



**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF
THE ENGLISH BRIDGE UNION
HELD AT THE SHIRE HOTEL, KETTERING PARK
ON WEDNESDAY 2 JULY 2003**

Present:	Denis A Robson	Chairman
	Philip G Mason	Vice Chairman
	Roger C Amey	
	Tom J Bradley	Treasurer
	Alaine MC Hamilton	
	David R Harris	(joined the meeting in item 3.2)
	David G Martin	
	Jeff K Morris	
	John D Neville	
	Terry Collier	General Manager
	Michele Attard	Office Manager
	Tony Parks	Auditor (for item 3.2 only)

1 APOLOGIES

The Board officially noted Malcolm Oliver's resignation.

The Chairman requested that agenda item 3.2 be brought forward to the start of the meeting to allow the auditor, Mr Tony Parks, to complete his presentation and leave the meeting at an appropriate point.

2 MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF 14 May 2003

2.1 Accuracy

Amendment to 2.2.1, 2nd paragraph: *"It was agreed that Board and Committee members seeking legal etc"*

Amendment to 4.0: Sub-title to read: *MiniBridge Presentation at House of Commons*

Amendment to 13.1: Replace 2nd sentence with: *The Chairman advised that a petition regarding the change in format of the trials was being sent to Aylesbury to be raised at the Council meeting.*

With the above amendments, the Minutes were **approved** as an accurate record of the meeting.

2.2 MATTERS ARISING

2.2.1 Inland Revenue – Status of Tournament Directors (3.5)

The General Manager reported that he had raised this matter with the CCPR, who are very concerned about the potential repercussions on other governing bodies, and had offered their support to the EBU in this regard. Discussion with the Inland Revenue is ongoing.

2.2.2 *English Bridge (3.2 & 9.1)*

Council's strong opposition to the removal of one issue of *English Bridge* was noted, and it was **agreed** that the Board would endeavour to seek cost savings elsewhere, with changes to *English Bridge* being a last resort.

The Board acknowledged Blue 2's intentions to continue to develop their relationship with the EBU; however, detailed discussions regarding the contract should be progressed with a view to contract signing before the end of the year. The General Manager advised that he is waiting for a schedule of profit due to the EBU from Blue 2.

2.2.3 *Sponsors Event*

Although the idea of a social event for potential sponsors is accepted, it was felt that detailed consideration should be given as to what the objective is. Possible dates for the event were proposed as the evening before or the evening after the October Council meeting.

2.2.4 *Membership Added Value (4.0)*

Discussions with JLT regarding legal and financial services to members are progressing.

Relationship with Ambassador Theatre Group and ItsWine to be launched at Brighton on 13 August.

2.2.5 *Sponsors Event (3.2)*

Baker Tilly has agreed to sponsor the Overseas Congress, and a cheque for £7,500 will be presented to the EBU at Brighton on 13 August.

2.2.6 *Charity Events (4.0)*

The General Manager advised that a meeting still needed to be arranged with Kitty Telscher.

3 FINANCIAL MATTERS

3.1 Treasurer's Report

The Treasurer's report on the key income and expenditure figures for the two months ended 31 May 2003 was **accepted**.

3.2 Accounts for Year End 31 March 2003

The accounts were presented by auditor, Tony Parks.

Mr Parks reported that, whilst he had been able to bring the audit to a satisfactory conclusion, difficulties had arisen with MIAMI's reporting of aged debtors. These reports needed manual verification and correction, occasioning extra work for his team and the Accounts Department. He was confident that the stored data was accurate, but expressed concerns that the system was too reliant on one person, and that not all the PCs were using the same version of MIAMI.

The Chairman thanked Mr Parks for undertaking the audit; and the Accounts were **approved** with the following **agreed** changes:

- Page 2 – Directors: *Add Malcolm Oliver's resignation date.*
- Page 8 – Item 6. Employees: Mr Parks to cross check wages and salaries, since there was an inconsistency between these and the figures for wages and salaries on page 11.
- The Treasurer and Mr Parks to add notes on what is included within the various headings, e.g. wages and salaries.

3.3 **Accounts for Two Months ended 31 May 2003**

See 3.1.

3.4 **Revised Five Year Plan**

The Treasurer advised that the five-year plan now showed the creation of the Development department.

Mr Amey asked why there was a large increase in the charge for Friendly Internationals. The Treasurer **agreed** to present facts and figures for the next Board meeting.

3.5 **Membership Subscriptions**

Following considerable discussion regarding the proposed increase in membership subscriptions and in particular the static membership proposed for Junior members, the costs were **agreed** with the following revision:

Junior members	
Over 17 and under 25 years old on 1 January 2003	£5.00
Under 17 years old on 1 January 2003	£2.00

It was also **agreed** that the 1991 Educational Trust for British Bridge should be approached with regards to MiniBridge membership, and that the whole topic of junior membership should be explored as a matter of priority by the new Development Committee.

