



**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF
THE ENGLISH BRIDGE UNION, HELD AT 40 BERNARD STREET, LONDON
ON WEDNESDAY 24th JANUARY 2002**

Present:	D R Harris	Chairman
	D A Robson	Vice-Chairman
	J D Neville	Hon. Treasurer
	T J Bradley	
	J M 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
	Brian Smith	Accounts Manager (for items 1-3)

1 Apologies

There were no apologies.

2 Minutes of the Meeting of 31st October 2001

2.1 Accuracy

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

2.1.1 European Junior Championships 2002 (Item 3.2)

Penultimate paragraph on page 3, delete the first sentence and replace with "T Bradley was concerned that a bank account had been opened in the EBU's name without prior approval by the Board."

The Chairman introduced Brian Smith, the Accounts Manager, who had been invited to the meeting to assist with the Budget item under Financial Matters.

3 Financial Matters

3.1 Treasurer's Report

The Treasurer reported that figures show a satisfactory position at the end of the calendar year. There were some departures from budget which were a matter of timing only and should be resolved by the year end.

3.2 **Budget 2002/2003**

The Treasurer presented his report and commented that the Budget process had been completed during the last few weeks of 2001. Revised figures for the remainder of the year were based on the accounts at the end of October.

Under paragraph 2.1 (e), further organisational expenditure relating to the European Junior Championships and the Commonwealth Games Bridge Championships, between now and the end of March, may be incorporated into the current year's accounts.

The Treasurer reported that the 3 areas of financial strain next year would be the Junior European Championships, the Commonwealth Games Bridge Championships and the European Championships (which had been brought forward a year). An initial estimate of £110,000 was made and it was clear that this would create a substantial deficit.

The Treasurer undertook to circulate the draft Five Year Plan well before the next Board meeting. It was acknowledged that the time-scale was short and that following the March Board meeting the budget figures would need to be drafted quickly to be presented at the April Council meeting.

Under paragraph 3.2, it was noted that £43K for the Junior European Championships was not enough and that a significant further sum would need to be found. It was accepted that generally the costs were driven by EBL requirements. However European events would not happen every year and it was hoped that EBU membership would support such events.

Ms Hamilton reminded the Board of the Queen's Golden Jubilee in 2002 and the Treasurer confirmed that there was no budget allocation for this. It was noted that the Commonwealth Games Championships had taken this on board and it was intended that commemorative cards would be provided as gifts at the event and that the trophy would refer to the Golden Jubilee. Ms Hamilton then said that *English Bridge* would also be reporting Jubilee-associated activities.

The Treasurer commented that next year would be very busy and some of the other planned activities may suffer, which could in turn mean less was spent under certain headings. However, this was speculation and the budget figures provided were realistic.

Debate took place regarding the EBU hosting European events in future. England was regarded as one of the main European federations and as such expected to play its part in hosting events. It was acknowledged that other countries were government sponsored, whereas the EBU catered for such events internally.

Referring to Schedule 7 – Competitions, J Carter commented that some events seemed only marginally profitable. The Treasurer pointed out that consideration needed to be taken that management charges were not included in these figures and whilst the accounts would show a surplus, the true position was that competitions ran at a small loss.

It was acknowledged that management charges needed re-distributing to take account of changed activities and the Treasurer and Accounts Manager would be reviewing this for the next financial year.

G Faulkner reported that the existing agreement with BGB in respect of income from Sim Pairs was coming to its conclusion. The Board would need to formulate its view as to any future arrangements.

T Bradley commented that the introduction of more competitions could help. The programme was very much one that had stayed still and was slow on introducing new competitions and new standards of play (eg *Bridge for All* level). Given imagination there was plenty of scope for the EBU to do more.

The Chairman observed that the budget did not reflect any significant growth and at best was a reflection of what we had been doing in the past, with the exception of the 3 championships. Competitions was a very important matter and would be discussed by the Board in future. However, no changes to the budget figures would be made at this stage.

3.3 Personal Expenses, Allowances, Fees and Charges Review

A schedule of the proposed changes to EBUTA membership subscriptions and Tournament Director fees and training was **approved** by the Board and is attached hereto.

