



**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF
THE ENGLISH BRIDGE UNION
HELD AT EBU OFFICES, AYLESBURY
ON WEDNESDAY 12 MAY 2004**

Present:	Denis A Robson (DR)	Chairman
	Philip G Mason (PM)	Vice Chairman
	Tom J Bradley (TB)	Treasurer
	John Carter (JC)	
	Alaine Hamilton (AH)	
	David Harris (DH)	
	Jeff K Morris (JM)	
	John D Neville (JN)	
	Peter Stocken (PS)	
	Terry Collier (TC)	General Manager
	Michele Attard	Office Manager

ACTION

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Mr Martin.

2. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF 18 MARCH 2004

2.1 Accuracy

Amendments were agreed as follows:

It was noted that the Channel Trophy had been held in Utrecht, not Maastricht.

Mr Martin had written to the Chairman disagreeing with 3.1(p) and, whilst his comments were noted, it was felt that, as this had been a confidential matter, it should not have been included in the minutes. It was agreed, therefore, that 3.1(p) should be deleted from the minutes and that a confidential minute be made, including Mr Martin's comments.

3.1 (continued on page 5) should conclude: *"The forecast, budget and five year plan were approved."*

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

It was agreed that Agenda Item 9 be brought forward to this point.

9. PRESENTATION AND STYLE OF MINUTES

Action

Following discussion it was agreed that the presentation and style of Board minutes should change. Individual views expressed would not be noted, unless there was strong opinion on the matter, and particularly if there is a vote on the view expressed. If a vote were taken, then the full text of motions would be recorded. There would be a report on the general discussion, and names would not be recorded, except where particularly relevant and pertinent, and if requested by the person raising the matter or expressing a concern. It was felt that minutes would then be concise, objective, and reflect the overall views of the meeting.

Board minutes would now be a clear summary of the discussion topics, which would include the main issues raised, decisions made, actions arising, who is responsible for the agreed action, and, where appropriate, the timescale.

It was also agreed that draft minutes would be emailed or faxed to all Board members. Board members would be given 3 days to review the draft and forward their comments to Aylesbury, prior to finalisation of the minutes. No response would be taken as no comments.

The Chairman agreed to suggest to Council that consideration be given to adopting a similar approach towards the presentation and style of Council minutes. It was noted that the various Committees have responsibility for determining the presentation and style of their minutes.

DR

2.2 **Matters Arising**

2.2.1 *EBU Trust (item 2.2.2)*

Mr Harris advised that he had reviewed the application documentation for the setting up of a Trust, and was prepared to draft the application for approval by the Chairman and Treasurer.

DH

It was agreed that the Trust should be named "*The EBU Youth and Education Trust*". The Trustees would be the Officers of the Union, i.e. the Chairman, Vice Chairman and Treasurer, with the General Manager as Secretary. A bank account would need to be opened, and it was agreed that a sum of £5,000, from the funds provided by Maple Finance, be allocated as opening funds.

2.2.2 *Ryder Cup Event (item 2.2.3)*

Mr Harris advised that he had sent emails to the EBL on the potential of a Ryder Cup bridge event, but to date had not had any response. He was, however, aware that there had been problems with the email system used by the EBL. It might now be too late to work up an event for 2004.

Mr Harris gave an outline of the various changes that had been made in respect of the starting date for the Seniors' event at the European Championships in Malmo. The resultant difficulties caused to NBOs would be the subject of discussion at the EBL Executive Committee meetings in Malmo.

DH

2.2.3 Rank / Handicap System (item 5.1d)

Action

Following the Master Points discussion at Council, Mr Mason chaired a meeting to review the Master Points scheme. It had been a valuable and interesting meeting with many good ideas raised, which could link into the introduction of a ranking/handicapping system. It was considered too early to go back to Council with a proposal, and Mr Simon Cochemé has been asked to consolidate the ideas into a draft proposal. It was felt that the report would be ready to present to Council in January 2005.

2.2.4 2005/06 – Year of Membership (item 9)

Following presentation of this topic at Council, Aylesbury was now moving ahead with promotional activities in support of 2005/06 being the Year of Membership. This would include membership as an incentive, and the General Manager advised that he would ensure that this was not in conflict with the Bye-Laws.

