



**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF
THE ENGLISH BRIDGE UNION
HELD AT 40 BERNARD STREET, LONDON
ON TUESDAY 4 NOVEMBER 2003**

Present:	Denis A Robson	Chairman
	Philip G Mason	Vice Chairman
	Tom J Bradley	Treasurer
	John Carter	
	Alaine MC Hamilton	
	David R Harris	
	David G Martin	
	Jeff K Morris	
	John D Neville	
	Peter Stocken	
	Terry Collier	General Manager
	Michele Attard	Office Manager

1. APOLOGIES

None

2. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF 17 SEPTEMBER 2003

2.1 Accuracy

Amendments were made to:

3.1, 3.2 and 3.3 – Accounts are **noted**, rather than accepted.

With the above amendments, the Minutes were **approved** as an accurate record of the meeting.

2.2 Matters Arising

2.2.1 Sponsors Event (2.2.1)

The Chairman reported that the sponsors dinner had been well received by all attending. The topics of interest included a National Bridge Centre (NBC), youth development, and a “Ryder Cup” type event for bridge. Thank you letters had been sent to those who attended, and a note explaining the discussion topics of the evening to those who were unable to attend. These would be followed up with individual discussions as to how these items should be progressed.

The Chairman reported that a possible facility for a NBC had been identified in Kettering, and had been visited by the Executive and Max Bavin. The facility offered 23,000 sq. ft. which could operate as a conference/bridge centre, with additional land available for the construction of a hotel adjacent to the centre. It was agreed that the possibilities should be explored and a report made to the next Board.

Mr Martin advised that he had been approached by a potential sponsor. It was **agreed** that a meeting would be arranged for the Chairman, the General Manager and Mr Martin to meet with the person.

Agenda item 5 was brought forward to this point.

2.2.2 Constitutional Reform (2.2.2)

It was **agreed** that the Vice Chairman and Mr Stocken would produce a paper for Council on the effects and implications on the sub-committees of a move to a single entity. It was considered unnecessary to instruct Hammonds to draft the bye-law allowing Council to dissolve itself, and this would be drafted by Mr Harris.

2.2.3 Inland Revenue – Status of Tournament Directors (2.2.3)

The General Manager reported that he had received a response from the Inland Revenue which had not proved favourable, and that he was awaiting a response from the insurers as to whether professional fees would be covered if this matter were taken to dispute. It was felt that this matter should be disputed, and that the Treasurer and the General Manager would deal with the matter of costs.

2.2.4 Membership Added Value (2.2.5)

The General Manager reported that a proposal had been received from JLT which was unacceptable, and they were reviewing their proposal.

2.2.5 On-line Bridge Club (5)

The General Manager advised that the draft agreement had been reviewed by Mr Harris, and an amended version had been held up in the post. Ms Hamilton expressed concern about the “significant space” allowed for the Club within *English Bridge*. The General Manager explained that, although the club was no longer directly connected to the EBU, it was a service which the EBU was offering to members, and hence the offer of space. However, this is likely to be less than the full page offer in the previous agreement.

In light of the withdrawal of the EBU from management of the On-line Bridge Club, the Chairman of the L&E Committee had expressed his concern that the change could result in more complaints being received, impacting on the resources of the Committee and within Aylesbury. It was **agreed** that matters should be closely monitored, and reviewed if there was an impact on resource.

2.2.6 IT Project – MIAMI and CASS (7)

The General Manager advised that the managers at Aylesbury had produced an outline requirements list for the “off-the-shelf” system, and this had been forwarded to potential suppliers. A meeting was being held on Thursday 6 November with a supplier to discuss the requirements. The Treasurer asked that the preferred supplier provides references and company accounts.

The Vice Chairman tabled a report on a trial of CASS version 1.6. The Chairman asked that any other comments from Board members be forwarded to the General Manager as soon as possible. Subject to any further comments, CASS is now ready for distribution to clubs.

