achieve this. Radical thinking may also be required in how bar billiards is structured in Sussex with many local leagues, which were already low on numbers, set to struggle further. While this is officially outside of the SCBBA remit it may be something we have to lead on going forward in order to help bar billiards continue to prosper in the county.

Hopefully, the discussion at the AGM around Inter League will prove useful and help us to agree on a future strategy around how to resume SCBBA activities.

Please all stay safe and hopefully will see you all again in person soon.

6. Correspondence – None

7. Treasurers Report and Accounts for Season 2019/20 (Jean Brackenridge)

SCBBA Account

I feel we are still in a reasonable financial position.

A few explanations on the accounts as it has been a strange year, as it has for everyone.

Income – Competition fees are down due to the Off The Spot/BIOC Ladies weekend being cancelled. This usually brings in income of approx. £300. This is usually offset by the expenditure of table hire for this weekend.

Trophies and Engraving – I have all the individual trophies for this year as they were ordered in early March. I have agreed with Roger Brown Trophies that any not given out will be used for next year and just new plates to be put on.

No perpetual trophies have been engraved yet hence the lower amount in the accounts.

Although I had collected a few trophies this task obviously came to a grinding halt. I will continue to collect them when this is possible but it may be a case of engraving when possible and probably getting them up to date next year.

The sponsorship for Sussex Open will be left in the Sussex Open account to be used towards the next Open

Sussex Open Account

Not much to say on these. The sponsorship received will be used for the next Open.

I have a few cash refunds to be returned for entry fees which will be returned as and when I see people.

If anyone has any queries on the accounts could they please either e-mail them to me or send me a pm and I will do my best to answer them before the AGM or refer them to the AGM.

I also need a proposer and seconder to sign off the accounts as a true record. Again please either e-mail or pm me if you are happy to do this.

SCBBA ACCOUNTS		
	2020	2019
AFFILIATION FEES	1070.00	1120.00
COMPETITION FEES	575.00	905.00
FOOTBALL CARDS/RAFFLES	756.00	653.00
INTEREST RECEIVED	1.31	1.01
SPONSORSHIP		50.00
	2402.31	2729.01
LESS EXPENSES		
AEBBA AFFILIATION	30.00	30.00
SUSSEX WEBSITE		
TROPHIES & ENGRAVING	844.57	1342.56
TABLE HIRE - 1 DAY INTER-LEAGUE	420.00	420.00
TABLE HIRE - SINGLES/DOUBLES	360.00	300.00
TABLE HIRE - OTS WEEKEND		300.00
BANK CHARGE		4.00
SPONSORSHIP SUSSEX OPEN	120.00	120.00
COUNTY T SHIRTS	45.00	60.00
	1819.57	2576.56
(DEFICIT)/SURPLUS FOR YEAR	582.74	152.45
OPENING BANK BALANCE	1581.47	1429.02
(DEFICIT)/SURPLUS	582.74	152.45
CLOSING BALANCE	2164.21	1581.47

SUSSEX OPEN			
	2020	2019	
INCOME			
ENTRY FEES		900.00	
TRUCK FUND		90.00	
SPONSORSHIP			
SCBBA	120.00	120.00	
BRIGHTON	60.00	60.00	
MR & MRS B		120.00	
WORTHING			
DONATION		9.00	
RAFFLE		254.00	
INTEREST	0.42	0.47	
	180.42	1553.47	
LESS EXPENSES			
TROPHIES		150.50	
TABLE HIRE			
AEBBA		420.00	
TARRATS		201.60	
AEBBA TRUCK FUND		90.00	
FOOD			
PRIZE MONEY		740.00	
	0.00	1602.10	
(DEFICIT)/SURPLUS FOR YEAR	£180.42	-£48.63	
OPENING BANK BALANCE	705.60	754.23	
(DEFICIT)/SURPLUS	180.42	-48.63	
CLOSING BALANCE	£886.02	£705.60	

Proposed: Colin Green, Seconded: Kevin Stoner

8. Secretary's Report (Jean Brackenridge)

I have booked the following dates for next year. These will be held at Burgess Hill Club guidelines permitting. We decided the Doubles/Singles weekend should be played later in the year rather than early January.

20th February – B Teams

21st February – Div 2

27th February – Ladies

28th February – Div 1

17th April – Doubles

18th April - Singles

9. Inter-League Report (Matthew Knight)

Where does one begin when compiling a report for the season just gone? Our wonderful game will seem insignificant to many, most of whom have never heard of it. To some however, it is important for their mental health, with the chance to socialise and interact with others who share their passion. Lifelong friendships have been nurtured through the playing of bar billiards, can we save the game that we all love?

