



Minutes of the Northern Counties Working Group (NCWG)

At Chez Millet, Leeds at 11am on 21 Feb 2018

Present:

Lesley Millet(LM) from Yorkshire, Nigel Durie (ND) from NEBA, Jeff Morris(JeM) from Manchester, David Adelman (DA) from Manchester, Richard Alcock (RA) from Merseyside & Cheshire, Paul Roberts (PR) from Merseyside & Cheshire, Julian Merrill (JM) from Merseyside & Cheshire, Jeff Smith (JS) from Lancashire, Liz Muir (LMu) from NEBA, .

Invited Members:

Gordon Rainsford (GR) – EBU General Manager, Ron Millet (RM)– EBU Director, Bev Godfrey (BG) – incoming EBU Director from North East, David Guild (DG)- Yorkshire RDO.

Agenda Items:

Lesley Millet chaired the meeting and welcomed the invited representatives of the EBU and members of the working party.

1. Approval of Minutes:

PR said that the minutes gave too much bias to information and intent of the EBU and did not fully reflect the concerns raised by the NCWG Committee. RA supported PR and said that it was important for minutes to fully record matters raised by each Committee member as they are accountable to their member organisations. A discussion followed as to whether the minutes should be “politician style - verbatim” or “commercial style – briefly informative plus action points focus”. No additional matters of concern were required to be entered and the minutes of the previous meeting on 23 October 2017 were approved without alteration.

Actions incomplete:

Oxford Bridge Festival EBU report from Bev Purvis has been received by LM. They lost £1k but seen as a success and will repeat this festival format. Discussion re Bridge Awareness Days/Weekend in North. **Action:** LM to circulate report to Committee. **Action:** LM to develop Bridge Awareness Days concept.

Club Sales Development Tool – **Action:** GR to progress

Online forum on IT Issues – GR has actioned this communication channel direct to EBU members/clubs. Proving very successful. **Minute closed**

Kids Teaching Methods – Graham Smith has not yet met with DA. GR offered to progress. **Action GR**

Cheshire Local League – RA has sent contacts to GR. **Minute Closed**

Apart from minutes above, there were no other outstanding matters arising from the previous meeting.

1. Apologies:

Trevor Ward from Cumbria, Mike Rothwell from Westmoreland, Deirdre Fell from Lincs – LM said that due to ill health Deirdre has dropped out from Committee and gave thanks for her valued contributions.

Action: LM to contact Graham Smith to seek assistance in having Committee representation from Lincolnshire.

2. EBU Club Affiliation

JS raised the pressing problem of Lancaster Club with 200 members who are having a meeting in the next 2 weeks to consider continued EBU affiliation. GR said that Bev Purvis has visited 2 months ago. **Action:** GR to discuss with Bev Purvis and Bev to have further discussions imminently with Lancaster Club.

Discussion re related issue of smaller clubs seriously considering EBU exit. RA said 3 clubs in Merseyside are particularly unhappy. Comments re lack of EBU visibility and lack of compelling marketing materials. BG commented that the EBU website is not a sales tool. JS noted that if the motivation is purely for the magazine and tournaments, then the direct member route is an option to club affiliation.

JS said nothing pushes the non-affiliated clubs to join. Further, the affiliation benefits document on the EBU website is not persuasive and missing the marketing slant. JS has asked for Abbey Walker to write an EBU promotion article for non-affiliated clubs.

LMu raised the problems of the NE which is a huge county of 21 affiliated clubs and a large number of unaffiliated clubs. GR said that Graham Smith/Bev Purvis are stepping up their programme of Club visits to see how the EBU can help. **Action:** GR to request Graham Smith to contact LMu to discuss.

GR said that membership is a key EBU thrust in the new Strategy 5 Year Programme. GR said that there is a Club Affiliation update document in preparation. **Action** GR to confirm release date.

