



**Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the English Bridge Union Limited  
held via Zoom  
on Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> November 2020**

**Present:**

Ian Payn (IP)	Chair	Patrick Shields (PS)	Board Member
Jerry Cope (JC)	Treasurer	Gordon Rainsford (GR)	Company Secretary
Gillian Fawcett (GF)	Vice Chair	Tony Parks (TP)	Auditor
Anthony Golding (AG)	Board Member	Sam Kelly (SK)	Communications Officer
Kiat Huang (KH)	Board Member	Karen Durrell (KD)	Office Manager
Rob Lawy (RL)	Board Member	Andy Margetts (AM)	EBED
Ron Millet (RM)	Board Member	Giorgio Provenza (GP)	EBED Chief Executive
Bev Purvis (BP)	Board Member	Teresa Brookes (TB)	
Patrick Shields (PS)	Board Member	Cath Fox (CF)	

**Apologies:**

None

	Shareholders		Proxy		Shareholders		Proxy
	Present	Apologies			Present	Apologies	
Avon	Mrs S O'Hara			London	Mr C Duckworth Mr D Flint Mr J Smith Mr A Smalley		
Bedfordshire	-			Manchester	Mr A Mould Mr J Morris		
Berks & Bucks	Mr D Davey			Mersey/Cheshire	Mr P Roberts Dr C Raymond		
Cambs & Hunts	Mr A Bowden Mr P Grice			Middlesex	Mr P Hasenson Mrs Lyn Fry		
Channel Isles	Mrs P Panter			Norfolk	Mr R Richardson		
Cornwall	Mr C Bickerdike			Northampton	-	-	-
Cumbria		Mr T Ward	Mr I Payn	North East	Mr A Darnell		
Derbyshire		Mr J Parker Mr A McCance	Mr I Payn	Nottinghamshire	Mr K Spencer		
Devon	-	-	-	Oxfordshire	Mr A Wilson	Mrs S Nicholson	Mr A Wilson
Dorset	Mr M D Wiles			Somerset	Mr T Russ		
Essex	-	-	-	Staffs & Shrops	Mr P Hackett	Mrs P Booth-Jones	Mr P Hackett
Gloucs	Mr I Sidgwick			Suffolk	Mr M Pryor	Mr C Carey	Mr M Pryor
Hants & IoW	Mr R Ray Mr K Bennett	Mrs M Gale		Surrey	Mr T Hobson Miss S Pritchard Mr J Allerton		
Hereford	Mr C Chowney			Sussex	Mrs J Mayall	Mr P Bates Mr R Wheeler	
Hertfordshire	Mr R Teesdale Mr A Woof Mr P Littlewood			Warwickshire	Mr C Lang Mrs M Scott	Mrs S Galvin	Mr C Lang
Isle of Man	Mrs L Kelly			Westmorland	-	-	-
Kent	Mr P Gibbons Mr S Brown Mr J M Lewis			Wiltshire	Mrs S Phillips		
Lancashire	Mr B Brelsford			Worcestershire	Mr P Hammond		
Leicestershire	Mr D Benton Mr D Pollard			Yorkshire	Mr D Guild Mrs L Millet Ms J Staniforth Mr N Woolven		
Lincolnshire	Mr A Howarth						

Ian Payn (IP), Chairman, opened the meeting by welcoming all those present and thanking them for attending.

## **1. Apologies for absence**

There were no additional apologies for absence to record.

## **2. Announcement of Awards**

The following award winners were announced. As the meeting was held via Zoom, the awards were not presented in person.

**SILVER AWARD** - given in recognition of long service and an outstanding contribution to the administration of the game of bridge.

### **Andrew Kambites (Gloucestershire)**

Andrew is a bridge grandmaster and a leading bridge teacher, teaching at all levels from beginners to experts, from schoolchildren to coaching young internationals. Andrew is also an author and has been a leading light in the early creation of 'teaching software for bridge'. He is still actively involved in directing and running seminars for bridge holidays.

Andrew was an EBU director, served as Chief Tournament Director for Gloucestershire on the GCBA Committee for 4 years, and was a senior congress director on the EBU directors' panel until recently retiring from the role. Due to his organisational and people skills, he spent nearly as much time training club directors as directing for the EBU.

Andrew was heavily involved with EBUTA (the EBU teachers' association, now EBTA). He wrote many of the books for the EBU project 'Bridge for All', provided a hand-book for use by bridge teachers, and is an honorary life member of the association. Andrew has assessed bridge teachers and has taught and assessed potential club and county directors for the EBU. His association with EBUTA (and Pat Husband who ran it) led to opportunities in writing, and he became a prolific writer.

Andrew introduced bridge to Marling School and has coached many youngsters from the area around Stroud into becoming very capable players.

Andrew was involved in designing material for and programming two computers and providing 'teaching software for bridge'.

Since the turn of the century, Andrew has been directing and running seminars for bridge holidays. This is the area in which Andrew is still most heavily involved and in which his generosity comes through. Over the years he has created seminar notes on nearly all aspects of bridge. There are handouts attached to each seminar which are available to all attendees; however Andrew will also send copies to anyone, answer questions by email and freely give bridge teachers a complete set of all his seminar notes. His main concern is to encourage bridge knowledge wherever it is requested. Through his seminars, directing, making up the number of players during afternoon bridge, and general advice, he has helped thousands of people with their bridge over the last 20 years.

**DIAMOND AWARD** – given for recognition of an excellent and sustained contribution to England's International success.

### **Gunnar Hallberg (Sussex)**

Gunnar enjoyed tremendous success in his native Sweden, winning the Swedish National Championship six times, and earning a Silver Medal at the European Championships.

He moved to England in 1995 and soon established himself as a formidable opponent in both the tournament world and at the rubber bridge table, a reputation that still stands a quarter of a century later. A losing semi-finalist for England in the 2000 World Olympiad, he has won the Cavendish (teams), the Australian championships and North America's prestigious Vanderbilt trophy, the first British player to do so.

In 2002 at the Rosenblum in Montreal, Gunnar reached the quarter final stage. He finished fifth place at the 2005 European Open Teams and the European Mixed Teams in Tenerife.

In the Summer of 2009, Gunnar reached the final of the European Pairs at the European Open Championships in San Remo, Italy.

Later in the year, Gunnar partnered John Holland and won the Gold Medal in the Senior Bermuda Bowl as part of the English team. In 2014, Gunnar was a member of the England Seniors team which won the European Championships, and in 2015 he was part of the England team which reached the quarter-finals of the D'Orsi Trophy at the World Bridge Championships.

In February 2016 he won a silver medal at the EBL's European Winter Games in Monaco. This gentle giant is the most affable of men. He is a fine ambassador for the game, and the English Bridge Union is honoured that he has chosen to reside in our country, and represent us so consistently well.

### **Nevena Senior (Middlesex)**

Originally from Bulgaria, Nevena Senior has long lived in England with her husband, Brian Senior. She first represented these shores before devolution, playing for the United Kingdom. She has been a consistent presence in the England Women's Team ever since.

The list of her medals in European and World championships is endless. She has won the European Women's teams twice for England, in 2012 and 2014, and the World Women's Olympiad twice in 2008 and 2012. Domestically, she has won the Spring Foursomes, Crockfords and the National Swiss Teams, and represented England in not only the Lady Milne but also in the Camrose Trophy.

But it is not only for the contents of her bulging trophy cabinet that Nevena is being honoured. She is also a fine and supportive team-mate, and it is the combination of that and her fine array of more tangible achievements that the EBU is delighted to recognise.

**TONY PRIDAY AWARD** – given in recognition of an outstanding contribution to the game of bridge

### **Peter Donovan (Direct Member from London)**

Peter wrote his first article in the Daily Mail on 31st January 1966, and his bridge column has appeared in the paper every weekday since. This longevity has already passed the existing Guinness Book record for longest-serving daily newspaper columnist by several years.

Aside from writing, he has pursued several worthy causes to the benefit of the game, which has been his lifelong passion. His priority has been to help others improve, and he has always been available for guidance and advice on bridge-related matters. He has also hosted popular seminars at top hotels around the country.

