



ASSOCIATION OF BRITISH SCRABBLE® PLAYERS

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

2019

8.45pm Sunday 25 August
Kents Hill Park, Milton Keynes

FINAL AGENDA

- 1 To receive the Chair's report**
- 2 To receive the Treasurer's report with Independent Examiner's report and accounts for 2018**
- 3 To elect officers and other members of the Committee**

The current Committee consists of: Stewart Brodie, Anand Buddhdev, James Burley, Laura Finley, Chris Harrison, Wayne Kelly, Nuala O'Rourke, Pete Thorpe, Mike Whiteoak, Natalie Zolty.

The officers of the Committee are currently:

Mike Whiteoak (Chair)
Laura Finley (Secretary)
Wayne Kelly (Treasurer)

The Honorary President is Gyles Brandreth

All Committee members are willing to stand again. We are keen to hear from anyone wishing to volunteer to join the Committee.

- 4 To appoint the Independent Examiner for the year 2019**

Karen Willis has confirmed that she is prepared to carry out the role of Independent Examiner for the 2019 Accounts.

- 5 To fix the subscription for 2020**

The subscription for 2019 is £15 (£7.50 for people aged under 18 at the time of joining/renewing), or alternatively £10 (£5 for people aged under 18 at the time of joining/renewing) on the condition of receiving an electronic copy of the magazine instead of a hard copy through the post.

The subscription for 2020 is the subject of a motion to be discussed later in this AGM, so for the purpose of this agenda item, it is proposed that the subscription for 2020 shall be the amount decided by the membership in a vote on the said motion.

- 6 Motions**
- 7 AOB**

Minutes of the AGM 2018

8.45pm Sunday 26 August

Kents Hill Park, Milton Keynes

44 members attended the meeting.

Committee members present were: Mike Whiteoak, Peter Ashurst, Laura Finley, James Burley, Wayne Kelly, Nuala O'Rourke, Bob Violett, and Natalie Zolty.

1 **CHAIR'S REPORT:** following a query regarding the number of issues of OnBoard being produced (Mike Whiteoak stated that we expect to be producing six issues a year in future), the Chair's report was accepted.

2 **TREASURER'S REPORT:** following queries regarding the loss made on last year's BMSC and the increased cost of 'Promotions', the Treasurer's report was accepted.

3 **ELECTION OF COMMITTEE MEMBERS:** Peter Ashurst, Rachel Bingham, Rick Blakeway and Bob Violett are standing down from the Committee following the AGM.

Since publication of the AGM Agenda, Elie Dangoor has also stepped down. Mike Whiteoak gave a vote of thanks to those leaving the committee, and introduced two new members who have recently joined the committee. Colin Nicol has taken over the club coordinator post, and Chris Harrison will take over Bob Violett's role. Chris also outlined ideas for his role in future.

Following a query regarding the change in the number of Committee members, those standing were re-elected by a show of hands.

Karen Willis was confirmed as **Independent Examiner** for 2018.

It was unanimously agreed that the subscription for 2019 should remain at the current level.

4 **MOTIONS:** Mike Whiteoak, Peter Thorpe and Nicky Huitson spoke in support of their proposed motions.

Motion 1: That the ratings levy, currently set at 60p per player for all tournaments, be increased to £1 per player, with effect from 1 January 2019. For leagues and similar ongoing events, the current rate is 10p per player per game, up to a maximum of 60p per player for any one session of games. The 10p rate will remain unchanged but the maximum per player will be increased from 60p to £1.

(Following a query, it was confirmed that the money raised by ratings levies now goes to the ABSP.)

For: 57 (including 13 proxy votes)

Against: 2 (proxy votes)

The motion was carried.

Motion 2: It is proposed that this rule (Rules of the Association) be amended.

6.10 Minutes of meetings of the Committee shall be circulated (to those entitled to attend) within ten days of any meeting taking place.

It is proposed that the rule be amended as follows:

Minutes of meetings of the Committee shall be circulated (to those entitled to attend) within ten days of any meeting taking place [and to any member requesting sight of them from the secretary once they have been agreed by the committee].

For: 58 (including 15 proxy votes)

Against: 0

Abstain: 1 (proxy vote)

The motion was carried.