2.2.7 Estoril (13.3)

The Chairman advised that a meeting had been held with OT&T, who confirmed that they were still keen to work with the EBU. They apologised for not informing the EBU of the reduced number of airline seats for Estoril, this being due to recent staffing changes. The Chairman advised that, although members travelling with OT&T would now have to pay a higher price, the overall package was still good value. The General Manager reported that it had been made clear to OT&T that the EBU would be considering other Overseas Congress proposals.

3. FINANCIAL MATTERS

3.1 Treasurer's Report

The Treasurer reported that although the figures shown included an income from *English Bridge*, this had not yet been received; and that there was also income from the BGB reserves of £10,000 which had been included.

The report was **noted**.

3.2 Accounts for Six Months ended 30 September 2003

The accounts were **noted**.

3.3 Budget process and Timetable

The Treasurer advised that there was little time between the draft budget and 5 year plan being presented to the Board and being presented to Council. He asked that any changes made by the Board in March be agreed speedily in order that the papers can be sent out to Council in a timely manner prior to the Council meeting on 7 April. Despite this, the Treasurer believes that the proposed timetable would allow for more accurate forecasting.

The process and timetable was **noted**.

3.4 Personal Expenses, Allowances, Fees and Charges Review

The Treasurer tabled the proposed fees etc. It was **agreed** that the Treasurer discuss the In-charge Bonus with Max Bavin. The Treasurer confirmed that he would be discussing licence fees and *Bridge for All* modules with the General Manager. It was also confirmed that the honoraria was a matter for the Remuneration Committee, who should meet prior to the end of the financial year.

4. DEVELOPMENT PLAN

4.1 Update

4.1.1 The General Manager reported that following the launch of the Development Plan at the Council AGM on 1 October, copies had been sent to clubs, and the Plan had been published on the website. The Plan was being well received, and 6-7 people had come forward to volunteer their time in various areas.

4.1.2 The General Manager was very pleased with the support received from the clubs that had been visited since the launch of the Development Plan and it was agreed that similar visits/contact with clubs should be encouraged. It was also agreed that greater communication between the Board and Counties should be encouraged. To this end, the General Manager would offer County Secretaries the opportunity of a Board member or the General Manager attending an early meeting of their association.

4.1.3 The Ron Klinger Master Classes had proved very successful, and had provided a good opportunity for the EBU to talk directly with the clubs and individual members. The Clubs involved have asked how they can encourage new members and support the EBU in the implementation of the Development Plan; and want to know when similar events will be held. It was felt that such a positive response should be followed up within the next 6-9 months using English bridge talent.

4.1.4 The General Manager reported that Maggie McCorkell had joined the EBU in the position of Development Officer (Operations). Her main responsibility would be for the administration and co-ordination of the Development Team, and that she was currently working with Christine Duckworth and Chris Brown prior to their forthcoming retirement from the EBU. It was confirmed that Christine Duckworth would be concentrating on the drafting of a Child Protection Policy.

4.2 Youth Development

The Chairman reported that a letter had been received from the members of the new Youth Squad Development Team (YSDT) tendering their resignation, and that a letter from Su King had been given to the members of the youth squads explaining their reasons. The Chairman of the Selection Committee had also sent a letter to the youth squads, explaining why changes had been made. The matter was considered very regrettable, and the Chairman advised that the Treasurer would now act as Chairman of the YSDT, and asked that he consider who should be invited onto the Team.

Mr Stocken advised that there needed to be a bye-law change enabling the co-opting of 2 members of the YSDT onto the Selection Committee, the wording of which would need careful consideration.

4.3 Publications Review

4.3.1 General

The General Manager reported that some £18,000 was currently spent on printing and posting EBU general publications.

It was **agreed** that the General Manager and Ms Hamilton review the whole area of publications and make recommendations for the future.

4.3.2 Year Book

The Chairman explained that the contents of the yearbook could be incorporated into a diary, which could then be provided free to every EBU member.

The cost of this exercise was explained with 3 options available for the cover of the combined diary/yearbook. The Chairman asked for a show of hands as to which cover would be the more suitable, and it was agreed that the new hardback cover should be used. It was agreed that we should proceed with this proposal at a cost of £11,700.

