

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF
THE ENGLISH BRIDGE UNION, HELD AT THE SWAN HOTEL, BEDFORD
ON WEDNESDAY 26th JUNE 2002**

Present:	D R Harris (latter part only)	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 (first part only)	Accounts Manager
	Tony Parks (first part only)	Auditor

G Faulkner advised the meeting that the Chairman had been delayed and that as the Vice-Chairman had given apologies, the Board was required to elect a Chairman from those present to chair the meeting until the arrival of the Chairman. G Faulkner proposed that John Neville chair the meeting and this was seconded by Ms Hamilton and agreed unanimously.

The Treasurer welcomed Tony Parks and Brian Smith, who were in attendance to assist with Item 3 on the agenda. He proposed and it was agreed that the meeting should start with Item 3.

3 FINANCIAL MATTERS

3.1 Treasurer's Report

The Treasurer had nothing to add to his report other than that the year had been a successful one, significantly ahead of budget and the revised forecast.

3.2 Statutory Accounts for the Year Ended 31 March 2002

A Parks provided an overview of the format and layout of the statutory accounts. It was the opinion of A Parks that the financial statements provided a true and fair view of the company's affairs and that its surplus for the year ended had been properly recorded in accordance with the Companies Act 1985.

Page 6 – Balance Sheet, Fixed Assets: Tangible assets. Attention was drawn to note 6 which provided a breakdown of the figure of £541,216. It was noted that there was a figure of £14,000 in fixtures and equipment relating to the website which had not yet been invoiced but was expected. The value of the development work carried out to date on the website was estimated at £20,000. The total expected spend of £10,000 would be accounted for in next year's figures.

Page 6 – Balance Sheet, Creditors. Attention was drawn to note 10, Social Security and other taxes. There was a difference of some £20,000 between 31 March 2001 and 2002. This was due to the payment of PAYE prior to the year-end in 2001.

G Faulkner asked what the arrangements were regarding cash at the bank to maximise interest thereon. He also suggested that other sorts of investment such as Gilts should be investigated. The General Manager reported that he had a meeting with the bank manager next week and would discuss this with him.

A Parks advised that pages 11 - 14 did not form part of the statutory requirements, but were provided for information only. The following points were raised:

G Faulkner queried the reduction in licence fees and the increase in advertising income, where the two are directly linked. The Treasurer advised that there had been an assumption made in 2001 regarding outstanding table money from overseas holidays which proved to be over-optimistic. No assumptions have been made in the 2002 accounts. The General Manager advised that the administration of receipts in respect of licenses issued would be reviewed during 2002.

P Mason queried the reduction in income from Master Points. A discussion took place on the proposals to move from a certificate charge to a table charge which may well reduce the problems relating to collection of Master Point income. It was acknowledged that any changes to Master Point charges should coincide with the introduction of the Club System.

T Bradley queried the reduction in Bridge Shop profit margins. B Smith reported that most Bridge Shop prices had remained static for 2 years and any increases in the cost of sales had therefore not been passed to the customer. He had analysed the main differences in regard to Shop stock items and had identified that the profit margin for metal bridge tables had reduced from 48% to 23% due to increases in freight, cost of manufacture and variances in exchange rates. It was acknowledged that the Bridge Shop pricing policy required review and that competitors should be monitored regularly. It was **agreed** that the General Manager and Board Member responsible for the Bridge Shop (M Oliver) would meet in September to discuss this further.

Publications expenditure was significantly down on the previous year due to changes in accounting policies.

EBL and WBF expenditure had increased in accordance with scheduled changes to the subscription rates to those bodies.

D Martin queried the membership figures on page 12 for London and B Smith was asked to check these and amend as required.

A Parks closed by thanking B Smith for the support he had provided during the audit. He added that an audit letter had not been provided to the Board due to the impending introduction of project MIAMI and changes that would take place at Aylesbury. The implementation of MIAMI had taken longer than expected but was now being introduced. Computerised Master Point receipts have always been identified as a concern during the audit. A Parks suggested that now was the time to consider looking at the way things were processed at Aylesbury. An overall review of the controls and systems in operation was recommended and he would write to the Board with his comments and suggestions shortly.

The Treasurer thanked A Parks and B Smith for attending the meeting. The Treasurer proposed, seconded by D Martin, that the Board accept the Accounts subject to the minor amendments requested above and that these be presented to shareholders for adoption.

Tony Parks and Brian Smith left the meeting.

1 Apologies

Apologies were received from DA Robson.