Motion 3: In future, a tournament may not be rated until a TO report (even a nil report) is submitted, so as to identify small incidents that could build into a bigger picture of a developing situation.

For: 53 (including 13 proxy votes)

Against: 2 (proxy votes)

Abstain: 4

The motion was carried.

Motion 4: Rule 6.4 applies. Any person who fails to attend three consecutive meetings without giving a reason acceptable to it shall cease automatically to be a Member of the Committee. It is proposed that a list of acceptable reasons be drawn up by the committee and that if members (except for non-voting and advisory-only members) do not adhere to this, they should be removed from post. It will be evident to whom this should apply if the minutes of each meeting (with a list of attendees) is published by the committee.

For: 24 (including 10 proxy votes)
Against: 9 (including 4 proxy votes)
Abstain: 25 (including 1 proxy vote)
The motion was carried.

Motion 5: Rules 5.2 and 6.2 apply. All members and officers of the committee should resign at the end of the AGM. It is proposed that this year particularly (in the light of people wishing to express their support for individuals) they be individually re-elected and not returned en bloc.

For: 10 (including 8 proxy votes)
Against: 36 (including 7 proxy votes)
Abstain: 13
The motion was defeated.

Motion 6: Individuals should not sit on the committee (other than those acting in an advisory-only role or with no voting rights) if they are paid by the ABSP, as this could be perceived as a conflict of interest. The exception to this should allow for a small stipend to be paid to certain committee members to support ongoing admin tasks.

For: 8 (including 6 proxy votes)
Against: 36 (including 9 proxy votes)
Abstain: 15
The motion was defeated.

7 AOB: Peter Thorpe offered a vote of thanks to the Committee.

Treasurer's Report

Having stepped into the breach midyear, it was a case of hit the ground running, but I am pleased to say the process has gone fairly smoothly.

The ABSP made a small surplus of just over £100 this year; however, this is not the whole story.

OnBoard proves to be the biggest cost to the ABSP, and we were lucky this year that the tournaments made healthy profits to cover some of that cost. However, we thought that as the BMSC made such a surplus due to venue error (which was pointed out and they accepted) that some of this should be ploughed back into ABSP events in 2019.

2019 may be a different story though, but some of the expense of *OnBoard* should be covered from the increase in ratings levy.

Membership was slightly down in 2018, but has already increased for 2019.

The full accounts are shown overleaf.

Wayne Kelly, ABSP Treasurer

Independent Examiner's Statement Association of British Scrabble Players Accountant's Certificate

I have examined the Income and Expenditure Account for the year ended 31 December 2018 and the Balance Sheet as at that date prepared by the Treasurer of the Association of British Scrabble Players and I am satisfied that the Association has maintained proper accounting records which are in agreement with the accounts and I am also satisfied that they reflect a true and accurate account of the finances of the Association.

(Signed) *K L Willis MA (Oxon) FCA*

Association of British Scrabble Players

Balance Sheet as at 31 December

	Notes	2018 £	2017 £
Assets			
Bank deposit account		5 012	5 009
Bank current account		2 382	3 657
PayPal account		1 775	595
Stocks	[4]	648	859
Sundry debtors	[5]	1 078	0
		<u>10 895</u>	<u>10 120</u>
 Liabilities			
Prepaid membership subs		4 842	4 431
Sundry creditors	[6]	248	0
		<u>5 090</u>	<u>4 431</u>
Retained surplus		<u>5 805</u>	<u>5 689</u>

NOTES

		£	£
[4] Stocks			
Round boards		0	21
Results sheets		638	760
BMSC giveaways		10	58
Logo pens		0	17
Books		0	3
		<u>648</u>	<u>859</u>

[5] Debtors			
Ratings levies due		106	0
Deposit for Easter 2019		472	0
Payment to Rachel Bingham		500	0
		<u>1 078</u>	<u>0</u>

[6] Creditors			
Ratings levies due		7	0
Entries received for Easter 2019		241	0
		<u>248</u>	<u>0</u>

