



**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE EBU LIMITED
AT BAKER TILLY MANAGEMENT LIMITED,
2 BLOOMSBURY STREET, LONDON WC1B 3ST
ON WEDNESDAY 17TH SEPTEMBER 2014**

Present: Jeremy Dhondy (Chairman) (JD)
Ian Payn (Vice Chairman) (IP)
Andrew Petrie (Treasurer) (AP)
Jerry Cope (JC)
Heather Dhondy (HD)
Darren Evetts (DE)
Anthony Golding (AG)
Robert Lawy (RL)
Ron Millet (RM)
Malcolm Oliver (MO)
Barry Capal (General Manager) (BC)

Peter Stockdale (Minuting the meeting) (PS)

1. Apologies for Absence

None

2. Minutes of the meeting of 17th June 2014

2.1 Accuracy

It was noted that item 7, 'Award Nominations', should have commenced with the line "IP took the chair for this item".

It was noted that the entry in the General Manager's Report should have read (missing words italicised), "BC advised *that consideration of* the replacement of Enterprise would take place later in the year.

BC advised that alternatives were being considered, in consultation with the relevant staff in the Aylesbury office, and the issue would likely be addressed in early 2015. He reported that payment had been made for the use of the current system through to August 2015, and it could probably be used until 2016.

The minutes were otherwise approved as accurate.

2.2 Matters Arising

RL sought further clarification on the policy agreed in item 6, regarding players who were not banned, but would not be considered for selection. It was agreed that in such instances the player would be given the opportunity to defend themselves, should they wish, to address the indiscretions in question. IP and/or JD would clarify the position with Andy Bowles, chairman of the Selection Committee.

Action: IP and/or JD

RM expressed dissatisfaction with the handling of agenda item 7 during the June meeting, specifically that his report which was proposed for discussion was not addressed.

2.1.1. Update on Parliamentary Match vs Poland

JD reported that the Polish contact had emailed Baroness Henig with regard to the match. It seems likely that the event will take place but it may be a while before it occurs as it is unlikely to be arranged before March, and thereafter parliamentary business will be so affected by the General Election that a suitable date is unlikely to be found until the summer.

2.1.2 Scorebridge Update

JD gave the background to the situation regarding the change of software required for the inclusion of team games in NGS calculations. He reported that Scorebridge software, which was used by the majority of clubs, was not initially suitable for scoring team games for NGS and that its developer, Stephen Bligh, was reluctant to make the necessary updates to become compliant. JD had recently met with Mr Bligh, however, and JD reported that he would be updating his software so that it could be used for this purpose. BC added that Mr Bligh had since submitted some test files which, whilst needing some small modifications to be completely accurate, were suitable.

AP thanked JD for working with Mr Bligh to resolve the matter.

Note: Subsequent to the meeting the testing process has been successfully completed.

2.1.3 Magazine Update

JD advised that the October issue would be the first of the new size, and commented that the proofing issue looked good. He reported that the change to the County News feature – the word count in the main magazine had been reduced, but two new columns had been introduced in the online magazine; ‘Local results’ and ‘In Memoriam’ – had been met with dissatisfaction from a few counties.

He reiterated that the change in size was expected to save around £24,000 in postage costs, plus or minus any change in advertising revenue.

BC commented that these changes were necessary to ensure the continuation of six printed issues and any criticism should be considered with that in mind.

PS reported that the ‘map’ feature on the EBU website was to be revamped and it would include the function for the addition of links to club and county newsletters and news pages of websites.

AP suggested that circulating the Bridge Overseas newsletter with the magazine may be beneficial to both parties so he would raise the matter with Simon Kelly at Bridge Overseas. **Action: AP**

2.1.4 Other Creditors Update

AP referenced the email which he had circulated prior to the email dealing with the matter.

He was asked the difference between the unused vouchers, and unused prize credits currently on member's accounts. He advised that there was £10.3K of unused vouchers still on the system, and £72K of unused prize credits. The latter, however, was a rolling figure as credits were continually earned and used. He added that the auditor had not raised this as an issue.

A discussion took place regarding credits on the account of those who ceased to be a member, or who were deceased. In the case of deceased members all were in agreement that the EBU would honour any request from the executor of an estate wishing to reclaim any credits. For 'dormant' accounts, or those with credits which had been unused for many years, advice would be sought on how long the money should be retained in the accounts.

2.1.5 Update on Tournament and Competitions Strategy

2.1.6 Updates on Archive, Technology at Tournaments

BC reported that the inclusion of teams results in the NGS calculations was underway and was working well.

JD asked whether there had been any developments regarding technology at tournaments. BC advised that whilst it had been thought about no-definitive decisions had been made. JD commented that it would be good to have a timescale to discuss at the next meeting.

Action: BC to ask Gordon Rainsford

AP stated that perhaps the appraisal of the tournaments had been too conservative. He suggested that more fundamental issues may need to be addressed next time as some events (such as the Brighton Summer Meeting) were not thriving.

