



**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF
THE ENGLISH BRIDGE UNION
HELD AT THE EBU OFFICES, BROADFIELDS, BICESTER ROAD, AYLESBURY
ON WEDNESDAY 14 MAY 2003**

Present:	DA Robson	Chairman
	PG Mason	Vice Chairman
	RC Amey	
	TJ Bradley	Treasurer
	Ms AMC Hamilton	
	DG Martin	
	JK Morris	
	JD Neville	
	Terry Collier	General Manager
	Michele Attard	Office Manager

The Chairman welcomed Michele Attard as the new Office Manager at the EBU offices in Aylesbury. Michele has responsibilities for the management of the office administration and IT team, in addition to providing PA support to the General Manager, and administrative support at the Board and Council meetings.

1 APOLOGIES

DR Harris and MG Oliver

2 MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF 20 March 2003

2.1 Accuracy

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

2.2 MATTERS ARISING

2.2.1 *Appointment of Legal Services – Report on meeting with Hammonds (item 2.1.1.)*

The Chairman and General Manager reported on their visit to Hammonds and were favourably impressed. Hammonds have proposed costs of £4K-£6K to update our disciplinary procedures and review and advise on Constitutional reform. It was **agreed** that we should ask Hammonds to proceed with these 2 items. Hammonds had stated that they would have a paper ready to present to Council on 4 June in respect of Constitutional reform.

It was **agreed** that Board members seeking legal advice from Hammonds at EBU expense should approach the Chairman in the first instance. EBU staff seeking legal advice from Hammonds would approach the General Manager in the first instance. Final approval would be a Board decision.

2.2.2 *Education Sub-Committee – Youth Working Party (item 2.2.2)*

The meeting between Mr Oliver, the General Manager and Education Manager to discuss the matter of youth selection further had not taken place. The General Manager reported that he would ensure that an information item would be tabled at Council.

2.2.3 *Overseas Congress (item 10.1)*

It was confirmed that the EBU now has full responsibility for the bridge element of the overseas congress, and that OT&T were providing a travel and accommodation package. This allowed players to make their own travel and accommodation arrangements, if they wished, without impacting on the bridge costs. This has resulted in the entrance fee being set at £95.00 which could be seen as a large increase.

2.2.4 *Sponsorship – Seniors Congress (item 10.2)*

OT&T will continue to support this event.

3 FINANCIAL MATTERS

3.1 Treasurer's Report

The Treasurer's report on the key income and expenditure figures for the year ended 31 March 2003 was **accepted**.

3.2 Accounts for Year End 31 March 2003

The Treasurer reported that the year end results were "disappointing". However, there were various contributing factors, including the fact that subscription income was down on budget by £8,000, and there had been the Torquay and Manchester competitions.

The Treasurer reported that the financial audit was underway and would be completed by 23 May. It was **agreed** that the auditors would present the formal accounts at the next Board meeting.

There was detailed discussion regarding the difficulties being experienced by Blue 2 in respect of attracting advertisers for *English Bridge*, and suggestions made as to what could be done to resolve this. It was **agreed** that the General Manager and the Treasurer would investigate ways of dealing with this matter, to include the possibility of reducing the number of issues of *English Bridge* by one in the current Financial Year.

It was noted that the proposed budget for 2003/04 was already under pressure – for instance, we have received a late invitation for our Youth Team to participate in the World Cup; increased accommodation costs due to Monte Carlo being the venue for the Venice Cup; and today's decision to instruct solicitors.

It was agreed that we should do more to attract sponsorship and whilst it was noted that the General Manager was awaiting confirmation of sponsorship in connection with the Overseas Congress, more action was needed. It was **agreed** that the General Manager should explore ways of meeting with playing sponsors, perhaps by staging a bridge event or dinner.

3.3 Five Year Plan

It was **agreed** that the Five Year Plan would be revised prior to presentation to Council, to take account of an adjustment to the management charge, and the creation of a Development Department.

Any comments from the Board on the Five Year Plan are to be forwarded to the Chairman.

3.4 Mandate – Amendment

It was **agreed** for the mandate to be revised to include Michele Attard (Office Manager) and John Pain (*Bridge for All* Manager).

3.5 **Inland Revenue – Status of Tournament Directors**

The General Manager reported that the Inland Revenue had written to confirm that they considered our TDs to be employees.

It was **agreed** that the General Manager would respond to the Inland Revenue expressing concern, and explaining further the reasons why the EBU consider TDs as self-employed.

In the meantime, it was **agreed** that all expense charges would remain as at present, until the matter of status was resolved.

4 **GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT**

The General Manager's report was **noted**.

Staffing – It was **agreed** for the General Manager to take legal advice through David Harris on any staffing issues that arise as a result of restructuring.

MiniBridge Presentation – This event would be followed up at the House of Commons.

Charity Events – It was felt that opportunities were being lost because of the unstructured approach. The formation of a small working party was, therefore, **approved** – to include the Chairman, the General Manager, Mr Morris and Kitty Teltscher.

Membership Added Value – It was reported that the proposal received from JLT on financial and legal services to members had not fully addressed the issues raised. It was **agreed** that the General Manager progresses this with JLT and report back to the Board.

It was **agreed** for the General Manager to progress discussions further with ItsWine.