4 Minutes of the Meeting of 31st October 2001

4.1 Matters Arising

General Manager's Report – Facilities Management (item 5.6)

G Faulkner asked for a progress report on the property insurance valuation. The General Manager reported that this would be done during the insurance review process due in March.

4.1.1 *European Junior Championships 2002*

T Bradley reported that the meeting with Torquay's local authority was disappointing and that requests for sponsorship and assistance from the authorities was not forthcoming. However, meetings with local bridge representatives and the venue were very encouraging and showed clear signs of a very successful event.

The financial situation was that a very good budget document had been prepared by Aylesbury staff, and the Organising Committee would be looking at this at its meeting next week.

Sponsorship would continue to be sought and it was clarified that benefits to sponsors would be half a page in the official programme, display facilities at the Torquay Centre and attendance at the closing banquet.

The minutes were **accepted** by the Board.

4.1.2 *Commonwealth Games Bridge Championships 2002*

D Robson reported that 15 overseas teams and the home teams have so far accepted invitations. The Tournament Manager had drafted a list of accommodation requirements and the 80 rooms provisionally booked appeared to be about right. Final details would be produced by the end of January. It was noted that no deposit was required on the rooms booked for staff.

D Robson had met with the sponsor who would be providing finance for the opening and closing ceremonies. The sponsor was expecting to participate in the Bridge event and to have a sponsored team. The value of this contribution was up to £13,000. P Hackett would be meeting the sponsor with final figures at the end of January.

G Faulkner asked for clarification regarding the provision of wine by Hedley Wright and whether corkage would be charged by the restaurant. The General Manager advised that corkage would not be charged and Mr Faulkner asked for this to be confirmed in writing

The budget figures for the competition were not yet finalised, but would be circulated in the near future.

G Faulkner suggested that prospective sponsors should not be named in the minutes, but merely referred to as sponsors.

Ms Hamilton commented that details of the consolation event needed to be circulated widely very soon to encourage participation in the event.

The minutes were **accepted** by the Board.

4.1.3 *Data Protection Act*

The General Manager provided an overview of the requirements of the Act. The following had been produced in accordance with these requirements:

- Staff had all signed a letter of consent to the processing of personal data
- Counties were part of the EBU as regards the exchange of information. An agreement was required between the EBU and county detailing how this information was held and who had access to it
- A letter to counties introducing the requirements of the Data Protection Act and request to enter into an agreement
- Data Protection Policy

D Martin commented that counties may hold member information in their own right which had nothing to do with the EBU.

G Faulkner offered to look at the Act, the proposed Agreement and accompanying notes, letters and the Policy Statement. This matter would be discussed again at the March Board meeting.

4.1.4 *International On Line Bridge Club*

The General Manager provided background information to the document tabled, and details regarding the benefits of the proposals for the EBU membership.

D Martin reported fully on what had been difficult but satisfactory negotiations and expanded more in regard to how a new amalgamated club would operate and develop in the future.

The Board **agreed** that a commercial lawyer should be appointed to write the agreement. G Faulkner suggested that the cost of preparing this partnership document should be met jointly by both partners and the General Manager **agreed** to discuss this with Nick Justice. It was also **agreed** that the technical side of the agreement would be vetted by D Martin with G Faulkner providing an overview.

5 General Manager's Report

The General Manager provided an overview of his report.

5.1 Staff Re-structuring

The restructuring had gone according to plan, both in terms of office layout and new areas of responsibility. As part of this process, a Marketing Workshop was held for all managers on 6th December, the results of which would take some time to be fully appreciated, but early signs were encouraging.

5.2 IT Projects

MIAMI – the invoicing process was now at testing stage and would be piloted over the next 2 weeks. Further phases included replacing of the BOS system, and adapting Education and *Bridge for All* systems. In April, staff training would take place and it was proposed that the system would then go live.

Website – Monitoring of downtime was taking place with a view to changing network cards, as this had been identified as the problem area. A new menu bar was now in place which should deal with the drop down menu problems experienced with some PCs. The functionality for putting results on the website remotely was also in place. The next major stage of the project was to implement on line payments, which would be done once the system was stable.

