



**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF
THE ENGLISH BRIDGE UNION LIMITED
HELD AT THE IMPERIAL HOTEL, LONDON
ON THURSDAY 2nd OCTOBER 2008**

Present:	Peter Stocken	Chairman
	Sally Bugden	Vice Chairman
	Mike Hill	Treasurer
	Barry Capal	General Manager & Merseyside/Cheshire & North-East Proxy
	John Carter	Board Member
	Graham Jepson	Board Member, Yorkshire Shareholder & Proxy
	Jeff Morris	Board Member
	Alan Nelson	Board Member & Tournament Committee Chairman
	Malcolm Oliver	Board Member
(Apologies)	Andrew Petrie	Board Member
	Martin Pool	Board Member & Laws & Ethics Committee Chairman
	Steve Eginton	Selection Committee Chairman
	Gerard Faulkner	Vice President & Norfolk Shareholder
	Tony Parks	Auditor
	John Pain	Education/BFA Manager
	Sandra Claridge	Minute Taker
	Karen Durrell	Reception

County	Shareholders: Present	Apologies	Proxy	County	Shareholders: Present	Apologies	Proxy
Avon				Mersey/Cheshire		G Endicott A Clark	B Capal B Capal
Bedfordshire		Mrs V Lawson	R Chester	Middlesex	KA Drane Mrs J Feldman PN Rosen		
Berks & Bucks	T Garrett	N Thompson	T Garrett	Norfolk	R Amey JG Faulkner		
Cambs & Hunts				North East		MJ Baker	B Capal
Channel Islands	Mrs P Panter			Northants	G Hedley		
Cornwall	J Booth			Notts	Mrs J Burgess		
Cumbria				Oxford	P Baxter Mrs A Claridge Mrs B Harris		
Derbyshire		T Treeby		Somerset		Mrs R Brown	
Devon		Mrs A Sharples	R Heath	Staffs & Shrops	PD Hackett	J Withers	PD Hackett
Dorset				Suffolk	MR Carey PB Bentley	MR Curtis	Mrs M Griffin
Essex	Mrs M Curtis I Moss	R Green	Mrs M Curtis	Surrey		H Marsen	Mrs M Griffin
Gloucestershire	Mrs P Pearce			Sussex	PJ Bates ER Buddery	Miss J Simpson	Mrs J Clinton
Hants & IoW		Mrs M Gale	Dr J Carter	Warwicks	C Lang J Pyner		
Herefordshire		G Harrington R Underhill		Westmorland		L Reece	
Hertfordshire	BN Eddleston M Hancock MW Minting			Wiltshire	P Green	Mrs JA Skelton	N Forward
Isle of Man		Dr EF Slatcher	Mrs B Harris	Worcster			
Kent	BR Crack JM Lewis			Yorkshire	GW Jepson	Mrs J Latham	GW Jepson
Lancashire	J Brelsford	Mrs J Wright	J Brelsford		PG Mason	IR Rodger	C Close
Leicestershire	RH Northage J Wilcox						
Lincolnshire		Mrs D Brown					
London	Mrs C Duckworth	S Cochemè	Mrs C Duckworth				
Manchester	JR Smith B Kaye	M Newman	S Travers				
	S Travers						

The following people were also present: Stan & Tara Harding and Gordon Rainsford.

1 Apologies for absence

See Page 1 for County information

2 Announcement and presentation of Dimmie Fleming Awards

The Chairman thanked all four for their invaluable contribution to the Union over a considerable number of years. Presenting the awards to Roger Amey of Norfolk and Stan Harding of Hertfordshire, Margaret Curtis said that the outstanding service of all the recipients of the award symbolised the true spirit of bridge throughout the country.

The Chairman announced that the award to Philip Wraight (Westmorland) would be presented at the Tenerife Congress in February 2009, and suitable arrangements would be made to present Roy Hughes (Lincolnshire) with his award.

3 Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of 3rd October 2007

This item was a matter of note, the minutes having been formally accepted at the Shareholders' Meeting on 5th March 2008.

4 Minutes of the Shareholders' Meeting on 4th June 2008

4.1 Accuracy

The attendance list to be amended to record Gerard Faulkner as a Vice-President.