3.6 **Master Points**

The Treasurer advised that there had been no increase in Master Point charges since 1998, and proposed an increase of £1.00 per book (= 2p per certificate). It was felt that clubs should be given sufficient notice of the change in order to take the opportunity to re-stock supplies prior to the price increase. It was **agreed** that the increase should be announced in the August edition of *English Bridge*, and a letter sent to clubs and Counties advising them of the change and giving the reasons why this is being done, i.e. no increase since 1998, and therefore negates the need to reduce the number of *English Bridge* issues during this financial year. Mr Morris **agreed** to draft a suitable letter to clubs.

The Treasurer's recommendation that licence fees not be reviewed at this time was **agreed**.

Following a review of Bridge Shop prices, the Treasurer recommended an increase of 20% across the Bridge Shop price list. This would ensure that the EBU prices remained competitive, but would result in an increase in sales revenue. The Treasurer also advised a discount scheme of 10% on the new prices for EBU members and 12% for EBUTA members as a benefit of their membership.

It was **agreed** that the Bridge Shop price increase should be effective from Monday 18th August, and coincide with the increase in Master Point charges, with both being announced in the August edition of *English Bridge*.

4 GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT

The General Manager's report was **noted**.

Staffing – Development Department (Confidential Agenda Paper) – Although the need for a full-time administrator for the Development Department was acknowledged, the Board **requested** clarification of how the costs had been obtained for the Development Officers. It was **agreed** that a review of staffing be undertaken and reported back to the Board.

Christmas Holiday – The Board **approved** Friday 2 January as an additional staff leave day.

Communications – The Board **agreed** that late agenda papers could be emailed in order for them to be received prior to the meeting; however, it was asked that the amount of late papers be kept to a minimum.

The privacy of Board members' contact details was discussed, and it was **agreed** that Aylesbury seek clarification from each Board and Committee member as to their requirements on the issuing of their contact details to third parties. A proposal that each Board member is issued with an EBU email address, with emails being fielded centrally by the Office Manager in Aylesbury, was also **agreed**.

5 ON-LINE BRIDGE CLUB – Report for Council

Following the request by Council for a more detailed explanation regarding the accusations of cheating being made within the On-line Bridge Club, and the management structure introduced by the General Manager, the Chairman presented a draft report.

Mr Martin expressed concern that the complaints procedure that had been implemented within the On-line Bridge Club would appear to contravene EBU Bye-Laws. Mr Harris was asked to look into this matter and report directly to the Chairman.

It was felt that the draft report required additional information, and the Chairman **requested** Mr Martin and the General Manager to produce statements, which he would then consolidate into a report for Council.

6 DEVELOPMENT PLAN

6.1 Progress Report

The General Manager proposed the preparation of 3 documents as the next stage of the Development Plan:

1. An illustration of where we will be by 2008;
2. A more detailed plan to be put on the web-site, which would be updated as the Plan progresses;
3. A full management plan, which would become the work programme of the proposed Development Sub-Committee.

A financial plan would be prepared in line with the Development Plan.

The General Manager reported that the invite for clubs to work in partnership with us in hosting a Ron Klinger Master Class had been well received, and matters were being progressed with this and the National Trust social event for Autumn.

6.2 **Formation of Development Sub-Committee – Future of YWP and Education Sub-Committee**

The formation of a Development Sub-Committee was proposed and **agreed**. This would result in the Education Sub-Committee and YWP being replaced by the new Development Sub-Committee. In addition, a Youth Squad Development Team (YSDDT) would be formed, hopefully with Su King as Chairman.

With regard to youth selection, a paper had been received from Chris Dixon, and the Board **agreed** to recommend to Council that the Selection Committee included co-opted representatives of the new YSDDT, with voting powers. It was noted that Mr Dixon was drafting Terms of Reference for a revised Selection Committee, and this would need to be considered along with the co-option of YSDDT representatives, and the future role of the Regional Youth Development Officers, prior to recommendation to Council. It was **agreed** that the Chairman would write to Su King on this matter.

Mr Morris requested copies of the presentation folder from the House of Commons MiniBridge presentation, for all County Secretaries, County Youth Development Officers and MPs. The General Manager advised that, while there would be a requirement for such promotional material in the near future, the content of the folder was not appropriate, neither was the timing. Attention was drawn to an article in the Sunday Telegraph regarding the active promotion of chess as an after-school activity by Charles Clarke, Secretary of State for Education. The General Manager advised that we had also been asked to submit a report outlining how bridge could be used as an after school activity – this request coming from David Miliband, Minister for School Standards. To progress matters similar to this and avoid duplication of effort a meeting had been arranged on 18 August at the MindSports Olympiad in Manchester.

