

**Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the South African Bridge Federation
held in Cape Town on the 26th April 2023**

Present

James Grant SABF President
Jocelyn Ashberg SABF Vice President
Bernard Donde SABF Treasurer
Roz Bernstein SABF board member
Andrew Cruise SABF board member
Peter Ward SABF board member

Imtiaz Kaprey WC, Duncan Keet WC, David Beinart WC, Janette Schewitz WC, Roger Wilson KZN, Kitty Cruise WC, Shirley Phillips KZN, Andre & Dee Truter WC, Harold Bernstein WC, Brian Paxton WC, Ann Sturrock WC, Andre Van Niekerk WC, Rose Duff WC, Tas Nestoridis GBU, Frank Chemaly KZN, Diana Balkin GBU, Mark Oliff KZN, Sharon Izerel GBU, Brian Thomas KZN, Merle Modlin GBU, Joyce Hessen WC, Greta Levenberg WC, Miggie Leigh KZN, Mary Mutch KZN, Linda Campbell KZN, Marita Ware KZN, Arthur Hughes KZN, Vanessa Armstrong KZN, Michele Alexander WC, Susanne Braatvedt GBU, Sheila Francis GBU, Craig Gower GBU, Hennie Fick GBU, Lotte Sorensen GBU, Jill Rabie WC, Rob Stephens GBU

Apologies

Kit Gilmour

Welcome

James welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Previous Minutes

The 2022 minutes were taken as read and accepted

President's Report

Let me begin by thanking the members of this committee for their continued support and hard work. I would especially like to thank those of our committee who are now standing down, Ice Peenz who has steadfastly served on this committee for more years than I can recall, Arie Ridderhof who has devoted so much of his time to formalizing the teaching of beginners, Arie was responsible along with Carol Stanton for setting up the first online courses for beginners and introducing us to the book by Paul Marsdon " Introduction to Bridge " which has been widely adopted throughout the country by teachers of Bridge as a set text book, and finally Andrew Cruise whose wise and thoughtful comments and suggestions have been so helpful over these last couple of difficult years.

This year is something of a watershed year for us as we shall finally see how many players have returned to our clubs, how many of us prefer to stay at home and play at virtual clubs, and how many of us have disappeared. As a federation we are shrinking in numbers, from 2700 paid up

members in 2019 we will do well to reach 2000 this year. We are growing smaller, poorer and older, the same challenges we faced pre COVID but exacerbated by this pandemic and I have no solutions I can offer that will change this situation.

But it is not all bad news; whilst most of our unions have seen a decline in numbers, the Eastern Cape has grown over this period from 150 members pre COVID to well over 300 now. This is almost entirely due to the energy and enthusiasm of one man, Arie Ridderhof, so perhaps there is a lesson we could all learn from him.

Treasurer's Report

Bernard took us through last year's financials stating that although we suffered a loss this was offset to a large extent by the interest earned by our trust fund which held a little in excess of R3,000,000.

Looking forward to expenses this year we will make a much bigger loss given that we will be sending teams to the World Bridge Championships in Marrakech and the fact that Congress was heavily subsidized.

Bernard went on to say that we could not continue to make losses and we should expect an increase in subs next year given that these have remained fixed for a good number of years now.

A full set of financial results for 2022 will be posted on our website

Election of members

Three new members were proposed and elected to join the SABF committee; these were Delene Spencer from the NGBU, Barbara Crosby from Borders and Michele Alexander from WCBU.

Mark Oliff asked why the SABF have limited the term of these three to only one year? Bernard Donde replied it was to align the terms of all members of the committee so that elections would only be held every second year. James added that, although this scenario was unlikely, it also prevented the bigger unions voting in more of their members and thus monopolizing the committee. He went on to explain that there was a widely held misconception, for which he was partly to blame, that unions were entitled to have representation on the committee the number of delegates being determined by the membership of each union. This was not the case; whilst each union could put forward candidates and vote in accordance with their membership numbers, unions could nominate individuals from other unions should they so wish. Nor was a candidate once elected obliged to vote along union lines, but was free to use his or her own judgement on matters arising. The SABF constitution had been drawn up in such a way that hopefully those serving on the committee were those most capable of making decisions in the best interest of all players wherever they resided rather than with individuals with only their union's or own interests at heart.

Having said that, James admitted that whilst serving as president he had encouraged all unions to have a least one member on the committee as this not only opened up a more efficient line

of communication between the SABF and the unions but ensured that opinions from all parts of the country would be heard before decisions were made.

General

Michele Alexander said we should approach the National Lottery for funding. Diana Balkin said they had been approached in the past and despite filling in hundreds of forms nothing came of it. Duncan Keet said that this route had been closed for a time but had recently been reopened. Diana Balkin asked if the SABF had subsidized trips last year for members other than players. James replied that we had indeed subsidized Helen Kruger at the same rate as the players to attend a WBF meeting in Salsomaggiore in Italy held during the championships. He went on to say that it was perhaps not generally known but Helen was elected last year to the WBF executive committee, the highest ever award for a South African. As the WBF paid for her stay there to attend their meetings but not her air fare it would have been very remiss on our part should we have failed to support her. Diana suggested that Helen should then give us some feedback on her meetings to be published in our bulletin. James was happy to ask Helen for an article as long as it was clearly understood that this was not a mandatory requirement on our part.

Lotte Sorensen thought that the SABF should make it clear to everyone the rules for nominations to the board but Andrew Cruise pointed out that these rules were set by the unions not SABF.

There being no further business, the meeting was closed