The first sentence of page 6 be amended to read..."In conclusion, Alan encouraged as many people as possible to attend the Brighton Summer Meeting."

Subject to the above amendments the minutes were signed as a true record.

4.2 Matters arising

Brenda Harris (Oxfordshire) presented her suggestions on the Pay to Play Strategy. The Chairman thanked her for her useful contribution, which would be passed to the Universal Membership Project Board.

5 Chairman's Annual Report for the year 2007/2008

He said that the year had been dominated by the debate on Universal Membership and Pay to Play, the principle of which had been accepted at the Shareholders' Meeting on 4th June 2008. In order to allay some misconceptions that had been aired, he stressed that there would be no 'second vote' when it came to the necessary changes in the Bye-laws. The wording of the June 4th Resolution had specifically included those changes: their passing would be merely 'enabling legislation'.

He went on to summarize the changes and improvements that had been achieved during the past year. Departing from the text he said that whilst it had been an exhilarating year, it had not been without its difficulties. The Board and he had known that there would be considerable opposition to its proposals; what they had not anticipated was the unwarranted antagonism, amounting sometimes to outright abuse, from a small but vociferous group, who really did not understand what the Board's objectives were and what it was trying to achieve. Accusations of autocracy, secrecy, even suggestions of acting illegally, were absurd: never in his twenty years experience had a Board of the EBU been more open in everything it did, nor consulted so widely with every level of the EBU's membership, nor had been so conscious of its responsibilities. The Board consisted of people like the County representatives gathered here at this meeting: unpaid voluntary workers who did what they did, whether at club, county or national level, purely in order to improve the game of

Duplicate Bridge, so that it could continue, prosper and attract to it new people, who could get the same pleasures from it as they had done.

He concluded by thanking all the members of the Board, the General Manager, and the staff at Aylesbury for the hard work and effort they had put in during the past year.

Malcolm Carey was joined by the Shareholders in congratulating Peter Stocken on his Chairmanship; he had taken over two years ago when the EBU was in decline, and had not been afraid to address the very difficult issues that faced the Union.

The full report is attached to these minutes.

6 Hon. Treasurer's Annual Report for the year 2007/8

The report was noted. The Treasurer said that his task had been made easy by the contributions of his predecessor and Barry Capal in reducing Head Office costs. Work continued on a more accurate apportionment of overheads.

7 Directors' Report and Accounts for the year ending 31st March 2008

The report was approved and the annual accounts to 31st March 2008 formally adopted nem con.

8 Re-appointment of Auditors for the year 2008/9

A proposal from the Chair that AD Parks & Co. be re-appointed was carried nem con. The Chairman thanked Tony Parks for his contribution over a number of years.

9 Presentation of the Board's Business Strategy Plan

Sally Bugden, presenting the document "Bidding for the Future 2008 - 2013", said that following the meeting on 4th June when the Shareholders voted in favour of Universal Membership and Pay to Play, the Board had worked hard to fulfil its commitments to provide a strategy for development. A two-day Board Meeting in July had addressed all possible issues, and a business planning team had been formed comprising herself, Michael Hill, Andrew Petrie, Barry Capal and Malcolm Oliver, which had analysed responses from the Board.

The strategy document had been produced as a road map providing a framework to explain the Union's objectives in terms of its vision, values, plans for tournaments, selection, education, business management, paying its way, and communication. The key aim would be to provide an integrated strategy to cover all levels, offer a quality service taking into account the diverse needs of around 900 clubs and 50,000 members for the benefit of all, and monitor progress on a regular basis. To this end a Club Committee had been formed based on a regional structure, to listen to the needs of clubs. Liaison would be undertaken with the Tournament and Laws & Ethics Committees, to seek to provide the best framework for tournaments and to simplify the regulations. Better use of IT to provide greater effectiveness would be investigated and on-line purchasing would be developed. Investigation was being undertaken to establish how other countries operate in regard to their disciplinary processes and international funding, and every effort would be made to ensure that the Union made the best use of its resources, and met the needs of the membership in a democratic manner. Additional projects would be considered via funding from outside sources in addition to the £83K that had been raised in sponsorship over the last year. In conclusion she said that the Board is committed to work hard to make Duplicate Bridge more popular for all ages and demonstrate its benefits to society.

