



**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE EBU LIMITED  
AT YOUNG CHELSEA BRIDGE CLUB, GOLDHAWK ROAD, LONDON, W12 8HA  
ON WEDNESDAY 22<sup>nd</sup> MARCH 2017**

**Present:** Jeremy Dhondy (Chairman) (JD)  
Ian Payn (Vice Chairman) (IP)  
Jerry Cope (Treasurer) (JC)  
Heather Dhondy (HD)  
Darren Evetts (DE)  
Robert Lawy (RL)  
Graham Smith (GS)  
Barry Capal (General Manager) (BC)  
Peter Stockdale (Minuting the meeting) (PS)

**1. Apologies for Absence**

Ron Millet (RM), Anthony Golding (AG)

**2. Minutes of the meeting of 25<sup>th</sup> January 2017**

**2.1 Accuracy**

A typo was noted and corrected. The minutes were otherwise approved as accurate.

**2.2 Matters arising**

2.2.9 – JD advised that EBED would not be placing an advert in the Daily Telegraph. This would be discussed further later in the meeting.

5 – JD confirmed that the matter of a perceived disparity in the penalties given was to be on the agenda for the next meeting of the Laws & Ethics Committee.

8 – The update in the minutes on the events that could, or could not, be included in the NGS calculations was noted. The possibility of including knockout matches was also raised. JD explained that it may be possible when there was comparable data from other matches playing the same boards – for example in the Spring Fours – but otherwise it would not be a statistically robust calculation, but there would also be concerns about the different tactics in teams matches – taking bigger risks to overturn deficits when the size of the defeat was not relevant. It was also acknowledged that in instances when it may be possible to include it there may be more important work which could be done than calculating how it could be included, given the infrequency of such events.

10 – HD had sought to clarify the regulations with the BGB and she had proposed two options which would tighten up the wording. She had also tried to tighten up the regulations relating to the eligibility of juniors playing in non-junior events for a different country – e.g. the Junior Camrose in 2016 for country A, and the 2017 Camrose for country B. There would be a discussion about this topic at the forthcoming BGB meeting.

11 – JD would speak to EBL President Yves Aubry in person about the matter in June.

### **3. Financial matters**

#### **3.1 Treasurer's report & January Management Accounts**

JC had circulated his report prior to the meeting. He advised that the numbers were still more volatile than expected, and the February figures were suggesting that performance by the shop had improved, but that there had been a fall in UM payments. It was noted that there was no particular pattern or logic to when UM figures were any better or worse than 'average'. He added that he was expecting that the year would end ahead of budget, but he couldn't be sure by how much.

#### **3.2 Budget 2017/18**

JC reported that he had worked with Gail Nancarrow to 'squeeze' the budget a little, and this had resulted in an improvement, with a predicted loss of only £10K. This represented a negative £25K swing from the last forecast (August 16) for the 2017/8 outturn. JC cited as reasons for the swing – the impact of exchange rates, the declining income from the shop and competitions, and the fact that a relative 'saving' would no longer be made now that the new membership software had been installed.

It was agreed that it would be necessary to look at issue of declining revenue from competitions, with BC noting that Gordon Rainsford (GR) was forecasting a continuation of the downward trend. JC commented that the financial model of expecting competitions to fund the international activities was likely to no longer be valid. They were, however, self-supporting, though this would be the minimum that would be expected. This issue needed further work, including considering the shape of the Competitions programme. **Action: JC and IP**

The level of spending on internationals was raised, and some noted the reluctance of members and clubs for international activities to be funded at existing levels. BC noted that some clubs continue to see UM payments as being a payment by the club and not a payment by the member. This may be an issue to address going forward. It was noted that the response to the magazine survey may indicate how 'club players' see themselves positioned within the membership.

The £5k reduction in contribution to EBED was noted.

The Board agreed the proposal that the income from the special, reduced licence fee from clubs running their own charity events – and which is to be donated to charity by the EBU – would be donated in alternate years to EBED and to a national charity – Macmillan Cancer Support in the first cycle.

The Board agreed the 2017/18 budget proposed by JC. It also noted JC's warning that the following four year financial projection, was a cause for concern and would take a lot of work to make it balance, in line with the financial strategy agreed at the last AGM. It was also recognised that the 2017/18 budget for international activities did not make a prediction on future exchange rates, so may be affected by any fluctuations.

### **4. General Manager's report**

BC had circulated his report prior to the meeting. He advised that the migration to Workbooks was in progress. He hoped that it would be completed on Friday, but believed it was more likely to be on

Monday. There had been a small number of unforeseen problems, but the files and finances had balanced, so all was progressing well to date.

BC advised that the Bridge+More system would likely be used at the National Pairs final, but GR was trying to organise that they would provide the scoring data and EBUScore, and not the Bridge+More software, would be used. If this was not possible then the equipment would not be used. He added that the Bridgemate tabletop dealer would likely be available sooner than expected.

