



**NOTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COUNTY CHAIRMAN'S CONFERENCE
HELD AT IMPERIAL HOTEL, RUSSELL SQUARE, LONDON WC1
ON WEDNESDAY 1 JULY 2015 AT 1PM**

1. Attendance EBU representatives

| Board Members | | Board Members | |
|---------------|-----------------|-----------------|-------------------------------------|
| Jeremy Dhondy | Chairman | Darren Evetts | Lesley Millet Northern CWG Chair |
| Ian Payn | Vice Chairman | Anthony Golding | John Pain Secretary |
| Andrew Petrie | Treasurer | Ron Millet | Kay Carter EBU Reception |
| Barry Capal | General Manager | | |

County Attendance

| County | Name | County | Name | County | Name |
|---------------|-----------------|-------------------------|------------------|-------------------|----------------|
| Berks & Bucks | Anders Wallen | Leicestershire | Dean Benton | Somerset | Gina Howard |
| Derbyshire | Arnold Chandler | London | Roger Morton | Staffs and Shrops | Linda Curtis |
| Devon | Mike Hamon | Manchester | Irene Davies | Suffolk | Jeff Orton |
| Dorset | Tim Dunsby | Merseyside and Cheshire | Julian Merrill | Surrey | Trevor Hobson |
| Essex | Paul Mollison | Middlesex | Harish Patel | Warwickshire | Mike Thorley |
| Hants & IOW | Andy Hughes | Norfolk | Suzanne Gill | Wiltshire | Roger Karn |
| Hertfordshire | Richard Banbury | Northamptonshire | Nicky Bainbridge | Worcestershire | Eddy Blackburn |
| Kent | Geoff Smith | Oxfordshire | Robert Procter | Yorkshire | Nick Woolven |
| | | | | | |

Apologies

| | | | | | |
|----------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------|---------------|-----------------|--------------|
| Board Members | Jerry Cope | Heather Dhondy | Rob Lawy | | |
| Bedfordshire | Michael Collins | Gloucestershire | Jim Simons | North East | Val Gibson |
| Cambs and Hunts | Chris Jagger | Herefordshire | Roy Milnes | Nottinghamshire | John Auld |
| Channel Islands | Norman Le Cocq Robert Plumley | Lancashire | John Brearley | Sussex | Andy Ryder |
| Cumbria | Trevor Ward | Lincolnshire | Guy Grainger | Westmorland | John Ellwood |
| | | | | | |

Absence – no apologies

| | | | | |
|------|----------|------------|-------------|------------|
| Avon | Cornwall | Mike Booth | Isle of Man | John Large |
|------|----------|------------|-------------|------------|

2 Introduction and Welcome

The EBU Chairman Jeremy Dhondy opened the meeting and welcomed all delegates on the hottest day of the year. He mentioned a number of administrative matters:

a) Youth Care Policy.

Now that the EBL had introduced an U15 event in the forthcoming 25th European Youth Bridge Team Championships event in Tromsø, the EBU has formed an U15 squad. EBED run a number of events specifically for Juniors – the Junior Teach In and the Young Bridge Challenge. Some clubs and counties also run junior events. We try to ensure that they are all properly cared for in accordance with the Youth Care Policy and clubs and counties are encouraged to do the same. In the same way that the model club/county constitution provides a framework, so does the EBU Youth Care Policy. EBED has recently adopted the policy for its events. Part of the policy provides information on obtaining DBS (formerly CRB) checks, which the EBU can progress for members.

The policy has recently been updated and can be found at

<http://www.ebu.co.uk/documents/official-documents/youth-care-policy.pdf>

b) Scoring issues

Most clubs and almost all counties use software to score their events. Around 500 clubs currently use ScoreBridge; 60 clubs use Jeff Smith (Pairs Scorer) and fewer than 20 clubs use other software. All EBU events are scored using the Jeff Smith suite of programmes. Jeff Smith has supplied Pairs Scorer to clubs, counties and NBOs free of charge for many years.

