



**Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the English Bridge Union Limited
held at the Royal National Hotel, London
on Wednesday 29th November 2023**

Present:

Adrian Darnell (AD)	Chair	Gordon Rainsford (GR)	Company Secretary
Tony Russ (TR)	Vice-Chair	Sam Kelly (SK)	Minute taker
Paul Gibbons (PG)	Board Member	Jonathan Lillycrop (JL)	Club Liaison Officer
Rob Lawy (RL)	Board Member	Karen Durrell (KD)	Reception
Patrick Shields (PS)	Board Member	Kay Carter (KC)	Reception
Ian Sidgwick (IS)	Board Member	Stephen Green	Laws & Ethics Committee
Abbey Smith (AS)	Board Member	Mark Humphris (MH)	EBED Chief Executive

Apologies: Kay Preddy (KP), Treasurer, Gayle Webb (GW), Board Member, Lee Guy (LG) (EBED Chair)

	Shareholders		Proxy		Shareholders		Proxy
	Present	Apologies			Present	Apologies	
Avon	-	-	-	Mersey/Cheshire	Mark Madeley		
Bedfordshire	Colin O'Hara			Mersey/Cheshire	Chris Raymond		
Berks & Bucks	Michael Green	Peter Hawkes	Michael Green		Peter Hasenson		
Cambs & Hunts	Peter Grice			Middlesex	Harish Patel		
Channel Isles		Craig Honey	Tony Russ	Norfolk	Chris Mallon	Peter Cotes	Chris Mallon
Cornwall		Chris Bikerdike	Tony Russ	Northampton		Trevor Thrower	Nicky Bainbridge & David Parry
Cumbria		Paul Davies	Tony Russ	North East		Marion Curran	Gordon Rainsford
Derbyshire		Alastair McCance	Gordon Rainsford	North East		Susan Davies	Gordon Rainsford
Derbyshire		Jim Parker	Keith Spencer	Nottinghamshire	Keith Spencer		
Devon	Jacqui Munns			Nottinghamshire	Julia Staniforth		
Devon	Mike Hamon			Oxfordshire	Joan Bennett		
Dorset	Andy Kittridge	Mark Hooper	Andy Kittridge	Oxfordshire	Charlie Bucknell		
Essex		John McCoy		Oxfordshire	Alan Wilson		
Gloucs		Paul Denning	Patrick Shields	Somerset		Andy Ridgers	Tony Russ
Hants & IoW	Mike Kinsey	Margaret Gale	Mike Kinsey	Somerset		Ceri Pierce	Mike Letts
Hants & IoW	Richard Ray			Staffs & Shrops		Pamela Booth-Jones	John Withers
Hereford		Chris Chowney	Tony Russ	Staffs & Shrops		Paul Hackett	John Withers
Hertfordshire	Alan Woof	Geoffrey Cordingley	Alan Woof	Suffolk		Richard Evans	
Hertfordshire		Paul Littlewood	Alan Woof	Suffolk		Jacks Morecombe	
Isle of Man		Diccen Sargent	Tony Russ	Surrey	Shirley Pritchard		
Kent	Sharon Bayne	Stephen Brown	Norman Inniss	Surrey	Tim Warren		
Kent	Norman Inniss			Sussex	Peter Clinch	Joy Mayall	Peter Clinch
Lancashire		Jeff Smith	Oliver Cowan	Sussex		Dick Wheeler	Peter Clinch
Leicestershire	David Pollard	Dean Benton	David Pollard	Warwickshire	Myra Scott	Darren Evetts	Myra Scott
Lincolnshire		Cathy Platt	Tony Russ	Westmorland		John Ellwood	Tony Russ
London	Chris Duckworth			Wiltshire	Andrew Parkes	Sue Phillips	Trevor Day
London	Sati McKenzie			Worcestershire	Paul Hammond	Martin Gill	Paul Hammond
London	James Smith			Yorkshire	David Guild	Pauline Stout	Ron Millet
Manchester	Jeff Morris	Alan Mould		Yorkshire	Lesley Millet		
Manchester		Alec Smalley		Yorkshire	Nick Woolven		

Award Winners Present: Sandra Claridge, Lesley Millet

Adrian Darnell (AD), Chairman, opened the meeting by welcoming all those present and thanking them for attending. AD noted that last year he was a Board member sat in the audience for the meeting and recognises the privilege of his position as Chairman. AD thanked GR and the EBU staff for their preparations for the meeting. GR explained the voting process.

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies from Kay Preddy, Gayle Webb and above shareholders as mentioned

2. Announcement of Awards

The following award winners were announced.

SILVER AWARD – given in recognition of long service and an outstanding contribution to the administration of the game of bridge.

Gillian Fawcett (Devon)

Gillian served on the Board of the EBU for four years, two of which were as Vice-Chair, and on the Selection Committee for five years of which she chaired it for four.

Gillian was particularly hard-working and effective in shaping the EBU board's response to the Covid pandemic, both from a public-health perspective and in dealing with the online cheating cases that arose from it. She still remains on the EBU Disciplinary Panel.

For this exemplary contribution to the EBU, we are pleased to present her with the Silver Award.

BRONZE AWARD – given in recognition of specific and significant service to English bridge at national level.

Clive Owen (Warwickshire)

Clive was on the selection committee in the early part of the millennium and at that time was a great supporter of junior bridge. He was on the Appeals Referee's panel for many years as well as more recently being on the Prosecution Panel of the L&E Committee.

He has now just stood down from the Tournament Directors' Development Group, of which he was a diligent member for the last ten years and it is in recognition of this tireless voluntary work for the EBU that we are glad to give him the EBU Bronze Award.

TONY PRIDAY AWARD – given in recognition of an outstanding contribution to the game of bridge at international, national and county level.

Sandra Claridge (Oxfordshire)

Sandra has been a volunteer for her county, Oxfordshire, for more than forty years, for much of which she was its Membership Secretary and EBU Shareholder.

During that time, she also gave long service to the EBU as the secretary of the Laws & Ethics Committee and the Selection Committee and was also for a number of years the EBU Office Manager.

For most of its existence Sandra has been the secretary of Bridge Great Britain, in which role she has single-handedly organised the Gold Cup and Silver Plate each year as well as over-seeing the Camrose, Lady Milne, Teltscher, Junior Camrose and Peggy Bayer Trophies. Whenever the EBU and other NBOs of the British Isles have had any part in organising international events, Sandra has been involved.

That the international standing of British bridge is as good as it is in no small part due to the tireless efforts of Sandra Claridge.

DIMMIE FLEMING AWARD - Worked hard for bridge as volunteers in administration at county level, typically giving 10/15 years or more service:

Jim Parker (Derbyshire)

Jim has been secretary of the DCBA for 20 years, and perhaps longer! He works tirelessly for bridge in the county and is the best secretary one could wish to have. He organises all our competitions and our calendar, prepares for our meetings and does the minutes. He chases people up and nudges them in the right direction. He is fiercely loyal to the committee and the interests of bridge county wide. He goes out of his way to meet and engage key people in all our constituent clubs, encouraging them to run events and to participate in ours. Nothing is too much trouble for him to do. He also runs British Rail Bridge Club's weekly sessions, which have been increasing successful since Covid has made evening bridge in the county a much sparser commodity.

He has been an enthusiastic contributor to the Midlands Counties working group and brings the fruits of that collaboration to our local meetings.

It would be no exaggeration to say that bridge in Derbyshire would be in a poor state were it not for Jim's tireless work. I believe he would be a most worthy recipient of a Dimmie Fleming Award.

Ruth Edmondson (Devon)

Ruth Edmondson has been an enthusiastic and hard-working champion of bridge in Devon since she moved to the area more than thirty years ago. Her special area of expertise is in computer technology, and it is in this field that she has made the greatest contribution.

Ruth wrote a computer programme to run Swiss Pairs events and developed other scoring programmes for use by Plymouth and Plymstock Bridge clubs as well as the county, and she was instrumental in introducing Bridgemates to both these clubs when they became available.

For more than 25 years, she has continued trouble shooting the technology and supporting the running of the NDC, as well as providing technical assistance to many club and county events.

Ruth was responsible for setting up and running the websites of the Devon Bridge Association (DBA) and the Plymouth Bridge Club websites, and she has continued to develop them over the last twenty years. She has recently finished uploading a complete online archive for the DBA website including all the DBA official paper documents dating back to 1955.

However, Ruth's contribution to Bridge in Devon extends beyond providing and supporting technology.