2.2.5 Forecast, Budget and Five-year Plan (item 3.1, page 5)

The question of approaching playing sponsors to support our work in the youth teams was also raised. It was reported that contact had been made with a Sports Psychologist based at Leeds University who would be interested in working with the EBU, and he is to meet the Youth Squad Managers. A proposal would then be prepared by the Sports Psychologist for the EBU, and, once the way forward had been agreed, would give rise to opportunities for sponsorship. Although it was confirmed that contact had been made with a potential sponsor regarding funding for training of the International Teams, it was felt that further approaches to sponsors should wait until the report had been reviewed.

2.2.6 Mind Sports Council (item 2.2.8)

It was confirmed that Keith Bradley, MP, was still attempting to get a meeting with Ms Tessa Jowell, to be attended by Mr Morris, the General Manager, and representatives from Chess and Go.

Further correspondence had been received from Mr David Lidington, Conservative MP for Aylesbury, who was disappointed to have had a negative response from Richard Caborn, Department of Culture, Media & Sports. However, Mr Lidington was prepared to continue with his involvement in securing some form of recognition for bridge, even if it was not sports recognition. He had been made aware that Chess receives an unknown category of recognition which provided a grant of £60,000 p.a.

3. FINANCIAL MATTERS

3.1 Treasurer's Report

The annual audit is currently underway, and it was agreed that the auditor, Mr Tony Parks, present the accounts at the next Board meeting. It is anticipated that there will be a small surplus.

4. DEVELOPMENT PLAN

The meetings with the individual County Associations undertaken by the General Manager and the Chairman are proving to be successful, with many positive responses. The common thread of criticism was the fact that the EBU does very little for the club member. It was apparent that the Counties have a desire to work closer with the EBU, and several social bridge events were now being planned.

The discounts arranged with book publishers have been well received by members. Chrysalis, the publishers of the Batsford series of bridge books, are offering the same discount to members, and are interested in exploring ways in which they can become involved with the Really Easy series.

A fresh contact had been established with the National Trust, who is keen to work with the EBU on a national basis.

The Overseas Congress 2005 in Tunisia is to include a Students' Congress, which is being well received.

The golf-bridge event at Woodhall Spa, held in conjunction with the English Golf Union, had proved very successful despite a disappointing entry, and the EGU were keen to do it again, with a possible date in autumn. It was felt that greater consideration should be given to the promotion of such events, ensuring that the correct audience was targeted. It is believed that there is good synergy between golf and bridge, and this should be explored further.

It was felt that the Development Plan is moving ahead, but with a scattergun approach. This will be addressed in a future report to the Board.

TC

5. SQUAD DEVELOPMENT – Paper from Selection Committee

The paper presented to a previous Selection Committee was now placed before the Board and whilst this was noted, it was felt that the decision made by the Board on 18 March to empower the Chairman and Treasurer to approve additional expenditure outside budget should stand.

6. CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM – Review of Draft Articles of Association, and Bye-Laws

A revised draft incorporating the comments that had been received from the Board was tabled and it was agreed that any comments on the revision be forwarded to Peter Stocken within the next 7 days.

ALL

A copy of item 3A-Q of the existing Memorandum and Articles of Association was tabled. After review, it was agreed that these should stand as they are.

7. COUNTY SECRETARIES' MEETINGS

Noting that the Chairman and General Manager had attended many meetings in the Counties, much of the content of the County Secretaries and County Membership Secretaries meetings was likely to have been discussed already, thereby significantly reducing the effectiveness of these this year. It was agreed to write to the County Secretaries and County Membership Secretaries advising that this matter would be placed before Council seeking their view in regard to the need to stage a meeting this year and what arrangements would be made for the future.

TC

8. NATIONAL BRIDGE CENTRE - Update

It was noted that interest had been received from potential funders and the Chairman agreed to speak to the interested parties with a view to determining what is required to progress this further.

DR

9. PRESENTATION AND STYLE OF MINUTES

Brought forward to item 2.1.

10. IT PROJECTS

10.1 Enterprise

A detailed report was presented, identifying how the implementation of Enterprise would be managed, the programme of testing and training, and the budget allocation.

The report was accepted and approval given to proceed with the project at a budget of £52,000.