**DIMMIE FLEMING AWARD** - Worked hard for bridge as volunteers in administration at county level, typically giving 10/15 years or more service:

**Elizabeth Kelly (Manx Bridge Union)**

Elizabeth is our EBU County Shareholder and Competitions Secretary and runs the Isle of Man county congress and acts as director at the Douglas Bridge club which is affiliated. She puts in a lot of time and effort to run in these events and is a pillar to the committee.

During the shutdown time she has rallied around and help support online clubbing and as well as her organization skills in promoting bridge on the island.

**Pat Beasley (Leicestershire)**

Pat Beasley was co-opted on to the LCBA Committee as Membership Secretary from January 1996 until September 2021 a total of 25 years plus. Pat was Minute Secretary from 2011 until 2016 and General Secretary from 2014 to 2019. Up to 2010 when P2P was introduced Pat ensured that all persons playing in the LCBA Competitions were paid up members which meant that up to £8000 was collected each year During Pats time on the Committee she organised meetings and venue bookings. Most of all Pat has given Neil tremendous support over many years. Both Pat and Neil are standing down at the AGM 2021.

**Neil Beasley (Leicestershire)**

Neil joined the LCBA Executive in 1980-1 as a committee member. He was Vice Chairman between 1983-5 and Chairman 1985-7 and was past Chairman between 1987-9. After which he became a committee member again. He became Tournament Secretary in 1987 until 2008 and then from 2013 to date. Neil has been Master Point Secretary since 2004. The Tournament Secretary role is a demanding one as it involves sending the adverts for competitions to clubs, acting as competition controller or getting someone to do it, ensuring there is a TD, providing the relevant paperwork for him or her and keeping track of the results.

**Peter Pennington-Smith (Norfolk)**

For nearly 10 years Peter, initially with his late wife, Margaret, and then on his own was the Norfolk County Competition Secretary. At the time this required an extraordinary degree of dedication. Planning the annual schedule, booking venues and preparing the annual Fixture Card was only the start of the process. He attended every event, organising the venue, directing, scoring, preparing Master Point forms, then with advances in technology, updating the results to the website and the EBU.

In Peter's days the duties of Competition Secretary involved not only a dozen or so Sunday events throughout the year but also for four months every summer running weekly Friday evening sessions when the main Norwich club closed for its summer break.

In 2015/16 he was President of the County Association, visiting all clubs in the County, both affiliated and non-affiliated as well as giving the opening and closing address to the annual Congress. Visiting clubs in Norfolk – which includes clubs physically in Cambridgeshire and Suffolk - involved long distances often late at night and sometimes in inclement weather.

Peter is a member of a number of clubs in Norfolk. He was one of the early members of the Wymondham and District Bridge Club, serving continuously on the Committee for 25 years and is now Chief Tournament Director and the lynchpin of its Find-a-partner service. He is also on the Director's rota at the ABC club, directing their regular afternoon sessions and their All-Day events.

### **John Withers (Staffs & Shrops)**

John has been a tireless supporter of the county for more than 20 years. Initially he was Membership Secretary for the County, trying to keep club lists up to date and collecting county subs from everyone – before the age of computerisation (we forget how much work that involved).

He also worked very hard on statistics relating to the introduction of P2P: who would benefit, who would lose out and at what level the county should pitch the county subscription. Initially, Staffs and Shropshire county elected to collect from individuals via clubs in the first instance: and then John calculated how much should be added to the P2P to the EBU and, again, which clubs would lose out with the change. His work enabled the county to diffuse any potential issues that would certainly have arisen without his work on this topic.

He was usually the representative of Wolverhampton Bridge Club at county committee meetings and a major player in the administration of that Club.

In addition, he was at the forefront of ‘computer’ scoring for the county and his club (Wolverhampton Bridge Club) and for coping with sending results to the EBU. If there was any sort of computer problem (including sorting out problems with bridge scoring systems from other clubs) – John was your man.

More recently he was at the forefront of starting up the county on-line bridge clubs, liaising with the TD for them and taking on the role of Membership Secretary for the two new on-line clubs.

Over the years he has represented the County at various EBU national meetings, always ready to stand in for another representative in his/her absence.

Always a person willing to take on any task or problem. John is a classic example of an unsung hero, and thoroughly deserves the nomination.

### **Dick Wheeler (Sussex)**

Dick Wheeler has served the Sussex County Contract Bridge Association for many years as the Honorary Secretary. During his time as Secretary he performed a prodigious amount of work in ensuring that the administrative work required of the County is carried out in an efficient manner. This included carrying out all of the day-to-day and mundane (but important) tasks that no one else particularly wishes to be involved with.

It is probably not too fine a point to say that Dick has run the County since becoming Secretary, ensuring that other members of the Committee have been able to concentrate on Bridge matters – organising tournaments, developing Youth Bridge etc. Perhaps the biggest complement paid to Dick and the role he has paid relates to comments made by candidates for senior roles in the County, who have said they were only prepared to take on the role if Dick stayed on as Secretary.

The roles taken on by Dick, increasing year by year, include-

- Primary organiser of Annual and Extraordinary General Meetings of the Association as required, from 2012 to 2019 inclusive.
- Ownership of the Association Constitution and oversight of review and change as required, from 2011 to date.
- Membership of the Management Committee from 2011 to date.
- Provider of policy advice to the Management Committee as required from 2011 to date.

- Primary communicator with affiliated clubs on behalf of the Management Committee.
- Organiser of occasional membership surveys as required, from 2012 to date.
- Chairmanship of the Tournament Committee from 2014 to date.
- Secretary to the Tournament Committee from 2011 to date.
- SCCBA Shareholder in the EBU from 2011 to date.
- SCCBA Youth Officer from 2017 to date.
- Teaching Co-ordinator (adults) from 2017 to date.
- Charities Co-ordinator from 2017 to date.

As will be evident from the length and breadth of this list, Dick has made a huge contribution to the running of the Association in Sussex.

### **Elayne Meakin (Warwickshire)**

Elayne has been a stalwart member of the Warwickshire Executive Committee since she joined in 2009. The extent of her contribution as Competitions Secretary for more than a decade has encompassed a variety of activities seeing annual table numbers rise and top the 400 mark. We feel, unanimously, that it is time that her tireless efforts are formally recognised.

Since joining the WCBA Executive Committee, Elayne has played a major role in organising pairs leagues, teams leagues and other county events, attending all events to greet the players and oversee the arrangements, even though she does not play in many of them. She has made a significant contribution to the rejuvenation and success of the Midland Counties Congress, formerly a three-counties event, now Warwickshire's Green Point Weekend, over the past five years, as a key member of a dedicated team of volunteers. Her exceptional versatility has been graphically illustrated following the switch from face-to-face bridge to online bridge precipitated by the coronavirus pandemic. She has deferred her intended retirement, helping WCBA to deal with the unprecedented challenges presented in her inimitable, unassuming, but highly effective manner.

The value of Elayne's unswerving, long-term dedication to bridge at all levels in Warwickshire is well overdue for recognition, and we hope that the Awards Committee agrees with our nomination.

### **Stuart Davies (Yorkshire)**

The YCBA wishes to nominate Stuart Davies for the above award in recognition of his long and continuing service in a number of roles which are summarised as follows:

- Master Points secretary from 2000 – 2010.
- A member of the Management Committee/Board since 2001.
- Appointed as Tournament Secretary in 2001 to advertise, receive entries and oversee the organisation of Yorkshire's one-day competitions, knock-out teams' events and its annual three day congress (recently reduced to two days).
- Stuart has organised and scored Yorkshire's three annual simultaneous pairs competitions from 2000 – 2007.
- In 2010, the YCBA took over the responsibility of running the Great Northern Swiss Pairs on behalf of the EBU. The YCBA similarly did the same with the Easter Festival in 2012 and the Harrogate Spring Congress in 2017. All these events have been highly successful and Stuart has played a hugely significant role in the planning, receiving entries and the overall organisation of all three.
- In 2007 he was appointed as Yorkshire League Secretary. The league is for teams of eight and regularly attracts around ninety teams placed in divisions of eight playing on seven Sundays from October to March. Stuart collects the results and validates the eligibility of all

members of each team. Up to 2015 he administered the distribution of master points for the entire league.

From Yorkshire's perspective, Stuart's contribution to the bridge scene in the county has been immeasurable and we feel that an award for his unstinting services would be richly deserved.