She was on the committee of the West section of the DBA and represented the section on the central committee, as well as serving on several other sub-committees.

She took on the role of County Treasurer in 2017 and, despite standing down a few years later, she agreed to continue doing the accounts until a replacement was finally found in 2021.

In addition, she taught Beginner and Improver classes at Plymouth Bridge Club for many years, including online during the pandemic, and has also helped to run 'supported play' sessions at the club.

After 30 years of involvement in so many areas, the Devon Bridge Association Committee feel that she richly deserves to be formally acknowledged for her significant contribution to Bridge in Devon.

Fred Kissack (Manx Bridge Union)

Fred has been the Secretary of the Manx Bridge Union for 16 years, which is an extraordinary effort!

In addition, Fred has been part of the team that has organised the Isle of Man Congress in September and he has been the glue that has helped keep the event together. Fred has also been instrumental in helping organise the majority of the local MBU competitions during his time as MBU secretary.

Fred is also a founder of a local club on the Isle of Man that promotes bridge to beginners giving them a chance to learn and fosters their development before moving on to wider MBU events and other clubs.

Fred has also organised regular lessons/seminars over his tenure, contributing hugely to the growth of the game on the Isle of Man. In so many ways, Fred has strongly promoted bridge and added significantly to the success of our association.

Within our committee, there is unanimous agreement that we ought to do something to recognise Fred's unstinting service and we think an award would be very appropriate for his years of service.

Paul Cutler (Staffs & Shrops)

None of us on the Committee can remember a time when Paul Cutler was not on the Committee. We think he started on the committee in the late 1980s. Initially his responsibility was the organising of the three Dawes teams (only two teams when he started) liaising with the opposing captain regarding venues etc, also he dealt with the team for the Tollemache qualifier and final when needed.

In 2020 after Covid it was likely that the Staffs league would not be taking place in 2020/2021 so he volunteered to run the event online, and this has now taken place for three years, this coming season will be the fourth.

Prior to Covid, the County entrants for the Midlands Counties Challenge Bowl and the Edgar Foster Cups had always been dealt with by the Competitions secretary, (but alas he stood down and we have been unable to recruit another person to take on this role) but over the last couple of years, Paul has been liaising with our Secretary with regard to those events.

Paul is a key member of the County Committee and I just hope he continues in his role for the foreseeable future. His nomination has the approval of the County Committee.

Lesley Millet (Yorkshire)

Lesley has been responsible for all levels of bridge in England, at all times she has been extremely proactive, encouraging and assisting those she has worked with to give of their best.

Director Leeds Bridge Club: 2006 – 2018; Chair of Leeds Bridge Club: 2009 – 2015; Chair Development Sub Committee – developing teaching methods and admin for Leeds BC and in association with neighbouring clubs.

YCBA – Treasurer: 2008 – Current; Chair – Development and Education Sub Committee: 2011 – Current; Active member of Tournament Committee: 2008 – Current; Lead organiser/Administrator for the set up

Research investigator on behalf of the EBU (with RFM) on the benefits of bridge in delaying the onset of dementia. Discussions and visits with various academic centres including Prince of Wales Hospital, Randwick Sydney Australia: 2008 – 2012.

Member of EBU Education Working Group: – 2010 -2012.

EBU shareholder on behalf of the YCBA: 2009 - Current

Chair of the EBU Northern Counties Working Party (NCWP). Led on the establishment of inter - county tournaments played simultaneously in 2 /3 locations: 2013 – until disbanded.

Delegate from the NCWP to the National Working Party: 2014 onwards.

YOUNG PAIR AWARD 2022-23

Tom Furness (Kent) & Henry Rose (Oxfordshire)

Tom Furness and Henry Rose were key members of the U21 squad and the U21 team that reached the quarterfinals of the World Youth Teams Championships this summer. They have been instrumental to the team's success, placing 2nd in the U21 pairs ranking after the Round Robin.

YOUNG PLAYER AWARD 2022-23

Imogen La Chapelle (Norfolk)

Imogen's performance over the last year has really stood out amongst the juniors. She made the quarter-finals of World Championships with the U26W team and won a bronze medal with her partner Charlotte Bedford in the European Youth Pairs Championship. She has acted as a fantastic senior partner/mentor for Lottie over the last year also playing with her in the Peebles teams and winning the event. Imogen gave up a lot of time to her partnership with Lottie and was instrumental in their success as a pair. In the 2022 Premier League, Imogen was top of the 3rd division Butler out of those players who played all of the boards. In Poland, at the adult World transnationals 2022, Imogen made the last 32 of the mixed teams and the A semi-final of the mixed pairs. She also achieved a number of impressive results in open mixed events playing with Stefano Tommasini. Finally, Imogen just missed out on a Lady Milne selection finishing a very close 4th place in the trials.

EBU/EBED Awards:

Alec Salisbury Award, is given in recognition of a schoolteacher who has made a significant contribution to Youth Bridge, and will be presented to:

Tom Lyster (London)

Tom, a teacher at St Paul's School Barnes, has been a supporter of schools' bridge, both nationally and in Surrey, for many years. Tom has supported many young players with an emphasis on enjoyment of the game and encourages those who want to learn further and develop their game. Several of the youngsters he's taught bridge to, have gone on to join the national junior squads. He gives young players opportunities and provides them with the means to join as many events as possible, including for many years the National Schools Cup and Surrey Schools Cup, which St Paul's School won this year. Tom enabled St Paul's school to host the annual Surrey Schools Cup for many years and gives up his time in the evenings to supervise inter-school league matches.

Tom Bradley Award, is given for services to Education, this award recognizes those who have made a significant contribution to Youth Bridge, and will be presented to:

Chris Dawe (Oxfordshire)

Chris is an unusual recipient of the Tom Bradley award in that he has never taught children in a club or school. However, he has made a huge contribution to youth bridge over the last few years, and in particular in helping youth bridge to recover from the impacts of the pandemic. In early 2020, when all face-to-face bridge had stopped, he was one of those who worked to support the monthly online events attended by up to 44 pairs of U18s. Moving on from this, he was instrumental with the introduction of the youth Grand Prix in 2022, a flagship multi-session youth competition. Chris's IT skills and expertise as an EBU panel level TD have been crucial in administering the annual program of youth bridge events including setting up and updating the bridge4schools website (now the junior standard), liaising with the EBU regarding MPs for junior events at all levels. Chris has resolved many junior administrative problems making future planning much more straightforward for us all.

3. Minutes of the AGM 30th November 2022

3.1 Accuracy

There were no other matters of accuracy. The minutes were approved.

3.2 Matters Arising

David Guild (DG) (Yorkshire), thanked the Board for the new revised approach to the audit of having shareholders involved in the process. He asked if the shareholders could be rotated regularly. GR confirmed that the intention from the Board was to look at it year-by-year.

4. Chair's Annual Report

AD thanked the people who have now left the Board. He noted the immense contribution from Ian Payn as previous Chairman and thanked him for his tireless efforts to steer the EBU through the pandemic and all of his previous years of service on the Board. AD also thanked Rob Lawy (RL) for his time as a Board member since he was first elected in 2013. The shareholders unanimously endorsed AD's sentiments in thanking IP and RL.

The Chair's report was circulated prior to the meeting, see appendix A. AD invited questions relating to the report.

Ron Millet (RM) (Yorkshire) expressed concerns about the reporting of the membership numbers. He suggested using the average number of new members per year and the number of members lost would give a better representation of the overall picture. He stated that it is a very big task to gain new members. AD noted that the previous 12 months have not been typical due to recovery from the pandemic, but he agreed the need for new members is a priority. This is an ongoing but necessary challenge and not something that can be driven solely by the Board and the office staff, they are only able to support clubs and counties in their own membership campaigns. Patrick Shields (PS) commented that the focus is also on the activity of members, which has increased by 14% in the last year.

Tim Warren (TW) (Surrey) noted the need to produce reports with useful information, he asked for the inclusion of a graph showing membership numbers over a year or more, to make the context clear. AD confirmed the Board will look at the details of this following the meeting.

DG suggested that the activity of current members should not be the only measurement used and that the EBU should look at incentives for bringing in more social bridge players. Alan Woof (AW) (Hertfordshire) stated a lot of members play online for free on BBO. PS confirmed these are valid points but that the past year saw a lot of clubs updating their membership lists which was a significant contributor to the falling numbers (as members who were no longer active were removed). Norman Inniss (NI) (Kent) asked if the Board could provide details of membership numbers broken down by county.