The strategy document would be published in the December issue of *English Bridge*, would be on the EBU website, and would be mailed or emailed to every club.

Pam Pearce (Gloucestershire) congratulated Sally and her team for all the work they had done.

Bernard Kaye said that unfortunately the vast majority of bridge students had very little aspiration to join the Duplicate Bridge scene and every effort should be made to communicate with them, and the large number of social bridge players. The Chairman said that this would be addressed as part of the longer-term strategy.

Paul Hackett pointed out that despite the Union paying a significant subscription to both the World Bridge Federation and European Bridge League, it had no official representation on either body. In response, Alan Nelson said that major issues of corporate governance, not to mention a serious lack of transparency, were in question regarding both the WBF and EBL. The Chairman said that, whilst the Board was undertaking an analysis of the WBF's and EBL's finances, for the foreseeable future its priority would be to put its own house in order. Steve Eginton concurred, recommending that the Union should work with other countries to seek to improve both organisations' modus operandi.

The Chairman said that David Harris would be representing the Union at the WBF Congress in Beijing. Whilst he did not have a vote, he would be able to express England's views and concerns.

Sally Bugden reported that despite the offer of free flights for our Youth teams in the Mind Sports Olympiad, on arrival at the airport the captains had been asked to pay £250 per head for airport taxes. It was agreed that this would be taken up with the WBF.

10 Minutes of the meetings of the Board of Directors

10.1 11th June 2008

Gerard Faulkner asked whether the minutes of the Club Sub-committee were available. The Chairman said that a report of the meetings would be included with Board minutes.

10.2 8th July 2008

Gerard Faulkner enquired what progress had been made on the VAT implications of PTP. The Auditor said that no firm ruling had yet been given by HM Customs, and that discussions were ongoing.

10.3 18th September 2008

The Chairman reported that an offer of an endowment had been received for a special "Sportsmanship" award in memory of John Armstrong. The initial amount of the award had been guaranteed, but any further offers would be appreciated and should be communicated to Barry Capal. No decision had yet been taken on the complex issue of what basis the award would be made.

Universal Membership Project Board

Sally Bugden reported that the first meeting of the Board had been held on 1st August, and profiles of its members were published in *English Bridge*. In conjunction with the project team at Aylesbury, work was continuing on the System Requirement Specification, which would be finalised towards the end of October. The next meeting would concentrate on the formalisation of the Pay to Play reference notes. A final draft of the Club Contract would be examined by the Club Committee, who would also be seeking to identify possible scams for avoiding the Pay to Play fee. Margaret Eddleston would be the link between the Project Board and the Club Committee.

Club Committee

Graham Jepson, Chairman of the Club Committee, outlined the membership of the Club Committee, and their respective responsibilities, as follows:

Margaret Eddleston (Herts)

Bedfordshire, Essex, Hertfordshire. (89 clubs). With assistance from *Stefanie Rohan (London – to be confirmed)* London & Middlesex (41 clubs)

Tom Garrett (Berks. & Bucks.)

Berks. & Bucks., Gloucestershire, Hampshire, Oxfordshire. (133 clubs)

Barbara Herold (East Sussex, with assistance from Andrew Jenkins)

Channel Islands, Kent, Surrey, Sussex. (165 clubs)

Maggie Jones (Northamptonshire – to be confirmed)

Herefordshire, Leicestershire, Northamptonshire, Warwickshire, Worcestershire. (79 clubs)

Phil Green (Wiltshire)

Avon, Cornwall, Devon, Dorset, Somerset, Wiltshire. (99 clubs)

Suzanne Gill (Norfolk)

Cambs. & Hunts., Lincolnshire, Norfolk, Suffolk. (81 clubs)

Terry Jacobs and Lesley Millet (Yorkshire)

Cumbria, Derbyshire, Isle of Man, Lancashire, Manchester, Merseyside & Cheshire, NEBA, Nottinghamshire, Staffordshire & Shropshire, Westmorland, Yorkshire. (189 clubs).