Association of British Scrabble Players

Income and Expenditure Account for the years ended 31 December

	Notes	2018 £	2017 £
Income			
Membership subscriptions		6 412	6 922
Tournament surplus/(deficit)	[1]	2 034	(5 562)
Bank interest		2	3
Rating Levy		2 985	3 530
		11 433	4 893
Expenditure			
Publications	[2]	8 315	6 687
Committee expenses		0	21
Miscellaneous	[3]	3 002	3 901
		11 317	10 609
Surplus on year		116	(5 716)
Surplus brought forward		5 689	11 405
Surplus carried forward		5 805	5 689

NOTES

		£	£
[1] Tournament surplus/(deficit)			
BMSC		1 839	(5 428)
NSC		242	(134)
Easter		59	0
Masters		(106)	0
		2 034	(5 562)

[2] Publications			
Printing		3 895	3 265
Postage and packaging		1 929	2 102
OnBoard editing		2 000	1 400
Enveloping		95	100
Software		597	0
OnBoard/Handbook income		(201)	(180)
		8 315	6 687

[3] Miscellaneous expenditure			
Insurance		604	659
Transaction costs		190	169
WESPA subscription		115	126
Website		0	267
Promotions		90	1 290
Engraving costs / New Trophy		265	31
Database		500	250
Rating Officer and Deputy		1 050	1 050
Membership Honorarium		149	161
Logowear		27	102
Audit costs		12	0
		3 002	3 901

Chair's Report 2019



When I wrote my first annual report as Chair twelve months ago, I stated that the first priority facing us at that time was to ensure the successful continuation of the ABSP's major events, and in particular to avoid the losses that had been incurred at the 2017 BMSC, and to reverse the decline in attendance at our flagship event. I am pleased to report that, thanks to excellent work by Wayne Kelly who organises all the ABSP's events, we have achieved all of those aims. I predicted that the new venue that Wayne had found for the ABSP, Kents Hill Park, would prove to be very popular, and that the deal he negotiated with the venue would ensure that the losses of the previous year would not be repeated.

Both of those predictions proved to be correct, and I believe that we will have another successful BMSC this year, with attendance rising once again. I have spoken to a number of players who had missed recent events and who are planning to return to the event this year, so the future is looking good.

Wayne has also continued to run the NSC, which is now an ABSP event, and after a successful NSC Final in London last year, this will be moving north in 2019 with an impressive venue at the Park Royal Hotel in Warrington, Cheshire. Players will have the option of booking accommodation and meals at the venue, or, like last year, will be free to make their own arrangements, ensuring

that all entrants can make the event fit their own budget. We have continued with the qualification system devised by Craig Beevers when he ran the NSC on behalf of the ABSP in 2017, and which has proved to be very popular. As I write this report approximately four months before the event, more than a hundred people have already qualified for the NSC Final, which again promises to be a great success.

A huge vote of thanks is due to Wayne for running these two events and making them the success that they are. Wayne also continues to organise the ABSP Masters, as well as the Easter Matchplay, having stepped in on behalf of the ABSP to save this event.

In my report last year, I noted the success of our magazine, *OnBoard*, in what was a completely new format, with a larger size, A4, and all pages in colour, on high-quality paper. This new format was very well received at the time, and I announced that we would shelve plans that had been made to discontinue the magazine and replace it with a more basic newsletter for those without online access. I made it clear, however, that if, after a further year with *OnBoard* in its new format, the membership wished to continue to receive the magazine as it now is, an increase in subscription fees would be necessary. We are indeed presenting a motion to this year's AGM, for the first increase in subscription fees since 2002. The membership will have to decide whether to continue with the current magazine at an increased subscription, or to reject the proposed increase and opt for the more basic newsletter.

Our *OnBoard* editor, Kay Möller, does an excellent job for us to produce a magazine of such a high quality. She does this from her home in South Africa, which obviously would not have been possible before internet technology became available. However, the fact that Kay is not here in the UK means of course that she is not in close touch with the tournament scene here. What this means is that, if the magazine is to continue, we desperately need somebody to take on the job of gathering material to pass on to Kay for inclusion

in the magazine. I am taking the opportunity here of asking all members to consider whether they could help at all in this way. It would not need to take up a huge amount of time, and does not mean that they would actually have to write the articles. As well as the increase in subscriptions, it is essential that we find somebody willing to take on this role, to ensure that the magazine can continue.