James Smith (JS) (London) asked if there had been any further cases of cheating. AD confirmed this would be discussed later in the meeting.

5. Special Resolutions – Articles of Association

A change of wording to the Articles of Association was proposed.

5.1 Item 16.1 Standing Committees of the Board of Directors

A change of wording to be more precise was proposed, see appendix B. The proposal was accepted unanimously by the shareholders.

5.2 Item 1 Definitions and Interpretation: Chairman and Vice-Chairman

A proposal to change the wording from Chairman and Vice-Chairman to Chair and Vice-Chair, see appendix B. AD confirmed this is the first step to rewriting all documents in gender neutral terms. The proposal was accepted unanimously by the shareholders.

5.3 Item 9.8 & Item 11.8 – to include electronic voting at General Meetings

A change to include electronic voting at General Meetings was proposed, see appendix B. The shareholders agreed with the spirit of the change but suggested some slight changes to the wording. The shareholders agreed to empower the Board to amend the terminology and liaise with the shareholders who made suggestions to improve the wording.

6. Ordinary Resolution: Laws & Ethics – Proposed Disciplinary Rules Changes

AD invited Stephen Green (SG) (Vice-Chair of the L&E Committee) to talk about disciplinary matters. SG spoke about the number of cheating cases in the past year compared to 2020-21. He noted at present there are no current cheating cases. In 2020-21 there were a total of 50 cases investigated by the L&E Committee. Since the last AGM in November 2022, there have been 25 cases. Of the 25 cases, 13 were related to “bad behaviour” and 12 were related to cheating offences. Of the 12 cheating cases, five were progressed following investigation. Three of the five progressed cases were resolved with confessions from the members being investigated, one was a non-EBU member, and one resulted in a conviction.

SG noted that the previous rule changes have helped the L&E volunteers and encouraged confessions from members rather than a lengthy conviction process. He noted that defendants will try to take advantage of unclear wording and that the proposed rules changes are intended to resolve this issue.

The proposed changes were circulated prior to the meeting, see appendix C.

6.1 Defendant Representation

SG confirmed that the changes to current rule 9.6 to limit what is acceptable and how defendants are represented, by introducing a code of conduct for representatives sign up to so that disruptions to the case can be curtailed.

There was a question about the choice of wording and if it could be gender neutral. It was noted that this is correct wording as of now to remain in line with other documents, but that future iterations will be changed to be gender neutral.

The shareholders approved a process for including an approved code of conduct, with a further shareholder vote to approve the document once written. Trevor Day (TD) (Wiltshire) suggested changing the wording from “The Code of Conduct” to “A Code of Conduct”. JS also proposed some further suggested wording which included confirming that the code of conduct should also apply to prosecutors. SG asked for JS to email more details of that proposal, to allow the suggested amendments to be taken into consideration.

6.2 Sanctions

SG noted the proposed changes to the sanction's guidelines. This includes:

- A. Add a new paragraph 9.13(vi) The addition of a new paragraph to enable the prosecution to communicate their views on the sanction to be applied by the disciplinary committee.
- B. Add two new clauses, 12.1 (vii) and 12.1(viii). In the list of potential sanctions, adding that the individual would be also precluded from undertaking any official volunteer role with the EBU such as being a non-playing captain.
- C. Amendment to current rule 12.1(vi) Increasing of the maximum fine from £500 to £5,000. SG noted that the wording for this will be made clearer before being published.

6.3 Admission

SG noted the proposed changes to the admissions guidelines. This includes:

- A. Insert a new paragraph 10.1. It was proposed that the wording in the charge letter be clarified with the aim to discourage an early guilty plea to a less serious offence, which may curtail an investigation that may uncover more serious issues.
- B. Proposed replacement to current rule 10.1(vii) Early admissions cases are not currently published on the EBU website or in English Bridge. This change, in order to make the membership aware that such cases exist, means that cases where a guilty admission is made early should also be published, but without naming the individuals concerned.

6.4 Appeals

SG noted the proposed changes to the appeals guidelines. This includes:

- A. Proposed replacement to current rule 11.8. It was proposed that the appeals process should be limited to cases where new information and/or a procedural irregularity had occurred which was of such an order as to bring the disciplinary committee's decision into doubt.
- B. Proposed replacement for current rule 11.9. To clarify that the prosecution has a role to submit its comments following a request for an Appeal.
- C. Proposed change to rule 11.12. To clarify the position for all appeals, not just requests for fresh hearings. There is no reason why normal Appeals should not be decided on written submissions.

Rob Lawy (RL) asked who would make the decision as to who can make an appeal. SG confirmed this would be the Appeals Committee.

6.5 Publication and Notification

SG noted the proposed change to the current rule 13.1 to change what information shall be published. He noted the current process could be subject to rumour, and the aim of the changes are to provide more transparency to the process.

All of the above proposals were approved by the shareholders.

7. Directors Report and Accounts Year Ending 31st March 2023

The Directors' Report of Accounts was circulated prior to the meeting. PS highlighted some areas of the report. He noted that this was the second year that an assurance report had been completed rather than a full audit.

Shareholders Norman Inniss (NI) and Peter Grice (PGr) had been given access to the report prior to the meeting, and agreed that the (admittedly limited) Board's reaction was appropriate. The topics investigated were members' transactions, Bridge Warehouse transactions and credit balances.

The focus from the shareholders was to look at the processes in place and check the rules are followed. One concern highlighted was the credit balances from members. The current total is approx. £85k. PS noted that addressing this issue is a work in progress.

PS confirmed the EBU have been active in contacting members who hold a credit balance on their account. There is currently a draft process for how to return funds to people we cannot contact, which will be refined, and implemented in the new year. PGr confirmed it is a big task, and he asked everyone to keep their members' details up to date and to ask for their money back if they have a credit balance on their account.

LM asked what the impact would be on income of an increase of UMS of 1p. PS confirmed this would increase annual income by approx. £15k with current playing levels.

RM asked about the amount of charitable donations made to EBED. This was £90k in 2019 and £54k in 2023. He suggested that education funding has decreased by £36k. PS noted the figures and commented that the EBU Board are researching additional education channels.

DG questioned the Board policy of using costs to push increases in fees, he suggested that fees should be regularly reviewed. PS confirmed he understood the concerns but that the ability to manoeuvre quickly is limited by the process of setting at an AGM, UMS fees which still apply 16 months later.

8. Treasurer's Report year to date inc. EBU Fees 2024-25

PS highlighted some details from the treasurer's report. He noted that the report shows a steady state, with some minor variations. He confirmed the past six months, since the report was written, have continued the same trend.

The number of sessions continues to increase slowly. The current session numbers are now at 90% of their pre-covid levels. This year has also seen an increase in Bridge Warehouse sales.

PS invited any questions.

Trevor Day (TD) (Wiltshire) asked for further details about the expenditure of BBO venue hire. PS confirmed this was fees owed to BBO, but the category is shown as venue hire due to BBO being an online venue.

Joan Bennett (JB) (Oxfordshire) noted she had sent queries to AD prior to the meeting. She asked for future reports to compare two neutral years, for example 2016-2017 and 2022-2023. She asked if the EBU's activities are as efficient as they can be. AD confirmed the EBU Board are looking at this.

PS confirmed the plan for next year is similar to the pattern of previous years. He asked for the shareholders to approve the proposal to increase UMS by 1p from 44p to 45p. The shareholders approved the increase.

AS thanked PS for his contributions.

9. Election of 3 Directors for the year 2023/2024

There were five nominations for three positions, the persons duly elected will serve for a three-year term of office expiring in 2026.

The votes received were as follows:

Elected for a three-year term of office expiring in 2026: Paul Gibbons - 52 votes & Ian Sidgwick - 52 votes

Re-Elected for a three-year term of office expiring in 2026: Adrian Darnell - 61 votes

Not elected: Nicky Bainbridge - 24 votes & David Parry - 16 votes

The current elected Board of Directors are as follows:

	Term Ends		Terms Ends
Adrian Darnell (Chairman)	2026	Patrick Shields	2025
Tony Russ (Vice-Chair)	2024	Ian Sidgwick	2026
Kay Preddy (Treasurer)	2024	Abbey Smith	2024
Paul Gibbons	2026	Gayle Webb	2025

In addition to those elected the Board of Directors may also appoint three Directors for one year at a time. Appointments for 2024 will be considered at the meeting of the Board in January.

9.1 Election of Chairman

There were two nominations for the position, the person duly elected will serve for a three-year term of office expiring in 2026.

