



**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 29TH OCTOBER 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)
Barry Capal (General Manager) (BC)

Peter Stockdale (Minuting the meeting) (PS)

1. Apologies for Absence

Malcolm Oliver (MO).

This would have been MO's final meeting as a Director. The Board expressed its sincere appreciation for his contribution and wished him well with his recovery from surgery.

2. Minutes of the meeting of 17th September 2014

2.1 Accuracy

The minutes were approved as accurate.

2.2 Matters Arising

There were no further matters arising bar those addressed in 2.3 or as separate agenda items.

2.3. Review of Action List

2.1.3 – AP advised that he had not yet spoken with Bridge Overseas regarding enclosing their newsletter with a future issue of English Bridge. **Action AP**

3.2 – AP reported that he had submitted the accounts to the auditors.

3.4 – The meeting with Sajid Javid is to take place on 4th November, and AP had prepared the briefing document as agreed. It will be attended by JD, AP and BC

5.2 – RM reported that it was still Yorkshire’s intention to move forward with the ‘flexi-time’ event, however it was too soon to give any further information. He will report back at a future meeting.

Action RM

9 – BC reported that all arrangements had been made with Bridge Club Live, and revenue would be received from 2nd January. He stated that a ‘rolling agreement’ would be in place.

3. AGM Matters

3.1 Ordinary Resolutions at AGM

3.1.1 Bye-law addition 2.8

The proposed wording had been circulated by email prior to the meeting. All were in agreement with the addition of this bye-law, and it would be put forward at the AGM.

3.1.2 Proposed Changes to the Disciplinary Rules

AG advised that the change to the wording which was initially proposed required some modification, and he had circulated an amended version prior to the meeting. This amendment was required to comply with Human Rights Convention obligations. It was agreed that publishing the details of any disciplinary case, as well as being a legal requirement, may also have the benefit of it acting as a deterrent to future indiscretions. All were in approval of the proposed wording, and it would be put forward at the AGM.

3.2 Chairman’s Annual Report 2013-14

JD had circulated his report prior to the meeting and gave thanks to those who had made comments. One small change was made, and it was accepted for distribution for the AGM.

3.3 Treasurer’s Annual Report 2013-14

AP advised that he had nearly completed the report. What he had circulated prior to the meeting was approved with two small amendments. The Treasurer highlighted from the report, the various financial challenges facing the EBU next year.

It was agreed that a discussion on how the forthcoming expenditure on ‘membership software’ would be included in the accounts would take place when the software had been acquired.

4. General Manager’s Report

BC had circulated his report prior to the meeting.

4.1 Technology at Tournaments

This item was not addressed but would be at a future meeting once GR had heard from the technical support person at the WBF. **Action BC**

4.2. IT Schedule

BC circulated the IT schedule. He advised that Michael Clark was currently working on a new league management system, a new map of clubs and teachers, and new members' area of the website

4.3 Enterprise replacement progress

BC reported that Workbooks – a British company based in Reading – had given a presentation of their software to the relevant staff at the Aylesbury office. They would also be returning to meet with staff, and watch them work, to get a better understanding of their 'needs'. BC will also visit the Coeliac UK offices to see the system in use and get feedback from their staff.

The current suppliers of Enterprise, TSG, have a new product and they will visit the Aylesbury offices in November to present this to the relevant staff. BC will therefore be able to present the options to the Board at either the January or March meeting. **Action: BC**

4.4 Other matters

BC reported that the insurers of the Aylesbury offices had required an electrical survey be carried out. During the survey a number of issues had been identified – including the need for a new fuse box. The repair work had been carried out, so everything was now satisfactory to the insurance company and met health and safety regulations. The cost was around £2,000, and whilst this work had not been included in the budget forecast there was sufficient in the 'contingency' account to cover the expenditure.