Graham said that as much information as possible was wanted from clubs, to seek to avoid disaffiliations and to provide all the help needed at grass roots level, particularly in regard to IT support. Discussions would then take place on what might be achieved on a regional basis, counties being consulted about the possible introduction of regional tournaments and competitions, and other aspects.

Some concern was expressed as to the continuing financial viability of counties, and whether the Board had any plans to alleviate dissipating funds. Sally Bugden reported that, despite writing to every County Chairman, very little response had been received. She encouraged the Counties, in consultation with their clubs, to examine what services they were currently providing to their membership and see what their needs and wants are.

She said that agreement of the Pay to Play fee would be sought from the shareholders in June 2009, contracts would be mailed to clubs in July 2009 containing that Pay to Play fee, and clubs would be asked to commit to the scheme by September 2009. There would be a series of follow ups to ensure that all clubs respond. It was confirmed that members of other Home Unions playing in EBU affiliated clubs would be charged a Pay to Play fee, but would not be registered as members of the EBU, or have the benefits of membership. No change was proposed to the table per session licence fee for holiday bridge.

11 Minutes of the meetings of the Laws & Ethics Committee of 5th June & 4th September

Presenting the minutes Martin Pool drew attention to the production by Frances Hinden of a simplified version of the Orange Book for clubs, and the agreement reached on the alerting of doubles, which had been received enthusiastically by the Club Committee.

It was agreed that the last line on page 9 of the minutes of 4th September would be amended to read..."The Committee was surprised that the deposit had not been kept."

12 Minutes of the meetings of the Selection Committee of 4th June, 15th July and 15th August

Steve Eginton reported that the first weekend of the Premier League had been very successful, the League representing the only event of championship standard in the English calendar.

The five teams competing in the Olympiad had left for Beijing, and were wished every success. It was hoped that funding could be obtained for a Mind Sports Olympiad in England in 2012.

Asked by Neil Rosen what plans were being put in place for international funding linked to success, Steve said that no specific details had yet been received concerning the Board's intended changes to selection processes, but it was clear that there would be no increase in funding.

13 Minutes of the meeting of the Tournament Committee of 29th May

Nick Forward (Worcestershire) pointed out that moving the 2009 Autumn Congress to Birmingham had created a serious clash with the Malvern Congress, and that no communication had been received from Aylesbury in relation to the change of venue. It was agreed that every assistance would be given by the EBU in publicising the arrangements for the Malvern Congress.

Alan Nelson confirmed that it would be recommended that the licence fee for joint venture one-day events, which had been proved very successful in simplifying administration, would be continued.

The reintroduction of the National Newcomers Pairs would be discussed at the next Committee meeting, with various proposals being considered for a reformatted event in 2010. An interim event will be organised by the Competitions Department at Aylesbury for 2009.

14 Election of Vice-President

The Chairman was pleased to report that the Board had put forward a recommendation to the Shareholders that David Harris be elected as a Vice-President of the Union. David had joined the Board in 1990, had been Vice-Chairman from 1994-1999 and Chairman from 1999-2002. For the last two years he had been very active as the Union's Honorary Counsel, and had saved the Union a considerable amount in legal fees. David had been a member of the Executive Board of the European Bridge League since 2003, he was Honorary General Counsel of the EBL, and had been a member of various committees of the World Bridge Federation over the last three years.

The recommendation of the Board was carried nem con.

15 Hon. Treasurer's Report for the year 2008/2009

The Treasurer reported that the figures to the end of July 2008 were broadly in line with budget, those to the end of August slightly ahead of budget, and that the final figures for the year were likely to be as forecast. No obvious advantages were envisaged, all the cost-saving having been achieved in the previous year. Overall membership figures were 2% down, but renewals in August and September showed a slight increase on the same period last year and were at an acceptable level.

16 Subscriptions for 2009/2010

A debate took place on the membership rates for 2009/2010 as recommended by the Board at an increase in line with the current rate of inflation of 5% which would have been £17.85 for an ordinary member. At the conclusion of which a resolution from the floor, that the existing member subscription be raised from £17.00 to £18.00, was carried by a substantial majority.