## **YOUNG PLAYER AWARDS**

There are two awards this year, given in recognition of outstanding play during the year (2019), going to:

### **Liz Gahan**

Liz is a highly-regarded member of the Under-21 squad. Despite her youth, she has a wealth of experience, having played in the Junior European Championships; the Junior World Championships; the Peggy Bayer Trophy; the Channel Trophy and the Junior Camrose. She has also represented England in the Women's Under-26 team.

Liz's contribution is not restricted to the table, however. According to U-21 squad leader, she is an invaluable presence in the squad, helping him to encourage less experienced players, and supporting him above and beyond the call of duty.

The EBU is delighted to recognise her all-round contribution to the game with this award.

### **Ben Norton**

Ben Norton, despite his youth, has been playing bridge for a long time, and his list of Junior achievements is long and consistent. The Junior Camrose, The Channel Trophy, the Palmer Bayer Trophy, the White House – Ben has played in them all, and has become in the process the leading young player in the country. He has also made his mark in both European and World Junior circles, reaching the final of the European youth pairs. But he has also already stepped up and made his mark in the Open team. He was due to play in the European Championships in June, in Funchal, Madeira, partnering Mike Bell. This was an excellent achievement, and despite the event not taking place, Ben has already made his mark on the adult game, and we await further news in the years to come of great things at the bridge table.

Away from the table, he is modest and unassuming, and a worthy recipient of this award.

## **3. Minutes of the AGM 27<sup>th</sup> November 2019**

### **3.1 Accuracy**

There were no matters of accuracy. The minutes were approved.

### **3.2 Matters Arising**

There were no other matters arising.

## **4. Resolutions**

AG introduced the proposed changes to the Bye-Laws and Articles of Association:

### **4.1 Increasing the number of Directors**

AG noted this is not a Bye-Law change, it is a proposed change to the Articles that would increase the maximum number of directors from 10 to 11, allowing the Board to appoint a further co-opted director. The appointed director would be responsible for representing the interests of clubs at the

Board level. AG noted that since the lockdown in particular, the clubs have needed a lot more support, and the Board felt an additional director with a specific club focus would be useful. There will be some consultation with clubs in appointing a director if the proposed change is passed. Proposal is an ordinary resolution pursuant to article 10 to increase maximum number of directors to 11 and the consequential provisions construed accordingly.

A representative from Merseyside & Cheshire asked why the additional director is planned to be co-opted rather than elected. AG confirmed that the current need for a club focused director may not be ongoing, a co-opted director gives the Board flexibility for other areas that arise. The current amendment proposed by the Board has been in the interests of wanting to achieve changes quickly. The position could become a nominated position if need be, at a future AGM. The representative from Merseyside & Cheshire stated he can see the merit of the current change for speed, but asked for the Board to produce a proposal at next year's AGM for either how to make the position an elected position or with clear reasons why it shouldn't be. The IP agreed this was a reasonable request.

A representative from Surrey queried the need for an additional co-opted director, specifically for supporting clubs, the Board could appoint someone on their behalf.

A representative from Middlesex asked if any of the existing Board member are able to take up the role to support the clubs. There was also concern that all Board members should be responsible for the entire company. AG confirmed that all Board members have responsibility for the entire company but that within the Board members have specific a focus.

A representative from Hants & IoW queried if the Board have any names in mind that they are thinking for the position, and asked about the timescales for the appointment. IP confirmed that the Board do not have any people in mind for the role, the clubs will be consulted on the decision. AG noted that the best way of consulting clubs has not yet been confirmed, this will be looked at if the resolution passes.

A representative from Gloucestershire noted that all Board members should be club focused.

A representative from Oxfordshire stated his support for the proposal.

A public vote was held, and the changes were approved (72% to 28%).

#### **4.2 Amending Bye Laws – online bridge and miscellaneous**

AG noted the proposed Bye-Law changes were sent to shareholders prior to the meeting. The main change is to make clear that online bridge is included in the provisions. Additional changes include clarification of wording, for example "member" meant shareholder as well as a bridge playing member, this has caused confusion in the past. Amendments have been made to clarify that "member" just referring to playing member and all other instances refer to "shareholder".

A representative from Yorkshire queried if the new co-opted Board director is to be act as a voice for online clubs. AG confirmed this will be the case.

A public vote was held, and the changes to the Bye-Laws were approved (98% to 2%).

#### **4.3 Amending Bye Laws – Disciplinary Rules**

AG explained the rationale for the proposed changes, the full details were sent to shareholders prior to the meeting. He noted that online bridge has led to a large upswing in the number of cheating case being investigated and prosecuted. The aim of the proposed changes is to prevent those



charged with cheating from continuing to do so while the case is ongoing and to deter would-be cheats from doing so. The proposed changes also aim to speed up the disciplinary process. The changes would only affect those people who have enough evidence against them for a charge to be brought. The accused has the right to appeal for a stay of the suspension if it is disproportionate and the proposal includes criteria for whether to grant a stay. The proposal includes that any hearing should be private and until convicted charges not listed publicly in order to protect a player's reputation. There is an option for an accused member to bring a representative to any hearing. Any convictions will be publicised, even if a member states they will appeal the decision.

A representative from Manchester noted that while everyone is in favour getting cheats out of the game and changes to timescales are welcome, there are concerns with amending a philosophy of innocent until proven guilty, to guilty until proven innocent. He stated Manchester is also concerned that the changes will not speed up the process as planned, concerned about possible legal implications. IP noted that this was not the first time these concerns have been raised. He confirmed that the new proposals do not change the philosophy of innocent until proven guilty, and that the Disciplinary Panel take each case very seriously. IP noted that while the current proposals aim at making the process faster, it is worth noting that all panels are complicated and members are voluntary. IP stated the EBU are trying to protect those members who are innocent and that any changes will be made following legal advice, AG is a lawyer and he will likely take further advice if necessary. The Bye-Law changes aim to achieve three things: making the process faster; make the process firm; making the process fair.

A representative from the North East offered three suggestions to improve the changes: adding timescales into the process; inviting counties to identify experienced players and pass the details to the Laws & Ethics (L&E) committee as potential volunteers; changing the emphasis on suspension charges from all cases to only exceptional circumstances. AG noted that the current proposal has specific criteria for suspension and a stay of execution. If changing to only exceptional circumstances, this would be open to interpretation and put the burden on a determining body to make the decision. AG accepted that adding timescales is a good idea, although this would be best suited to the L&E committee to produce, rather than adding in to the Bye-Laws. IP stated that the process is currently being looked at by the L&E committee, and that it is reasonable to include timescales for both the defendant and the prosecution. IP confirmed he has previously asked for more volunteers via the website, but he is happy to send additional requests to the counties.

A representative from Middlesex stated the county is opposed to the proposal. They are opposed to restricting a person's play until they are convicted; due to the length of the current process, there are concerns people will be suspended for an intolerable amount of time. The county is also opposed to private hearings, as the process should be open to scrutiny which cannot happen in private settings. IP replied that the private hearings are to protect the defendant, and that they are allowed to bring an observer as well as a representative. AG also noted that with private hearings, the details of the charge are not made public until conviction. If hearings are to be made public, these will need to be notified and publicised, with names of people and charges, and there is the potential for reputational damage.

A representative from Suffolk stated that there is a perception that cheating allegations are becoming like a witch hunt with the rights of the accused not being respected, with the current process not seen to be fair. He noted that the current proposal will only work if there are significantly shorter timescales implemented.

A representative from Sussex stated that the county will also oppose the resolution. She noted the changes feel rushed and re-iterated previous concerns about timescales. She also noted that we should be seen to be open to scrutiny, so hearings should be open.

A representative from Surrey asked for clarification of the process from accusation to charge. IP confirmed that presently for online cheating cases, once a suspicion is raised an investigation team will look at the playing records for the accused, and this can cover thousands of hands. The records are looked at by three individuals, separately, with their own conclusions. If they all agree that there is a case to be heard, they will then submit a report to the prosecution panel. If the prosecution panel decides there is enough evidence for a case, they will appoint a prosecutor and the person involved will be charged. IP confirmed that a lot of investigation is involved prior to any formal charge being made, and charges are not made lightly.