Jeff has decided to give his suite of scoring programs to the EBU and from October 1st 2015 Pairs Scorer will be rebranded as EBUScore and serviced and supported by EBU Headquarters. The other modules in the suite (Teams Scorer, Swiss Pairs Scorer, Swiss Teams Scorer and Individual Scorer) will also be part of EBUScore.

Nobody will be compelled to change from their current system, so those who use ScoreBridge can continue to do so.

There will still be no charge for downloading and using EBUScore, however a small sub-committee will be set up to decide, amongst other things, how to charge for the support in using the programs. The sub-committee may also look for volunteer clubs to assist in trialling updates before they are made more widely available. Organisations may still ask for their 'wish lists' to be added to the programs, but that will depend on how feasible they are.

c) Shareholders expenses

JD reminded delegates that Counties were entitled to claim for the first shareholder attending shareholders meetings. The EBU procedures manual was being updated, taking modern travel practices into account and he suggested that Counties might look at their own procedures in this area.

d) Regional Improvers Pairs

JD said that Lesley Millet would be giving a briefing on how this event for Northern Counties had progressed.

e) County adverts in *English Bridge*

JD reminded Counties that they were entitled to a 50% discount in adverts in *English Bridge*. This was in addition to the lower rates now available for ¼, ½ and full page adverts given the smaller size of the magazine. They should contact the Advertising manager Chris Danby (adsales@ebu.co.uk) if interested.

3 Standing Committee Consultation

JD said that it was the intention of the Board to continue to improve the governance of the EBU. The three standing committees (Laws and Ethics, Tournament and Selection) were formed between 1946 and 1948 and had remained largely unchanged since then. The modern thinking was to have sub-committees of the board, rather than standing committees. There were already some permanent sub-committees (e.g. the Editorial Board), whereas others (e.g. to set up the NGS) were formed and disbanded once their work was done.

The current arrangement meant that contested elections for members were rare and shareholders were often being asked to vote for members of whom they had little or no knowledge.

The original proposals (put to shareholders) had been modified in light of their opinions as follows:

Laws and Ethics: The roles of judicial and regulatory would be split into two committees. The current set up requires expertise in both areas, whereas the new suggested arrangement could call on members with different skill sets.

Tournament: The existing committee would be replaced by a small sub-committee consisting of the Chief TD and a small panel.

Selection: It was acknowledged that this was the most difficult sub-committee to revise. Those who served on the committee were usually those who had an interest in being selected. However, suitable and willing members outside that set who might be prepared to serve were hard to find. The proposal was to have approximately five appointed members including one representative from the board plus the Chief TD.

Several members spoke about the Selection Committee proposals. It was noted that the primary intention was to have the best possible committee to do the job; bridge was one of few areas where a committee did the selecting – often a manager was appointed, who then picked his team. In this regard it was noted that the U25, U20 and U15 teams were largely selected by the Squad Manager with the Selection Committee endorsing the teams selected.

In the Camrose the winning team from the Premier League is guaranteed to be picked for a Camrose weekend. Others are selected from participants in the Premier League.

Kent, Wiltshire and Derbyshire all spoke in favour of all the proposals. Derbyshire had already split their L&E in the way proposed.

4 County Working Group

Darren Evetts introduced the topic by giving a brief summary of where the various County Groups had fared.

The Northern & Midlands Group are thriving . The Eastern Group had recently lost its Chairman and was looking a new one, The Southern Group was to be formed following the unsuccessful attempts to form groups based around London and the South East and the West Country. Darren introduced Lesley Millet who gave an outline of the work of the National and a Regional Group:

EBU COUNTY WORKING GROUPS

AGENDA SAYS "where are we now".

The EBU established the National County Working Group and 4 Regional Working Groups in 2013. Both the EBU National County Working Group and the Northern Counties WG have met quarterly since November 2013.

Our journey as Members together has been an interesting one –

- we have been getting to know each other,
- dispelled many of our misconceptions concerning the EBU,
- have been getting to understand each other's views
- and have become working colleagues.