10.2 CASS - Update

It was reported that version 2.5 has now been released, and a newsletter has been sent to all clubs advising them that the version is available for download from the EBU website. This version allows various requested administration functions. Version 3, to include multi-session, would be available in June, followed by version 4 in August, which would include multi-section, butler scoring, ladders and handicaps, and an event archive.

10.3 Bridgemate Terminals (item 10.3)

Although the EBU wishes to encourage the deployment of such technology, it does not believe that EBU resources should be applied to its development. The EBU is interested in becoming a promoter of the right product once it has been developed for the English marketplace. Notwithstanding this position, several individuals have expressed an interest in assisting adapting the Bridgemate Terminals for use in this country and in conducting a pilot programme to ensure its suitability for the user, both the player and Tournament Director. Mr Carter agreed to engage these individuals and involve the manufacturer. This will enable the EBU to monitor progress in its future development and assess the appropriateness of these terminals for use in our clubs.

JC

11. COMMITTEE REPORTS

11.1 Editorial Board – 6 April 2004

It was reported that some changes have been made to the presentation and page layouts of the June issue of *English Bridge*, including incorporation of a cover price of £2.50 (free to members).

It had been noticed that there were very few youth articles in the magazine, and the Board were advised that this had been raised with the Editor, and steps were being taken to include a youth section.

Concern was raised with regard to the lack of PR and the poor promotion of events. It was noted that several opportunities had been missed at recent events which would have made good articles, including photographs, for the magazine and website. A case in point was the recent Schapiro Spring Foursomes when a photographer was not engaged for the presentation by the new sponsor. It was recognised that the EBU is poor at publicising events, and it was agreed that the Officers consider the whole matter at their next meeting.

DR

It was noted that Mr Paul Hackett had volunteered the services of his family in providing a member's Q&A article for the magazine, and this would be brought to the attention of the Editor.

AH

12. **BGB MATTERS**

Some of the Camrose matches had been enhanced by the use of a system that could put the play onto the web. It was agreed that this should be investigated further, along with proposals from the on-line bridge club, BridgeClubLive.

TC

It was reported that BGB would like exposure in the editorial of *English Bridge*, particularly in light of the fact that there was a lot happening this year. This would be discussed at the next Editorial Board.

AH

13. **EBL AND WBF MATTERS**

It was confirmed that the World Olympiad is still scheduled for Istanbul in October/November of this year, and the European Open Championships are now fixed to be held in Tenerife in June 2005.

14. **CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGES**

The changes requested by Berks & Bucks have been reviewed, and the County is now in receipt of a letter suggesting how the issues can be resolved.

Changes requested by Surrey and Nottinghamshire are currently being reviewed.

15. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

15.1 Tony Forrester's recent article in the *Daily Telegraph* was tabled, and it was agreed that the Chairman draft a measured and constructive response to be approved by the Officers. It was felt that it might well be appropriate to take the discussion further in *English Bridge*.

DR

15.2 It was agreed that, should a situation arise in future whereby the Chairman needs to gain Board approval at short notice, relevant documentation would be sent via e-mail/fax to all Board members, with a deadline for their response. In the event that a discussion is required, this should be achieved by sending Board responses to all Board members. Should an immediate decision be required, it was agreed that the Chairman telephones all Board members, and the agreement of 5 directors (including the Chairman) would qualify as a Board decision.

- 15.3** The EBU has been invited to participate in a Sports Show to be held at Earls Court on 24-27 June, where an audience of 50,000 was expected over the 4 days of the exhibition. The offer has been made through EBU Press Agent, Ron Boddy and includes a free area in the exhibition hall for display and participation. It was felt that this was a great opportunity and Mr Morris agreed to progress this matter. It was noted that the cost of undertaking an event of this kind would require funds and it was agreed to allocate a sum of £5,000.
- 15.4** In light of her resignation, due to her husband's job relocation, the Chairman thanked Mrs Attard for her assistance with the administration of the Board and her work as Office Manager, and wished her well with her forthcoming move.

JM

BOARD MEETINGS

(all meetings commence at 12.30 p.m. unless otherwise indicated)

Monday 5 July 2004, Kettering Park Hotel, Kettering

Thursday 2 September 2004, Leeds (TBC)

Tuesday 2 November 2004, 40 Bernard Street, London