A representative from London asked how many cases of online cheating are currently ongoing. He also noted that a lot of members of his club will not play online as they are concerned about people cheating online. IP confirmed approximately 30 current cases.

RM indicated that while there have been a lot of concerns about the rights of the accused, the EBU are looking to tackle the insidious problem of cheating in a fair and firm manner. In order to do so the Board need the support of the Shareholders.

A number of representatives stated concerns about people remaining innocent until proven guilty, and the timescales of the current process being too long. IP accepted that shorter timescales are needed for the process, but that this could not be added to the current proposed changes and would instead be actioned by the L&E committee. IP reiterated that by making these changes the EBU wants to send a clear message that you cannot cheat, and if you do there will be consequences. This is to make the game fair for the vast majority of people who do not cheat.

A representative from Kent gave support for the proposed changes, the process should protect members who aren't cheating, while maintaining a philosophy of innocent until proven guilty. He asked that if the process takes too long to reach a conclusion, would members have a right to continue playing. AG confirmed that a stay of suspension is noted in the changes, for lengthy cases.

A public vote was held, and the changes to the Bye-Laws were approved (59% to 41%).

## **5. Chairman's Annual Report of the English Bridge Union**

The annual report was presented verbally at the meeting.

IP commented on his communications made throughout the year, the main theme of the year being lockdown due to Covid. There has been very little face to face bridge this year, which has not always been replaced by online bridge. IP expressed an enormous vote of thanks to all of the members of EBU staff, directors and volunteers at club and county level. He noted the massive amount of time and effort from everyone attending meetings online and the work to switch to online play.

IP noted that the EBU Board has been holding numerous online meetings. These have been largely successful and the Board have also introduced new executive working groups; the Marketing Working Group and IT Working Group, these groups benefit from the expertise of their members and are hoped to continue.

IP talked about the EBU strategy mission statement and vision that has been a project lead by PS.

IP confirmed that the structure of the EBU head office has changed dramatically this year. The office has been virtually closed since March, with members of staff working from home where possible. He reiterated his tanks to all members of staff in what has been a difficult year, with some members of staff being furloughed and 3 members of staff let go.

## **6. Directors' Report and Accounts for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020**

The published list of members by county as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020 is attached to these minutes - **Appendix B.**

JC highlighted that in early February, we were on course to hit the budgeted deficit of approx. £23k, the budgeted deficit was due to being at that particular point in the international cycle. He noted that in March, the UMS income was £32k less than the same month in 2019. This hampered our attempt to land on budget, with the year ending in a deficit of approx. £60k. There was also an additional expenditure for fixing the leaking roof at the Aylesbury office.

JC stated the accounts have continued to be put together in the normal way with auditors' approval, and confirmed that the EBU is currently still an ongoing concern. He noted that by September/October the EBU had a map of a way forward, albeit still losing money.

JC had not received any questions prior to the meeting. No further questions were asked at the meeting.

Accounts approved nem con.

### **7. Treasurer's Report, year to date**

JC sent out a six monthly report prior to the meeting. He highlighted some details from the report. The running-rate at the half-year point is rather better than it looked last May. The loss of the first six months is £29k. He cautioned that this figure is slightly misleading for three reasons: we benefited from a government support package earlier in April/May; we have been making maximum use of the government furlough scheme that is now coming to an end; and we have not yet paid the WBF or EBL fees – the EBU along with other NBO's have come to an agreement that only two thirds of the full amount will be paid. The payments will be made in December. He confirmed that by the year end we will likely be in a three figure deficit.

JC noted that we are continuing to gain online income. The BBO prices increased in November, with no negative impact yet on the number of games being played. JC is reasonably hopeful we can get close to a running rate of zero by the year end, provided we continue to cut costs. One of these cuts will be the number of issues of English Bridge, from six to four per year. It will also mean we will not re-hire any staff. We will also look to economise as much as possible.

There were no questions.

### **8. Appointment of Auditors**

The auditor was re-appointed. TP expressed his thanks for the staff at Aylesbury during this difficult year, in allowing the auditors to complete the audit safely.

### **9. Election of 3 Directors for the year 2020/2021**

There were four nominations for three board member positions. The votes received were as follows:  
Elected for a three-year term of office expiring in 2023: Adrian Darnell - 53 votes  
Re-Elected for a three-year term of office expiring in 2023: Rob Lawy - 49 votes; Ian Payn - 46 votes  
Not elected: Heather Dhondy - 28

### **10. Election of 2 Members of the Laws & Ethics Committee for the year 2020/2021**

There were three nominees for two positions. The votes received were as follows:

Re-Elected for a three year term of office expiring in 2023: David Burn - 49 votes; Heather Dhondy - 44 votes

Not elected: Jeremy Dhondy - 31

### **11. Election of 3 members to the Selection Committee for the year 2020/2021**

There were three nominees for three positions, therefore no election was required. David Bakhshi and Jeremy Willans will be re-elected and Claire Robinson will be elected for a three-year term of office expiring in 2023.

### **12. Appointment of Company Secretary**

Gordon Rainsford was re-appointed as Company Secretary.

### **13. EBU Fees 2021-22**

JC issued a paper prior to the meeting. JC highlighted those with fixed costs, e.g. clubs and the EBU, will need income. However, the usual calculations of income from the Bridge Warehouse, competitions, Universal Membership and affiliation fees are unpredictable in the current circumstances, and unable to be used for forecasting the next financial year from April 2021.

JC confirmed that the EBU's current bye-laws only allow for UMS figures to be amended and fixed at the AGM. Therefore, the Board proposed that the shareholders agree that UMS could be increased by 1p if absolutely necessary in April, but that this would try to be avoided. There will be a two months' notice period if the price increase is deemed necessary, including to shareholders. Any such notice would give a full rationale for any increase. The Board asked that the counties waive any UMS charges, where possible, as they are more likely to have no fixed costs.

Some county representatives asked if it would be better to increase UMS fees at this time in order to restore the EBU reserves. JC noted that following his consultation with the clubs regarding UMS, it is clear that clubs are struggling and it would be best to support them in this time by avoiding increasing UMS if possible.

A question was asked if we should be concerned about people not returning to face to face play. JC noted that the future of bridge is likely to include a mixture of online and face to face play.

The proposals were agreed. (92% for, 8% against)

### **14. EBED Report**

The report to the Shareholders was made by Andy Margetts (AM), EBED Chair, and Giorgio Provenza (GP) (EBED Chief Executive Officer).

AM and GP talked about the following:

- EBED financials, with a high level overview of income and revenue, including a dramatic income reduction in the past year
- No TD training taken place this year due to Covid
- Teacher training has been re-designed for online teaching
- Launch of the English Bridge School in August
- Staff changes for the past year, resulting in more bridge knowledge in the team
- Thanks were expressed to all EBED staff and volunteers. KH was acknowledged and thanked for his time and effort in helping EBED with moving to online play and teaching
- The revision of the green book has been completed and well received
- Seminars have been run live via zoom to showcase BBO and BCL teaching facilities

- It is hoped that face to face teaching and directing courses, including refresher courses can be held in May 2021
- EBTA revamp planned including online teaching modules and mentoring
- It was noted that youth bridge has suffered with the youth officer Giles Ip being made redundant as schools have been shut down for weeks at a time. It is hoped that the Schools Cup will be run online in February 2021. It was noted that the Junior Teach-In was cancelled this year, but it is hoped to be run again in August 2021

## **15. Minutes of the meetings of the Board of Directors of EBU Ltd**

**15.1 22nd January 2020**

**15.2 15th April 2020**

**15.3 6th May 2020**

**15.4 9th September 2020**

**15.5 4th November 2020**

The meeting considered the minutes of these meetings. There were no questions. Minutes approved.

## **16. Minutes of the meetings of the Laws & Ethics Committee**

**16.1 24th February 2020**

**16.2 10th September 2020**

The meeting considered the minutes of these meetings.

A representative from Surrey asked for further details from the L&E minutes that have not yet been placed online. GF gave a brief overview of discussions during the meetings. It was noted that all minutes from the L&E meetings have now been approved and will be made available as soon as possible. Minutes approved.