5. POSSIBLE EBU TRUST

The Treasurer and Mr Morris explained that sponsors were keen to promote youth bridge, and the idea of an EBU Trust had arisen.

Mr Harris advised that the advantages of making the Trust a charitable enterprise were beneficial, including tax savings and the opportunity to take advantage of gift aid. The General Manager was asked to consider what an EBU trust would be used for before a decision would be made as to its status.

6. BOARD RESPONSIBILITIES

The Chairman tabled a paper indicating proposed Board responsibilities, and asked for comments to be forwarded to him.

7. AGMs OF EBU LIMITED AND EBU COUNCIL

It was felt that some agenda items were taking too long, and the Chairman agreed to speak with those concerned.

8. DATES AND VENUES FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

Mr Carter advised that there was a BGB meeting scheduled for 27 January, and it was agreed that the Board meeting proposed for this day is changed to Thursday 29 January. Aylesbury will confirm the venue. *[Post meeting note: the venue is confirmed as Kettering Park.]*

9. COMMITTEE REPORTS

9.1 Editorial Board – 15 October 2003

Ms Hamilton tabled the minutes, drawing attention to item 8.1, explaining that a new structure for the Editorial Board would be tried, i.e. every other meeting would be electronic.

The General Manager reported that, although Blue2 were keen to work with the EBU, he had been in discussion with other suppliers regarding the production of the magazine, and would discuss the matter with Ms Hamilton and the Treasurer.

The Chairman advised that agenda item 11 would be brought forward to this point to allow Mr Harris to depart early.

9.2 Youth Working Party – 7 October 2003

Mr Morris expressed concern that the YWP had been dissolved, and that there were some urgent issues outstanding. The Treasurer assured Mr Morris that his concerns were noted, but stated that the important matter to hand was to determine the structure of the Committee and the services to be provided first. He did, however, welcome the “clean sheet” and the opportunity to review the entire subject.

10. BGB MATTERS – Minutes of meeting 18 September 2003

The Chairman reported that a meeting had been held on 30 October in Manchester with the WBU and the SBU. The main agenda item related to the division of the BGB Sims Pairs funds. It was agreed that the funds would be paid in the 60:20:20 split for the next 3 years, with the expectation that the BGB pay expenses for attendance at meetings. A new agreement would be required following the next 3 year period. The new split is subject to final approval by the WBU and SBU, but it was acceptable to the EBU Board.

The meeting had been well received, with the General Manager leading the way on various discussions items. All participants agreed it was a worthwhile and informative meeting, and that, further meetings should be held annually.

11. EBL AND WBF MATTERS

Mr Harris reported that the EBL were trying to be more accountable for their finances, and in alternate years would be seeking to build up reserves by running the Open as at Menton. Although the conditions at Menton had been poor, the players had considered it one of the better competitions, and it had proved very successful. There was also a significant change in how money was being spent and greater budgetary control put in place.

Mr Harris warned that the European Championships to be held in 2006 would clash with Brighton, and this was noted.

Mr Harris was uncertain as to when the funds from Menton would arrive, but the General Manager has provided validation as requested by the EBL.

The Chairman reported that he had sent a personal good luck letter to each of the ladies in the England team.

12. CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGES

Nothing to report.

13. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- 13.1** The Chairman asked whether Mr Bridge's article denigrating the Development Plan warranted a formal response. It was felt this was unnecessary, but the General Manager could send a note wishing him a speedy recovery, enclosing a copy of the Development Plan.
- 13.2** The Chairman advised that only 3 Board members were available to take part in the Board event alongside the Channel Trophy, and he would open the invitation to VPs and/or the Chairman of the Tournament Committee. It was also agreed that this was a formal invitation and expenses would be covered by the EBU. The Chairman reported that there was consideration that this event take place each year. It was felt that this should be considered after the event.
- 13.3** Mr Martin advised that the White Book had been re-written and asked that, since it was a globally used document, if it could be officially published. The General Manager was asked to review costs for this.

**The next meeting will be held on Thursday 29 January 2004, 12.30pm
at Kettering Park**