



Draft Minutes of the Northern Counties Working Group (NCWG)

At Chez Millet, Leeds at 11am on 7 June 2018

Present:

Lesley Millet(LM) from Yorkshire, Jeff Morris(JeM) from Manchester, David Adelman (DA) from Manchester, Paul Roberts (PR) from Merseyside & Cheshire, Julian Merrill (JM) from Merseyside & Cheshire, Jeff Smith (JS) from Lancashire, Adrian Darnell (AD) from NEBA, .

Invited Members:

Ron Millet (RM)– EBU Director, Bev Godfrey (Bev G) – EBU Director,

Bev Purvis (Bev P) – EBU Club Liaison Officer, David Guild (DG)- Yorkshire RDO.

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

1. Apologies

Donna Wright – EBED Ceo, Richard Alcock - Merseyside & Cheshire.

Michael Rothwell – Westmorland , Liz Muir - NEBA

2. Approval of Minutes:

PR said that the February minutes gave a good representation of the meeting discussions. The minutes were approved.

Actions from February minutes not included as items on June meeting Agenda:

Oxford Bridge Festival - **Prev Action:** LM has circulated report to Committee. **Minute CLOSED**

Prev Action: LM to develop Bridge Awareness Day concept. **C/F**

Club Sales Development Tool – **Prev Action:** GR to progress **C/F**

Committee Representative from Lincolnshire **Prev Action:** LM has contacted Graham Smith but no progress yet. **Minute CLOSED.**

Action: JeM to send contacts for possible candidate to LM for delegate invite to Committee.

Lancaster BC - EBU Club Affiliation

Prev Action: Bev P had actioned further discussion with Lancaster Club to try to persuade them to affiliate. **Minute CLOSED**

JS reported that the Lancaster BC, led by a strident Chairman, had now decided not to affiliate to the EBU. There were 38 members who voted to affiliate. The inter-club non-affiliated league, the Fyle

League for teams of eight, is very active in the locality. JS has had recent discussions and their Committee do not agree to an affiliated Club being formed on the same Lancaster Club premises. Meeting discussion re finding an alternative location to establish a Lancaster EBU Club. The Lancaster University site is a possibility. The University of Cumbria has a central Lancaster city campus which may also be a possibility. This will be a new completely club and will need EBU/County support to initiate. **Action:** JS to develop a completely new affiliated Lancaster City BC plan.

Wider Club Affiliations

The working group re-iterated the wider criticisms as raised in the February meeting, being that the EBU do not have a good marketing platform to encourage non-affiliate clubs to join the EBU, no compelling reasons to join, lack of selling materials to club and members. Also, that non-affiliates are grouping up in some areas to offer more inter-club play. Bev P said that there are reasons beyond Master Points and NGS, including securing the future of our game and the increased status associated with EBU affiliation. The meeting raised the contrary fact that becoming an EBU club is still perceived as adopting a more competitive stance with decline in "friendliness. Bev P said that Jeremy Dhondy has written articles in MR Bridge to address these issues and that they are now available together to view on the EBU website. PS asked if the EBU are working on a better offer to non-affiliates? RM said that most non-affiliate clubs are a red-herring as only a few are candidates for affiliation. Further, the wider Recruitment Campaign rolling out will concentrate first on affiliated clubs. **Action:** PS to write to EBU to request that they review the offer for clubs to affiliate and consider a more compelling offer.

NB Prev Action: GR said that there is a Club Affiliation document in preparation and GR was actioned to confirm likely release date. **Prev Action C/F** This may answer some of the concerns and queries raised in this most recent meeting, so needs chasing.

C/F JS has asked for Abbey Walker to write an EBU promotion article for non-affiliated clubs.

Bev P handed out copies of the EBU Welcome pack for new EBU members. JM said that this was an excellent initiative by the EBU. A **Prev Action** is for GR to have a welcome pack for the newly affiliated Club as distinct from the club's members. Bev P said that all the documents to work up a club to affiliation already exist but not in welcome pack form. Bev P also said that it is a substantial admin process to fully affiliate a club. **PREV Action: C/F** The meeting expanded this discussion into the resources requirement at Aylesbury. Bev P said that both admin and accounts areas are under tremendous pressure. Partly this is due to the learning curve of new procedures, with emphasis on the new Shop software introduction, this software not communicating directly into Sage. The Committee noted that the computer department staffing is lean.

The meeting then considered the EBU P2P structure and whether introductory short term incentives should be offered to newly affiliated clubs. Differential charging and 2-tier charging was discussed. An example was to have a first 2 Year discount from affiliation in place. PS suggested that new affiliates may benefit from established larger club mentoring although this would need to be managed to reduce fear of members' drift. Adrian D cautioned ad hoc deals and it being essential to have a fully structured and publicised payment system. Bev P noted that work had been done by the EBU previously and this model had been rejected partly due to the threat of leakage across to a lower tariff band. LM noted that Mike Willowby of the Midlands Working Group is interested in this approach and is working on a model. JS suggested that larger clubs could be incentivised and perhaps some of the "subs" could be rebated as a direct support for more teaching by that particular club. Bev P noted that development incentives to clubs have declined in the last two years and the

player rebate for over 150 sessions per year has been withdrawn. JM particularly raised the withdrawal of teaching financial assistance, now under the EBED remit. JM said that his County had added teaching finance support to their affiliated clubs to mitigate this loss. It was noted that there are fewer EBU teachers and that U3A is now a substantial bridge teaching organisation.