## **17. Minutes of the meetings of the Selection Committee**

**17.1 27th February 2020**

**17.2 2nd June 2020**

**17.3 3rd July 2020**

**17.4 9th November 2020**

The meeting considered the minutes of these meetings. There were no questions. Minutes approved.

## **18. Dates for 2020 Chair's Meeting & AGM**

IP advised that the details of the 2021 Board meetings would be circulated, but noted they have been approved by the Board. The 2021 AGM is set to be Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> November. The County Chairs meeting is set to be Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> May.

## **20. Any Other Notified Business**

A representative from London asked if the EBU could provide an opinion on online bridge platforms. GR stated that it is good to have a variety of platforms and noted the EBU try to have an unbiased opinion. He advised that if clubs are looking for help setting up online then they should contact the Club Liaison Officer Jonathan Lillycrop (JL) for assistance.

IP thanked the EBU Board, EBU staff and all EBU shareholders and members for attending.

**Additional Item**

The draw took place for the prize winners in the Simultaneous Pairs competitions. Every club who had run a face to face heat were entered into the draw. The leading prize winners were:

**Sims Club winners**

**Blundelsands BC**

**Wellingborough BC**

**Tunbridge Wells BC**

**Lines BC (Saffron Walden)**

All prize winners, including runners up, are listed on the website <https://www.ebu.co.uk/node/3997>

Closing the meeting, the Chairman thanked Shareholders for their attendance. The meeting closed at 16:00.



## ANNUAL REPORT OF THE ENGLISH BRIDGE UNION

### 1 September 2019 - 31 August 2020

The English Bridge Union is the governing body for duplicate bridge in England, representing communities of bridge players at club, county and national level. It is funded by members for members and provides the infrastructure and development of the game in England. It is non-profit making and any and all surplus is invested in our national game.

This report provides an insight in to the work that we do to support our clubs, counties and members.

We would like to thank all the volunteers that make up our national team - the Directors of the Board and all the members of its committees and the dedicated team of staff led by Chief Executive, Gordon Rainsford. Volunteers are a precious commodity!

The five year strategic aims document entitled “Raising our Game 2018-2023” has been overtaken by events and shelved; effort has been put into clarifying the services offered by, and the priorities of, the EBU in a world of online bridge alongside face-to-face bridge, as foundations for the development of a strategy over the next few months for the period up to 2025.

The statutory annual report and accounts will be able to be viewed on our website [www.ebu.co.uk](http://www.ebu.co.uk) shortly after the EBU’s Annual General Meeting on 25th November 2020.

### ***The Board***

The Board is made up of eight directors elected by the shareholders, who are the representatives of our counties, and up to two appointed by the Board, renewable annually. The directors receive no remuneration for the work they undertake. They have legal and financial responsibilities as set out in the Companies Act 2006.

Each director takes responsibility for one or more aspects of the EBU’s business. This responsibility includes budgetary control, delivering strategic objectives and regular reporting on the work of the department and committee associated with it. For the year 2019-20 the responsibilities were as follows:

**Chairman:** Jeremy Dhondy until Nov 27<sup>th</sup>, Ian Payn since

**Vice-Chairman:** Ian Payn until Nov 27<sup>th</sup>, Gillian Fawcett since

**Treasurer:** Jerry Cope

**Board director responsibilities**

<b>Board Member</b>	<b>Responsibilities</b>
Jerry Cope Treasurer	Financial Strategy, Staff Development, 5 Year strategic plan 2018-2023, Editorial Board Chairman since Nov 2019
Jeremy Dhondy Chair until Nov 2019	Editorial Board Chairman, Archive and Web development, WBF/EBL liaison, Annual Report, BGB Liaison. Board member: L&E, Selection
Heather Dhondy until Nov 2019	Chair TDDG, Chair L&E – continues in these roles since leaving the board
Gillian Fawcett Vice-Chair from Nov 2019	Sponsorship & Fundraising. Selection/Internationals, Chairman Selection Committee until Nov 2019
Anthony Golding	County and club constitutions, Bye laws, articles. Legal matters, Eastern CWG
Kiat Huang co-opted in Jan 2020	Technology, Executive Working Groups
Rob Lawy	Education, Volunteering, SW CWG
Ron Millet	Membership project, Awards, All Party Parliamentary Group, Mini Bridge Visits, Northern CWG
Ian Payn Vice-Chair until Nov 2019, Chair since	Tournaments and competitions Board member: Selection, L&E Tournament Panel, Midlands CWG
Bev Purvis since Nov 2019	Club Liaison, Legal matters
Patrick Shields co-opted in Jan 2020	Future Strategic Plan County Working Groups
Graham Smith until Mar 2020	EBU Warehouse Facilitator for meetings County Development Chairman National County Working Group

**Finance**

Clearly this has been a difficult time since the end of February for the EBU both financially and operationally. We were broadly on course to achieve budget as we reached February, so the end of year numbers starkly illustrate the devastating effect of Covid-19. In particular UM in March 20 was £31.5k less than that received in March 19. The overspend in overheads is essentially due to the roof repairs, which we have accrued into 19/20. Otherwise there are no particular surprises within our annual numbers.

So we have ended the year with a deficit of £65.1k, against a budgeted deficit of £22.9k, which has eaten into our now vital reserves. Since March we have introduced many cost-cutting measures and although we are still loss making on a month by month basis, the position has stabilised, we are slowly building up income, and our reserves are not being



eaten away too alarmingly - this sort of occasion is of course the reason why we run a strict reserve policy. The Auditors are satisfied that we remain, at least at the moment, a going concern, but we have more work to do to balance our books as the pandemic continues.

*As we did last year, we are publishing (Appendix A: Charts) showing our sources and application of funds, which will be published on the website to be clear about what we do with our Members' money. These charts average international expenditure over the four-year cycle which is also the basis of our budgeting and planning approach.*

### **Clubs and Club Services**

This has been a different and very busy year for the Club Liaison Officer (CLO). Since Covid struck the overwhelming focus has been helping clubs to get up and running online so they can continue to play as a club. This has involved a huge amount of correspondence with clubs to share with them information about the online offerings (primarily EBU Virtual Clubs on BBO) and to help them to get setup and running duplicates. Many clubs either did not have anyone who was interested in doing the directing online or preferred to pay a director to do it for them. Particularly in the initial months there was a shortage of directors and so the CLO was doing a large amount of directing for clubs to facilitate them running their games. Payment for directing done by him during office hours has brought in significant additional income for EBU.

At the start of the year the CLO made club visits to clubs in Kent, Somerset, Gloucestershire and Norfolk as well as attending the Midlands Counties Working Group. Further club visits had been scheduled with the intention of visiting parts of the country the CLO has not yet visited including Nottinghamshire, Merseyside & Cheshire and Yorkshire. Plans for now are obviously on hold but hopefully next year he can visit these areas.

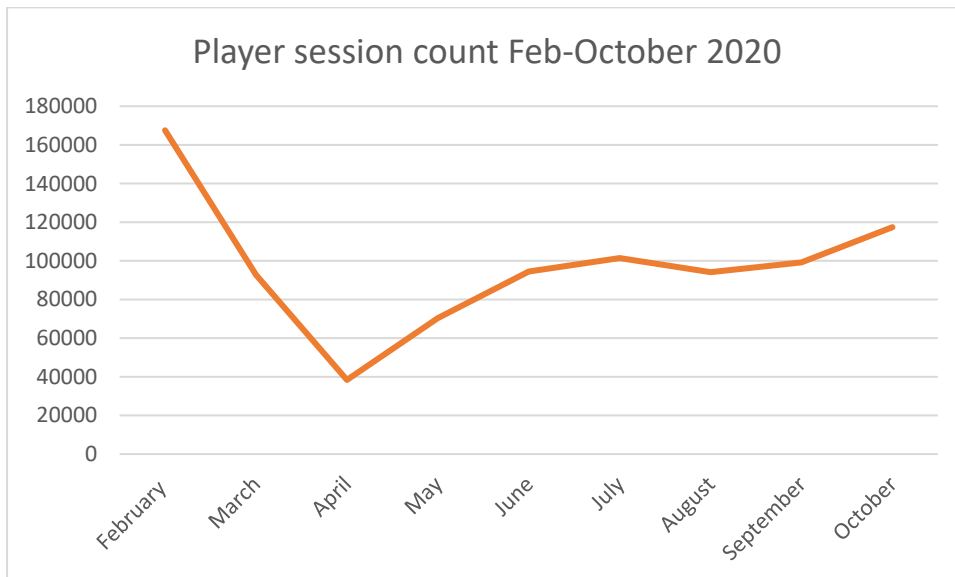
Although a small number of clubs have been forced to close permanently because of Covid this is far exceeded by the number of new affiliated clubs (29 so far this year). Some of these new clubs are for organisational reasons for the purpose of online bridge and do not represent new members but many are genuinely new clubs or clubs re-affiliating who have not been affiliated since before 2010. The large appeal was the availability of EBU Virtual Clubs on BBO which was only available to affiliated clubs. This is slightly reduced now as non-affiliated clubs can access other platforms but at least for now BBO is still the largest player. BBO are now offering ways for non-affiliated clubs to access their services but at less preferential rates.