The nominees were Adrian Darnell & David Parry. Since David Parry was not elected to the Board, no vote for Chairman was required, and Adrian Darnell was elected for a three-year term of office expiring in 2026.

9.2 Election of Vice-Chairman

There were two nominations for the position, the person duly elected will serve for a three-year term of office expiring in 2026.

The nominees were Nicky Bainbridge & Tony Russ. Since Nicky Bainbridge was not elected to the Board, no vote was required and Tony Russ was elected for a three-year term of office expiring in 2026, subject to being re-elected to the board when his current term on it expires.

10. Appointment of Company Secretary

Gordon Rainsford was re-appointed as Company Secretary.

11. Election of 2 Members to the Laws & Ethics Committee for the year 2023/2024

There were two nominees for two positions. Therefore, no election was required and David Burn is re-elected and Jeremy Dhondy elected for a three-year term of office expiring in 2026.

The current elected members of the Committee are as follows:

	Term ends		Term ends
David Bakhshi	2024	Peter Grice	2025
David Burn	2026	Jane Jensen	2025
Jeremy Dhondy	2026	Tim Rees	2025
Stephen Green	2024	Gayle Webb	Appointed

12. Election of 3 Members to the Selection Committee for the year 2023/2023

There were three nominees for three positions. Therefore, no election was required and David Bakhshi, Claire Robinson and Jeremy Willans are re-elected for a three-year term of office expiring in 2026.

The current elected members of the Committee are as follows:

	Term ends		Term ends
David Bakhshi	2026	Abbey Smith	2025
Paul Barden	2025	Jeremy Willans	2026
David Burn	2024	Alan Wilson	2024
Claire Robinson	2026	Patrick Shields	Appointed

13. EBED Report

AD had invited EBED to write a report which was circulated prior to the meeting. Mark Humphris (MH) EBED CEO asked if there were any questions stemming from the report.

David Pollard (DP) (Leicestershire) suggested that the report glosses over some failures from EBED, for example the lack of County TD courses. GR confirmed that this has been taken over by the EBU and a County TD Course will be delivered in Spring 2024, the venue and dates will be confirmed in due course.

MH confirmed the next Advanced TD Training Day will take place in Sutton Coldfield, March 2024.

Tim Warren (TW) (Surrey) asked if future reports could include failures and challenges from EBED as well as positives. He stated this would be more helpful and enable better collaboration between EBED and the EBU.

DG asked how the large bequest granted to EBED will change their operations. MH stated that EBED do not want to use the funds to meet their day-to-day operations. They plan to create a legacy project, the EBED trustees are currently discussing the details of how to best use the funds in a tangible and specific way. DG asked if the amount would be shared once known. MH confirmed that this would be the case but that the amount is not currently known and it may take some time. LM asked if there are any restrictions on how the funds are to be used. MH noted there are no restrictions.

RM asked if there were plans for the EBU to fill the gaps that EBED currently don't fill. AD confirmed that identifying and filling the gaps from EBED is a current project and that the EBU Board have already compiled an initial draft of the "gaps". AD noted that the teaching of new students is not currently within EBED's activities; EBED's current focus is on the teaching of teachers. Local clubs, working with other Clubs and their Counties, supported by the EBU, are the source of new members. The EBU membership is a grassroots organisation.

DG stated that EBED currently only focuses on internal and existing clubs. He would like to see more external projects with the aim of bringing new people to bridge clubs.

14. Minutes of meetings of the Board of Directors of EBU Ltd**14.1 12th January 2023****14.2 23rd March 2023**

14.3 21st June 2023

14.4 14th September 2023

14.5 19th October 2023 (draft)

The meeting received the minutes of these meetings. There were no questions.

15. Minutes of the meetings of the Laws & Ethics Committee

15.1 1st February 2023

15.2 3rd May 2023

15.3 27th September 2023 (draft)

The meeting received the minutes of these meetings. There were no questions.

16. Minutes of the meetings of the Selection Committee

16.1 25th January 2023

16.2 6th September 2023

16.3 21st September 2023 (draft)

The meeting received the minutes of these meetings. There were no questions.

17. Dates for 2024 AGM

The 2024 AGM will be on Wednesday 27th November, the venue is yet to be confirmed.

18. Any Other Notified Business

AD thanked the EBU Board, EBU staff and all EBU shareholders and members for attending and for their contributions.

Additional Item

The draw took place for the prize winners in the Simultaneous Pairs competitions. 2 clubs were drawn from those which entered the EBED Sims and 6 from those entering the other sims. Each receives £200. The winning clubs were:

Club names	County	Category
Selsdon Bridge Club	Surrey	EBED Sims
Harrogate Bridge Club	Yorkshire	EBED Sims
Framlingham Bridge Club	Suffolk	EBU Sims
Noverre Bridge Club	Norfolk	EBU Sims
Bishop Auckland Bridge Club	North East	EBU Sims
Bromsgrove & District Bridge Club	Worcestershire	EBU Sims
Aylesbury Aces Bridge Club	Oxfordshire	EBU Sims

Pembury Bridge Club	Kent	EBU Sims
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All prize winners, including runners up, are listed on the website
<https://www.ebu.co.uk/article/2023-sim-pairs-prize-winners-drawn>

Closing the meeting, the Chairman thanked Shareholders for their attendance. The meeting closed at 3.30pm.

DRAFT



ANNUAL REPORT OF THE ENGLISH BRIDGE UNION

1 September 2022 - 31 August 2023

BRIEF SUMMARY

- Accounts show a surplus of £24.8k against a budgeted small deficit.
- Club sessions, player sessions, session sizes and player numbers have risen.
- IT innovations make it easier for students to find suitable teachers.
- *My EBU* and *NGS* continue to be the most popular pages of the website.
- Although we had no national teams in the world championships in Marrakech, many teams with EBU members performed well in the transnational events.
- Face-to-face EBU tournaments continue to recover.
- The EBU Online One-Day Green-Pointed events are running successfully with good player demand.
- Face-to-face County One-Day Green-Pointed events are returning to the calendar.
- The number of disciplinary cases relating to cheating has reduced and the new inexperienced player procedure has led to a number of players accepting a sanction without publicity, avoiding costly and time-consuming hearings.
- Bridge Warehouse sales have recovered to an extent and it is producing positive income, although less than pre-pandemic, as well as providing a service to members.
- Reduced staffing over the last five years and increased home working since the pandemic have allowed us to let part of the Aylesbury building to increase income.

MAIN REPORT

The English Bridge Union is the governing body for supporting duplicate bridge in England, representing communities of bridge players at club, county and national level, playing face-to-face and online. It is funded by members for members and provides the infrastructure necessary for the development of the game in England. It is a not-for-profit organisation and all surplus is invested in our national game.

This report details the work that we do to help our clubs, counties and members enjoy the game.

In addition to the dedicated team of staff led by Chief Executive, Gordon Rainsford, we would like to thank all the volunteers who comprise the EBU by belonging to its committees and working groups. Volunteers are a particularly valued sector of our community and without them organised bridge at all levels would be unable to function.

The statutory annual report and accounts will be viewable [on our website](#) shortly after the EBU's Annual General Meeting on 29th November 2023.

The Board

The Board is made up of eight directors elected on a cycle of three-year terms by the shareholders (the representatives of our counties), and up to three further ones appointed by the Board, renewable annually. The directors receive no remuneration for the work they undertake. They have legal and financial responsibilities as set out in the Companies Act 2006.

The board is assisted in its work by two elected standing committees (Selection and Laws & Ethics) as well as appointed working groups composed of board members, other volunteers, and members of staff.