County Chairman's Conference – July 1st 2015

What are we achieving and is this project worthwhile? I can only speak from my personal experience on both the Northern & National Working Groups

We are:

- Working together and firing off ideas in the regions where we operate and ideas to other Regional Working Groups – whilst tapping into the existing resources of the EBU and have created “Regional Collaboration” which we class as very important for the future.
- Bouncing New ideas off each other in areas such as Teaching, Seminars, Marketing and PR (eg website & Club Development)
- Reporting back to the EBU Board with new ideas for the future to make us one approachable cohesive body.
- We are working closely with the EBU Board Members and although we are our own people, we are feeding our views into the EBU for consideration and pathfinding for the future.

What have we achieved:

- We have moved forward after the Clubs Committee and entered into a new area of Bridge Development which did not exist before. But it does need hard work, commitment and also support from the EBU.
- We have made new contacts in different counties – with representatives of both County Chairmen and other County Representatives involved.
- On the ground information has been exchanged on County Projects and Working Groups.
- We have created Joint ventures – Regional Improvers Pairs – knockout competition, leading up to a simultaneous final in 3 centres with regional and a winning pair. Over 200 players below the rank of Master participated. Is this the start of the Working Groups being used as test projects for new ideas?
- Preparation and discussion on Topics for today's meeting which have already been reported back to the EBU Board –
 - Views fleshed out on Unaffiliated Clubs and Different Counties' involvement with these Clubs – and how to move forward in the future.
 - Discussions have taken place on developing a strategy to revitalise our membership.
 - Preparation of a paper on Best Practice for County Associations.
 - A joint Regional meeting by the Northern Counties WG is being organised with EBED on Youth Development in the future, to see what advice and resources are available and what involvement EBED will be having with the Teachers and Counties.

These are just some of the outcomes from the National WG & Northern Counties WG.

The idea of a Regional Support Officer has been discussed in length with both the National & Regional Working Parties and will be fleshed out later in this meeting.

The Future

The Working Party has been established for a period of 5 years and is about to complete its 2nd year.

Is it worthwhile?

- Yes - if people are prepared to spend time – our volunteers are vital but need finding.
- Yes - if the EBU & Counties are prepared to listen and action.
- Yes - if Counties continue to populate the Regional Working Party – each one is able to send 2 members.
- Yes - if the Working Parties have representatives from across the Country at the National Meetings – some areas are not active and need support.

- If we didn't exist would we need to be invented or something like it. In my view the answer is yes.....

The meeting divided into four groups for discussion. The briefing notes are shown in **Appendix A:**

Eastern group (summariser: Paul Mollison): Bedfordshire (abs), Cambs and Hunts (abs), Essex, Hertfordshire, Norfolk, Suffolk.

Midlands (Robert Procter): Derbyshire, Gloucestershire (abs), Leicestershire, Northants, Nottinghamshire (abs), Oxfordshire, Staffs and Shrops, Warwickshire, Worcestershire.

Northern (Lesley Millet): Cumbria (abs), Lancashire (abs), Lincolnshire (abs), Manchester, Merseyside and Cheshire, North East (abs), Westmorland (abs), Yorkshire.

Southern (Andy Hughes): Avon (abs), Berks and Bucks, Cornwall (abs), Devon, Dorset, Hants & IOW, Herefordshire (abs), Kent, London, Middlesex, Somerset, Surrey, Sussex (abs), Wiltshire.

The provincial group (Guernsey, Isle of Man and Jersey) were not represented.

Feedback from discussions:

Eastern Group:

- Youth development – not feasible.
- Non-affiliated clubs – don't rattle their cage.
- EBU to help/provide advertising, materials, support.
- For bridge teachers: Follow up on teachers club weekend to improve skills and develop ways students can move forward into clubs.
- Eastern counties group make-up.

Midlands Group:

Topic C

- A lot of it we are doing already
- Big problem for some volunteers/recruitment
- Generally full of good idea
- Too much detail? May put people off
- Criticism demotivates – but ask critic to do the jobs
- Better websites needed
- Encourage a review, identify strengths and weaknesses
- Communication with clubs.

Topic A:

Like: National Bridge Week, idea of support aimed at people not clubs, teachers responsibility beyond teaching, regional improvers competition.

Dislike: idea of being told what to do.

Add: National advertising, help clubs to make themselves more attractive (social/friendly), define 'social duplicates', measurements re growth, incentive prizes?