The focus continues to be in trying to help clubs who are not yet playing online to consider setting something up to keep members playing and ensure that clubs survive until such time as they can again meet face to face. To this end an online meeting was held in partnership with Jacks Morcombe of EBED and all clubs who had not submitted a duplicate session since April were encouraged to attend. Counties were also invited and ask to encourage the clubs in their areas. During the meeting details were given on the options for playing online and two clubs who are successfully running online shared their experiences. The meeting was well attended although the number of new Virtual clubs as a result has been small.

At the time of writing there are 277 EBU Virtual Clubs on BBO. 295 clubs and 32 counties have submitted a session since April. This is just under half of the total of 636 affiliated clubs although some clubs have joined together for the purposes of online play so are active even though they have not submitted results.

### **Membership Development**

In November 2019 membership development was about extending our scheme of supporting clubs in recruiting new members and teaching, as well as plans to put on a best-practice training event for clubs about how to grow. Then in March 2020 everything changed. Clubs stopped meeting and it was clear that we faced a huge challenge. The number of EBU player sessions plummeted, with the April figures being more than half composed of sessions run directly by the EBU on Bridge Base Online.



From a membership development perspective, other serious problems included face to face bridge classes and supervised sessions ceasing, and development activities planned for the spring and summer being cancelled.

That said, as the chart above shows the situation is better than, perhaps, we imagined it would be, thanks to a lot of energy put into online bridge. The success of EBU virtual clubs on BBO has persuaded some clubs to affiliate. However, the arrival of new online bridge platforms such as Real Bridge and clubs on Bridge Club Live means that the distinctive advantage of EBU virtual clubs will probably lessen.

We also noticed something else: that during lockdown fewer people are playing, but those that are playing, are playing more often. If you compare October 2020 to October 2019, for example, the number of player sessions is 61% of what it was, but the number of unique players only 46%.

During this period of lockdown, we have been working both on getting more clubs playing online, and on encouraging more online EBU sessions (as opposed to playing online in non-EBU sessions). One of the key discoveries is that there is a significant subset of players who will enjoy playing online, but only in the context of their own club or with people who are already familiar. Thus we have worked on encouraging clubs to resume sessions online. The EBU virtual club scheme is part of that, while MDO Tim Anderson has also got several clubs playing online through his own online platform under development, called Your Bridge Club Online.

Some other key activities currently are:

- Working with EBED on a joint approach to attracting new players into the game.
- Looking at what opportunities we have to refresh the EBU's image and create a more effective web presence via a redesigned web site.
- Beginning to think about what we do coming out of lockdown sometime in 2021 and supporting our clubs in winning back members.

- Looking at the permanent impact of online play and how we can more effectively use technology to enhance our bridge clubs and improve the standard and availability of bridge classes.
- Building on lessons from lockdown, such as the demonstration that where we have a compelling offer to clubs such as the virtual bridge clubs, more non-affiliated clubs will be attracted to join us.
- Contacting our clubs not currently playing to learn from their experience and explore whether we can help them resume via online play.
- Reviving plans for a best-practice event possibly as an online conference.

## **Executive Working Groups**

*A new board initiative has been the formation of [Executive Working Groups](#), aiming to harness the voluntary input of a number of our members with backgrounds as top executives in business. At present two of them are active – the Technology Group comprising Cath Fox and Kiat Huang have been instrumental in creating and putting into effect the replacement plan for Michael Clark’s departure (see staff matters below) ; and Teresa Brookes has made very welcome input into our Marketing arrangements. We are still looking for one or two more suitable volunteers to join both of those groups as well as up to three people to form a Commercial EWG.*

## **Parliamentary Activity**

The All Party Parliamentary Group for Bridge (APPG) continues to be chaired by Bob Blackman MP, with Baroness Henig acting as the primary point of contact for the EBU and the coordinator of the majority of the group’s events. In the year 2019-20, due to Covid-19, the group has not held any meetings.

The APPG has not hosted any school’s events in 2020 and no future school visits have yet been planned. There is no longer a Youth Officer within EBED, to take up responsibility for setting up these meetings. During 2019, it was noted that school visits are welcome but notice of 2-3 months must be given for planning the events.

The 2019 Lords v Commons match was organised by the EBU, taking place on 31<sup>st</sup> October. The Lords beat the Commons for the first time since 2016. Due to Covid-19 there will not be an annual Lords v Commons match in 2020. If permitted in 2021, the EBU will continue to organise the event on behalf of the APPG.

## **Media coverage**

Media coverage over the last year remained consistent with coverage from 2019. Most coverage in the national press has been through their bridge columns, with the occasional additional article.

A team of bridge players took part in BBC2 quiz show Only Connect, consisting of two Junior Squad players, Kyle Lam and Toby Nonnenmacher and non-bridge playing friend Isi Bogod. Their team name was "The Suits", a team name suggested by the producers of the show in a nod to the bridge players. Kyle and Toby talked positively about their bridge playing during their time on the show. They reached the final round.

A new online bridge magazine was launched this year, BeBridge, from the creators of bridge magazine Le Bridgeur, BeBridge is available in English.

Overall online media coverage has remained similar to 2019. However, the type of coverage has shifted due to the lack of face to face bridge.

### ***International Performances***

England's representation in international duplicate bridge competitions is an important part of the EBU's activities as a national bridge organisation albeit, like all expenditure, we need to keep a close eye on overall costs. Successes at international level help to raise public awareness of English bridge and to attract new players to the game. Our participation in international events provides us with an international profile in the bridge world and it also brings more influence within the European Bridge League (EBL) and the World Bridge Federation (WBF).

The Selection Committee, made up of seven elected and two ex officio members, now chaired by Alan Mould, has a number of duties, but primarily these revolve around selecting teams for international events (home internationals, European championships, world championships, friendly internationals, etc), managing the squad system to support and develop young players, and managing the budget delegated to it by the Board for the internationals and squad system.

- Junior Teams and the Squad System

The Committee has, for some years, run a squad system with young players being in the age appropriate squad, each of which is run by a semi-autonomous squad leader, who is answerable to the Committee and provides regular reports.

The number of junior series has expanded in recent years and hence the junior squads have expanded as well. There are now U16, U21, U26 and U26 women series and we have a squad and squad leaders for each, all of whom give enormous amounts of their time and expertise freely and we are immeasurably grateful to them for their work and dedication.

In terms of selecting for junior events, we rely heavily on the recommendations of the squad leaders in liaison with a member of the Committee with responsibility for such matters, as they know the junior players best, all of whom change and develop at a fast rate. The next challenge for the squad leaders is to develop their teams to be competitive at the World Championships scheduled for the summer of 2021.

The expansion of the junior series has inevitably put strain on a budget already at bursting point. The EBL and WBF continues to expand the junior series and had this year intended to start a U31 series. The Committee took the view that whilst it would not prevent players participating in such events (it would be entirely wrong to shut down avenues for playing international bridge) it could offer no support for such participation.

- Adult Teams

In terms of selecting for adult events, over the years the Committee has tended to move in cycles between selecting for events and holding trials for events to which it binds itself to selecting those who did well to a greater or lesser extent. We are currently in a cycle where they have moved very much to selection by trials (pairs trials for some events and teams for other events).

However, the number of series in adult events has also expanded in recent years, with the recently added mixed team series meaning that for the European championships, world championships and world bridge games (aka the Olympiad) there are now four series to select

for (open, women, senior and mixed) with many players multiply eligible and some eligible for all four series.