3. Financial Matters

3.1 Treasurer's Report for 3 months ending 31st July 2014

AP had circulated the report in advance of the meeting and had nothing further to add. He advised that the difference in 'Accruals & deferred income' was just a timing issue dependent on when in the period certain activity took place.

3.2 Approval of the 2013/14 Company Accounts

AP drew all Board members' attention to the 'Statement of Directors' Responsibilities' on page 2.

He reported that it had been a good year financially and thanked all Aylesbury staff and volunteers on the Board and Committees, for helping to achieve this. He highlighted the Exceptional Item – the donations made to English Bridge Education and Development.

He advised that the division in allocation between 'members' and 'non-members' trading was based on previous percentages which had been approved by the Inland Revenue.

All present were happy to for the accounts to be signed as accurate and submitted to the auditors.

Action: AP

3.5 Source and Application of Funds/Overhead Allocation

AP had produced a document which looked at assigning to specific categories any unallocated overheads based on the number of staff working on that activity. On this basis, Competitions barely made a profit which was a worrying feature of the current EBU finances.

3.3 2015/16 Prices: UM Subscription, Licence Fees, Competition Entry Fees

AP highlighted the excellent financial performance over the last 4 years. This had created cash reserves in excess of the requirements of the reserves policy and at the previous meeting, releasing some of the cash had been discussed. He continued by highlighting the need to replace the Enterprise system, amongst other expenditure, that would lead to a likely significant loss in 2015/16. He therefore advised against releasing any further reserves next year. All were in agreement.

AP raised the issue of the 2015/16 UM subscription. This was discussed at length and it was agreed that despite the financial challenges in 2015/16, the subscription rate should only increase in line with inflation, i.e. by 1p and the 2015/16 UM subscription would therefore be 36p.

There was unanimous agreement to increase competition entry fees by 4% to try to offset the impact of a decline in the number of entries. The exception to this would be in representative events (such as the Pachabo and Corwen). In these events prize money would be removed, and medals introduced for the leading places along the same lines as the Tollemache. Entry fees would be reduced accordingly. This would be in place for Summer 2015.

The entry fee for simultaneous events would be frozen. It was reported that for most of the simultaneous events in 2015 there would not be heats held on a Friday as some of these were making a loss. This price freeze would be announced to the membership on the website and as part of the promotion for the 2015 events.

3.4 Bridge as a Sport, VAT Claim, Sport England, APPG

JD reported that the VAT appeal will be heard on 15th July 2015. David Ewart was aware and matters were proceeding. The appeal would be heard by a judge, which was believed to be positive. AP advised that the EBU would be paying the chambers for the production of the necessary paperwork. JD added that the appeal date fell outside the filming period of the TV company which was interested in featuring the case.

JD reported that Bob Blackman MP, a member of the All Party Parliamentary Group for Bridge, had arranged a meeting between the EBU and Sajid Javid, Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport. This would be in early November and AP would put together a briefing document for the meeting. **Action: AP**

JD also advised that the EBU would be meeting with English Chess next week to see if there was any common ground for working together on a number of matters including, but not limited to, the topic of bridge and chess as 'sports'.

AP reported that he had written to UK Sport asking how the EBU could challenge their use of the European Sports Charter as their definition of Sport - he believed they had no statute for so doing. He had not yet received a reply.

4. General Manager's Report

BC had circulated his report prior to the meeting.

AP reported that he had spoken with the club which had reclaimed Gift Aid on subscription fees paid to them. He would ask the Club Liaison Officer, Andrew Urbanski, to prepare a report and information for the Board's consideration prior to its circulation to the clubs.

4.1 IT Schedule

The replacement of the Enterprise software had been discussed in item 2.1.

BC reported that the support of the Jeff Smith software by the EBU staff in Aylesbury was likely to begin in approximately June 2015. Jeff Smith would provide assistance for the year following the change, and some additional time after that may be needed.

5. County Chairmen's Meeting & County Working Group Meetings

5.1 County Working Group Terms of Reference

DE had circulated the proposed change of wording prior to the meeting. All were in favour of the change.

AP commented that one county had informed him that they did not have a stated 'purpose', and he asked whether this common. It was agreed that whilst the EBU should not dictate what a county's 'purpose' should be it was probably beneficial if the stated purposes were not wide ranging. It was thought that the counties should develop an agreed template amongst themselves, and that the purpose used by Hampshire & Isle of Wight in their charity proposal would be a good starting point. It was agreed that how the counties see their relationship to the EBU, and to the clubs in the county, should be an important part.

5.2 Update on Meetings

DE reported that the meetings had been positive. Each meeting was tasked with highlighting what they felt were the three most significant topics so these could be put to the board. One recurring topic had been getting more 40-60 year olds playing the game.