Prev Action: GR to confirm EBU plans re U3A. Bev P said that the U3A will not engage at the national level. It is a franchise organisation and the relationship is best explored at local level. Also Donna Wright has U3A contact as a main action point. **Minute CLOSED**

Adrian D commented that two weeks' notice period for the EBU's Capital Grants is grossly insufficient. Club Committees cannot respond in this time and refused grants from year prior often jump in. A minimum of three months' notice is required. DG said that these grants are actually a disincentive when the boundaries set are unclear with a false expectation of success. It is better to say how much is going to be allocated with guidelines on maximum support, perhaps by asset type, so that a club can gauge whether to prepare the proposal document or not. Also, the amount allocated in total is small when we consider that a sorting machine can totally transform a club.

Funding of Junior Teams Over £35,000 raised to date. **Previous Actions.** Complete. **Minute closed.**

PR had requested at Feb meeting, the 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. **Prev Action:** GR to confirm expected availability to LM **Action C/F**

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

Agenda Items continued:

3. EBU Membership Recruitment Campaign

i) National Roll Out

The campaign is to now roll out nationally and an EBU Sub Committee to manage this programme has had its first meeting in London on 16 May. RM, LM, Bev G, GR, Bev P, P Stockdale and DG are on this Sub Committee. The EBU has allocated £20,000 from budget for this development. RM said that he has already had communications with Somerset and Surrey who have indicated their interest. Further, Counties will have formal agreements for this campaign and the intent is to show a two year pay back through increased activity. It has been agreed that additional marketing and design support will be made available at Aylesbury for this campaign. A 2 days per week person will be recruited to report in to Bev P. Also David Emerson of EBED will assist 1 day per week. **Action:** Bev P to progress.

ii) Yorkshire Campaign

The Yorkshire campaign is continuing for one further year.

Prev Action: DG said that a paper summarising the club marketing methodology of the YCBA campaign had been drafted and was now going through approval before release. **Prev Action C/F**

Prev Action: RM to release report(s) on costs and benefits of the Yorkshire campaign to date. RM confirmed these have been circulated to all. **Minute Closed**

iii) Northern Counties Roll Out

NW England

Prev Action: Consider NW Counties Co-operated campaign

The NW Counties' Chairs met with the Yorkshire Campaign Committee at Manchester BC on 23 April. Lancashire have decided to not participate. The campaign will run across Manchester, Merseyside and Cheshire with a part time RDO recruited to this. A job description has been published and three applicants have so far expressed an interest.

Action C/F

NEBA

Prev Action: To consider a NE England co-operated project.

Prev Action: GR to request Graham Smith to contact LMU to discuss NEBA. BG to pick up this discussion on imminent visit to EBU Aylesbury HQ **Action C/F**

Bev G confirmed that NEBA have met and remain very interested in having their own co-operated recruitment campaign. They see stumbling blocks as:

1. **Cost:** NEBA have modest reserves and are unsure of the cost impact. RM said that the budget should be set at approx. £2,500 from NEBA. This will be three way funding; by EBU, Counties and matched funding by clubs that participate.
2. **Teaching:** Lack of teachers is a real issue in NEBA. RM agreed that this is a problem in some areas. Bev G has been in contact with Club secretaries re teacher availability but has had a poor response. Discussion re setting up a Teachers' Course **Action** Bev G to progress
3. **North South Divide** – This does exist and there is no obvious solution. **Action:** Yorkshire team to make presentation(s), perhaps North and South, to NEBA. **Action:** Bev G to progress

Durham University Bridge & Chess Club is active with 24 Bridge members and 2 drives with some players in the England Under 25 squad. Charlie Bucknall is very active in organising this club.

Action: Bev G to make contact and linking across to Durham BC with Adrian(AD) and St George's BC. May also be teaching opportunities.

4. **Bev Purvis' Update**

Bev P showed the Izettle technology. This hand held device takes touch card payments, so avoiding the need to take table money in clubs and at congresses. The device costs £29 plus 1.75% of transaction value. **Action:** All to publicise to clubs.

Bedfordshire are publishing a quarterly magazine that has innovative content. The publication can be seen on the Bedfordshire Bridge association website. **Action:** For info. To ease access, all Club development resources have now been centralised in one area on the EBU website. This resource bank is being added to constantly. Bev P had examples of posters that were gratefully received by Working Group members.

5. **Junior Bridge**

Prev Action: – Graham Smith has not yet met with DA. GR offered to progress. **Prev Action** GR C/F

DA raised the question of where are the over 5,000 pupils who were taught when they were young and, now in their twenties, seem to have left bridge behind them? DG said it would be

useful to have some stats on the longevity of bridge play in a school and the strike rates after one term.