Each member of the board takes responsibility for one or more aspects of the EBU's business. This responsibility includes budgetary control, delivering strategic objectives and regular reporting on the work of the organisation and the committees associated with it. For the year 2022-23 the responsibilities of the officers and other board members were as follows:

Chairman: Ian Payn

Vice-Chairman: Adrian Darnell (Cath Fox until November 2022)

Treasurer: Kay Preddy

Board members' responsibilities:

Member	Responsibilities
Adrian Darnell Vice-Chair	EBED; Education Working Group (Chair)
Cath Fox Vice-Chair until Nov 2022	IT; communications; marketing
Paul Gibbons (appointed)	Competitions Working Group (member)
Rob Lawy	Competitions Working Group (Chair); Volunteers; Education Working Group (member)
Ian Payn Chair	Selection Committee (member); Editorial Board (Chair); Laws & Ethics Committee (member); I.T. Working Group (member); Marketing Working Group (member)
Kay Preddy Treasurer from Nov 2022	Finance; Staffing
Tony Russ	Counties; Competitions Working Group (member); Education Working Group (member); Marketing Working Group (member)
Patrick Shields	Bridge Warehouse; Strategy; Internationals; Competitions Working Group (member); Education Working Group (member); Selection Committee (member)
Ian Sidgwick (appointed)	Marketing Working Group (member); Procurement; Competitions Working Group (member)
Abbey Smith	Junior Liaison Officer; Safeguarding Officer; Selection Committee (member)
Gayle Webb	Clubs; Competitions Working Group (member); Marketing Working Group (Chair)

Finance 2022-23

The financial year April 22 to March 23 had a surplus of £24.8k (just under 2% of turnover) against a budgeted small deficit; the largest contributors to this variance were increased income from UMS (as numbers over the year were up about 5%) and various administration changes (including the switch from an Audit to an Assurance service, and certain unspent allowances).

Across the income from different types of game, we saw an increase over the budget from UMS (mostly club games) but less income than expected from Licensing, and much as planned in Competitions. The spend on internationals – in a busy year with seven teams competing in European Championships across adult events and junior events – was almost twice the net profits from competitions. Generous donations to fund the Juniors over the year came to £15.2k and this covered almost half the cost of supporting the juniors. Overall, internationals take about 10% of our turnover.

Activity in the Bridge Warehouse has continued to grow but has only reached about 60% of the pre pandemic numbers, and our margin is only about half what it was then. The cost of English Bridge has gone down a little, but so has the advertising revenue; it currently costs about £1 per active member per edition to produce and deliver the magazine.

In looking forward, we are expecting income from rental of space in the Aylesbury premises and continued small growth in the amount of play that takes place, but costs are expected to rise with inflation and this will keep pressure on the EBU finances. It is important to build a surplus in 2023-24, as it is a quiet year for internationals which will return in greater number in 2024-25.

Clubs and Club Services

Comparing figures for the 12 months to end of August 2023 to the 12 months before that the number of club sessions, the average number of players in a session and the number of distinct players have all increased which are all encouraging signs. These stats are for club and county games only (excluding EBU games):

	Sep 21 - Aug 22	Sep 22 - Aug 23
Average players per session	25.76	26.67
Number of club sessions	57,261	59,025
Total player sessions	1,474,853	1,574,352
Number of distinct players	37,749	38,347

Since 1 September 2022, 10 clubs have signed up for the trial affiliation offer and are regularly submitting sessions. Of the 21 clubs whose trial affiliation period has come to an end 13 have chosen to stay affiliated and one merged with an affiliated club. During the same period 25 clubs have disaffiliated or closed, some of these were online only clubs which were setup during Covid.

During the 12 months, 44 free club teacher training places were taken up, so this remains a popular benefit of affiliation and no doubt this increase in teaching has contributed to the higher numbers of player sessions seen above.

Club seminars have continued this year and have been well received. Topics covered have been: Gentle Duplicate, Charitable Status, Bridge Club Websites and Running a Teaching Programme. Recordings of all these and more are available on the EBU YouTube channel.

Tony Russ and the Club Liaison Officer (CLO), Jonathan Lillycrop, had three meetings with randomly invited groups of clubs to get their feedback on what the EBU could do better. These meetings were constructive with useful feedback and we are working on a number of actions from these discussions.

EBU ClubPairs is available as a simplified version of EBUScore and is being regularly used by four clubs. For clubs already used to EBUScore there is little incentive to change but ClubPairs should hopefully provide an attractive alternative for clubs switching from other scoring programs.

The CLO is always keen to visit clubs and usually does so in response to any request such as for training on EBUScore, or a club which is considering affiliation and would like a representative to speak to the members and answer questions, or a club which is having a special event and would like an EBU representative to attend. In addition, some clubs prefer virtual visits by Zoom, by which route things like EBUScore training can be offered. Clubs who would like a visit can contact him at jonathan@ebu.co.uk

Since he has just moved to the North-East, he expects to be able to visit all the clubs there in the coming year. Club visits often involve playing in a club duplicate which is a good opportunity to speak with members and get feedback and answer questions.

Membership Development

The EBU has a part-time membership development officer, Tim Anderson, but he will be retiring from this role at the end of the year, which will prompt a review of our membership development provision.

During 2023 we have seen continuing recovery from the periods of lockdown and health anxiety accompanying the COVID-19 pandemic though our numbers (people playing in EBU sessions) remain around 10-15% below where they were in 2019. However, we added over 4,000 new members in the 12 months to September 2023, reflecting the hard work and enthusiasm of our clubs and teachers.

We are also aware of the demographics of our membership and are tracking the age of our members so as to be better prepared for changes ahead. We are grateful to over 7,500 members who shared their date or year of birth in order to improve the quality of our statistics. The average age of a player in one of our sessions between August and September 2023 was about 73 years.

We are focusing on several things in the drive for new players:

- Making it easier for bridge enquirers to learn the game. We have introduced a new web-based service to help enquirers find appropriate courses and teachers.
- Supporting clubs in their teaching and marketing. We have run popular seminars for clubs on topics including running a teaching programme, improving club websites, and putting on gentle duplicate sessions.
- Retaining more students in clubs when they complete their courses. We support clubs with advice and sharing what we have learned from others about this often-difficult transition.

- Making our website and EBU services in general more attractive to novice and intermediate players.
- Promoting bridge nationally as well as locally, including a “Festival of Bridge” planned for September 2024.
- Preparing for a new focus on youth bridge as we believe this is critical to the future of the game especially the more competitive game.

In all the above we are working with our associated charity, EBED (English Bridge Education and Development), to implement an effective joint strategy.

IT and Data matters

The EBU’s IT services are managed by Tim Anderson and Harry Watson. A working group meets weekly, currently Tim Anderson, Harry Watson, Gordon Rainsford, Jonathan Lillycrop and Kiat Huang. There are several strands to the work:

- Maintaining the IT systems at the Aylesbury office
- Maintaining a cloud network with remote desktops for staff along with our Sage accounting system
- Running the EBU website
- Maintaining and developing custom applications including My EBU, Masterpoint management, SIMs, scoring, results and others.
- Supporting staff with IT issues

Goals of the IT team include enhancing and modernising our IT systems both internally and those which clubs and individual members use, automating tasks where possible to free staff for other work, and careful cost management.

Recent work includes:

- Creating a new “Find a club or teacher” service which enquirers can use to connect with suitable clubs or teachers. The service on our website automatically contacts potential teachers and nearby clubs, so they can present offers to the enquirer. We have seen encouraging take-up since its launch in Summer 2023.
- Developing our web bridge calendar to give an at-a-glance view of events in any month including competitions and EBED training events, and feeds to link with personal calendars. More work is planned to improve event details booking links.
- Replacing the Aylesbury server and wi-fi with a new and more cost-effective modern system.
- Developing a new event management reporting system to help us keep track of who is booked for our competitions and other events.

Media coverage

Media coverage of duplicate bridge has remained relatively stable from 2022 to 2023. The majority of coverage in the national press has continued to be through the regular bridge columns, with the occasional additional article.

Most local news coverage focuses on new lessons or open days being held at bridge clubs as local interest stories. Many clubs also celebrated anniversary years or moving premises, with stories in local papers and the EBU Blog. The Summer Meeting at Eastbourne was advertised locally online.

In February clubs held special charity tournaments to benefit earthquake relief funds supporting those affected in Turkey and Syria.

Later in the year Helen Erichsen wrote a murder mystery novel which prominently featured bridge. The book was featured in various book review columns including the Sunday Times.

The majority of people access the EBU website via desktop and laptop computers (58.5%), although mobile usage has seen a 30% increase in the last year, to a total of 33.5% of people accessing via mobile devices. 8% of people also access the website via their tablet. The most popular pages are the My EBU members area, NGS pages, Results pages and Competitions. Also popular are the Information Resources and Gradings and Rankings pages.

Cases of cheating continued to decline in 2023, and there were therefore fewer national and international articles printed about cases of cheating in the game. Local news sites across the country covered some local bridge clubs' events, teaching initiatives and open days.

International Performances

The first events of the year – the Channel Trophy in December, the Camrose in January and March, and the Junior Camrose and Peggy Bayer in February were all held as live, face-to-face events.