A resolution from the floor that club affiliation fees remain unchanged for the year 2009/2010, was carried by a substantial majority.

The rates for the year were confirmed as follows:

Existing members	£18.00
New members:	
Joining between 1/4/09 and 31/10/09	£18.00
Joining between 1/11/09 and 28/2/10	£ 9.00
Direct members:	
UK	£28.00
Overseas	£30.00
EBUTA members:	
Existing or new members joining before 31/10/09	£15.00
Joining between 1/11/09 and 31/3/10	£ 7.50
Junior members:	
Over 17 and under 25 on 1/1/09	£ 5.00
Under 17 years old on 1/1/09	£ 2.00
Affiliations:	
Club (via County)	£20.50
Club (Direct)	£41.00
University	£ 5.00
Schools	£ 0.00

It was confirmed that from 1st April 2010 members who wished to belong to the EBU without being a member of an affiliated club will pay a direct member's fee. However, these members will still be liable to pay the Pay to Play fee in any affiliated club they may play in.

17 Dates for Shareholders' meetings for the year 2008/2009

<i>Wednesday 11th March</i>	Shareholders' Meeting - Imperial Hotel, London
<i>Wednesday 3rd June</i>	Shareholders' Meeting - Imperial Hotel, London
<i>Wednesday 7th October</i>	Annual General Meeting - Imperial Hotel, London

18 Election of Directors for the year 2008/2009

Eleven candidates had been duly nominated, and the outcome of the vote was as follows:

Elected:

Sally Bugden 63, John Carter 44, Michael Hill 64, Graham Jepson 56, Jeff Morris 54, Alan Nelson 53, Malcolm Oliver 46, Andrew Petrie 60, Martin Pool 58, Peter Stocken 64.

Not elected:

Steve Eginton 29.

19 Election of Chairman for the year 2008/2009

Sally Bugden having been duly nominated was formally appointed Chairman for the year 2008/9.

Taking the Chair, Sally Bugden thanked the Shareholders, and said that it would be an honour to serve as their Chairman. She then thanked the out-going Chairman, Peter Stocken, for all his hard work over the last two years, for his commitment to the Board and its plans for development, for his understanding of the membership, for his eloquence, and, not least, for his unfailing humour.

20 Election of Vice-Chairman for the year 2008/2009

Andrew Petrie having been duly nominated was formally appointed for the year 2008/9.

21 Election of Treasurer for the year 2008/2009

Michael Hill having been duly nominated was formally appointed for the year 2008/9.

22 Appointment of Company Secretary for the year 2008/2009

Barry Capal was formally appointed for the year 2008/9.

23 Election of 3 members to the Laws & Ethics Committee for the year 2008/2009

Three nominations had been received for three positions. Martin Pool and David Stevenson were re-elected for a further three-year term of office expiring in 2011, and Neil Morley was elected for a 2-year term of office expiring in 2010.

24 Election of 2 members of the Tournament Committee for the year 2008/2009

Two nomination had been received for two position. Brian Crack and Paul Hackett were re-elected for a three-year term of office expiring in 2011.

25 Election of 4 members of the Selection Committee for the year 2008/2009

Five nominations had been received for four positions. The following were elected:

David Burn (59 votes), Simon Cocheme (51 votes) and Tom Townsend (45 votes) for a 3-year term of office expiring in 2011.

Steve Eginton (41 votes) for a 1-year term of office expiring in 2009.

Sandra Landy (40 votes) failed to be elected.

26 Any other business

Shareholders congratulated Elena Jeronimidis on her excellent leader in the October issue of *English Bridge*.

Closing the meeting, the Chairman, said she would do her utmost to fulfil the trust that they, the Shareholders, had placed in her. She had a very good team around her and she had every confidence that, with all levels of the English Bridge Union working together, they could, over the ensuing years, achieve their objectives of transforming the Union and developing the game of Duplicate Bridge.