This started the general conversation on the direction of schools bridge for which DA is a strong advocate. Bev P noted that EBED have David Emerson part time with a remit to develop junior bridge. Also Liz Dale has been very active and published two work books on Bridge in Schools (on Amazon). LM noted that the EBED Teacher Educator day on 31 May did not include Junior bridge. RM said that Doug Wright in the Oxford /Wimbledon areas includes Mini Bridge but DA said that school volunteers do not feel empowered by EBED. LM read out Donna Wright's update summary that includes a Junior Teach-In (JTI) this September. RM pointed out that EBED's Service Definition includes teaching mini-bridge as their item 4 of list. RM suggested LM writes to Donna re the upcoming Training Day for Club Teacher Educators using Bridge For All on 19 July at Aylesbury and say that "this Working Group have been made aware of David A's system availability for large audience teacher education for schools bridge and would it be possible to include this in the day's agenda as mini bridge is part of EBED's core activities". **Action** LM

Bev P said that the JTI and the 19 July Teacher Educator Training day are on both the EBED and EBU websites. JM said they are poorly publicised and lost on the websites. JS said that the search facility on the EBU website is very poor and events such as these need a highlight box to show out. **Action:** Bev P to talk to Donna and Peter Stockdale to elevate these events. JM suggested Teacher Training Colleges as an entry point for mini bridge but Adrian D said that the majority of teachers today are not educated through Teacher Training Colleges and such overtures need correct packaging.

It was agreed that the Education Advisory Group, including Liz Dale, Jan Bennet et al, may be a suitable entry point for DA to contact EBED. Further that DA writes to Donna W, as representative of this Working Group and suggests attending a meeting of this Advisory Group as an interested guest. **Action** DA to write to Donna. Also, **Action:** LM to include Donna W on the circulation of these minutes.

6. The Changing face of Club & Tournament Play

RM issued two further papers. The first showed the lower trends in national members and sessions from 2016 onwards with a statistical word of caution re primary and secondary memberships and records lag. The second was a discussion paper on the move towards more "gentle bridge" and the ramifications for our game. **Action:** All to send RM pertinent comment and suggestions for this discussion paper.

The discussion included the growing gulf between top level players and social players and how changes to feeder streams have exacerbated this effect. The financial impact on the EBU and shorter tournaments of 20 boards were raised.

Bev P explained the different charging codes for P2P and it was obvious that some of these were previously poorly understood. There was concern for the 10% rule for novice sessions and a discussion re NGS impacts. A suggestion was made to introduce Buddy Numbers at the Club level to support assisted practice play. **Action:** Working Group to consider Buddy Numbers to overcome 1 member maximum exemption per session.

7. EBU Strategic Five Year Plan

The Five Year Plan has been published and copies of the plan were circulated at the meeting. RM thanked the Counties that made suggestions to the draft and confirmed these were considered prior to final publication. Also, RM noted that this is a working document that will be reviewed at least annually.

8. General Data Protection Regulations

The 25 May deadline has passed. Counties have raised the awareness of GDPR within their Bridge Clubs.

Prev Action – EBU Contracts The EBU sent out their to Club contracts in the week prior to deadline. EBU to County contracts are not required. **Minute Closed**

Bridgemates and Pianola are similarly developing GDPR compliant contracts for clubs and Counties. **Prev Action:** Counties to progress as not yet received. **Action C/F**

Privacy Statement: **Prev Action:** Counties have progressed. Most clubs have inserted the model Privacy Statement to their website. **Minute Closed**

Data Management by Counties: The EBU are to consider their data service offer to Counties as their next big project after GDPR. **Action:** Counties to progress with GR.

Changes to Member Data Query re the extent of opt out. Whilst a member may not want to share personal contact information with other members, does this preclude this information being made available at the County level for one to one communication.

Action DG to write to GR.

9. EBED Future Development

Covered in minutes above.

10. Northern Improvers Pairs Final

The final ran on 13 May with 24 pairs and will be continued in the future events calendar.

11. EBU Summer Festival

Northern Clubs signed up for sessions to date are:

Monday 6 Aug – Play with the Experts – Hudds, Leeds, Sheffield

Tuesday 7 Aug – Championship Pairs – Hudds, Leeds

Wed 15 Aug – Mixed Pivot Teams – Hudds

Thur 16 Aug – Mixed Pairs – Hudds, Sheffield

It is not too late for other Clubs in Northern Counties to sign up to a session(s) **Action:** All.

12. AOB

Jeff M said that the EBU are trying to raise the support for bridge by the Minister For Loneliness, Tracy Crouch. He further suggested that clubs should write with two testimonials and to outline the “wellness” benefits of bridge and bridge clubs.

Action Jeff M to circulate a letter template to working group members for them to encourage their own clubs to action.

13. Next Meeting: 11am Thursday 6 September at Chez millet, Leeds

End