England retained the Camrose, ahead of the second placed finishers from Wales. In the Channel Trophy, the U21 team won their category, while the U26 women and U26 open teams finished second in their respective groups. England retained the Peggy Bayer, and the Junior Camrose, with an EBU team comprised of U21 players, finishing second in the Junior Camrose.

The Lady Milne and Teltscher Trophy also took place as live events, with England narrowly winning the Lady Milne, ahead of Ireland, and comfortably winning the Teltscher trophy to complete the domestic set of events.

With no English representation at the Open, Women's, Mixed and Seniors World Championships, the major international event for 2023 was the World Youth Teams Championships in August. Following a late invitation for the U26 team to fill a vacant spot, England were represented in the U26, U26 women's, U21 and U16 categories. The U26 and U16 teams failed to qualify for the KO stages, finishing 18th and 16th respectively, but the U26 women's and U21 teams both made it through to the quarter finals, where they were subsequently eliminated. The U26 women finished 4th and the U21s finished 8th in the qualifying stage.

In the 10th European Transnational Championships in Strasbourg, France in June, a number of EBU members reached the late stages of the various events, with three of the four semi-finalists of the Women's teams containing English players: the Tri Polar team including Nevena Senior and Nicola Smith were the eventual winners over the Baker team, including Sally Brock and Fiona Brown. In the semi-finals the Baker team beat Marcia Green's team including Heather Dhondy.

EBU players who reached the late stages of the Transnational teams in Marrakech this summer included the Knottenbelt team (Michael Byrne, Ben Handley-Pritchard, Maggie Knottenbelt, Ben Norton, Stefano Tommasini & Tom Townsend), Team Orca (Andrew Dyson, Espen Erichsen, Glyn Liggins & Richard Plackett) and the Rosenthal team (Artur Malinowski).

Regulation

The Laws and Ethics Committee (L&E) is made up of seven elected individual members of the EBU and three ex officio members: the EBU Chair, Vice Chair and Chief Tournament Director, as well as one appointed board member – Gayle Webb. It is responsible for the regulation of the game in England. David Burn is the current Chair and Steve Green the Vice-Chair. In addition, Robin Barker has been co-opted for the specific purpose of overseeing the Blue Book and the White Book.

2023 saw a much-reduced number of cheating cases and an increase in confessions in cases that progressed after an initial investigation. Notably, there was only one case which proceeded to a full disciplinary hearing.

There are currently 20 sanctioned members listed on the EBU website. Absent from the website are three members who confessed under the new *Procedure for Inexperienced Players* when first asked to comment on the allegations thereby avoiding publication on the EBU website and in English Bridge. There are a further three members who have confessed to cheating online whose names will likely appear on the website by the time of the AGM.

Unfortunately, cheating cases take many hours of work even in cases where confessions are forthcoming. Particular thanks must go to Steve Green for prosecuting and overseeing challenging cases and to Jonathan Cooke for his invaluable statistical analysis of data from online deals and the NGS.

The L&E produces two annual publications, the [White Book](#) (primarily information and guidance for Tournament Directors) and the [Blue Book](#) (primarily information for players). Both publications are available free from the website. The Blue Book was updated effective from 1st August 2023 in time for the Summer Meeting. Since the Blue Book was not updated for a couple of years during the Covid pandemic, there have been more changes to it than usual this year, but it is hoped that this will avoid the need for further changes for some time, other than for any points of clarification.

Tournaments and Competitions

This year has seen the competitions situation continue to settle down after the pandemic, with a more streamlined tournaments programme and a significant recovery of a number of our face-to-face events. Three of the events we had intended to discontinue, the Spring Bank Holiday Congress, Scarborough Congress and Northern Mid-Week congress, have now been taken over by Oliver Cowan on our behalf and they have been able to justify their continued existence.

The Tollemache Trophy continues to have its qualifying event held on RealBridge while the final is face-to-face. Both the Corwen and Pachabo trophies have recently been run online but from next year we are going to try holding one of them online and the other face-to-face each year. The National Teams League is now in its fourth season and currently has a total of 39 teams in three divisions, playing weekly 16-board matches online.

The Online One-Day Green-Pointed (OODGP) events introduced by the EBU to replace those run by counties over the previous two years have been successful, and 16 counties have run a total of 30 face-to-face One-Day Green-Pointed (ODGP) events in the six months since the new arrangements came into effect.

The EBU has continued to have a serious online presence with seven daily online games on BBO, which continue to attract worthwhile numbers, although an attempted extra morning game did not survive after its introductory period. We also still have two regular daily Funbridge robot games and, in addition to our daily 12-board robot game on BBO, we now have a second one that uses Acol bidding. We have four ladders based on these robot games, a monthly one from our 20-board match-pointed games with a further one handicapped on NGS, a quarterly one for our IMPs games and another combining the results of the three 12-board robot games – one Funbridge and two BBO. These ladders get between 70 & 300 players participating in them.

The Year-End and Easter congresses in London have regained their numbers to a fair extent and attendance at the Summer Meeting in Eastbourne, with its new reduced 3 ½ day format, was up a bit this year on last year. The Spring Foursomes, generously sponsored by Helen Schapiro for the twentieth and final time, recovered this year to have a very convenient entry of 48 teams, perhaps due to some extent to being part of the WBF's [World Bridge Tour](#).

As expected, the Arena Travel takeover by the Leger Shearings Group has not brought much change with it, and they have continued to find playing accommodation for us in England for our congresses and other competitions, as well as sponsoring our overseas congresses. We have held overseas congresses in Montenegro and Antalya in the last year, with forthcoming ones planned in Italy and Tunisia.

The Competitions Working Group (supported now by an Advisory group) has continued to meet regularly, though less frequently than last year. It has produced a new format for the Crockfords Cup which will start this year and is working on a programme of events for less-experienced players, run in conjunction with some of our counties.

Tournament Directors Development Group

The Tournament Directors Development Group (TDDG) is a subcommittee of the Board which deals with the development and management of the EBU's active tournament directors, from trainee to National director. It is now chaired by Peter Clinch. We held a successful TD training weekend in December 2022, to which all TD panel members were invited.

This was the first such weekend since 2018, and we focused on trends since that time - online versus face-to-face directing, changing numbers of events and participants, and directing with screens. We are happy that our three new young trainees, William Clennell, Megan Jones, Stephen Kennedy, were all able to attend and take an active part in the proceedings.

EBU Counties

The EBU collaborates closely with the 39 county associations to promote the game of Bridge. Effective communication is essential in this collaboration, which has been achieved by continuing with the programme of meetings of County Chairs. These have considered several issues, generally raised by County Chairs themselves but also those put forward by the EBU Board. We have continued with regular 'Updates from Aylesbury' and 'Crisp Competitions Communications' sharing information about upcoming events, results and important announcements.

Each county has a Board member as a 'buddy' so there is always an open channel of communication. The exact nature of the collaboration varies from county to county but the common goal is to foster the growth and enjoyment of Bridge in the county while aligning with the broader goals of the EBU at national level. During the last twelve months we have worked

on improvements to the support that we can offer to clubs and counties; there has been a significant return of face-to-face county One-Day Green-Pointed events following the changes that were introduced at the last AGM; and at the moment we are embarking on a major collaboration with our clubs and counties as we plan for a Festival of Bridge in September 2024.

EBU Headquarters at Aylesbury

We have a total of sixteen EBU staff members— a full-time staff equivalent of around 13, down from about 15.5 in 2018-19. They serve about 50,000 members through the provision of tournaments, regulation, international support, club and membership support services, including the Bridge Warehouse providing bridge books and supplies, and communications including Club Management Focus to affiliated clubs, and Events Focus to “tournament players”, so on average we have one member of staff for just under every 4,000 EBU members. In addition, we have 39 counties and about 600 clubs.

We also support the charity English Bridge Education and Development, with whom we share offices and some administrative systems. EBED has a Chief Executive, who was Giorgio Provenza for most of the year after which Mark Humphris took over this role, as well as three part-time staff.

With the reduction in staff numbers during the Covid pandemic and the increase in working from home, we now have less need for as much space in Aylesbury and in response to this we investigated letting the building and moving to smaller premises, but we found that this would not save us much money, so we have recently let half of the ground floor, which will provide us with an additional source of income. We also now have a large meeting room on the first floor, available to let to commercial organisations as well as to bridge groups.

Annual General Meeting and Shareholdings

The EBU is a company limited by shares. Our shareholders do not get any financial remuneration, their shareholdings and voting rights are based on the number of members their county has. This report will be presented to the shareholders for discussion at the Annual General Meeting on 29th November 2023.