BC reported that Ian Mitchell was in the process of taking on a support role for Jeff Smith's scoring software, and that it would be rebranded and launched as EBUScorer in the near future. It is proposed that from June, when Jeff Smith's contract expires, he will continue to offer support to Ian for a period of time. BC reported that it was suggested that the product be available for free to clubs, but that over time they are charged a small fee for 'support'. It was recognised that bridge clubs need most support at the start and end of their evening sessions, and whilst having this provided 'over the phone' would be ideal, such an arrangement may not be practical. It would therefore be necessary to develop written advice to cover these 'out of hours' requirements. Ian Mitchell would be asked to help develop this advice. **Action BC**

It was agreed that an update would be given at the January Board Meeting, prior to a formal announcement to the clubs in February, and then to the membership via the April issue of English Bridge magazine.

The possibility of regional training sessions, and also of making the product commercially available outside England, was discussed.

5. Financial Matters

5.1 August Management Accounts

AP had circulated the report in advance of the meeting. He highlighted that the Membership Services & Overhead Allocation had been split into four categories so as to be more informative.

5.2 Proposed 2015/16 Subscriptions

These had been circulated in advance of the meeting. They were approved by the board and will go to the shareholders for final approval at the AGM.

5.3 Brighton Review

This would be dealt with in agenda items 5.4 and 10

5.4 Financial Outlook

Prior to the meeting AP had circulated a report looking at possible future expenditure. He cited the probability that 2015/16 would result in a significant deficit, though he did note that this was only an estimate as some costs were still uncertain. He advised that the likely deficit could safely be covered from current reserves.

AP proposed that for clarity and transparency, expenditure on World Championship type events should be identified separately in the Management Accounts. The Board agreed that the Internationals budget 15/16 to 18/19 (excluding World Championships) should be targeted as the 11/12 to 14/15 actual spend plus inflation.

JD advised that the approach to British Airways for sponsorship had been rejected. The possibility of approaching other airlines was discussed, however PS advised that no other carriers flew direct from the UK to Chennai, and it was agreed that indirect flights would not be optimal. The possibility of trying to source 'general' sponsorship was raised, and it was agreed that whilst it had been relatively unsuccessful in the past it may be worth pursuing again.

AP advised that the finances of Competitions may decline by around £10k per year over the coming four years. The question was raised as to whether the events should be profitable, break even, or be subsidised by other areas, and it was agreed that this was a fundamental issue that should be addressed at a future strategy meeting. The possibility of saving money by relocating the Summer Festival from Brighton from 2016 onwards was raised, and would be addressed in agenda item 10.

5.5 Schedule for 2015/16 Budget Preparation

AP had circulated the schedule, and made the Board aware that they should liaise with Gail Nancarrow to address their particular activities.

6. EBED Update

6.1 Reappointment of Trustee

AP's one year term as a trustee of EBED had ended. IP proposed his reappointment, HD seconded the nomination, and all approved. AP's term would be for three years.

JC advised that a newsletter would be emailed to all EBU members next week. He added that the work of EBED had been well received at the National Working Group meeting earlier in the week.

7. Future of Standing Committees

JD advised that the Standing Committees had been in place since the 1940s, and it was therefore agreed that any changes which were made should focus on modernising the structure.

It was recognised that whilst Standing Committees provide resources and expertise outside those currently on the board, or employed on the EBU staff, their status as 'Standing Committees' does not allow the flexibility that is currently required.

It was thought that a sub-committee of the board – chaired by a board member, and filled by people appointed by the chairman of the subcommittee – would be a better alternative. This would allow the subcommittee to be adapted as required to meet the needs at the time, with specialist knowledge, and enthusiastic volunteers willing to give their time, added as necessary. As sub-committees of the board this would also ensure a consistency of approach and thinking throughout all decision making processes.

JD would draft a proposal for consideration at the January meeting. This would then be put forward at the Shareholders Meeting in May, for implementation after the AGM in November 2015. **Action: JD**

8. Bans from Membership

This was addressed in agenda item 3.1.2

9. EBL/WBF matters (including Champions Cup update)

HD reported that she had so far been unsuccessful in securing sponsorship for the Champions Cup event but some avenues remained to be explored.

JD reported that the WBF had written to most countries asking them to share their membership data. JD had replied stating this was not possible due to data protection laws, and it was agreed that it would be likely that the organisations in other EU countries should also not provide the information.