RM commented that Yorkshire was considering running a 'flexi-time' event. It would start at 4:30pm and finish at midnight, but competitors could choose when in that period they played. It was thought this could allow people with commitments which prohibited them playing in a 'normal' 7-10pm session to take part. The Board expressed interest in the idea and would like to be kept updated on its progress. **Action: RM**

6. EBED Report

JC reported that EBED was trying to divide its time and resources between improving the operational side of the charity and developing its strategy. He believed more progress was being made with the former and that some reassessment may be needed to ensure enough time was devoted to strategy development.

He advised that three priority projects had been identified:

i) a replication in other parts of the country of the process used to introduce bridge to school children in Oxfordshire-Bedfordshire-Buckinghamshire. This will help identify whether it is location or the system which allows the scheme to work.

ii) a scheme which accelerates the 45+ age group through the teaching process to get them playing duplicate bridge quickly, and so they are not 'stuck' in lessons.

iii) a study of the academic papers which have been written on the benefits of bridge to the elderly – combating both mental decline and social isolation. This would be an academic research project, possibly suitable for a PhD student.

He added that whilst these projects had been identified they were all currently unfunded, although EBED would soon receive £15k from the recent simultaneous pairs event.

It was agreed that JC should seek to communicate an update as to what EBED is, what it is doing, and what it is aiming to achieve. It would be particularly important to have this available at the AGM.

7. Staff Succession Planning

JC reported that he had developed the 'emergency' and 'strategic' succession plan as previously discussed. He added that he included the three officers of the EBU Board, and not just the EBU staff. On behalf of the board AP thanked JC for this important work.

8. Awards

8.1 Approval of Dimmie Fleming Recommendations

The advisory panel presented names for the board to consider for Dimmie Fleming Awards for 2014. These awards were confirmed subject to IP checking some detail with the Advisory Committee.

Action: IP

8.2 Gold and Silver Nominations for 2014

JD presented possible nominations for the Gold and Silver award. He also gave names for consideration for future years. Some of the nominees had also been put forward by the County Advisory Panel for a Dimmie Fleming award. After discussion, and with reference to the fact that the Gold or Silver Award recipients would also have contributed at a county level, it was agreed that the awarding of a Gold or Silver Award would take priority, and an additional Dimmie Fleming Award would not be given to the individual. The 'citation' at the time of presentation to any such person would strongly reference their contribution at county level. This would be reported to the counties who had nominated such individuals. **Action: JD & RM**

The Board unanimously approved the following recipients:

Gold Award: Sally Bugden

Silver Award: Graham Jepson, Brian Crack, Mike Hill

8.3 Other Awards

JD summarised his belief that at the previous meeting those present were unclear whether the proposed Diamond and Sapphire awards were for performance over a period of time, a single excellent performance, or both. It was therefore important to define the criteria for the award.

It was agreed that there would not be a separate award for coaches/NPC's and they would be covered by the Diamond Award. The Diamond Award would be for success at an international level over a prolonged period of time. The list of recipients of the Diamond award could ultimately be seen as a 'Hall of Fame' and it may be necessary to make additional awards in the first few years to firmly establish the award.

In instances where a single event, or short time period, would be recognised this would be covered by an EBU Board Special Award . This award could also recognise 'non-playing acts' and would therefore be considered for 'non-administrative' endeavours.

It was hoped the above awards would be presented in the near future, though they may not be ready for the AGM.

The giving of any teaching awards would be deferred until next year, at which time EBED, and its manager Simon Barb, would be better placed to make informed decisions on the winners.

9. Bridge Club Live

BC had circulated a document from Gordon Rainsford prior to the meeting outlining the proposed future relationship between the EBU and Bridge Club Live (BCL). He reported that the start date of 1st January had been agreed and test files would be produced in advance to ensure all was operating properly. BC added that the members of BCL had raised little criticism when notified of the developments by BCL management. It is expected that this arrangement will generate around £5K annually for the EBU.

A change in byelaws would be required and would need to specify that anyone playing at BCL would not receive the benefits of EBU membership. AP would send a proposed wording for the new byelaws to BC, which he would adapt and refer to AG for approval. **Action: AP, BC & AG**

10. Future of Standing Committees

This item was deferred to a future meeting.

11. Bans from Membership

This item was deferred to a future meeting

12. EBL Champions Cup 2015 Update

HD reported that the venue had been booked and sponsorship opportunities were being pursued.

The possibility of raising funds from donations from clubs or individuals, or from commercial sponsors was mentioned and if necessary could be considered at future meetings.

13. Annual Report 2013-14 Draft

JD advised that he had started work on this and would have a draft for the next meeting. **Action: JD**

14. Calendar of Meetings for 2015

JD asked that all members advise him in the ten days following the meeting of their availability in relation to the proposed dates so that bookings could be made. **Action: all & JD**

15. Any Other Business

BC advised that there would be a change of venue for the meetings from March. The Institute of Arbitrators at Bloomsbury Square was a likely venue.