

**CONTRACT BRIDGE ASSOCIATION OF IRELAND
DUBLIN SOUTH REGION
SPECIAL GENERAL MEETING**

Wednesday 22nd September 2010 at 8.00pm

Attendance:

Committee: Thomas MacCormac (President), Aoife MacHale (Deputy President), Gerry McKenna (Ex Officio), Michael McAuliffe (Hon. Secretary), Kay Downes (Hon. Treasurer), Séamus Dowling (Hon. Life Vice President), Stephen Bearpark (County Development Officer), Frances Kelly, Gerry Tracey.

Clubs: (26 Clubs) – Tony Casey (Ballinteer), Dolores Rooney, Andrew Dennison (Ballyroan), Gerry Lawlor, Bettina Stefanini (Bankers), Leo MacCormac (Whitefriar St), Noreen O'Callaghan, Seán Hayes (Civil Service), Denise Byrne, Maura Downey (Clondalkin), Mary Campbell, Marian Coleman (Cypress), Mary Barron, Noreen Hyland (De la Salle), Seán McGrath, Brian Lawlor (Engineers Ireland), Rita Carthy, Mary Flynn (Firhouse), Evelyn Ballagh (Grosvenor), Ann Marie Heavey, Ann Cogan (Knocklyon), Statia Cloke, Ann Hickey (Marian), Siobhán Supple, Freda Gorman (Milltown Golf Club), Eilís Walsh, Elsa Rantalow (RDS), Jim McAndrew, Elva Gannon, Mamie MacCormac (Regent), Kay Doyle (Roadstone), Michael O'Loughlin (St Conleth's), Noreen Flynn, Tony Diviney (St Jude's), Paddy Graham (St Mary's CYM), Siobhán Doyle (St Tiernan's), Declan Sherry, Pat McGrath (Tallaght), Toni Pelosi, Ann Fitzmaurice (Templeogue College), Majella Jones (Templeogue Tennis Club), Mary Fagan (The Manor), John O'Keeffe (Waterloo).

Apologies:

Committee: Paula Tolan

Clubs: Siobhán Callaghan (Marley Grange), Joan Toomey (Capital), Brenda Hardiman Byrne, Frances Condon (Churchtown), Bernie Lynch (King of Clubs), Mary Morgan, Nuala Devlin (Milltown Parish).

The President welcomed everyone to the meeting and said he was very pleased with the large turnout. He apologised in advance that item 2 on the agenda could not be proceeded with, and it was agreed that the Special General Meeting would not have concluded at the end of tonight but would be deemed suspended – to be resumed when the accounts were ready for presentation.

1. A motion to amend Article 22 (xii) of the DSR Constitution to read as follows :

'A member of the DSR who has given outstanding services to the administration of bridge in the DSR may be proposed as an Honorary Life Vice President of the DSR by any member or club of the DSR. Such a proposal must be put to a Regional Meeting and must be approved of by not less than two thirds of the members at this meeting who are entitled to vote.

(a) The AGM may award the title of Honorary Life Vice President.

(b) The total of Honorary life Vice Presidents shall not exceed three (3).

(c) An Honorary Life Vice President shall be entitled to attend all Management Committee meetings and Regional Committee meetings of the DSR but shall have no vote.

Proposed by : Thomas MacCormac

Seconded by : Gerry McKenna

The President said that the concept of Honorary Life Vice Presidents meant that the region could avail of the wisdom and advice of experienced figures in the bridge world, and he praised in particular the valuable contribution to the Management Committee of Séamus Dowling, so far the only holder of the title in the Region.

Ann Fitzmaurice said that she had drafted this motion for the revised proposal procedure for Honorary Life Vice Presidents, and had ensured that it was in line with CBAI guidelines.

The motion was passed unanimously.

