



**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF
THE ENGLISH BRIDGE UNION, HELD AT THE SWAN HOTEL, BEDFORD
ON WEDNESDAY 31 OCTOBER 2001 AT 12.30 PM**

Present:	D R Harris	Chairman
	D A Robson	Vice-Chairman
	J D Neville	Hon. Treasurer
	T J Bradley	
	JM Carter	
	J G Faulkner	
	Ms A M C Hamilton	
	D G Martin	
	P G Mason	
	M G Oliver	
	Terry Collier	General Manager
	Karen Etchells	Administration Manager

The Chairman welcomed the Board to the first meeting of the year, in particular John Carter, who had rejoined the Board, replacing Mike Ingham. The Chairman thanked Mike Ingham for his contribution to the Board during the past year.

The Chairman said that both the EBU's administration and Board had a testing year ahead of them, which included two new championships as well as the finalisation of numerous ongoing projects. In addition, a number of new services for members were being planned and all this would undoubtedly stretch resources at Aylesbury. However, he was confident that the administration, with the active support and encouragement of the Board, would rise to the challenge and achieve another successful year.

1 Apologies

There were no apologies.

2 Minutes of the Meeting of 5 September 2001

2.1. Accuracy

The Minutes were approved as an accurate record of the meeting, except for the amendments below.

2.1.1 Constitutional changes (item 11)

D Martin raised this matter. For clarification the last sentence of the third paragraph should be replaced with "Two elected members of the Committee plus the ex-officio members will be charged with the responsibility of investigation whether a case was answerable and a panel of at least three from the remaining five elected members would conduct any final disciplinary hearing".

3 Matters Arising

3.1 European Junior Championships 2002

The Chairman reported that the contract had been signed for the event to be held at the English Riviera International Conference Centre in Torquay, in July.

T Bradley commented that the contract had been finalised very soon after receipt of a long and complex specification. The Chairman confirmed that the points of concern identified in discussion with G Faulkner regarding the agreement and specification had been raised with P Gerontopoulos. An exchange of letters between P Gerontopoulos and the EBU would deal with other matters.

In particular, transport to and from airports was a major issue and P Gerontopoulos had confirmed that competitors and other attendees would get to Torquay without direct assistance from the EBU.

P Gerontopoulos had agreed to provide information, two months prior to the event, regarding accommodation for a maximum of 10 EBL officials and Executive members.

It was acknowledged that because of the date change to the 7th July, the Junior Championships would now coincide in part with the Commonwealth Games in Manchester. The Board also **noted** that certain domestic events remained in the calendar in July 2002, which would have implications on resources.

T Bradley commented that in organising the Championships co-operation would be welcomed from Devon CBA and its members in particular those living near Torquay.

T Bradley advised the Board that the cost of hiring the Riviera Centre had risen to £20,000. Approximately £10,000 would also need to be allocated to accommodate the EBL tournament organisers and others. £30,000 was therefore already spoken for before starting on the EBU part of the competition. Provisional costs incorporated in the five-year plan would be exceeded.

T Bradley reminded the Board that the 1991 Educational Trust traditionally had an option to run a February Simultaneous Pairs. The Trust was willing to assist the Championship by releasing the 2002 date. P Mason said it could be run over three weekdays, 26-28 February. It was **agreed** that the event should go forward and be publicised in the December issue of *English Bridge*. John Pain and Sue Maxwell should be asked to consider how *Bridge for All* members might take part.

3.2 Commonwealth Games 2002

The Vice-Chairman reported that Manchester Bridge Club had revised their accommodation offer in the light of the incorrect June Board minute, this being for up to 16 teams of 4 players. A debate took place on how to proceed with Manchester Bridge Club going back on their original agreement at Council to fund the accommodation for the overseas NBO teams. The Treasurer expressed concern at the renegeing of this agreement. He strongly stated his view that the detailed financial aspects of the arrangements of both Manchester Bridge Club and the EBU must be fully documented so that the EBU was fully apprised at all times of what was happening. It was **noted** that Manchester Bridge Club still had 50 rooms reserved.

The Treasurer felt that if the level of risk was confinable then the event should go ahead as previously agreed; performance to date was not a satisfactory way to handle

business. Ms Hamilton supported this view. The Board expressed its concerns regarding the finances and confirmed that these must be strictly monitored.

G Faulkner noted that an offer of sponsorship from Maple Finance (Canada) had been accepted on the basis that it was to be shared between the EBU and Manchester Bridge Club. The Vice-Chairman clarified that the Board had previously had the option not to accept this offer but had decided to go ahead. The Board still had the opportunity to limit exposure, by keeping overseas teams to 16. However, there was a figure of £4,000 in the budget for 4 extra teams and this figure was within the £40,000 that the Council had mandated for the event.

G Faulkner pointed out that the Organising Committee minutes of 11 October contained contradictory budget details about the closing banquet:

- Budget (item 2), *Contribution towards banquet - £5K (item 2)*. Board had approved a budget of £25 per head.
- Sponsorship (item 3), *Commonwealth Games Festival (item 3.2)*. £10K suggested.