I have fewer changes of committee personnel to report than I did last year. Colin Nicol had taken on the still fairly new role of Clubs Coordinator, but has recently stepped down as other commitments, particularly caring for his elderly mother, meant that he had less time available to devote to the job. There is therefore a vacancy available for anyone who might be interested in helping to develop contacts between the ABSP and Scrabble Clubs. I thank Colin for the work that he did during his time on the ABSP committee, and note that he will still be involved in running the Forth League and collating the results from all the various league competitions in Scotland.

We have recently recruited Peter Thorpe and Stewart Brodie to the committee, and I welcome them both. I know that they will both give great service to the ABSP. They are currently working together on updating our website, and Stewart will be taking over from Calum Edwards as webmaster. Calum has now stepped down from this role, and I thank him for the work he has done over the last two years. He wasn't always happy with the items he was asked to add to the website, but he always fulfilled his duties in a professional manner despite this.

I believe that we currently have an excellent group of people on the committee, and I thank them all for their support and hard work over the past year, but there is always room for anyone else who feels that they may be able to contribute something. In particular, if, when you read the part about us needing someone to gather material for *OnBoard*, you thought "I could do that!", then I'd like to hear from you!

Mike Whiteoak

Proposed Resolutions for consideration

Motion 1:

- That the cost of membership of the ABSP for 2020 be set at £25.00 (with paper copies of OnBoard) or £12.50 (with electronic copies of OnBoard).

Proposer: Mike Whiteoak

Seconder: Wayne Kelly

Rationale:

When we introduced the new format of OnBoard magazine last year, with the larger A4 pages and full colour printing throughout, it was very well received, and has proved to be very popular with the membership. We stated, however, at the 2018 AGM, that if after a year of the new format, members wished the magazine to continue as it now was, an increase in the cost of membership would be necessary.

Our editor, Kay Moller, has done an excellent job in producing a magazine of such high quality, and ensuring that it appears regularly and on schedule. We are proud to be able to offer such a first class magazine to the membership, and very much want this to continue. However, with the increased costs incurred by colour printing on high-quality paper, and increased postage costs because of the larger size of the magazine, production of OnBoard is taking up nearly the entire income that the ABSP receives, including the whole amount of the membership fees and nearly all of the additional income received from ratings levies. This is tying our hands and preventing us from pushing forward with other initiatives such as the development of the ABSP website.

The last increase in the cost of membership was in 2002, when subscriptions were increased from £10.00 to £15.00. Not many things have remained at the same price from 2002 until 2019. In fact, if we had increased the cost of ABSP membership each year since 2002 in line with inflation, based on the Consumer Price Index, then the membership fee would already be standing at £24.20 for 2019.

If this motion is not passed, membership fees will remain (subject to the vote on Motion 2) at the current levels of £15.00 and £10.00. In this case, we will be unable to sustain production of OnBoard in its current format, and it is likely to be replaced by a basic newsletter. The format of this newsletter is to be decided should it prove necessary, but it will definitely include details of forthcoming tournaments.

The ABSP Committee supports this motion.

Motion 2:

- £1 extra for annual ABSP membership subscription to start a separate fund towards eventual purchase of a venue for Scrabble. That the fund could be boosted by private donations, bequests and investment. If the proposal is passed, approaches will be made to The English Chess Federation and the English Bridge Federation or the equivalent thereof to do the same.

Proposer: Bob Lynn

Seconder: Penny Downer

The ABSP Committee does not support this motion.

PLEASE NOTE:

If you receive a printed copy of *OnBoard* and are submitting a postal or proxy vote, kindly use the loose voting form that has been inserted with the flyers.

ABSP ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2019

PROXY VOTING FORM – Use this if you are unable to attend the AGM

Must be handed to:

ABSP Secretary, Laura Finley, by 12 noon Sunday 25 August 2019

or posted to:

206 Cleveland Road, Sunderland SR4 7QR by 21 August 2019

or emailed to:

secretary@absp.org.uk by 21st August 2019

Name:

Membership number:

Motion 1:

For _____ Against _____ Abstain _____ Chair's discretion _____

Motion 2:

For _____ Against _____ Abstain _____ Chair's discretion _____