2 Minutes of the Meeting of 24th January 2002

2.1 Accuracy

The Minutes were **approved** as an accurate record of the meeting.

2.2 Matters Arising

2.2.1 Computer Working Party - 25 April 2002 (item 7.1) - The General Manager reported that the paper on Master Points had not been prepared but would be available at the next meeting.

2.2.2 European Junior Championships 2002

T Bradley reported that he had not attended the meeting of the Organising Committee on the 29 May, however, he had since met with Panos Gerantopoulos, Dimitri Ballas and Max Bavin. The meeting was detailed and the spirit and tempo of the meeting was superb. T Bradley wished it to be noted that Max Bavin was highly regarded by the European representatives and also that credit should go to Sandra Claridge for the enormous amount of work she has done in organising the administration of the event.

G Faulkner asked whether arrangements were underway regarding a press launch. The General Manager confirmed that he and Brian Cook were dealing with this and local and national press had already expressed interest.

T Bradley asked for clarification regarding the opening of a bank account. The General Manager confirmed that he had arranged a meeting, to take place next week, with Barclays to discuss the difficulties we were having in opening this account.

D Martin suggested that the EBU should open an additional number two account which would be available for use at such events in the future. This would also be discussed with Barclays at next week's meeting.

2.2.3 Commonwealth Nations Bridge Championships 2002

In the absence of the Vice-Chairman, the General Manager reported that changes were still taking place regarding team entries but that up to 30 teams would be participating. The Press Launch on 17 June attended by the Minister for Sport had gone well resulting in TV, radio and newspaper coverage. Richard Caborn stated that he has instructed his officials to look at the 1937 Act to see if Mind Sports could be included.

P Mason asked whether there was a full complement of teams for the consolation event and the General Manager advised that there were still places available.

The Treasurer wished it to be noted that he was concerned that he had very little firm information of what was happening regarding the financial element of the Championships and was relying on the Vice-Chairman's management of this. He did point out that expenditure should be retained within the revised budget.

The Treasurer wished it to be formally minuted that in his view the budget for the final banquet was excessive and on an inappropriate scale.

The General Manager referred the Board to Item 10.9 of the minutes of the last Organising Committee meeting and asked for Board approval that the Chairman or Vice-Chairman be proposed to chair the meeting to facilitate discussion about the future of a Commonwealth Nations Bridge event. A lengthy discussion took place regarding the appropriateness of an EBU representative chairing the meeting, where it might be seen that a financial commitment by the EBU would be forthcoming. The Board **agreed** to the Chairman or Vice-Chairman chairing this meeting in a facilitator role, and that he should have a firm brief from the Board that no financial commitment would be given from the EBU. However the Selection Committee might consider putting a team forward at such an event.

G Faulkner brought the Board's attention to minute 10.6 and commented that it was inappropriate to make this commitment, that this should not receive Board approval and that the minutes should be amended. However, a tribute of thanks in the form of a flower bouquet to be presented to both patron teams would be appropriate. The General Manager **agreed** to take the matter back to the Organising Committee.

2.2.4 *Disability Discrimination Act (item 3)*

G Faulkner queried whether the General Manager had written to clubs regarding their responsibilities under the Act. The General Manager confirmed that he had presented this matter to the County Secretaries meeting last week and that the note of the discussion and a letter to all clubs would be sent out in the near future.

2.2.5 *Bye Laws Review (item 11)*

There was nothing to report on progress regarding the review of the Bye Laws. Bearing this in mind, the General Manager asked for and **approval** was given to proceed with Board and Officer elections assuming that the review would not be completed in time for the AGM in October. The Board wished to formally minute its concern at the lack of progress in this matter.

2.2.6 *Any Other Business (item 12)*

Ms Hamilton reported that David Burn, in his capacity as Chairman of the Laws and Ethics Committee and member of the Editorial Board, had agreed to proof read L & E sensitive articles prior to publication in *English Bridge*.

4 **County Secretaries Meeting - 16 June 2002 - Feedback**

P Mason commented that the content of the meeting was much better than in previous years. Ms Hamilton and the Treasurer reported that the atmosphere was good, the General Manager's presentations were well received, and that Ron Boddy, the EBU's new press agent, was entertaining and informative.

P Mason expressed concern that only 18 out of 39 counties had attended. Feedback had been received from 7 counties so far. A lengthy discussion took place on the future of these meetings and the introduction of county road-shows, and it was **agreed** that the General Manager should put a paper to the next Board meeting.

