

INTRODUCTION

I agreed to be co-opted as Chairman in September at a time when this organisation was in difficulty with its constitution and recruiting its officers.

It seemed to me that before anything else, we needed to be clear what the DBA should be doing. So we set up a series of Working parties with a remit to consult as widely as they could on three areas – Education, Clubs and Competitions. Our guiding principles have been to not increase the workload upon the County, not to increase costs (this has meant several ideas being shelved until the Treasurer has been able to study their implications) and liaise with clubs

By Easter we were able to formulate a set of proposals which I will now outline. They should be familiar with you by now. Please direct any suggestions to your section representatives – we have a committee meeting in a couple of week's time

EDUCATION

The EBU has launched several initiatives relating to bridge education so it only right we should respond. There is clearly a great demand for bridge tuition at all levels **Beginners**- it is clear that the most dynamic clubs are those that take teaching beginners seriously. The EBU has courses for bridge tutors and Carol has just run a course for Devon tutors. These people are now “recognised” by the EBU and the DBA and will be on the Devon website.

To get beginners into clubs requires a careful transition, so we were pleased to support Titch with her Introduction to duplicate day as a means of advertising to everyone that such activities are important. However it is probably unrealistic to expect beginners from all over Devon to attend a central event, so I would expect local teachers and clubs and possibly sections to manage their own introductions in future.

Novices / Improvers.

There is a need for club players to be introduced to competitions, so later this year the West section is going to try a novice event. Other counties e.g. Cornwall do this successfully.

Advanced

We had many discussions on how county might help increase the numbers of players eligible for inter- county competitions. In the end Warner and I agreed on a Challenge match between the “A” team and players who expressed an interest. In the words of Terence's report – it was chaotic.

I have high regard for the “A” team and do not have the nerve to ask them to repeat the exercise again in the near future. We need to consult with Warner and others as to what next.

Andrew Robson

Some thought that the idea of bringing him back had been dropped. Not so. We were advised last year that he was unavailable in 2011. At Easter “not in the foreseeable future”. However we have now got a date in September 2012, thanks to Terence's efforts.

CLUBS

We got a very mixed response to our surveys. At Easter we invited all affiliated clubs to a meeting where we presented them with our proposals for the future. Only 11 out of 19 clubs were represented.

Even so the meeting was very useful and helped us improve on some of our ideas.

The clubs should now be aware that there are other events they can put on as service to their members – without incurring any extra cost or effort. We will be writing to them in soon to confirm this.

COMPETITIONS

We propose making the following changes to County events::

1. **Devon pairs** (Julia Chadwick) – revert to heats to be held at volunteering clubs, final to be run by a non-playing director
2. **Devon Teams** (WMN)- increased seeding in early rounds
3. **Club Teams of 8** (Garden Cites qualifier) – a most contentious event. No-one seems able to agree on how it should be run. We are proposing that the event will not run unless at least 7 teams enter (in order to break even).
4. **Pivot and Mixed Pairs** –dropping on cost grounds
5. **Club Teams of 4** – this will be a new event which the clubs were very enthusiastic about. To be run along the same lines as the Devon Teams of 4, but not in competition with it. In the first year, the rules will be as simple as possible – any club can enter any number of teams , seeding in the early rounds

Events held during the Year

Each section held its own congress – successfully.

The Devon Green Point Congress moved to a new venue – successfully and it was a very enjoyable event. Congratulations to all involved in running these events. Well done.

COMMUNICATIONS.

It became apparent during the year that communications within Devon are fraught, in spite of the efforts of Terence to let everyone know.

One idea that came from our consultation exercise involved the Devon Diary.

We have agreed to split into two. The new Devon Diary will basically be a calendar.

A separate Rule Book will contain all the sundry information about the rules, regulations and guidance.

The Diary will be printed and available to all. The Rule Book will be made available to Directors, clubs and be on the website. Overall we estimate these changes will reduce costs.

THE DBA ITSELF

If you look at the present structure of the DBA you realise that it has no manpower. It has 4 officers only. It is the sections that do all the good work.

So to manage what we do within the present structure, we need to resurrect the sub-committees. These effectively run things on behalf of county and are responsible and report to the main committee. They are

Selection – One of the successes in recent years and plays a very important role Warner, Terence, Ruth. Vacancy (David retiring)

Tournament – Terence, Jeanine does a good job re inter-county league, Vacancy

Devon Congress - . Terence, Pam, Kelseys, vacancy

Conduct – formed over 5 years ago. Never met. To be re-formed

Education – new , to be formed. I will assist here

Which brings me back to my position. I only agreed to stand until this meeting. That has not changed. However those approached to stand for the committee have

pointed out that they would be reluctant to be thrown in at the deep end. This I can understand, so I have offered to conduct the first committee meeting in July. This is perhaps the most important one of the year. I will also chair the meeting in Sept, if required. This will give the new committee time to be acquainted with things I will also be available to represent County if required.

FINALLY

None of the work we have done over the last 9 months would have been possible without the dedication and enormous amount of work carried out by Terence. Hopefully the renewed sub-committees will lessen the demands upon him. Also my thanks go to the sections – their hard work is vital and appreciated. And thanks you all for listening!