Approval was given to progress discussions with the Ambassador Theatre Group, with a view to launching this at the Brighton Congress.

Data Protection – The disclosure system had been successfully trialed, with full disclosure within the given timeframe.

Computer Administration & Scoring System (CASS) – The latest version of CASS has now been trialed at 40 clubs, with identified problems feedback to Chris Barrable in order to make necessary system “tweaks”. A new version had just been received and was being trialed at Aylesbury before issuing to the trial clubs.

On-line Bridge Club – Following a meeting with a group that are dedicated to finding possible cheats, led by Eric Nolf, an improved strategy for monitoring and dealing with such issues is to be implemented by 1 June 2003.

Mr Martin expressed strong disappointment that he had not been consulted on this matter, although he was in agreement with the strategy in principle. He felt that he must resign his responsibility for On-line Bridge due to the fact that his intended action against Mr Nolf for the public accusation of cheating against other on-line players had been compromised by the intervention of the General Manager. A lengthy discussion followed and Mr Martin was asked to reconsider his position. He also expressed disappointment that Mr Nolf was not being taken to task for public accusation of cheating, and the impression this would have on members. It was noted that Mr Martin's proposed action was not in response to a specific member complaint, and it was **agreed** that no further action would be taken on matters to date, but that future accusations of cheating must be made only to officials in a prescribed manner.

The introduction of the proposed strategy was **agreed**.

Membership Renewals – This year the membership renewals had been sent out with *English Bridge* with a Direct Debit mandate on the back of the renewal notice. This had been well received, and had proven successful, with over 500 new DDs registered, bringing our total up to 9,000 members now on DD.

5 BOARD RESPONSIBILITIES

For the absence of doubt, the Chairman stated that he believed the General Manager acts as our “Managing Director” and is responsible for operational delivery in all areas, unless specifically otherwise directed by the Board. It was **agreed** that any issues between the General Manager and a Director that remain unresolved should be referred to the Board for resolution.

6 CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Amendment to be made to page 2 where it is stated that TDs are “employed”.

The content of the report was noted and it was agreed that this matter should be progressed without delay. A report for information would be passed to Council and reported through *English Bridge*.

It was **agreed** that it would probably be inappropriate for the L&E Committee to handle issues raised under the Code of Practice, and that the use of an appropriate outside body should be considered.

Mr Amey departed at this point.

7 COUNTY SECRETARIES’ MEETING – 18 June 2003

Any agenda items should be forwarded to the General Manager. It was noted that Mrs Curtis would be raising some issues from the Tournament Committee.

It was agreed that the Development Plan would be the last agenda item.

9 COMMITTEE REPORTS

9.1 Editorial Board – 2 April 2003

It was **agreed** that the General Manager should discuss the issues regarding *English Bridge* with Brian Cook, in advance of any changes that may result from his discussions with the Treasurer (item 3.2).

9.2 Education Sub-Committee – 18 May 2003

The meeting was cancelled.

10 BGB MATTERS

Mr Neville confirmed that letters had been sent to SBU and WBU regarding the division of surplus BGB funds. SBU were planning to respond, but fully appreciated that there is little leeway on the proposed split.

11 EBL AND WBF MATTERS

The Chairman reported on his visit to the new Netherlands National Bridge Centre. He reviewed his comments regarding the proposed agenda for the EBL General Assembly.

Following detailed discussion, it was **agreed** that the Chairman should vote against the proposed change to the votes available to each EBL member.

It was confirmed that David Harris was standing for election to the EBL Executive.

12 CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGES

There were no constitutional matters.

13 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

13.1 **Selection Committee** – Mr Neville advised that the suggestion of 4 players in trials as opposed to 6 raised at the Selection Committee would probably be raised at Council. It was confirmed that this was likely, but any such petition had not been received in Aylesbury at the time of this meeting.

13.2 **House of Lords vs House of Commons Bridge Match** – Mr Morris asked whether the EBU should make more of the opportunity afforded it by actively promoting the EBU at this event? It was confirmed that this is a private match, not an EBU event; however, it was **agreed** that Mr Morris would investigate this further.

13.3 **Publishing of results on the website** – Mr Martin expressed concern that results were not being published in a timely manner on the website. The General Manager stated that he was aware of this issue, and a mobile phone was being procured for the Tournaments Team, which would facilitate the up-loading of results in a more timely fashion.

13.4 **Remuneration Committee** – It was **agreed** that there would be no change to the remuneration of the Chairman and Vice Chairman, but Committee Chairmen would be increased from £125 to £128.

13.5 **MindSports Olympiad, Manchester** – Mr Morris reported that this year's MindSports Olympiad was to be held in Manchester and that Alison Nicolson would be part of the education team, presenting on MiniBridge to teachers and students in a 500-seat theatre at the Olympiad.

8 DEVELOPMENT PLAN

It was recognised that a great deal of work had gone into producing the detailed document, and thanks should be passed to Nicole Cook. Unfortunately whilst it was appreciated that a detailed document would be required for the operational team, it was felt that the Plan did not truly reflect all of the ideas raised within the review groups, and would be too long a document for Council. It was **agreed** that an Executive Summary would be produced, which would also highlight some of the practical ideas raised within the workshops.

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 2 July 2003 at 12.30pm
at Kettering Park