For full details of our constitution and structure please see the EBU’s Articles and Bye Laws available on the EBU’s website, www.ebu.co.uk



Adrian Darnell

Chairman from September 2023

For and on behalf of the Board of the English Bridge Union

Staff members and national volunteers 1 September 2022 – 31 August 2023

Names of the board members, working groups, staff and committee members can be found on the [EBU website](#). We are also grateful for the assistance of:

Honorary Counsel

David Ewart KC

Pro Bono Advisor

Roger Karn

Disciplinary Panel (a committee drawn from this group hears and decides on cases that are prosecuted by the Prosecution Panel named below)

Geoff Smith (Convenor), Sarah Bell, Brian Callaghan, Frances Connell, Jerry Cope, Helen Erichsen (until July 2023), Gillian Fawcett, Jim Grant, Ben Handley-Pritchard, Andy Hughes, Norman Inniss, Adrian la Chapelle, Alan Mould, Kath Nelson, Paul Roberts, John Wilmott.

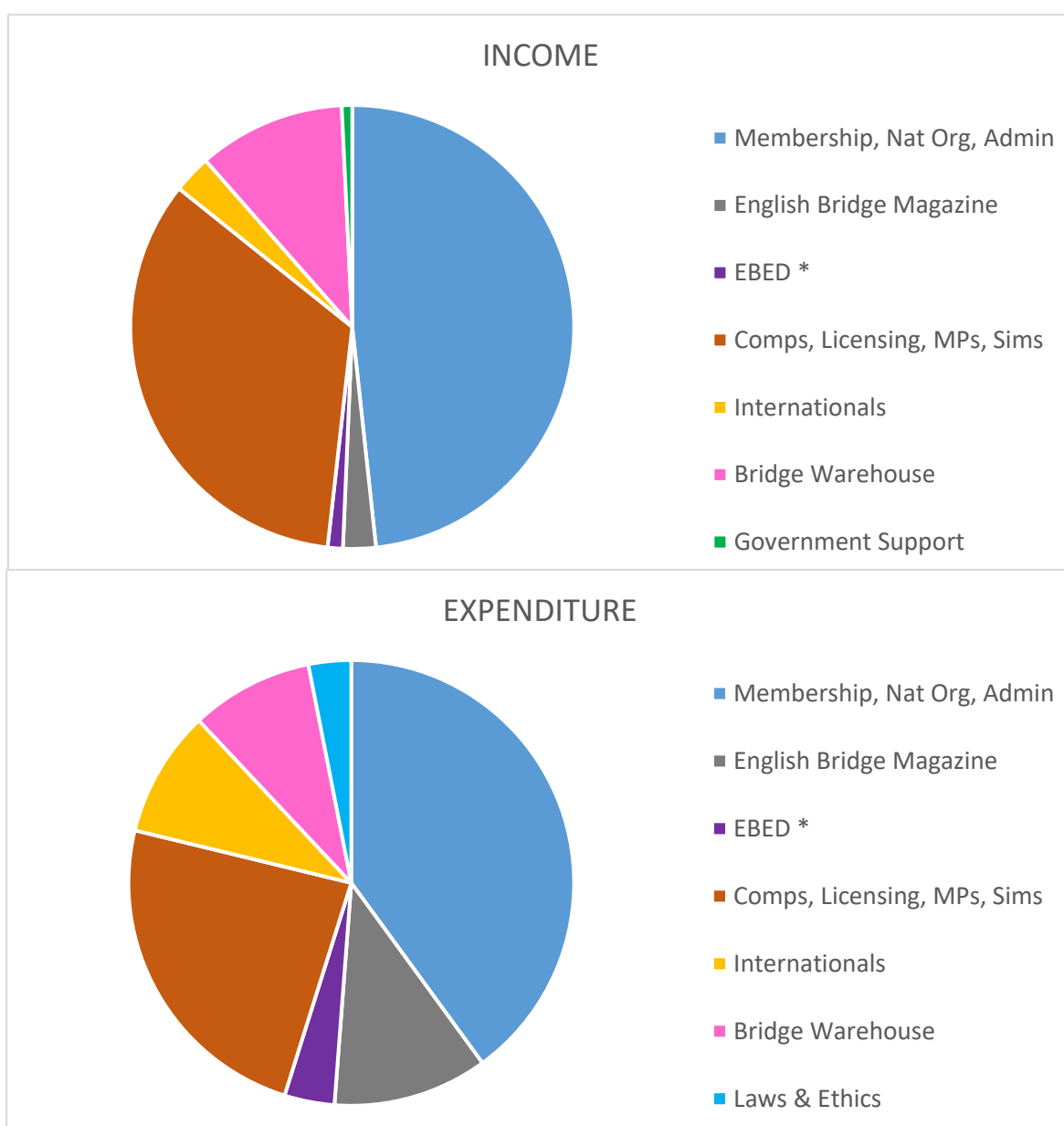
Prosecution Panel (members drawn from this group conduct prosecutions on behalf of the EBU)

John Dean, Richard Fedrick, Mike Graham, Stephen Green (L&E Committee Vice-Chair), Mike Huggins, Simon Husband, Jane Jensen (L&E Committee member), Richard Johnson, Fiona Littlewood, Jim Mason, Shirley Pritchard, Neil Rosen, Andrew Southwell, Nick Woolven.

EBU Pie Charts of income and expenditure 2022-23

	INCOME £k's	EXPENDITURE £k's
Membership, Nat Org, Admin	633.4	-514.5
English Bridge Magazine	31.3	-144.5
EBED *	14.5	-46.8
Comps, Licensing, MPs, Sims	445.3	-308.2
Internationals	36.4	-118.5
Bridge Warehouse	140.8	-114.6
Government Support	10.0	0.0
Laws & Ethics	0.0	-39.8
	1,311.7	-1,286.9

* English Bridge Education and Development Charity





SPECIAL RESOLUTION

ARTICLES OF ASSOCIATION of The English Bridge Union Limited

Proposed changes for the AGM Shareholders meeting Wednesday 29th November 2023

FROM:

16 STANDING COMMITTEES OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

16.1 There shall be two Standing Committees of the Board, namely a Selection Committee, and a Laws and Ethics Committee (constituted in accordance with this Article 16), together with such other Standing Committees as the Board shall determine from time to time. These Standing Committees shall have authority, subject to the direction of and in accordance with the principles laid down in these Articles, the Bye Laws or from time to time by the Members in general meeting, **to exercise such powers of the Directors as the Directors shall determine**. Standing Committees may exercise such powers through sub-committees if they consider it desirable to do so.

TO:

16 STANDING COMMITTEES OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

16.1 There shall be two Standing Committees of the Board, namely a Selection Committee, and a Laws and Ethics Committee (constituted in accordance with this Article 16), together with such other Standing Committees as the Board shall determine from time to time. These Standing Committees shall have authority, subject to the direction of and in accordance with the principles laid down in these Articles, the Bye Laws or from time to time by the Members in general meeting, **to exercise such powers of the Directors as the Directors shall document in published Terms of Reference for each Committee**. Standing Committees may exercise such powers through sub-committees if they consider it desirable to do so.

Change wording from Chairman to "Chair" and Vice-Chairman to "Vice-Chair" in definitions as below and throughout the Articles.

1 DEFINITIONS AND INTERPRETATION

1.1 In these Articles the following words and expressions shall have the following meanings:

"Chairman" means the chair~~man~~ for the time being of the Board of Directors of the Company appointed in accordance with Article 11.9(c).

"Vice-Chairman" means the vice-chair~~man~~ for the time being of the Board of Directors of the Company appointed in accordance with Article 11.9(d).

Amend wording to include the possibility of electronic voting.

FROM:

9.8 Without prejudice to the rights of Members under the Statutes, at any general meeting a resolution put to the vote of the meeting shall be decided on a show of hands, unless a poll is demanded (before or on the declaration of the result of the show of hands) by at least five Members present in person or by proxy entitled to vote. Unless a poll is so demanded, a declaration by the Chairman that a resolution has, on a show of hands, been carried or carried unanimously or by a particular majority, or lost, and an entry to that effect in the minutes of the meeting shall be conclusive evidence of that fact without proof of the number or proportion of the votes recorded in favour of or against that resolution being required. Regulations 46 and 47 of Table A shall not apply to the Company.

