



MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE NATIONAL COUNTY WORKING GROUP

AT West Midlands Bridge Club

ON Monday 23 February 2015 @ 12.30pm

Representatives:

Region	Name	Region	Name	Region	Name
EBU General Mgr	Barry Capal	EBU Board	Jeremy Dhondy	Eastern (HRT)	Bernard Eddleston
EBU Board	Darren Evetts	Western (HIW)	Andy Hughes	Northern (YOR)	Lesley Millet
EBU Board	Ron Millet	Midlands (OXF)	Robert Procter	Midlands (GLO)	Alan Wearmouth
Eastern (ESX)	John Williams				

Apologies:

Region	Name	Region	Name
Northern (MER)	Paul Roberts		

Chair: Darren Evetts

1. **Apologies** were received from Paul Roberts and the group noted that due to work commitments Peter Bushby had stood down from this group and the Eastern Counties Working Group. Peter was thanked for his extensive input to the groups in the short time he had been involved. Andy and Bernard were welcomed to their first meeting. There was no representative from the Metropolitan region.
2. **Minutes of Last Meeting** (27 October 2014) – Had already been agreed by email.
3. **Matters Arising** excluding Discussion Topics - None
4. **Update from topic leaders** -
 - a. Topic A (Lesley Millet) - Improving the relationship between the EBU/Counties and unaffiliated Clubs (with Ron Millet & Andy Hughes).
 - b. Topic B (Alan Wearmouth) - Developing a Value Proposition and a Progression Strategy for Players at all levels that revitalises our membership (with Peter Bushby, Mike Willoughby & Jude Currie).
 - c. Topic C (John Williams) - Structuring, staffing and motivating the volunteer workforce that we depend on at National and County level (with Rob Procter & Paul Roberts).

Moving Forward:

Following extensive discussion, and the view that a number of outcomes were common to all three of the topic areas, it was agreed to move forward as follows:

1. That Regional Support Officers might prove to be a huge benefit in the development of Counties, joint funding with Counties, might be the way forward. Lesley and Andy agreed to research and develop such an idea.
 2. Produce a Value Proposition as a Marketing Tool, which will outline the Value Proposition of our National and County organisations to Existing Members, New Members and Potential Members. Alan and John to produce some draft proposals.
 3. To access local publicity opportunities – It was felt that any publicity generated would help enormously in raising the profile of the game. BC agreed to liaise with Peter Stockdale with a view to producing some sample press releases and letters, and a general 'how to' guide for Clubs and Counties.
5. **Eastern Counties** – Update & Discussion Paper
- a. A paper prepared by Michael Collins, Chair, Bedfordshire CBA was presented and it was agreed to pass the paper to Topic Group Leaders so that they may include any relevant points in their topic areas. JD agreed to respond to other points, and that we would hold the paper for inclusion in any relevant future topics.
 - b. Is there any scope in conducting targeted Surveys, perhaps by asking individual Clubs? Thought needs to be given to the questions and what it is possible to do with the data collected, particularly as 'open' questions will be time consuming and expensive to analyse. Carefully considered 'closed' questions would certainly be less onerous to analyse.
6. **Midland Counties** – Update
- a. The idea of producing a document to deal with etiquette and behaviour was thought to be a good way of dealing with a large number of issues at the table which can often result in bad behaviour. The idea being to manage the expectations of both the newcomer and more the experienced player, and to develop an ethos of good behaviour/best practice and acceptance that calling the TD is not an aggressive or hostile action.
 - b. The idea of an EBU IT User Group was presented. It was agreed that as IT was not currently an area this group was focusing on we would hold the paper for future consideration. It was also agreed to pass the paper on to Barry for his consideration.
 - c. It is apparent that the majority of County organisations are made up of long standing members and very few, or none, of the members we welcomed through

universal membership have yet entered the area or County organisation. An example of this was highlighted where one new member of a County Executive Committee was embarking on face to face communication with clubs and, in particular, those people who became members through Universal Membership.

- d. The advantage of cross-county collaboration was highlighted, when the counties were able to discuss the Midland Counties League.

7. Northern Counties

- a. The EBU Northern Counties Region Improvers Pairs Competition has been organised and will be open to players from all clubs falling within the Northern Regional Area. The event is for players below the rank of Master and will be played at four venues across the region. It is hoped that this event may be taken up by other regions once we have some feedback from the Northern event. We wish them every success.
- b. A number of other points had already been raised elsewhere.

8. Metropolitan Counties – Nothing to report

9. Western Counties – No meeting had taken place since Dick Andrews had stood down. Darren and Andy will look at this situation, and that of the Metropolitan Region.

10. Provincial Counties – Nothing to report

11. AoB

- a. Best Practice for County Associations and Measurements of Best Practice for County Associations - It was agreed that Counties may find these documents very useful, perhaps in simply reviewing what the County has achieved, or in adopting them as a framework to operate within. John will finalise the two documents with a view to them being presented at the County Chairmen's Meeting.
- b. The question of membership of the Regional County Working Group was raised, in view of the fact that a number of members of these groups were no longer serving officers of the County they represent. It was confirmed that Counties can select their representative(s) to serve on the Regional County Working Group however they choose. Membership of the National County Working Group is made up of two representatives from each region, EBU Board members, EBU staff, and any other person who might be invited to attend to support the Group's objectives.

12. Date of Next Meeting, Monday 8 June 2015, 12.30pm @ West Midlands Bridge Club.