The Vice-Chairman explained that the budget was neutral for the closing banquet with income and expenditure the same, but the sponsorship was only a suggestion of what might be asked.

The Chairman advised that the original sponsors were not as firm as previously indicated. The EBU had been led to believe that at least one of the two possible patron teams (£15,000) was certain. However it transpired that the indication of willingness to provide finance was the result of a casual conversation, not a commitment to sponsor and funds were unlikely to be forthcoming.

The Vice-Chairman stated that he understood that a sponsor was available for the closing banquet. It was **agreed** that a letter from a sponsor of substance, confirming that the cost of the banquet would be met, was sufficient.

The General Manager reported that the budget (sponsorship, item 4.2) included a £1,000 contribution towards the opening reception from a sponsor who was thought to be providing playing cards. It transpired that another sponsor was now supplying the cards for the event, and that any contribution from the original sponsor was now unlikely. This change had not been approved by the Organising Committee and it was **agreed** that any such decisions must be primarily agreed by the Commonwealth Games Organising Committee.

T Bradley was concerned that a bank account had been opened in the EBU's name with one of the signatories not being an EBU director and that the Board had not approved this. He accepted that it was correct to have a separate bank account for accurate control of the finances and he was merely seeking to regulate the matter. The Treasurer confirmed that the account had been opened on the basis that the Vice-Chairman would sign every cheque. It was **agreed** to take out the reference to the EBU in the account name.

Discussion took place regarding the mechanism for accepting teams. It was confirmed that all teams should be members of the Commonwealth and NBOs in the main. The General Manager **agreed** to take advice from the Commonwealth Games Federation. It was **noted** that the invitations must be clear as to what was meant by a representative team. Rules of eligibility needed to be included. The General Manager **agreed** to undertake this with Max Bavin.

Ms Hamilton proposed that an announcement should be made in the December issue of *English Bridge* and it was **agreed** that this should go ahead if the letters of invitation had been issued.

It was proposed that 18 teams should be invited to participate in a consolation event towards the end of the Championships, with an entry fee of £500 per team. Teams eliminated during the competition would be able to enter free of charge. The Board went on to consider who else might be interested in entering. It was thought that counties would probably not be prepared to fund teams, but that individuals might well enter their own teams at their own cost. It was **agreed** that the consolation event should be publicised in *English Bridge*, and counties informed via their Newsletter.

G Faulkner raised a point regarding liaison with the Commonwealth Games Federation and the setting up of a Commonwealth Bridge Championship. The Chairman explained that the President of the WBF was interested in pursuing this and thought that it may further the cause for Olympic recognition. G Faulkner pointed out that if a formal structure was adopted, the financial cost of servicing this would be enormous. The Chairman **agreed** and gave his assurance that if a Commonwealth Bridge Association was formed it would have one purpose only, that being to encourage future Commonwealth Games host country NBOs to organise similar events to that proposed for Manchester.

3.3 *Data Protection Act*

To be reported at the next meeting.

3.4 *Full membership – Suffolk CBA*

G Faulkner asked if any counties had responded to the questionnaire circulated at the AGM. The General Manager reported that he had received 12 responses so far; some of the information provided was very useful. The closing date for responses was 16 November 2001.

4 **Financial Matters**

4.1 *Treasurer's report*

The Treasurer reported that a great deal of work had been done: there was a new accounts regime in Aylesbury and under the General Manager's guidance staff were quickly learning the systems in use. The systems were somewhat dated being a collection of spreadsheet programmes analysing figures extracted from Sage Accounting. There was a lot more work to do over the next few weeks and the Accounts Manager would be looking to streamline matters. The ex-General Manager had been active in producing the first and second quarters' figures and there had been a comparison of notes with the Accounts Manager.

The figures in the accounts were very close to budget. The Treasurer was satisfied that things were basically on track at this time.

D Martin asked for details of the write off figure of £4,000 in bad debts and the General Manager **agreed** to provide these.

4.2 *Budget process and timetable*

The Treasurer introduced the budget timetable and indicated that he expected this timetable to be met.

4.3 *Personal Expenses, Allowances, Fees and Charges Review*

The Treasurer did not think that many of these needed changing at this time. However, more time was needed to look into this further. It was **agreed** that the Treasurer and General Manager should consider the paper and report back with some suggestions at the next meeting. G Faulkner asked that fees for relevant rail cards be including in the future. This was agreed.

5 **General Manager's Report**

5.1 *Staff Re-structuring*

The General Manager provided an overview of his proposals. The aim was to increase marketing awareness and to pay attention to development of services. This was **approved**.

5.2 *Training – Marketing*

G Faulkner proposed and J Carter seconded **approval** to proceed with the Marketing Workshop at a cost of £400. This was agreed.