5 **Suffolk Initiative**

The General Manager tabled an e-mail he had received from Suffolk CBA saying they were withdrawing the proposed tiered membership system. The General Manager would be contacting Suffolk to offer support in putting together the events they were proposing to encourage a wider membership.

The Chairman joined the meeting.

6 General Manager's Report

6.1 Staffing

The General Manager asked for and received Board **approval** to look at the way forward regarding staffing in commercial, advertising and marketing activities following the departure of Sue Maxwell and Matthew Read. The Chairman and Treasurer would be involved in discussions.

The General Manager advised that he was also looking to outsource advertising and web site management. G Faulkner and Ms Hamilton expressed concern regarding the cost and use of advertising agencies. The Board was in favour of the General Manager pursuing the management of the web site with Anna Gudge, but required a report about the possible future use of an advertising agency, and stated that no arrangement on this should be entered into without specific Board approval.

6.2 Press Agent

The Board noted the General Manager's proposal regarding a sponsorship agreement with Ron Boddy. However, G Faulkner requested that a formal letter of agreement be drafted. This needed to include a clear right on the part of the EBU to reject a sponsor who was thought to be inappropriate. It was **agreed** that the General Manager would draft a letter for approval by G Faulkner and the Chairman.

6.3 Book Endorsements

A lengthy discussion took place on the merits of and way of handling this 'EBU seal of recommendation' proposal. It was agreed that further discussion was required and that the matter be brought back to a future meeting.

7 Committee Reports

7.1 Computer Working Party

The General Manager advised that he had signed off Phase 1 of MIAMI with Phase 2 being delayed until September due to other work commitments.

With regard to CASS, the project was on target with revised discs going out to pilot clubs this week. Further revisions were proposed for August with a roll-out still on target for September.

7.2 Editorial Board - 18 June 2002

Ms Hamilton reported that the proposal to move printing to Warners had been postponed following St Ives Press expressing concern over the loss of EBU business and a wish to re-submit their quotation.

Review of June 2002 issue (item 7) – Ms Hamilton expressed concern that the advertisement relating to Data Protection had not been taken out of the June issue as had been instructed by Ms Hamilton.

Any Other Business (item 9) - Ms Hamilton reported that Mr Bridge wished to extend the contract for the advertorial section in *English Bridge*. Following discussion it was **agreed** that the contract should be extended until the end of the year on the current

terms and that the General Manager would then be free to negotiate a new contract as appropriate.

7.3 Education Sub-Committee

Nothing to report.

8 EBL and WBF Matters

The Chairman reported that the European Championships were taking place in Salsomaggiore at the moment and that the World Championships would begin in Montreal in August. It was also noted that Gianarrigo Rona and Jose Damiani had accepted invitations to attend the Championships at both Torquay and Manchester.

9 Nominations for Vice-Presidents

The Chairman reminded the Board that it had been desirous at the start of the year to put forward G Faulkner as a Vice-President and it was **reaffirmed** that this nomination would be put forward at the AGM in October.

10 Gold Awards

There were no nominations for Gold Awards this year.

11 Any Other Business

11.1 Orange Book

D Martin advised the Board that an update of the *Orange Book* was programmed for publication in 2005. A lot of work was required over the next 2 years and only one volunteer to draft this had been identified so far. The Board **agreed** in principle to this work, with a letter of engagement being drawn up stating the time-scale involved, proposed delivery date, and the fee agreed for this work. Ms Hamilton offered to proof-read the text of the Orange Book prior to publication.

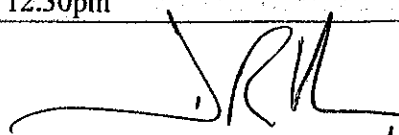
11.2 Rubber Bridge Club Affiliation

The General Manager brought to the Board's attention a complaint he had received from a rubber bridge club wishing to affiliate with the EBU to take advantage of the insurance agreement with Osbornes. However, their relevant County Association had refused affiliation because the club only played rubber bridge. The Board **agreed** that this affiliation should proceed and the General Manager was asked to advise the club concerned.

11.3 Club Health and Safety Issue

The General Manager reported that Bolton Bridge Club had been heavily fined following a fatality at the Club premises. The Board requested the General Manager to advise clubs of their responsibilities in regard to maintaining adequate health and safety measures.

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 4 September 2002 at 1.30pm
at Mulberry House, 24 Magdalen Street, Eye, Suffolk
Lunch will be served from 12.30pm


4/9/02