10. Brighton

JD reported that there was one year left on the deal with the Hilton Metropole in Brighton, and that any renewal would need to be arranged by Christmas. BC stated that he and Gordon Rainsford (GR) would be visiting the Metropole on 18th November to talk about the cost of renewing the agreement with them.

AP reported that he had asked Bridge Overseas to source alternatives, and they had advised that suitable venues in that area, in August, would be hard to find.

Other venues would be explored and the debate would continue in January at which point BC would report back on progress made with the Metropole

It was noted that moving to certain venues may require a change in the structure of the congress to make it as appealing as possible and address any logistical issues.

It was recognised that some research amongst the membership would need to be undertaken to establish their motives behind attending – or not attending – the event when held in Brighton. The importance of geographical location, travel and accommodation costs, the specific town/city, etc, should be ascertained before making any further decisions. Concern was expressed that a survey may only generate responses from those with extremes of opinion, however it was thought that a short and simple survey which outlined some pros and cons of each venue – though without giving

specific details – would be productive. BC and RL would liaise with GR on the matter, and this could be circulated via the Event Focus newsletter which was emailed to all ‘tournament players’. **Action: BC, RL (& GR)**

11. Awards Update

JD outlined the previously agreed criteria for the newly established Diamond Award and all were in agreement. It was confirmed that prior to January board members should give their suggestions for recipients to RM, along with the reasons for the nomination. These would then be discussed at the next meeting. It was hoped that the recipients could be agreed at that meeting so the awards could be made at an event in the spring – for example at the Easter Congress or an international event.

RM highlighted the awards which he had previously proposed for introduction in 2015, and advised that consideration should be given in the near future to whether these awards would be introduced as planned. He also felt it would be necessary to look at the procedures for all existing awards.

RM reported that the trophies for the Dimmie Fleming award had been produced and production was shortly to begin on those for the Gold and Silver Awards

12. 2015 Board Meeting – Confirmed Venues

Confirmation of the location of each meeting had been circulated prior to the meeting.

It was noted that the proposed date of Tuesday 11th March was incorrect – this was amended to Wednesday 11th March.

13. Any other business

JD reported that he would be notifying the counties via his forthcoming newsletter that the small donation the EBU makes when a Bridge for All student had been a member for one year would be ending in April 2016. **Action JD**

DE advised that he had received comments from some counties expressing dissatisfaction that changes in the dates of EBU events had impacted on their tournament calendar. He asked whether it would be possible to highlight as far in advance as possible any competitions where a change of date was being considered. He would talk to Gordon Rainsford (GR) about this matter. **Action: DE**

DE reported he had been approached about a combined simultaneous pairs event with clubs in Singapore. There was no objection from the board members so he would speak about it with GR. **Action: DE**

The National Working Group had met on Monday 27th October. DE reported that the meeting had been positive, with three ‘hot topics’ being the focus of the meeting.

Topic A (Host: Lesley Millet (YOR)) - Improving the relationship between the EBU/Counties and unaffiliated Clubs.

Topic B (Host: Alan Wearmouth (GLO)) - Developing a Value Proposition and a Progression Strategy for Players at all levels that revitalises our membership.

Topic C (Host: John Williams (ESS)) - Structuring, staffing and motivating the volunteer workforce that we depend on at National and County level.

With reference to the decision at the March meeting (item 7.2) to charge 50% for 'supervised play sessions' DE asked whether 50% of the county component was being collected and passed on. BC would check that this was the case. **Action: BC**

Prior to the meeting Gordon Rainsford had circulated an update on the Competitions Forward Strategy. The Board expressed their thanks to Gordon for producing it. The success of the Really Easy Afternoon at the Autumn Congress was noted. JD advised that he would be telling the counties about the change in prizes for the Corwen and Pachabo in his forthcoming newsletter, and he also believed it was being considered for the Seniors and Midweek events. It was noted that the justification for the removal of prize money – for example the reduced entry fee – should be emphasised in the information booklet at each of the relevant competitions. **Action JD**