Topic B:

The trial glossy brochure would be better on white paper, but does it look stimulating and fun? Is bridge at an affiliated club more fun than an unaffiliated club? The brochure must answer this requirement and include things such as 'stratified' and 'Swiss'. Not yet a marketing thing for the casual social player.

Ask people why they chose an EBU affiliated club, answers dictate front page of brochure, details relegated to smaller print. Not enough about progress strategy.

Northern Group:

Topic C:

- Reference document – good
- Raising awareness
- Can a strong county help others?
- Take sections and work on small areas
- Working Group give benefit of their own experiences (case studies) which have been successful.

Topic A:

- Website and other methods of contact = keeping contact
- Information from club liaison officer at EBU
- Unaffiliated members becoming affiliated members
- Engage with unaffiliated clubs at county level first
- National bridge week/day
- Media coverage
- Café bridge.

Regional Support and Development Officer

- Responsibility to whom? Nc and then EBU.
- Aims and objectives – results based
- Accountability
- Costs – 5 year strategy
- Regional trial
- Training
- New membership drive via education
- EBED – where does this fit into proposal?
- Partnership for the future
- More information needed on the role. Is there a need?
- RSO helping clubs to get people to join classes
- Regionally responsible
- National group
- Trial; nominate for a pilot.

Southern Group:

The newly formed Southern Group had different initial considerations, but offered the following:

It was agreed that some collaboration would be beneficial, initially via Google Groups and email, if this works then a progression to Skype meetings could be considered, the idea of formal meetings was at this stage not popular.

The three areas that were agreed upon to collaborate were:

A) falling numbers and non affiliated clubs, ideas how to remedy and how best to handle NA clubs.

B) Regional national improves pairs, work together to run a southern region.

C) Communication - websites, emails, e-newsletters etc, - sharing of ideas and successes.

Actions required. Darren Evetts set up a Southern region Google group. Andy Hughes to email all Southern group members and share all our contact details.

7 Any other business

Benefits of EBU Membership for Clubs and Counties

Advance notice of this topic had been given. It was felt important to have tangible evidence to present to prospective members and clubs of the benefits of EBU membership. It was also felt important to have similar evidence for leagues.

JD said that every county is a constituent member of the EBU, so each county should, as a minimum, show that it is by displaying the EBU logo on its website. Affiliated clubs, too, can and should display the EBU logo. It was agreed that we need to promote ourselves in a greater way.

Education programme

There is a need to reshape the education programme, starting with training and progression for teachers. Initial teacher training should be followed up with further training and support.

JD took the opportunity to mention that Jonathan Taylor had just been appointed as the new EBUTA Manager and had started work that week. He mentioned that EBED changes were now afoot and the opportunity to use South Bucks BC to try out various ideas was being considered. He noted, though, that teacher follow-up was labour intensive and expensive.

It was noted that the EBUTA Qualification process did offer extra training and support. However, bad teachers with no training was doing a disservice to bridge teaching.

Update on 'Bridge as a Sport'

JD said that the Stage 2 VAT tribunal was scheduled for July 15h, although a decision was likely to be several months away.

He also mentioned that the judicial review against Sport England's position regarding bridge being recognised as a sport was scheduled for September 22nd.

JD thanked members for their attendance. There being no further business the meeting closed at 4.15pm.

COUNTY CHAIRMEN'S MEETING - 1 July 2015
County Working Group Matters - Brief for Group Chairs

Topic C

Discuss briefly Topic C (the papers have been sent to attendees). This is a developing (work in progress) document prepared by Counties for Counties who may wish to adopt it all, or in part, and who may wish to amend and/or contribute to its development. Ask each County to please discuss and feedback to their Regional County Working Group (RCWG).

Topic A and Topic B

The aim of this session is to discuss where the National County Working Group (NCWG) currently is. Are they on the right track? Is there anything they are missing?

Bring the group up to speed (quickly) on each Topic, and where we are now (output from the NCWG Meeting 8 June 2015 is below – anything in italics has been added subsequent to the NCWG meeting), and what is currently being considered. Be prepared to feedback to the meeting the group's comments.