Chairman's Report, October 2008

We have come a long way since I delivered my Chairman's report to you this time last year, a year that has been dominated by the debate on universal membership and the best way of implementing it. After the widest possible consultation, during which we undertook a consultation involving counties, clubs and their members, you, the Shareholders, decided on June 4th, by a majority of 52 to 31, to "accept the principle of universal membership and approve the Board's proposals for replacing the current Annual Subscription and Master Point income by a Pay to Play fee".

It was an historic decision and when in place will put us on the same footing as other European countries of comparable size to ourselves. But I must stress that it is not an end in itself: its essential purpose is to give the English Bridge Union a firm foundation to enable it to carry out the reforms necessary for it to develop the game of Duplicate Bridge.

Having examined – over a period of two and a half years - every possible way of achieving universal membership, Pay to Play emerged as the only one that was fair, equitable and efficient. Fair, because an extra 29p (less, of course, if the club awarded master-points) every time people play is a miniscule amount to help support the game they love; equitable, because it makes every member of every club a stakeholder in the national organisation and gives them a vote to make their views felt at, initially, County level, therefore ultimately at national level; and efficient because Pay to Play can be collected - and master-points can be registered - electronically, removing, both at club level and at EBU headquarters the onerous duty of collecting subscriptions and registering master-points.

The Board moved quickly after the June 4th decision: it set up the Universal Membership Project Board under the Chairmanship of Sally Bugden to oversee the implementation of Pay to Play; it had its first meeting at the beginning of August. A Business Planning Team was put in place to be in charge of overall strategy and its five-year plan "Bidding for the Future" will be presented later in the meeting. And most important of all, it created a Club Committee as a permanent committee of the Board; in addition to its Chairman, Graham Jepson, it is comprised of eight members from clubs, chosen to represent the fairest possible geographical spread, plus Barry Capal, the General Manager, and Krys Kazmierczak, the Club Liaison Officer. The creation of this committee is a testament to the Board's belief that the clubs are the bedrock of the English Bridge Union, too long taken for granted, and that they must be given every assistance possible to develop and expand, since it is from them that new members will emerge. In future any decisions that may affect clubs will pass through this committee. Already, liaison with the Laws and Ethics Committee has resulted in a consultation on club-friendly resolution of the 'alerting of doubles' problem. Similar co-operation will result in the distribution to the clubs of a simplified 'Orange Book' edited by Frances Hinden.

Moving on from Pay to Play, I would like to highlight some of the progress that has been made elsewhere. In April we put into operation the 'membership centralisation' database: 25 Counties now use this facility and we have had no reported problems. Another satisfactory IT success was the Brighton Swiss Pairs: the Competitions Department ran this for the first time using Bridgemates; thus the largest single field event in the world became the largest single field event to be run with electronic scoring. My thanks to them and to Jeff Smith for all the work they put into this.

On April 1st, we brought back in-house the management of our web-site into the capable hands of Michael Clark. You will already have noticed many of the changes, and there are many more in the pipeline, Michael's objective being to make the site as accessible as possible.

We are about to complete the production of a TV pilot which we will try and sell to the TV networks. It stars ordinary players with Andrew Robson as the expert assisting with the commentary. It has been

made professionally, but at a very reasonable cost, using the services of one of our members and the contacts of Matt Betts, our Communications Officer.

On the Youth front, we have received a £60,000 donation to be invested in a three-year project to teach bridge to young people. The EBU Youth Trust now has over £30,000 in it and we would welcome donations to it.

I would also like to wish good fortune to our five teams, the Ladies', Seniors', Open plus two Junior teams, who are just about to compete in the World Mind Sports Olympiad in Beijing.

After two years as Chairman, I would like to thank Barry Capal, our General Manager, for his unstinting commitment to the EBU, and for all the invaluable work he has done in streamlining our administration, reducing costs and inspiring his staff at Aylesbury.

I would also like to thank all the members of the Board for all the time and effort they have put in, often at considerable cost to themselves. Special thanks must go to Mike Hill for his contribution as Treasurer, and Sally Bugden for her work as Vice Chairman. I wish Sally all the best in her new role as Chairman of the Union. For all the years I have been Chairman, I have never experienced a Board with such unity of purpose nor with such a determination to move the English Bridge Union forward.

Peter Stocken
28th September 2008