The Board gave their thanks to Peter Jordan for his exceptional service to the EBU ahead of his retirement at the end of the month.

It was noted that the survey on English Bridge magazine had recently closed. The results would be considered at the April Ed Board meeting, and a report would be available at the June Board meeting.

## 5. VAT Update

IP had attended the court proceedings in Luxembourg. He reported that the QC acting on the EBU's behalf believed it had gone well based on the level of interest shown by the judges. The court's Advocate would produce a general report in June, and the judges would consider the report and give a verdict at a later date - believed to be some time in 2017. It was unknown whether any party involved would have the opportunity to review the Advocate's report, for example to check for factual errors. IP believed that HMRC would accept the court's decision, though this may be affected by the wide-ranging implications of the ruling.

JC added that a formal appeal had been made against this year's VAT payment, so that would be added to the amount owed if the ruling was favourable to the EBU.

## 6. Strategy Day Topics

It had been noted that in 2018 we would publish a successor to the report 'Bidding for the Future 2013-18'. JC had therefore produced a paper to look at which targets in that report had been achieved to date. Although a number of actions had been taken there were areas which would need to be addressed, and he highlighted four possible areas for discussion. As others may be addressed in other ways, it was agreed that at the Strategy Day the Board would focus on matters relating to: relationships with non-affiliated clubs; competitions and tournaments. GR would be invited to the meeting to contribute to the latter discussion. There would also be efforts made to draft the 'headlines' and an outline list of topics, in preparation for writing the 2018-2023 report. **Action: JD**

## 7. Shop

The Board thanked GS for the report he had prepared regarding the shop and its future direction.

JC reminded the Board that the Shop aims to produce a net profit of 20% to contribute to general funds, and that should be kept in mind when considering the shop's activities.

The Board agreed that in future the shop would charge a standard price commensurate with the 'members discounted price' currently available to members. This would help to ensure that those looking at the shop's listings would be aware of the excellent prices available. To make administration and advertising simple, and to increase sales to unaffiliated clubs and non-members, this lower price would also be available to non-members. JC requested that a 'ball-park' figure be calculated to estimate the loss of revenue from charging the reduced price to all, and not just to

members. It was noted that some members may see this change as a 'loss of benefit of membership'. When the change was announced efforts would be made to stress that: a) no benefit was being removed from members – the change was for non-members; b) the change was intended to lead to an increase in revenue for the EBU, and this would be reinvested in services for the members, so they would see additional benefit as a result. It was noted that some changes to documentation relating to membership benefits would be needed. It was also agreed that in due course a 'loyalty' scheme – like Nectar Points – may be introduced for members, thus giving a new benefit to members.

It was noted that the new pricing structure would allow for the use of a new online shop platform, which may benefit both the customer and staff. In the meantime special offers for Members would only be advertised in English Bridge, or perhaps on the EBU website.

GS would seek to add a proposed timeline to the recommendations which he had made in his report. This was for the Board's information only – GS would be given the authority, with input from BC when needed, to proceed with any minor actions he believed were necessary. **Action: GS**

## **8. Education**

RL had attended the EBED meeting on 1<sup>st</sup> March. He reported that the Education Advisory Group had produced a paper with a number of good and positive suggestions about the possible changes and improvements to EBTA and teaching in general.

As mentioned earlier in the meeting, EBED had opted not to advertise in the Daily Telegraph this year. The reasons for this decision were discussed.

## **9. County Chairman's Meeting**

It was agreed that the meeting would focus on a discussion of the future of CWGs. JD, DE and GS would liaise on the content and structure of the discussions, and the counties would be contacted by mid-May so the Chairmen had time to talk about the matter with the key members of their county prior to the meeting. **Action: JD, DE & GS**

## **10. Bye law and article changes**

The Board approved the intention of the changes to article 9.12, however an error was noted which BC would be asked to correct. It was also agreed that it would specify that email was a suitable method of communication. BC would make the changes and send an updated version to JD and AG for approval. **Action: BC**

The Board approved the wording of the change to article 11.

These changes would be included with the papers circulated for May's Shareholders Meeting.

## **11. County Working Groups**

DE had a circulated a 'value proposition' which he would table at the next national CWG meeting. An amendment to the introduction was suggested, but it was otherwise approved. It was noted, however, that when presenting it at the meeting DE should emphasise that the topic of the CWGs would be discussed at the County Chairman's meeting, so the paper was still in draft form, pending the outcome of that meeting.

## **12. Membership**

In RM's absence this discussion was deferred to a later meeting. Whilst there was awareness that some progress had been made, it was agreed that RM would be asked to provide an update in writing in the near future – in particular as the EBL had asked for feedback.

JD reported that a request had been made to the EBL that their donation to activities in this area simply be deducted from the EBU's next bill.

## **13. EBL/WBF matters**

JD gave an update on the possible reassignment of medals from the 2014 European Teams Championships.

## **14. Any Other Business**

JD gave an update on the Selection Committee.