GR said that the EBU Welcome Pack to New Members has just been released. At present a Welcome Pack to all in a newly-affiliated club's members does not exist but is a good idea.

Action: GR to discuss new Club all member packs with Bev Purvis.

U3A relationships were discussed. LM said that there are 7 affiliated U3A clubs but normally U3A clubs are unaffiliated and fiercely independent, although Sheffield have had some success with forming a good U3A local relationship. GR confirmed that there have been EBU overtures to U3A in the past but no present known relationship at national level. **Action:** GR to confirm and outline any plans re U3A.

The high growth of café bridge in Southern England was discussed. Developments in technology include scoring using own tablets and iphones – although teething problems noted. This allows simpler scoring solutions for smaller clubs and disseminated play where phones can be used for table scoring and tables can be sited remotely. Could herald remote player to player games from homes. The Committee did not have any specific actions other than to have a watching brief on relevant technology development.

3. EBU YCBA Membership Campaign

GR commented that the European League has identified this as a successful project.

DG summarised methodology and outcomes to date.

Action: DG to circulate main marketing operation points to all Committee.

RM explained the programme in the EBU/ YCBA context and national membership rankings . RM noted the importance of joining new students immediately to the EBU take advantage of free 12 months EBU membership and to have linkage to EBU/YCBA membership programme funding. RM gave costs and benefits to date as stated in his programme report being written. **Action:** When released, RM to circulate this report to all Committee.

Discussion re roll-out to other Northern Counties. Discussion re co-operating on a membership campaign across contiguous Counties.

Action: RA, PR, JM and JeM, DA and JS to consider a NW England co-operated project

Action: LMu and ND to consider a NE England co-operated project.

Discussion re wider EBU roll out. GR offered to discuss a Design Service with Peter Stockdale. Committee concerns that Membership needs a separate programme identity and facility, clubs need to be visited and closely coached and that they fully buy into and drive their own club campaign. **Action:** No action nationally at this time requested until regional roll outs show successes/pitfalls.

4. EBU Strategy Draft Proposal for 2013 -18 – (Top Level strategy)

LM confirmed that Jeremy Dhondy had circulated this recently to all counties for comment.

Action: All to fully discuss at County meetings and revert any comments to Jeremy .

Round table immediate comments were:

Yorkshire: Not radical enough to meet speed of change.

Merseyside & Lancs: Too generalised. Not SMART targets. PJ saw the comment EBED to deliver “value for money on investment” as sinister.

Manchester: Remit too narrow. Duplicate bridge only. No online strategy. No Kids strategy – (particularly strong criticism from Manchester).

Other counties declined specifically to comment until their County level opinions known.

Generally shared comment that the strategy needs an action programme to anticipate and develop new forms of playing the game. Also, unfavourable comments re will this strategy get us up to Southern Hemisphere’s and Eastern European performance?

Positive comments were that this is the first strategy plan where the EBU has taken a direct involvement in the “promotion of playing” (Previous strategy was “advancement of playing” so no direct to member involvement). Also, that International Team now have individual written commitment to promote the EBU.

Comment that the plan says EBU interaction with clubs but no mention of same with Counties.

5. General Data Protection Regulations

Discussions re this impending legislation that will impact all clubs. The EBU has already issued guidance and has more on EBU website including Q&A.

Data Contracts. EBU to Club contracts in progress via ICO. No EBU to County contracts.

Action: GR to progress County contracts.

Bridgemates and Pianola are similarly developing GDPR compliant contracts for clubs and Counties. **Action:** Counties to progress.

Privacy Statement: A model Privacy Statement is available on the EBU website for Clubs. This can be tweaked for use by Counties. **Action:** Counties to progress

Data Management by Counties: Raised in the context of County Databases, tournament management and trend analyses. Also, whether the EBU are an information service provider to the counties or just a data base. JS said that the EBU have the API’s to do this and RA said

that turnkey report generation software is readily available to offer flexibility. GR said that this is an issue beyond simple GDPR and that he had released a paper on Members' data in the week prior. The paper was further circulated to the Committee and GR requested comments to be sent. **Action:** Counties to review paper and send comments to GR.