It was **agreed** that the Vice Chairman would accompany the General Manager to the meeting, and report back at the next Board meeting.

7 **CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM**

7.1 **Reform Group**

The Vice Chairman reported that Peter Stocken had agreed to be a member of the Reform Group, and a meeting had taken place with Hammonds, who had subsequently drafted a letter to the EBU outlining their review of constitutional arrangements and understanding of the EBU's requirements.

7.2 **Report from Hammonds**

A letter from Peter Stocken and the Vice Chairman was tabled, indicating their concerns regarding the proposal from Hammonds. The General Manager advised that Hammonds were merely raising issues connected to the modernisation of Governing Bodies of Sport. Following considerable discussion, it was felt that some issues should only be considered subsequent to the move to a single entity.

It was **agreed** that the General Manager instruct Hammonds to progress with the move to a single entity, and produce a draft paper for the next Board meeting on the process required for Council to adopt the single entity at the October Council meeting. The paper would form the basis of a Board discussion in respect to the opportunities and benefits that this move presents in terms of full constitutional reform.

8 COMMITTEE REPORTS

8.1 Computer Working Party – 4 June 2003

The General Manager reported that Chris Barrable had attended at Aylesbury for 2 days and significant progress had been made on CASS. He advised the Board that 1 September 2003 was the proposed launch date for CASS to be issued to clubs, and was confident that this would be achieved.

The Minutes were **approved**.

8.1.2 Centralised Computer System (Confidential Agenda Paper)

The Board supported the recommendation made in the paper for a meeting to be arranged, and **requested** a full report be presented at the next Board meeting.

8.2 Editorial Board – 11 June 2003

Ms Hamilton advised amendments to the Minutes as follows:

Item 3 – Matters Arising: Correct spelling – “... *to identify potential mistakes and infelicities of expression.*”

Item 4 – Financial Matters, end of 2nd paragraph: “...*and their readiness to work towards reducing...*”

Item 6 – Review of June 203 Issue, 2nd paragraph: “...*as presented. It was agreed that BC should write to TC with guidance on presentations. TC said he would bring this to the attention of Committees.*”

Ms Hamilton explained that some of the articles being received from Committees were too long, and the Editor should be allowed to cut these down appropriately. Concern was expressed that the publication of official notices should not be cut down, but it was noted that such notices also need to be readable, and consequently should be edited, if necessary. Full details of such notices would be included on the web-site.

The Minutes were **approved** subject to the above amendments.

The Chairman advised that agenda item 11 would be brought forward to this point to allow Mr Harris to depart early.

9 COUNTY SECRETARIES MEETING – 18 June 2003

The Vice Chairman reported that 24 County Secretaries had attended the meeting. There had been considerable discussion on the issues presented, and the afternoon presentation by members of the new Development Department had been particularly well received.

10 BGB MATTERS – Minutes of 29 April 2003

The Chairman advised that Patrick Jourdain had approached him with a view to presenting an alternative suggestion for the split of the BGB funds. Mr Neville confirmed that the EBU had never given an undertaking for the funding of SBU and WBU to continue; and it was agreed to appraise the alternative proposal when received.

11 EBL AND WBF MATTERS – Report from EBL Assembly

On behalf of the Board members and the EBU staff, the Chairman congratulated Mr Harris on his election to the Executive Committee of the EBL.

Mr Harris reported that he was to be Chairman of the NBO Liaison Committee, and would also be involved in the Finance and Budget Committee. He advised that the EBL wanted to broaden its involvement in developing the smaller bridge-playing countries, such as Croatia. He reported that there were 44 countries within the EBL and 50% had less than 1,000 members.

The Chairman advised that an invite had been received from the Netherlands for a team of Board members to participate in an event as part of the Channel Trophy on 19-21 December 2003. It was felt that participation would be beneficial, since separate time was to be planned for discussion between the Board teams. It was **agreed** that the Chairman should accept the invitation in principle and that attendance would be at the Board members own expense. Board members wishing to attend are to **advise** the Chairman.

12 CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGES

Nothing to report.

13 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Chairman understood that the local authority owned the land adjacent to the Kettering Park Hotel, and that he would identify any options which may be worth exploring.

The Treasurer **agreed** to act as chair for the Membership Secretaries Meeting to be held on 24 September 2003. Agenda items to be forwarded to the Treasurer.

Next Meeting: Wednesday 17th September 2003, Kettering Park

Approved By:	
Date:	