



**NOTES OF THE MEETING OF THE NORTHERN COUNTIES WORKING GROUP
AT Leeds Bridge Club
ON 28th September 2016
@ 10.45am**

Northern Regional County Representatives:

County	Name	County	Name	County	Name
Lancashire	David Adelman	Manchester	Jeff Morris	Manchester	Jeff Smith
Merseyside & Cheshire	Richard Alcock	North East	Liz Muir	Yorkshire	Lesley Millet

Invited Members:

County	Name	County	Name
EBU Board	Ron Millet	EBED	Sue Maxwell

Apologies: Nigel Durie, Deidre Fell, Julian Merrill, Paul Roberts, Michael Rothwell, Darren Evetts

Chair: *Lesley Millet*

The Minutes from the previous meeting were agreed

Matters arising

Flexibridge -- Jeff Smith working with Stuart Davies will prepare a Project paper to take the idea forward.

EBU Congresses with the problem of distance. Maybe we should look at Simultaneous Congresses for the future, i.e. the same boards played at the same time in more than one location with electronic links between locations.

Regional Development Officer – NEBA didn't consider it to be cost effective for them as they had looked at it before. They couldn't see it would offer more than they already had. They had a dynamic Executive and were getting more attendances. This was helped by out-sourcing activities to individual clubs

The meeting was then advised that the YCBA have agreed to pilot this working with the EBU.

RM & LM outlined the suggested programme ,which would be firmed up over the next few months working with their Clubs input.

Bridge tournaments should be held in pleasant places with more relaxed timings and locations viz overseas experience. The key factor was that the demographic and its expectations have changed. There were declining numbers - so the old large Congress arrangements don't necessarily fit.

Beginners need to be welcomed. Promoting of Bridge was essential with Mini Bridge tasters.

The Advertising Standards advert was discussed and support given for action. This was all part of the problem of perception and bridge only being aimed at the elderly

There was an agreed request for Gordon Rainsford to visit the WP.

He will be visiting Manchester end Oct for Premier League. Also Northern events were not sufficiently advertised. This has been raised already but should be taken further.

EBU website regionalisation - Could the EBU website be regionalised at least on the front page? Flag events in a region. Vis the club, teacher map page.

Facebook usage was discussed - Leeds, York, Manchester Bridge Club, Merseyside, etc should have linked Facebook pages. To be investigated further.

It was announced again that the Learnbridgeyorkshire template was available for free of charge to all.

House of Lords Schools - 22 November 2016- a school was needed - does anyone have a school? Grange School, near Northwich was suggested. **Note:** LM – too late for this year but we need to discuss in plenty of time for next year. Liaise with Richard Banbury from EBED.

Ask Virgin to fund train tickets for weekend schools, HOL, etc

Bridge in Schools - To get Bridge accepted in schools a Bridge GCSE is needed. Already a Duke of Edinburgh Award for bridge exists.

Get Bridge into teacher training colleges.

JM experience - got into some colleges - taster sessions but were not followed through because of funding.

Prof Bill Fung gave a donation of £10000 for Youth Bridge.

DA simultaneous teaching of mini bridge.

Issues raised by Darren Evetts

Dual membership –

RA - wanted to know if someone was a county member if listed on the EBU site. We want to keep what we have. A long discussion then took place.

Need to know the precise EBU definition of membership and also a County member as well. There should be attendance profiles so that we can chase up those who attend less frequently, with a chat forum on this.

Agreed

1) Ask for the current definition of “member” and how it interlocks with Club and County procedures.

2) Set up a Northern Chat Room.

SUE MAXWELL – EBED then joined the meeting.

Topics discussed were:-

- Advert in the Daily Telegraph - cost £4000, with a new website + tel number. Contacted all the teachers. - 155 contacted teachers resulted.

All replies sent to relevant teacher - 550 enquiries – EBED referred 90%.

- Problems of Non EBUTA courses was raised.
- Discovery of Bridge “deserts” eg Hampshire – EBED now working with them to develop teaching there.
- Suggestions from County Representatives for widening the focus and appeal of promotion -

Classic FM Radio, Sun Newspaper. Include refs to Counties and Clubs.

- Advising Clubs & Counties on how to repeat the promotion at their local level. They should concentrate on the 4 week period mid Aug – mid Sept.
- Will there be documents to help to market Bridge. When will these be ready? No yet known.

A working party, with Sally Bugden, past chair of the EBU with marketing experience, is involved.

- EBED will look at cut back on financial support for teacher training courses.
- Andrew Petrie – was reviewing webinar training.
- EBED also looking at the problems of bringing Bridge to Colleges and Universities.

They also believe that the marketing of Bridge, both getting students into classes and afterwards into clubs is the prime responsibility of the teachers. This was not the view of some of the NCWP members.

- Youth is the future of the game - but how to get publicity in the media was the difficulty.
- Aiming to involve all teachers and all Bridge clubs/players, including Unaffiliated Clubs.
- Fast Forward Bridge is a programme being developed to learn Bridge over a long weekend – hopefully September 2017
- Annual Jamboree for teachers – all to get together and meet to exchange ideas.

The WP thanked Sue Maxwell for her attendance.

Date of next meeting- 18th January or 1st February 2017