When Brighton A secured an unassailable lead in Division 1 following a high-quality victory over nearest rivals Worthing A the world was already changing. I don't think any of us knew quite how much but it was not long before it became pretty obvious that things were very serious and we were not going to escape the pandemic.

With the Inter-League season now curtailed and a great deal of uncertainty about the future the committee have come up with some ideas that we are putting forward for consideration at the AGM. Reporting on the 2019/2020 season itself apart from Brighton A certain to top Division 1 the positions in the other divisions remain undecided, not helped by a number of fixtures still outstanding because matches were not played on their scheduled dates. It is certainly unimportant now but always a shame when matches are not played on the schedule date, Hastings perennial offenders. It seems inevitable that we will lose them and others whatever decisions are made at the AGM. I just hope we are able to play some form of Inter-League, maybe not next year, but hopefully the following one.

10. One-Day Inter-League Report (Jean Brackenridge)

Fortunately these survived before lockdown restrictions came into force.

All days went well and I would like to congratulate all winners.

Thanks to everyone who gave up their time to help over the two weekends.

11. Competitions Report (Tony Jenner)

Sussex doubles saw a day of high class bar billiards, with there only being two entries for the ladies doubles the decision was taken to let the ladies take their chance in the men's competition, so they got a fair number of games. The winners were Curt Driver and Gerry Fitzjohn, who beat Kev Hall and Phil Osborne in the final. The plate was won by Mark James and Grant Tully who beat Jim Greensted and Mike Daw in the final.

Sussex Singles. Another high class day of bar billiards which saw Kevin Tunstall defeat Stuart Carruthers in the final, but well done to Stuart on making his first final. The Plate was won by Barry Holt who beat Kev Hall in the final. The Ladies final was won by Jean Brackenridge beating Michelle Baden in the final, the plate was won by Jan Bithell who beat Lorraine Hall in the final, the ladies set a very high standard of bar billiards throughout the day.

Sussex Captains and Over 50s was trialed this year as a one day competition and we saw both the number of entries increase and the standard of play rise. Captains Winner Martin Cole Captains Runner-Up Jean Brackenridge. Over 50s winner Jim Greensted Over 50s runner-up Dave Reeves. Unfortunately the mixed doubles did not take place. The Watney Mann was cancelled due to Covid19. As far as things stand unless anyone desperately wants to give it a go I am happy to continue as long as I get the admin support.

12. County Team Report

Sussex County A – Kevin Tunstall

My first experience as Sussex A captain and I wasn't disappointed. An excellent team performance saw the A side overwhelm the opposition, winning four matches and losing one to Surrey. Three 5-2 victories and a very satisfying 6-1 win sending Kent down to Division 2 next year. An exceptional 5 out of 5 from Matthew Knight, 4 wins each for Nigel & Phil, 3 wins each for Martin Cole & Joe. 2 each for Ian and myself (not my best day playing wise but still a very proud Captain).

Hopefully when we get round to defending the title, I will get the chance to make it two from two as skipper.

Thank you

Sussex County B – Tony Jenner

Sussex B went to the county championships as surprise defending champions and put up an excellent showing and were not disgraced and by finishing 3rd will hopefully remain in the top division. Well done to Mike Daw, Stuart Mephram, Bob Hall, Daniel Wheal, Jim Greensted, Chris Cox and Stuart Carruthers. Once again it was an honour to captain the side.

Sussex County Ladies – Michelle Baden

Sussex Ladies achieved their best position since playing alongside the men's teams, finishing 3rd out of the 5 division 2 teams. The days started with a respectable 5-2 loss to eventual winners Bucks, Lorraine Hall securing a win by 100 points over Dawn Jordan. This was followed up with a 4-3 victory over Oxon B – Jean, Jan and Lorraine all scoring over 6k with their wins. A strong Berkshire team was up next, only Jean could avoid the whitewash as we went down 6-1, leaving us a point behind Oxon ladies with them to play in the last game. It was a tight match but Sussex won 4-3 to finish above Oxon Ladies on aggregate score.

Jean and Lorraine won 3 games out of 4. Michelle and Jan won 2 apiece and Bella won 1. Ros was unlucky losing some close games, and many thanks to Sheena for stepping in to play in place of Sandra

13. Inter-League Discussion

Opening Address – Stuart Carruthers

Hopefully by attending the AGM and joining in this discussion you are showing that you would like to continue playing league bar billiards when you deem it safe to do so.