TO:

9.8 Without prejudice to the rights of Members under the Statutes, at any general meeting a resolution put to the vote of the meeting shall be decided on a show of hands, **or by an electronic poll. Before or on the declaration of the result of a show of hands, if at least five Members present in person or by proxy entitled to vote so demand, then a poll shall be organised during the meeting.** Unless a poll is so demanded, a declaration by the Chairman that a resolution has, on a show of hands, been carried or carried unanimously or by a particular majority, or lost, and an entry to that effect in the minutes of the meeting shall be conclusive evidence of that fact without proof of the number or proportion of the votes recorded in favour of or against that resolution being required. Regulations 46 and 47 of Table A shall not apply to the Company.

FROM:

11.8 In the event of more nominations being received than the number of vacant elected Director positions in accordance with Article 11.4 or 11.7, the Directors shall be elected from the persons so nominated (or, in the case where Article 11.7 applies, from those persons nominated in accordance with Article 11.5 only) by a poll being taken at the Annual General Meeting. Each Member shall be entitled to a number of votes in such poll as is equal to the number of Shares held by him (and each Member shall be entitled to cast each such vote for any person so nominated). Subject to the maximum number of Directors and the automatic election of nominated persons as Directors in accordance with these Articles, the persons receiving the most votes on such poll shall be elected as the Directors.

TO:

11.8 In the event of more nominations being received than the number of vacant elected Director positions in accordance with Article 11.4 or 11.7, the Directors shall be elected from the persons so nominated (or, in the case where Article 11.7 applies, from those persons nominated in accordance with Article 11.5 only). **This may be done by a poll taken at the Annual General Meeting, or electronically in advance of the meeting.** Each Member shall be entitled to a number of votes in such poll as is equal to the number of Shares held by him (and each Member shall be entitled to cast each such vote for any person so nominated). Subject to the maximum number of Directors and the automatic election of nominated persons as Directors in accordance with these Articles, the persons receiving the most votes on such poll shall be elected as the Directors.

ORDINARY RESOLUTION

Proposed Disciplinary Rule Changes for 2023 AGM

Submitted by the L&E Committee October 2023

Defendant Representation

Current Rule 9.6:

The Defendant shall have the right to be represented by a legal counsel of his choice or may be accompanied by a person to speak on his behalf.

Proposed 9.6:

The Defendant shall have the right to be represented by a single legal counsel of his choice or may be accompanied by a single person to speak on his behalf. Any such representative, whether a Company member or not, must first sign up to the Representative Code of Conduct.

Rationale:

- a) There have been instances of representatives being abusive to others in the process as well as making false factual claims. At the moment there is no provision in the Rules to curtail this behaviour, hence the introduction of this proposal. The Code of Conduct is in the process of being compiled.
 - b) This Code of Conduct will also include a provision that any written submissions a representative makes must be approved by the defendant. This avoids the potential situation where a defendant may later argue that he didn't agree with what his representative was saying on his behalf.
 - c) "Single" has been added to clarify that only one representative is permitted.
-

Sanctions

A) Add a new paragraph 9.13(vi)

any aggravating or mitigating factors from the Prosecution

Rationale:

There is currently nothing in the Rules that permits the Prosecution to communicate their views on the sanction to be applied by the DC. Even though this is what happens in practice.

B) Add two new clauses:

12.1(vii) a ban on undertaking one or more non-playing roles

12.1(viii) removal of right of the defendant to be identified as the winner of any past event in which they were shown to be cheating

Rationale:

A playing ban may not be an appropriate sanction for non-playing related offences eg. suppose a TD manipulated NGS data in some way; or a national playing or non-playing England representative misbehaved during a tournament. The DC may want to issue a sanction related to the role that was being undertaken.

We considered removal of Masterpoints and NGS rankings, but there are both difficulties and unintended consequences of doing so. However, it seems only right that the DC has an option to remove any honours achieved where someone has been shown to have been cheating.

C) Current Rule 12.1(vi):
a fine up to a maximum of £500.

Proposed Replacement:
a fine up to a maximum of £5,000.

Rationale:

Sometimes the actions of defendants cause us considerable nuisance and significant financial outlay which is unfair for the membership to have to bear. £500 is too low a limit.

Admissions

A) Insert new paragraph 10.1:

An admission in response to the letter seeking comments under Rule 7 shall be included in the subsequent charge letter, together with a request for the defendant to confirm that there are no other offences he would wish the Disciplinary Committee to take into account before determining sanction.

Rationale:

This helps discourage an early guilty plea to a less serious offence, which may curtail an investigation that may uncover more serious issues.

B) Current Rule 10.1(vii):

an admission made at the time of the letter seeking comments under Rule 7 shall receive a sanction of one-third of the tariff that would have applied if later found guilty. Further, the sanction would be communicated under Rules 13.2-13.5, but not published in accordance with Rule 13.1.

Proposed Replacement:

an admission made at the time of the letter seeking comments under Rule 7 shall receive a sanction of one-third of the tariff that would have applied if later found guilty. Notifications under Rules 13.2-13.5 would apply, but publication under Rule 13.1 would indicate the nature of the offence and not name the offender.

Rationale:

The number of admissions has increased, hopefully as a result of the rule changes made in 2022. The membership should be aware that such cases exist, but without naming the individuals concerned.

Appeals

A) Current Rule 11.8:

Any appeal must be filed by submitting a written Notice of Appeal, with copies of all documents relied on in support of the appeal, to the L&E Secretary. The Notice of Appeal shall set out the decision appealed against, the grounds upon which it is submitted that the Disciplinary Committee has erred, and (if applicable) the grounds for requesting a fresh hearing. If the appeal is based on a procedural error having been made then the appellant must not only show that the error in procedure occurred but that he was disadvantaged by it.

Proposed Replacement:

Any appeal must be filed by submitting a written Notice of Appeal, with copies of all documents relied on in support of the appeal, to the L&E Secretary. The Notice of Appeal shall set out the decision appealed against and the grounds upon which it is submitted. These grounds must demonstrate that the decision of the DC was partly or wholly based on an error of fact. Alternatively, if a procedural error is identified then a fresh hearing may be requested, which must include a demonstration of how the Appellant was materially disadvantaged by the error.

Rationale:

Hearings and appeals are time-consuming for many people. It is too easy at the moment to have a second bite of the cherry and try a second opinion. Hence there should be some material fact or procedure that was wrong that misled the DC.

B) Current Rule 11.9:

The L&E Secretary shall send copies of the Notice of Appeal and of all relevant documents to the Respondent.

Proposed Replacement:

The L&E Secretary shall send copies of the Notice of Appeal and of all relevant documents to the Respondent. The Respondent has 14 days to provide comments on the Notice of Appeal to the L&E Secretary.

Rationale:

To clarify that the Prosecution has a role to submit its comments following a request for an Appeal.

C) Current Rule 11.12:

If the Appellant requests a fresh hearing the Appeals Committee shall consider the application on the basis of written submissions alone.

Proposed Replacement:

All requests for Appeals are considered by the Appeals Committee on the basis of written submissions alone. The Appeals Committee may request attendance of any party to clarify points of fact.

Rationale:

To clarify the position for all appeals, not just requests for fresh hearings. There is no reason why normal Appeals should not be decided on written submissions. Otherwise we are effectively in a situation where all appeals become fresh hearings.

Publication and Notification

Current Rule 13.1:

Unless in exceptional circumstances the Board decides otherwise, details of disciplinary hearings including the identity of the Defendant (except where the Defendant is under 18 or an admission has been made under Rule 10), the nature of the offence and the Sanction imposed shall be published in English Bridge and/or such other publication as the Board may decide, and on the Company's website. Such publication shall take place as soon as practicable after either the time for appeal has elapsed or following the Appeals Committee decision to Sanction if a Notice of Appeal is filed.

Proposed Replacement:

Unless in exceptional circumstances the Board decides otherwise, details of disciplinary hearings including the identity of the Defendant (except where the Defendant is under 18 or an admission has been made under Rule 10), the nature of the offence, the full decision and the Sanction imposed shall be published in English Bridge and/or such other publication as the Board may decide, and on the Company's website. Such publication shall take place as soon as practicable after either the time for appeal has elapsed or following the Appeals Committee decision to Sanction if a Notice of Appeal is filed. Such publication on the Company's website to be deleted once the sanction has expired.

Rationale:

This proposal adds "the full decision" to what can be published. Compared to the USA where a great deal of detail is published alongside verdicts, we provide the very minimum of information. This creates unfounded rumour and a feeling that justice may not have been done. By also providing the decision this greater transparency will help alleviate misgivings. It is not proposed to publish decisions for cases already concluded.