2. DSR financial report for 2009-2010 – held over from the AGM on May 31 2010.

The president again apologised that, due to reasons entirely outside the Management Committee's control, the accounts for 2009-2010 were not available to be presented to the meeting. He said, however, that they were being audited at present. They would be presented when the Special General Meeting resumed at a later date.

3. Discussion

The President opened a discussion by saying that although the Region was successful and well-represented at the top levels of the game, this meant that for the majority of its players a 'disconnect' could be perceived between themselves and their clubs on the one hand, and the Region and its organisation on the other. It was his intention to work to overcome this during the year, and in particular to focus on the needs of Novice and Intermediate players.

He outlined the Management Committee's proposals for an 'inter-region' teams competition to be organised in combination with the neighbouring regions (Eastern, Dublin North and Mid-Leinster), who were equally keen to be involved. Although no firm decision had yet been taken, it was intended that something like 15 – 20 teams from clubs in each region would take part, with all grades represented but especially Novice and Intermediate. June of next year is the provisional date.

Paddy Graham wondered if a South Dublin Congress was a possibility. The President said that the Committee felt it was better to start by organising an event jointly with other interested neighbouring regions rather than immediately attempt a 'stand-alone' event that might prove too ambitious, but he agreed that a Congress could grow out of it in time.

Stephen Bearpark (County Development Officer) spoke to the meeting about development plans, and emphasised the fundamental importance of fund-raising and adequate resources. Rather than relying on one-off fundraising events, he suggested that a Regional raffle might be organised – for instance, clubs could be asked to give a certain amount of money according to their size, to provide Regional funds and the raffle prizes, then would sell the raffle tickets and could keep any excess.

The question of fundraising was opened to the floor of the meeting, and a lively discussion took place, with many contributors (among them Andrew Dennison, Tony Casey, Mary Campbell, Declan Sherry, Pat McGrath, Leo MacCormac, Marian Coleman, Mary Campbell, John O'Keeffe, Majella Jones. Jim McAndrew, Bettina Stefanini).

There was some approval for the idea of a raffle, and in particular it was felt that in the current economic climate cash was far preferable as prizes. The possibility of a Regional Lotto was also raised. This would have the advantage of being ongoing, and not a 'once-off' event, providing more regular funds.

However, many speakers pointed out that the Templeogue Bridge Centre already runs a successful Lotto, and any Regional Lotto could be seen as detracting from this or 'in competition' with it.

Other speakers wondered whether it might not be simpler just to run one night a year in each club to raise money for a Regional Development Fund – or, even easier, just to make a slight increase in the affiliation fee or a token increase in table money.

The President asked for a show of hands with regard to the 2 options (raffle vs. Lotto) and a majority favoured the raffle.

Committee members Gerry McKenna (Ex Officio) and Gerry Tracey said that it would be impractical to raise funds only for tightly defined ends, and that the Region would be better placed having a 'war chest' for the various development needs. However, the overriding mood of the meeting was that any fund-raising demands on the Region's clubs and their members had to be for specific and clearly defined objectives, and that a 'blank-cheque' approach was far less likely to be successful. The natural reluctance to handing over money to the Region and the CBAI would only be increased in the absence of such objectives.

The President and Gerry Tracey both spoke about the need for development in the Region, to ensure the supply of new players, and in particular younger players. This would address 'succession' issues, with new blood helping to ensure that clubs didn't go out of existence, as had happened occasionally. Development funds could also be used to provide bridge teaching in schools on a more widespread basis – up to now, only private schools seemed to have the resources to do this – or to provide start-up help for new clubs.

The President and the County Development Officer then proposed, and the meeting agreed, that they would contact all clubs within the next few weeks with more definite fund-raising proposals, to be considered by clubs and their members – and that the committee would then proceed on the basis of the reaction and feedback, and also of any proposals of their own that clubs put forward.

The President brought proceedings to a conclusion by thanking the meeting for the excellent attendance and the useful discussion – and reminded everyone that the Special General Meeting would resume when the accounts were ready.