Changes to Member Data Query re the situation on changes to incumbent members data. GR said that the regulation is practical and there is a clause on "legitimate interest" of all (member/club/county) rather than opt in for individual data changes. The important matter is prior consent for personal information release for over and above normal process (eg TD Appeals or Disciplinary Committees. Also sharing of data with third parties).

Photos: RA raised the joint responsibility question for members' photos on websites (Club and website management Pianola/website) and for leaflets. GR said ok if prior agreed with those in photo and for such as winners, get a consent sign off when they get their trophy/prize. The thorny problem is photos of juniors. (Not further elaborated in meeting).

6. Funding of Junior Teams

GR said that monies are coming in for China trip but unlikely to fully meet requirement. Counties stated their actions to date and noted EBU request for more to be raised. PJ asked the obligation on juniors to be bridge ambassadors. Has been discussed at EBU Board and an expectation but not a specific obligation (contractual with adult internationals). **Action:** Counties to fund raise in accordance with their local county agreement.

LM said that, in her conversation with Simon Stocken, there seems to be considerable funds to be tapped for Youth Bridge; £300k from Davenport Trust. A youth video has been made in India with funding being made available. **Action:** LM to send GR her email correspondence with Simon Stocken for GR to follow up.

7. Best Behaviour At Bridge

RM explained that the EBU have made the Best Behaviour byelaw more stringent. It is a wider definition of bad behaviour and now includes, as an offence, bad behaviour away from the bridge table, both physically and digitally such as on social media. Another change, the Law and Ethics Committee can now be approached for guidance on process prior to an individual's raising a formal complaint.

This changes the Model Constitution para 15.1. Clubs and Counties will need to amend their constitutions to comply to this change. **Action:** Counties & Clubs to amend Constitutions.

PR suggested a "psyche book" approach to capture occurrences of low level defamatory comments. GR cautioned that each instance will need to be signed off by perpetrator to comply with GDPR.

8. EBED Future Development

New CEO, Donna Wright is now fully in position. Two non-bridge playing staff have participated in a Fast track Bridge course – including the new CEO Donna Wright. . New people coming in include David Emerson, a bridge teacher and TD. **Action:** LM to invite Donna to June NCWG meeting.

9. Northern Improvers Pairs Final

At Master or below level. For 13 May Finals across 24 boards. Finals will cost plus £10 per player, with tea, trophies and prize money provided. Local prelims in clubs with own selection process – 50% of the field qualify. As before, Regional finals rather than one location. JeM offered Manchester as a regional finals centre and York for Yorkshire. **Action:** Counties to revert to LM with decision on participation.

10. EBU Summer Congress

Email sent 6 Nov 2017. Due to non-availability of Eastbourne venue, this year only, looking at Northern regionalised 4 competitions mid-week evenings across 2 weeks in August. Competitions are Play with the Experts, Mixed Pairs, Pairs, Pivot Teams. Charge is £3 + club table money. Blue pointed plus EBU supplied regional prizes. Scoring complete same night as competition. Looking for 4 centres for each competition. So centre can choose to run from 1 to 4 competitions. Each location to have 10 tables minimum and 20 is ideal. RA said likely to run all 4 as regional centre. LM said Leeds likely to run one. **Action:** GR to re-send email of 6 Nov to Counties. **Action:** Counties to consider where to run competitions.

11. AOB

PR requested expected date for new Regional Working Groups Terms of Reference as mentioned by Graham Smith at October meeting. GR said has been discussed and write up in progress. **Action:** GR to confirm expected availability to LM

12. Next Meeting: 11am Thursday 7 June at Chez millet, Leeds

GR offered apologies in advance.

Lesley Millet

6th March 2018