With both the Europeans and the world bridge games scheduled to take place in 2020 this led to a real log jam of trials in 2019/20 with, at one point, potentially 14 weekends of trials to play in, plus the Premier League. This placed great strain on the calendar and trials clashed with long standing county events. There have been discussions with the counties about this and hopefully positive resolutions have been found, particularly around the timing of the Premier League weekends, by fixing them in advance as far as possible (the Committee is sometimes constrained by EBL or WBF events being announced late or moved at short notice). The last three trials were cancelled due to the pandemic and the recurrence of such a log jam of trails in the foreseeable future is unlikely due to a re-arrangement of EBL and WBL timetables.

- Budget

The Committee had determined that it would perform a complete bottom-up overhaul of the budget. The budget had developed over time in an ad hoc fashion as more series had been added, the squad system developed, etc, and it needed a holistic look, to see whether decisions taken one by one over time now made a rational whole. Much work had been done on this before the world turned upside down with the pandemic; international bridge as well as domestic bridge ceased, and the EBU was in no position to commit funding for the future. Whilst such work has not been wasted and will stand the Committee in good stead if and when things return to some degree of normality, all budget decisions will be against a backdrop of what the overall EBU can allow for international representation. Whilst the Board is committed to supporting our international teams, there are always other constraints.

- International Performances

Here is a brief overview of England's performances at international level since last year's report by the previous chair (Gillian Fawcett). Inevitably the pandemic has loomed large in international bridge with many events being cancelled, though a few have recently been played online. It remains to be seen whether such online play will become a permanent feature of international bridge.

- Juniors

The 2019 Channel Trophy was played in Utrecht in December. The U21s won their event, the U26W were second and the U26 Open sadly 4th. There was no U16 event in the Channel Trophy.

The Junior Camrose (U26) and Peggy Bayer Trophy (U21) were interesting this year. Other home nations could not all put out teams, so England was invited to field two teams in both events. It was therefore decided to have a U26 and a U21 team in the Junior Camrose and a U21 and a U16 team in the Peggy Bayer. In the Junior Camrose, the U21 team performed exceptionally well and agonisingly lost the event more or less on the last board to Scotland, the margin being 0.58VPs. The U26 team were third. In the Peggy Bayer, England continued to dominate the event as it has done for a number of years. The U21 team won easily, while the U16 team were a comfortable second, a particularly fine achievement given that some of the players were playing against opponents the best part of 10 years older than themselves. The squad leader informed me that the players greatly enjoyed the event and hoped they could participate again, but that decision is not in our hands.

Since lockdown, the teams have been playing in various online competitions, including the “Three Seas” events for the U16 squad. The Channel Trophy will be played online in December.

The world junior championships are due to be played in Salsomaggiore, Italy, over the summer of 2021, which is the next big challenge for the junior teams and the squad leaders.

- Open

The world bridge championships took place in September 2019 in a Chinese city no one at the time had ever heard of.... Wuhan. The open team qualified from the round robin comfortably enough and then lost a heart-breaking match to USA1 in the quarter final. The 2020 Camrose was about the last event to be played face to face, the final weekend taking place in March. England won the Camrose, being over a match clear at the end. As always, the Camrose places were filled by pairs from the first division of the Premier League. The Champions Cup, the European Championships and the world bridge games (Olympiad) were all cancelled due to the pandemic.

- Women

The English women’s team won a bronze medal at the world championships, winning a hard-fought battle against the Netherlands. The Lady Milne Trophy was delayed by the pandemic and was played online using the RealBridge platform over the weekend of 30th October – 1st November, concurrently with the Teltscher Trophy. As the nominal host for the event England had two teams. The England team won the event comfortably, being over a match clear, whilst the EBU team came third, pipped for second by Wales a mere 0.07VPs ahead. The European Championships and the world bridge games (Olympiad) were cancelled due to the pandemic.

- Seniors

The seniors won a silver medal in the world championships, losing the final to Denmark. This must rate as a particularly strong performance as five of the six players were debuting at this level. The Teltscher Trophy was delayed by the pandemic and was played online using the RealBridge platform over the weekend of 30th October – 1st November, concurrently with the Lady Milne Trophy. The team won the event narrowly, after overtaking Scotland, who had led throughout, in the second half of the final match. The European Championships and the world bridge games (Olympiad) were both cancelled due to the pandemic.

- Mixed

The mixed team stormed through the round robin in the world championships, finishing a match clear of the field. They then beat Latvia in the quarter final, but lost both the semi-final and the bronze medal playoff to finish agonisingly just short of a medal. The European Championships and the world bridge games (Olympiad) were both cancelled due to the pandemic.

## **Regulation**

The Laws and Ethics Committee (L&E) is made up of seven elected individual members of the EBU and two appointed Board members. The chairman is Heather Dhondy. It is responsible for the regulation of the game in England.

It produces two annual publications, the White Book (primarily information and guidance for Tournament Directors) and the Blue Book (primarily information for players). Both publications are available free from the website. There is also a series of videos relating to

The Laws of Duplicate Bridge (2017) and a group of forums for various English Bridge Union interests.

The L&E hears cases of both a technical and disciplinary nature. Appeals from tournaments are reviewed by the L&E so that they can offer advice and ensure the consistency of decisions. An annual booklet of the major decisions is published and is available electronically from the EBU website. Appeals are reviewed and comments published in the minutes of the L&E meetings.

With the move to on-line bridge there have been a large number of cheating allegations brought to the L&E for investigation. An Online Ethics Investigation Group has been set up to undertake extensive analysis of these allegations to prepare evidence for the L&E. This group is comprised of expert players who analyse the hands played by the accused to judge whether cheating is likely to have happened. They also gather statistical and technical data.

A pro bono adviser, Joy Mayall, is available to anyone who is subject to disciplinary action by the L&E.

The committee provides advice on model disciplinary procedures for clubs and counties and has also produced a set of model regulations for League Competitions. In addition, the committee has produced a set of guidelines for disciplinary committees.

A panel of referees is appointed by the L&E who hear appeals at tournaments and act as telephone referees in knock out events.

### ***Tournaments and Competitions***

Having found a new home last year for our main London congresses, the Easter Congress and the Year End Congress at the ILEC centre in West Brompton and successfully returned our Summer Meeting to Eastbourne, to newly-built premises in the Devonshire Park complex, most of our plans for competitions were thrown into disarray by the lockdown and other restrictions caused by the Covid-19 pandemic.

However, once we settled into providing a regular schedule of daily online games on BBO (currently seven every day including two aimed at less-experienced players), we started to look at providing as much as we could in the way of online events to replicate our usual congress schedule. We were initially limited by Bridge Base Online (BBO) as to what we could offer and in particular were unable to run Swiss Pairs or Swiss Teams in the way that our members are used to, but the recent arrival of RealBridge from a small English consortium is allowing a full range of bridge events to be provided, as well as allowing audio and video communication at each table to add to the social element that players enjoy.

So, having run the Summer Meeting on BBO over two weekends we have more recently run the Autumn Congress on RealBridge and are about to run the Tollemache Qualifier there too as well as the Year End Congress in its tried and tested format, on the usual days between Christmas and New Year.

We have run a couple of Sim Pairs events since lockdown, at a reduced rate to encourage participation and will continue to run them although likely at the standard rate. At the start of 2021 one of the Sim Pairs events will be dedicated to Peter Jordan who sadly died this year, a few years after retiring from our Competitions department where he was a well-known and much-loved figure.

One other new event we ran this year was the National Handicap Pairs Championship, which had been planned as an event to be run in clubs but which we ran online instead, enjoyed by nearly 200 pairs across the country. Handicapping scores by players' NGS grades gave an

opportunity for success to a wider than usual range of our members and we expect to repeat this and build on it in future years.

At the start of this year, we had made arrangements with *First for Bridge* (Arena travel) to take over from *Bridge Overseas* in running our overseas holidays and finding playing accommodation for us in England for our congresses and other competitions, due to take effect at the end of January 2021. The current situation has meant that they have made a number of arrangements for us that have subsequently had to be dropped, but as soon as we are able to get back to running large events live, they will be making the arrangements for them. Plans for future overseas holidays include Malta, Turkey and Croatia as like destinations.