5.3 *Online Bridge Club*

Discussion took place on the future of the Club and the best way to manage the service. Given that the agreement with IOBC expires in February, the General Manager would need to put a paper together to give the Board time to consider the draft contract.

It was **agreed** that D Martin, T Bradley and the General Manager would meet to investigate the best way forward and report back to the Board before finalising negotiations.

5.4 *IT Project Manager*

It was acknowledged that if the EBU was going to complete Project Miami skilled management would be required. After a lengthy debate, it was **agreed** that the General Manager would appoint S Lockyer on a freelance basis. His initial task would be to spend a few days appraising progress to date and to present a report concerning the future expectations and timescales. This work was to be undertaken without delay and within a budget of £1,000.

5.5 *Club Promotional Pack*

It was **agreed** to produce a promotional pack at minimal cost and possibly to look at producing some of the documents as individual publications.

5.6 *Facilities Management*

It was **agreed** to proceed with additional building maintenance works identified in General Manager's report. A property valuation on a replacement and market value basis would be discussed further with the Treasurer following the Health and Safety Inspection due to take place during week commencing 5 November 2001.

6 Organisation Review Group – EBU Strategy

J Carter commented that the EBU should be putting together the framework for the sort of document required. ORG had intended in the first instance to put some ideas forward, it was not seeking to determine the content, which was the responsibility of the Board.

7 Board responsibilities

The Chairman circulated a revised list of responsibilities and this was **accepted** as follows:

David R Harris	Chairman Aylesbury EBL/WBF matters Sponsorship
Denis Robson	Vice-Chairman Computer Working Party (Chairman)-- Steering Group for Commonwealth Games Championship (Chairman)
John Neville	Treasurer Strategic Financial Plan Computer Working Party
Tom Bradley	Bridge for All and Education Sub Committee (Chairman) Steering Group for European Junior Championships (Chairman) Remunerations Committee On-Line Bridge Club Computer Working Party
John Carter	Organisation Review Group Remunerations Committee Computer Working Party
Gerard Faulkner	Licensing BGB matters County Constitutions Steering Group for European Junior Championships
Alaine Hamilton	Editorial Board (Chairman) Publications Press and Public Relations
Philip Mason	Tournament Committee (Chairman)
David Martin	On-Line Bridge Club (Chairman) Laws & Ethics Committee Remunerations Committee
Malcolm Oliver	Bridge Shop Membership Administration County and Club Liaison Master Points

8 AGM's of the Company and Council

It was **noted** that notice to forego the July meeting needed to be given to delegates prior to the next Council meeting.

9 Dates and venues for future meetings

These were agreed as follows:

Thursday	24 January 2002	40 Bernard Street, London
Wednesday	20 March 2002	Swan Hotel, Bedford
Wednesday	8 May 2002	Aylesbury
Wednesday	26 June 2002	Swan Hotel, Bedford
Thursday	5 September 2002	Eye, Suffolk
Thursday	31 October 2002	Swan Hotel, Bedford

10 Committee reports

10.1 *Computer Working Party – 4 September 2001 and 22 October 2001*

The General Manager reported that efforts to contact Ian McKennon regarding the Windows version of the scoring programme had been unsuccessful to date.

10.2 *Editorial Board – 2 October 2001*

It was reported that an 8-page advertisement from John Magee would appear in the December issue of *English Bridge*. It was **agreed** that copy must be provided in sufficient time to ensure that the content was acceptable and that the pages are clearly identified as being advertising.

10.3 *Education Sub-Committee – 11 September 2001 and 16 October 2001*

A copy of a draft letter written by Su Burn, Chairman of the Youth Working Party, to members of the EBU Council was circulated. T Bradley provided the Board with an overview. The remit of the Youth Working Party was to recommend to the Selection Committee a team for the Junior Camrose. The YWP had made their recommendation based on development of the squad, the Junior European competition, competing in trials, squad activities and building the team. The Selection Committee varied the YWP recommendation. Su Burn was dismayed at this action and wished to express her concerns to Council, where it had been agreed as a matter of principle that the Selection Committee should select teams to win.

There were two major issues which she wanted to be addressed:

- (a) that selection should be based on youth development; and
- (b) that the selection of youth teams should be made by the YWP, not the Selection Committee.

It was **agreed** that the letter should go forward to Council, and T Bradley agreed to give Su Burn some advice on re-drafting it.

11 EBL and WBF matters

The Chairman reported that an invitation was on its way to invite the England Ladies European Championship team to take part in the bridge demonstration match at the 2002 Winter Olympics in Salt Lake City, playing as a Great Britain team.

12 Constitution Changes

G Faulkner and Nick Doe have offered to work together on some of the changes that had been recommended in order to assist the Hon. Solicitor in his preparation of the updated Bye-Laws.

13 Any other business

None.

The meeting closed at 7.30pm

The next meeting will be on Thursday 24 January 2002 at 12.30pm
at 40 Bernard Street, London

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'SRU', written over a horizontal line.

24/1/02.