Topic A - Improving the relationship between the EBU/Counties and unaffiliated Clubs

- i) Significant time has been spent on this area, and it is good to see that Counties have been consulted on their views.
- ii) It is clear that some Counties include unaffiliated Clubs on their Website, and some do not.
- iii) The question asked, of a recently affiliated Club, was why have you affiliated? The answer was to ensure the future of the Club, because the exposure gained through affiliation, etc, will encourage new membership.
- iv) There is no quick fix; it is a 5-10 year programme, a very slow process.
- v) Unaffiliated Clubs – should we focus on local/County approach, with support materials from Aylesbury.
- vi) Perhaps we should accept where we are and concentrate on, 1) Reaching out to unaffiliated Clubs and non-Members who wish to join the EBU and, 2) Focus on encouraging our teachers to promote affiliated Clubs, and membership, as well as making affiliated bridge more attractive (technology, etc).
- vii) Should we concentrate on people, rather than Clubs, remembering that unaffiliated Clubs are a conduit to potential Members.
- viii) Use practical Club experience to define strategy.
- ix) Recommendations to the Board/Next Steps:
 - a. Initiate Regional Improvers Pairs events in all Regions. Perhaps, when all Regions are on board, culminating in a National Final.
 - b. National Bridge Week should be considered.
 - c. Future EBU Strategy Meetings should include people from the field.
 - d. The EBU should take advantage of press related features, and generate an action plan to enable maximum exposure.

e. Explore the idea of Counties/EBU supporting smaller Clubs to increase sessions – daytime for example.

f. Consider Regional Support Officers. *The Board has asked the NWCG for a proposal:*

1. Is there a need/desire for Regional Support Officers?

2. What role could a Regional Support Officer Play?

a. County Development/Sharing of Best Practice

b. Membership Campaigns

c. Education

d. What role would we expect a Regional Support Officer to play?

i. Someone with all round experience of County administration/development, or

ii. Someone to identify and collate the individuals with skills, knowledge, and experience, and who are willing to share them with others. In addition to this, offer administrative support in other areas is possible, with central support from Aylesbury.

Topic B - Developing a Value Proposition and a Progression Strategy for Players at all levels that revitalises our membership.

The following was identified as what the EBU offers to players:

i) A National body which organises, administers and regulates competitive bridge.

ii) A programme of good quality bridge competitions, advertised well in advance, catering for progression and achievement through a variety of formats, including flighted and stratified events.

iii) A National ranking scheme offering both lifetime and current indications of individual achievements within the game.

iv) An interesting, lively and informative online (or printed) bi-monthly magazine.

Programmes of training and support for Tournament Directors.

v) A structure of County Associations (which own the EBU) to guarantee that voices can be heard.

vi) Good quality bridge variety, competitive, preparation for EBU tournaments.

vii) A number of weekend events for all standards of player.

viii) Local Green Point/Blue Point events with open entry, and friendly local faces, to support members wanting to play more widely.

County Chairman's Conference – July 1st 2015

- ix) Training events open to all, with an expanding programme of mentoring and nurturing.
- x) Opportunities to represent the County, either by right (Pachabo, Corwen) or by selection (Tollemache, Leagues, Invitational events).
- xi) Help and support with Club events (Directors, Bridgemates, *Scoring*, etc.).
- xii) Advice and support by the EBU with Club Constitutions and procedures.
- xiii) Financial support for Club Director training and publicity.
- xiv) County website and National website and magazine (EBU).
- xv) Recruitment youth bridge; publicity.
- xvi) The ability to issue Master Points with an accompanying ranking programme.
- xvii) A central hub which can supply an archive of materials, advice, help and support across a range of areas, supported by both paid and volunteer staff.
- xviii) A variety of National teams to aspire towards, and to support.
- xix) Recommendations to the Board/Next Steps
 - a. *What do EBU/Counties offer to players:*
 - i. *Current Members*
 - ii. *Potential New Members*
 - iii. *Returning Clubs (those who have disaffiliated)*
 - iv. *Rejoining Members (those lost in 2010)*
 - b. *A glossy leaflet outlining what the EBU/Counties offer players could be produced.*

Ideas for Future Topics – If time allows