In addition to our regular daily Funbridge robot games programme, we now also have a daily robot game on BBO.

### ***Tournament Directors Development Group***

The Tournament Directors Development Group (TDDG) is a subcommittee of the Board which deals with the development and management of the EBU's active tournament directors. It is chaired by Heather Dhondy. The group has this year welcomed new trainee Jacks Morcombe. There have been no other changes to the panel.

### ***The County Working Groups (CWG)***

The two County Working Groups that are active have provided a forum to discuss the challenges of the Covid crisis. As was commented last year these two Working Groups "continued to show the benefits of regional cooperation. We encourage counties from the other regions to contact either one". This will enable individual Counties in a region to discuss matters and offer support each other.

The Midlands Counties WG had been meeting quarterly in recent years, and was focused on three issues (a) membership growth and how to set realistic targets, (b) how to engage better with non-affiliated clubs, and (c) how to better support the classroom to clubroom to tournament transitions.

When the first lockdown occurred, the MCWG became a lot more active, meeting by video conference at first weekly and more recently bi-weekly. The group expanded during this period to welcome counties as far apart as Devon and Suffolk and a total of 16 counties are now participating. The emphasis has been on the sharing of ideas and experiences of online bridge, and the exchange has enabled the fast-starters to help the other counties to get going. The group have created and run multiple inter-county events, and have recently replaced the MCL with a Midlands Counties Online League with nine counties participating. Minutes of all meetings are on the EBU website.

*The Northern Counties Working Group has met quarterly since it was founded in October 2013 with the aim of creating effective relationships with Counties, Clubs and their members.*

*This has recently been stretched to its maximum with the onset of the Global Pandemic. The main subject of conversations with the County Representatives through Zoom conferencing has been to allow them to touch base with one another, keep up to date with what is happening in the Virtual Bridge World*



*and pass back to the EBU, through the attendance of at least one EBU Director and the CEO, our thoughts and worries for the future and for discussion at Board level.*

### **EBU Headquarters at Aylesbury**

We now have a full-time staff equivalent of around twelve, serving over 55000 members through the provision of tournaments, regulation, international support, club and membership support services including the Bridge Warehouse providing bridge books and supplies, and communications including Club Management Focus to affiliated clubs, and Events Focus to ‘tournament players’.

We also aid the charity English Bridge Education and Development, with whom we share offices and some administrative systems. EBED has a Chief Executive (Giorgio Provenza has recently taken this role), as well as four part-time staff.

#### **• IT and Data matters**

Work is now far advanced on an updated website, which was necessary because the Drupal 7 software on which it is based will be going out of support at the end of this year. At the same time as making the necessary update to Drupal 8 we have taken the opportunity for an entirely new look, which we think will be much easier to navigate once members have become used to the new design. We expect this to be launched before the end of the year.

#### **• Staff**

A significant number of our staff have been on furlough for most of the time since the scheme started in March, which has required the rest of the staff to cover for their responsibilities, a challenge that they have risen to magnificently. Unfortunately, despite this we have also had to make three staff redundant due to the financial constraints brought on by the pandemic – we are sorry to have said goodbye to Adam Lugmayer, Steve Walker and Jacki Farrugia. Those staff remaining have had to be flexible and willing to expand their roles so that all the work has been covered as necessary, even if outside their formal job descriptions

The other significant staffing change has been that Michael Clark has left our IT department after 17 years, during which time he has built the EBU into a technological leader among National Bridge Organisations. We wish him well as he branches out on his own, and his place will be taken by Harry Watson on the development side and Charlie Bucknell’s role has been adjusted to include the systems administration part of the job.

### **Annual General Meeting and Shareholdings**

The EBU is a company limited by shares. Our shareholders do not get any financial remuneration, their shareholdings and voting rights are based on the number of members their county has. This report will be presented to the shareholders for discussion at the Annual General Meeting on 25th November 2020.

For full details of our constitution and structure please see the EBU’s Articles and Bye Laws available on the EBU’s website, [www.ebu.co.uk](http://www.ebu.co.uk)



Ian Payn  
Chairman

For and on behalf of the Board of the English Bridge Union

### **Staff members and national volunteers 1 September 2019 – 31 August 2020**

Details of the directors, committee members and staff can be found at <http://www.ebu.co.uk/biographies/ebu>. We are also grateful for the assistance of:

#### **Honorary Counsel**

David Ewart QC

#### **Pro Bono Advisor**

Joy Mayall

**Disciplinary Panel** (a panel drawn from this group hears and decides on cases that are prosecuted by the Prosecution Panel named below)

Sally Bugden, Brian Callaghan, Jim Grant, John Hayton, Norman Inniss, Christine Jepson, Alan Mould, Kath Nelson, Jackie Pye, Paul Roberts, Paddy Seligman, Geoff Smith, Jeff Smith, John Williams.

**Prosecution Panel** (a panel drawn from this group conducts prosecutions on behalf of the EBU)

David Bakhshi, Heather Bakhshi, Simon Cocheme, Brian Crack, Jeremy Dhondy, Tony Forrester, Mike Huggins, Simon Husband, Jane Jensen, Richard Johnson, Fiona Littlewood, Clive Owen, Martin Pool, Shirley Pritchard, Bryan Willis, Nick Woolven

## **Appendix A**

### **EBU Pie Charts of income and expenditure 2019-20**

	<b>INCOME (£k's)</b>	<b>EXPENDITURE (£k's)</b>
Membership, Nat Org, Admin	712.8	-547.0
English Bridge Magazine	53.4	-178.1
EBED *	35.2	-117.6
Comps, Licensing, MPs, Sims	538.4	-451.7
Internationals **	47.3	-173.00
Bridge Warehouse net profit	35.4	
	<b>1,422.5</b>	<b>-1,467.4</b>

\* English Bridge Education and Development Charity

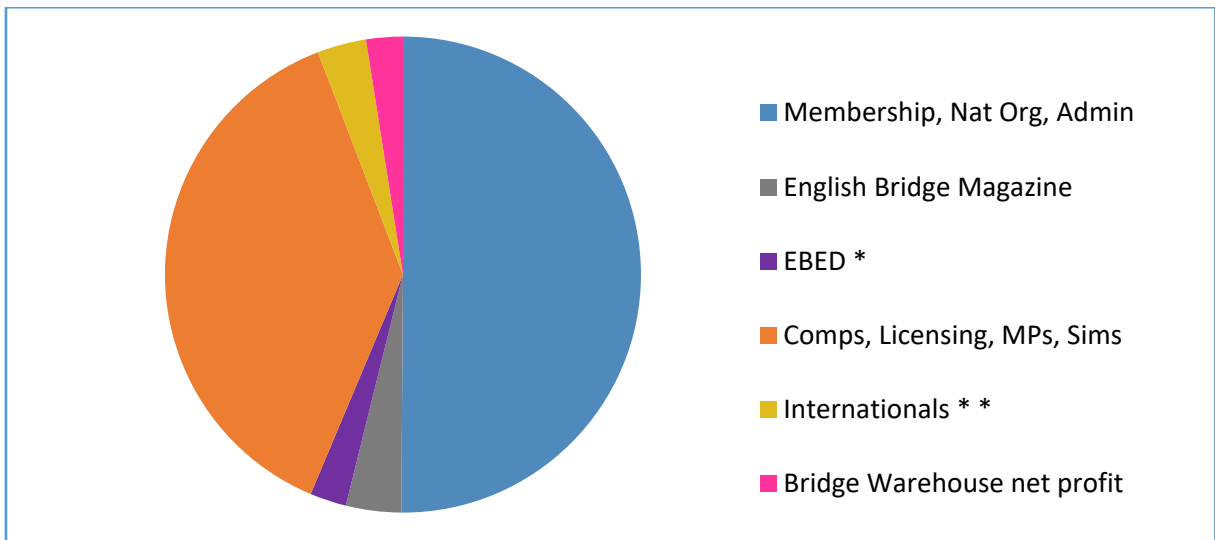
\*\* Ave of last four years as Internationals finances vary according to a four-year cycle

**2019-20 Internationals:**

**52.5**

**-198.5**

### INCOME



### EXPENDITURE