Club Administration System – Chris Barrable was working on the pilot and writing the documentation. The General Manager reported that plans were now being prepared to test this program with a view to distribution to clubs in late summer/early autumn.

Scoring System – It was believed that Chris Barrable could assist with this in the future. There was nothing to report further on progress of the McKinnon Windows conversion, other than this would be marketed generally at some stage.

It was acknowledged that projects had not been well managed in the past and the Computer Working Party were asked to consider how matters might be better handled in the future.

5.3 Press Service

The contract with the Press Officer had been terminated with effect from 31 January 2002. The General Manager suggested that in future we might make use of Ron Boddy who places press stories with the national press. He had already had some success with an article produced in the *Sunday Herald* by Steven Bunce, relating to the Camrose, and this journalist would also be at Salt Lake City.

G Faulkner wished it to be noted that he was positively against this type of reporting and was consequently against proceeding with this suggestion. The remainder of the Board **agreed** to the appointment of Ron Boddy on a project basis. The General Manager would report on the costs of this service and how this would operate in future.

5.4 Bridge for All

It had been suggested that *Bridge for All* might be presented as a discussion topic at the next Council meeting. However, membership was already a substantial discussion

topic on the agenda. It was **agreed** that the General Manager and John Pain should prepare a paper with future plans for *Bridge for All*. This will be presented at the May Board meeting.

6 Committee Reports

6.1 Computer Working Party – 22 October 2001

The minutes of the meeting of 22 October 2001 were accepted **accepted** by the Board and are attached hereto.

6.2 Editorial Board – 4 December 2001

The minutes of the meeting of 4 December 2001 were accepted **accepted** by the Board and are attached hereto.

6.3 Education Sub-Committee – 16 October 2001

The minutes of the meeting of 16 October were accepted **accepted** by the Board and are attached hereto.

Under item 2.2, Health and safety of young people, it was noted that the action point had not been dealt with, and the General Manager had not yet been in contact with G Faulkner as requested.

7 EBL & WBF Matters

The Chairman reported that he would be going to Salt Lake City with 4 of the original 6 Ladies European Champions Team members. It was clarified that accommodation and entry fees were being met by the WBF and that BGB was funding the travel costs of the players.

8 Bridge Great Britain – 4 October 2001

The minutes of the meeting of 4 October 2001 were circulated previously for information and are attached hereto.

G Faulkner reported that the new Chairman was Mrs E McGowan.

The accounts up to the end of the year for the Sim Pairs represented a satisfactory situation £2-3K over budget.

There were major proposals on the table regarding the Gold Cup, possibly looking at moving the finals from Peebles to the first weekend in Brighton. Such a calendar change could not sensibly start before 2004 to give people sufficient advance knowledge. The Tournament Committee was asked to look at this proposal possibly to include the swapping of the two weekends at Brighton – the teams to move to the first weekend. This would have the dual effect of avoiding future clashes with WBF teams events and provide a very meaningful competition into which losing teams in the Gold Cup could fall.

9 Constitution Changes

The Chairman reported that the Hon Solicitor would be producing a draft within the next few weeks and we should be in a position to put proposed changes to the Bye

Laws before Council at the next meeting. G Faulkner and N Doe were thanked for their good work in preparing the groundwork documentation

10 Any other business

10.1 Board meeting Thursday 5 September – it was agreed that the date should be changed to Wednesday 4 September.

10.2 IT services – The question of the future management of IT projects and the existing service was discussed and it was agreed that the services currently being provided by S Lockyer would be monitored prior to a report being submitted which may recommend greater use of such external services in the future.

10.3 Organisational Review Group – It was agreed that the ORG should be an item on the agenda for the next meeting.

10.4 Council and committee meeting minutes and agenda papers – G Faulkner reminded the Board of the request at Council for those minutes to be circulated within three weeks. The General Manager gave assurance that improvements would be made.

The next meeting will be on Wednesday 20th March 2002 at 12.30pm
at The Swan Hotel, Bedford



20th March 2002