Since March the committee has discussed on a few occasions what to do both in terms of concluding the 2019-20 Inter League Home and Away season and starting the 2020-21 season. Consensus has not been fully reached and has become a near impossible decision to make with so many unknowns to take account of.

While many of these unknowns remain, the committee has two opinions to present in order to allow us to move forward. These are cancelling the 2020-21 season and using the time to finish the 2019-20 season or ending the 2019-20 season now and starting a new season when we can. As it stands we have no preferred option.

What we wanted to understand is how many players and teams would play Inter League and when do people feel we would be in a position to schedule matches in a safe manner. Obviously much depends on the progression in the battle with the virus and the avoidance of further lockdowns.

What is true is that in order to resume we need the vast majority of players, teams and venues to be willing to play and host matches. Also, if we decide to start a new season I feel we should only do so if we are confident we can complete it.

While we have to accept that not everybody will agree with the decision and we can't wait for all to feel 100% secure what we would want to avoid is forcing people into feeling they have to play when they are uncomfortable doing so or penalising teams or people who chose not to play.

It would be good to hear as many views as possible into your thoughts around this.

However, what I do not want to hear is people saying "I played last week and it was totally safe" or "It is not safe because the infection rate is too high". These personal views are good in understanding who would play but not helpful in the general discussion of how and when we should resume Inter League.

I would also like people to avoid quoting guidelines. Unless somebody knows otherwise, there are no specific guidelines covering the playing bar billiards. The vast majority of available guidelines are ambiguous and while one can be found supporting a view it is extremely easy to find another which suggests the opposite.

What would be preferable to hear is what lessons can be learned from games played so far in playing bar billiards in a Covid secure manner and from those not wanting to play what would have to be true in order for you to feel confident to return.

We have given two options but that is not to say we could not consider alternatives alongside these such as playing a "friendly" league for a season between those teams wanting to play.

Please raise your virtual hand or message if you would like to speak and I will try to remember to mute and unmute everybody correctly as required.

Comments:

Kevin Stoner – Btn C would struggle to get team but personally is happy to play.

Ric Bithell – Lewes wouldn't have a team. Ok to play at home venues when you know safety measures are in place but travelling to an away venue which you don't know would put doubt in peoples minds.

Phil Oakley – Travelling to matches could cause a problem with car sharing.

Graham Sparksman – Horsham would struggle to get a team out.

Kevin Tunstall – Asked how leagues were standing at the moment and if possible to end the season.

Jim Millward – Some pubs (eg Stag) are ok and have the room to social distance. Had friendly where hand washing, sanitising balls and table, no shaking hands worked well. Return match at Blue Anchor was tight for space and some people worried but after talk with landlady (also worried) managed to sort problems.

Tony Jenner – Cleansing of ball trays and runs should also be done. Not many venues have the room to hold matches to enable social distancing.

Matthew Knight – Its about space at venues. Possible Inter-League to change to 5 a side if it helps leagues get a team out. Worry going forward re finishing the current season is that there seems to be teams that will struggle to get a side out.

Ian Giffen – Possible put in a player short rule. Concern about Hastings

Graham Sparksman – Settle divisions now with no promotion, relegation

Kevin Stoner – Have a friendly season for players who want to play to keep people involved

Bill Harrison – Key thing is when do we start again. How many teams and who wants to play.

Nigel Senior – Inter league going to struggle to re-start. Should be looking at local leagues re-starting as a starting point for getting back playing.

14. Election Of Officers

The following were voted en bloc – Proposed: Phil Oakley, Seconded Kevin Tunstall

Chairperson: Stuart Carruthers

Vice Chairman: Martin Cole

Treasurer: Jean Brackenridge

Secretary: Jean Brackenridge

Competitions: Tony Jenner

Inter League Secretary: Matt Knight

1 Day Events: Jean Brackenridge to co-opt helpers

15. Rules & Amendments

Additional Rule: Committee Proposal

Emergency Rule: The Committee will put in any rules regarding Inter-League/Competitions that are deemed necessary for the smooth running and safety of its members for the 2020/21 season

Vote taken and passed unanimously

16. Any Other Business

Phil Oakley – Asked about fees for next year. It was agreed that at the moment forms would be sent out for the affiliation fee only. Fees for inter-league would be looked at and paid if/when these competitions go ahead.

Tony Jenner – Could SCBBA draw up a set of guidelines for leagues for safety measures.

Jim Millward – Every pub has a risk assessment. You can go to pubs and get a copy of their assessment.

Meeting Closed : 21.05