

Submission from **The Archway Bridge Club in Chepstow** re motion.

The Club wish to comment on the decision that all members of the Archway Club are also to be members of the WBU from 2016, or else the Club's registration will be withdrawn.

The Club's registration WILL lapse if this is not changed. The Club currently has 93 members, and play on 3 nights per week. The membership is drawn from Monmouthshire and West Gloucestershire, (plus the WBU president) which reflects Chepstow's position of straddling the national boundaries. We have many members who have played for 20+ years, plus 16 new members as result of completing a recent programme of lessons for novices. The annual subscription is £6 and table money of £1.50 per night.

The Club has 19 WBU members, some of whom are also members of the Gwent Bridge Academy. These are the more serious minded players but represent less than a quarter of the total membership. Most of our members are over 70 years of age who seek a social setting and interaction with other people. I think a similar membership profile applies to many other Clubs as well.

If the Club is to retain its WBU registration it must more than double the annual subscription for the majority of its members who will receive no perceivable benefit. As I understand it, if just one of our members refuses to pay, that will negate the Club's registration, should we allow that individual's club membership to continue. So one brave committee member may have to tell 80+ year old Joyce that while she lives in England, has supported and been at the forefront of the Club for over 30 years, she is no longer welcome. It isn't going to happen.

We have increased our WBU numbers from 8 to 19 over the last few years as we have developed as a Club, entering a team in the WBU Teams of 8 for the last 4 years, and last year, for the first time, having 2 teams in the East Wales League. We are currently canvassing members to see whether a 3rd team can be entered for 2015/16. We also represented East Wales in the 2014 Presidents Cup competition. Next winter, we will be delivering a programme of improver lessons for all club members, but principally aimed at those who completed the novices course. We see the promotion of bridge in East Wales as a priority, hopefully with the result that ours and other Club memberships will increase. Please let us continue to steadily progress without this decision hampering our efforts.

Thank you for considering this submission.

Peter Smith
Secretary - Chepstow Archway Bridge Club
30 May 2015

Cardiff Bridge Club has read the motion to the Welsh Bridge Union Annual General Meeting, changing the criteria for affiliation in 2016.

We are concerned as to how this will affect us. Unfortunately because we are also a 'section' of the Penylan Club, our membership at £37 p.a. is by far the most expensive in the area and this does not include the WBU fee of £6 plus EWBA of £1.50. Unlike many clubs we cannot afford to pay this for our members.

We have 126 members, 79 are WBU members, and 9 are WBU members through another club, this leaves 29 members who are not members of the WBU. Our club is made up of a mixture of very experienced members who regularly participate in your competitions, club members who do not participate, 'social' members and beginners – and by and large it is these who are not WBU members. We always encourage members to join, but they do not always want to. And why should they? They are not good enough to win master points, and they are not yet up to taking part in competitions. The WBU does not in all honesty offer them anything. If they have to pay the extra they may well go elsewhere.

We will not disaffiliate, if this motion is successful, as for a substantial part of our membership the WBU is important. However we do oppose this motion, because it jeopardises the number of players who will renew their membership next year, and ask that the WBU find another formula that is not so disadvantageous to clubs such as Cardiff Bridge Club.

On 15/05/2015 16:14, Peter Richards **Criccieth** wrote:

Hi Both,

Below is an email sent in response to an alarm call as the north wales meeting is scheduled for a time when I shall be abroad. You will note that I consider the proposal to be counter-productive.

Peter Richards

Hi Dewi,

I noticed the circulated email regarding the suggestion that all players should be WBU members and wonder whether the WBU has taken regard of the EBU experience with "Pay to Play", where I believe that they had a large drop off in members/clubs.

The WBU members playing at Criccieth, Penrhyn and Pwllheli clubs form roughly 50% of club members (though Criccieth have some "members" who never attend (like Marjorie, who is still on the books!) to make up the required 8.

It is my belief that some of the small clubs will drop out of the Union if a "closed shop" approach is adopted.

Quite a number of club members enjoy playing duplicate bridge, for many reasons - a particular group being the widows who are able to meet people with no commitment other than to play bridge for an evening. A social resource that I would be sad to see disappear. Many of these players seldom find themselves in the "points awarded" positions at the end of play - but if they were not attending those who take the plaudits would not be able to play.

A moment in time, when the numbers of people playing bridge seems to be reducing, seems to be an odd time to start setting extra hurdles for any prospective new club members.

Pete

Hi Peter,

Thanks for your email. There is in reality no alteration to the current WBU membership requirement under the Constitution, and the motion passed by Council is to reinforce that requirement. The proposal to amend the Constitution is to remove the perceived ambiguity and interpretation, where some club committees have decided that having eight WBU members, no matter the size of the club membership, is enough to ensure affiliation, when in fact eight is the minimum number. The majority of our affiliated clubs include the WBU membership fee in their annual club membership fee with this being equivalent to 50 pence a month.

Smaller clubs are not being targeted. I play in Rhayader club where the average turnout is four tables. All members of the club are WBU members as national membership is included in the annual renewal. Our two largest clubs, Rhiwbina and the Gwent Bridge Academy both have total WBU membership and again this is included in the annual membership fee for the club.

You mention 'Pay to Play' and the EBU experience, where there was initially quite a considerable rejection by some of their clubs. Like many others I thought that this was a bad move, but now most of these clubs have rejoined the EBU and they have also recruited some extra clubs. The implementation of 'Pay to Play' has proved to be a considerable success for the EBU and it may well be a path that the WBU will have to follow in the future.

Best regards

Neville

From Pwllheli Bridge Club

Dear Herbie and all members of the WBU Executive,

I am writing on behalf of Pwllheli Bridge Club but equally I believe my concerns are for all rural Bridge Clubs existing on the periphery of both their Area and National centres. Members of such clubs frequently have to travel up to 40 miles each way to play and support their clubs. Most of these are 70 plus and very many nearing 90. To play in area events, many drive 60 and up to 90 miles each way. Little wonder then that few are capable of such arduous long journeys followed by a day of Bridge or be able to consider the even larger distances involved in National events.

In our club we have in the past had many members willing to participate in such competitive bridge but many now have poor health. In the last few years we have been desperately trying to save our failing club. At times we were down to two tables. For many years we have advertised and provided lessons and now average between 4 and 8 tables. Very few of our new members are young.

I, along with many others believe this motion is bad news for both our and other such struggling clubs.

Having been a regular player in Staffordshire and Derbyshire and for many years a member of the EBU , concurrently with the WBU, I have seen the affects that Pay2play has had on club numbers. I have also played at an unaffiliated club that is the most successful club in its area with all the most up to date equipment, Duplimate machine, Bridgemates and connected computer system, showing ongoing results in play. It is full to capacity with up to twelve tables.

I truly believe that we would lose many members and decimate many clubs in our area if this motion is passed. Why, honestly, should our poorer, older members have to pay for our enjoyment in competitive bridge at a higher level? I certainly would feel great guilt if I did this.

Yours sincerely,

Anne Edwards