



**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE
ENGLISH BRIDGE UNION LTD, HELD AT IMPERIAL HOTEL, LONDON
ON WEDNESDAY 16TH MARCH 2005**

Present: Denis Robson Chairman
Philip G Mason Vice Chairman
Tom J Bradley Treasurer
Sally Bugden
John Carter
Chris Dixon
David Harris
Jeff Morris
Alan Nelson
John D Neville
Terry Collier General Manager
Clare Farthing Minute Secretary

(Due to delays in public transport the Vice Chairman opened the meeting and covered Items 1 and 2 on behalf of the Chairman.)

1. APOLOGIES

There were no apologies.

2. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF 25TH JANUARY 2005

2.1 Accuracy

The minutes were **approved**.

2.2 Matters Arising

The General Manager apologised for the delay in the minutes circulation, this being due to his absence from the office on both business and holiday.

2.2.1 Master Points Discussion Paper and Ranking Proposal (2.2.2)

The Vice Chairman advised that he has submitted an article to *English Bridge*, thanking the many members who had responded to the circulated paper. The Board urges the Tournament Committee to undertake their deliberations on this matter without delay and to report, with their recommendations, to the Board's May meeting.

2.2.2 Youth Development (2.2.4)

It was noted that Alison Nicolson has been appointed as a temporary Manager for the Women's Youth Team. It was also noted that Andrew Kambites has withdrawn from further involvement with Youth Bridge. This was accepted and he was thanked for his past efforts.

Jeff Morris asked if there was any development on MiniBridge. He was advised that we are still waiting news from various Grant bodies.

2.2.3 Membership Development (2.2.5)

The Middlesex pilot scheme is now under way and new members are already starting to join. This scheme allows new members to join at a greatly reduced rate of subscription and even lower, if Direct Debit is undertaken. Oxfordshire are also looking at pilot scheme details, of which, it is hoped, will be reported to the next meeting. A similar scheme to Middlesex's is also underway in Devon, with a link to participation in the English Riviera Tournament.

The General Manager apologised for not informing the Board about a scheme to promote membership payment by direct debit for new members; this gives the members a free Ron Klinger Master Class book.

The Chairman advised that he had entered into discussions with Lancashire about membership levies and it was agreed that the General Manager should attempt to resolve this matter, along with possibly similar situations in Cumbria and Westmorland.

Chris Dixon advised that he had learned of a potential sponsor who is interested in sponsoring the staging of a new invitation team tournament. It was recommended that perhaps they could sponsor a team event at Brighton. The value of this sponsorship is likely to be in the region of £30-40,000 spread over a three year period. The Board agreed that Chris Dixon should pursue this and ensure that we comply, as appropriate with the WBF and EBL's restrictions on logo use, particularly if televising.

It was agreed that the proposed exhibition event (England v Netherlands), to be staged alongside the Brighton Congress should proceed. A budget of £5,000 was allocated to cover the eventuality of sponsorship funding being unavailable.

3. FINANCIAL MATTERS

3.1 Forecast to 31 March 2005/Budget 2005-06

In presenting his overview, the Treasurer highlighted the decline in membership of confirmed his previous prediction that our loss for the year 2004/5 would be in the order of £33k. It was noted that legal costs of some £15,000 had been incurred in this financial year in achieving the 'Single Entity'.

The Budget for the year 2005/6 is based on the assumption that we will remain in Aylesbury. It allows for a slight increase in Bridge Shop sales and a modest increase in Master Point income, with the suggestion that a price increase should be made in the autumn. On the grounds of caution, a further decline of 750 members is provided for in next year's budget. Competitions have had a very good year and the Treasurer hopes that the membership decline will not affect this. There are some doubts as to the extent of our international commitments for the coming year, with possible invitations still to come. Nevertheless, full support for Junior, the Bermuda Bowl and the normal run of events has been budgeted for.

The Commonwealth Games in Australia are likely to be in March 2006 and we currently await the cost and terms under which we will be invited to participate. It was suggested that a sponsored team might come forward to represent us. £5,000 would be available, if necessary.

The budget for the coming year (2005/6), which provides for a small surplus was accepted and approved by the Board.

4. GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT

A confidential minute relating to salary increases has been filed.

5. NATIONAL BRIDGE CENTRE

The Tournament Committee held their recent meeting at the Kettering Leisure Village and was impressed by its potential.

The NBC Working Party met with Phoenix Leisure on 8th March to discuss the terms and came away positive that things are moving steadily forward at this stage.

The Chairman advised the Board of Hammond's recommendations with regard to the length of lease. It was noted that detailed figures relating to the construction or rental of office space were awaited. It was also noted that expressions of interest from hotel developers are awaited by Phoenix Leisure, with a closing date of 31st March.

After a lengthy discussion it was agreed that we could, subject to acceptable terms, be playing some events in the Kettering Conference Centre from the autumn of this year. The establishment of the National Bridge Centre would ultimately require on-site hotel accommodation. Therefore, we need to be convinced by Phoenix Leisure that a hotel will be provided, prior to proceeding with the overall concept.

6. COUNTY CHAIRMANS' CONFERENCE

Whilst the proposed day (10th May), will be very busy, the topics for discussions were agreed. The Chairman will now plan the timetable and invite appropriate speakers and discussion leaders to participate.

7. REMUNERATION COMMITTEE

John Carter tabled a paper which examined alternative approaches to the remuneration of incidental expenses for the Officers' and the Chairman of various sub-committees. It was agreed to consider this paper at the next Board meeting. Accordingly, it was agreed to retain the present mechanism and at its current level, namely;

Position	Amount p.a.
Chairman	£1,400
Vice-Chairman	£700
Treasurer	£1,100
Chairman of the Tournament Committee	£128
Chairman of the Selection Committee	£128
Chairman of the Laws and Ethics Committee	£128

8. IT PROJECTS

An update on CASS was given, highlighting the way forward which is to provide an interface for other scoring systems to use in download clubs and county's Master Points electronically.

It was noted that Enterprise continues to bed in and that 3 members of staff are trained in Crystal Reports, which allows us greater flexibility and the ability to resolve some outstanding matters.

Two possible National Scoring systems are currently being tested, one of which allows for a national ranking system to be incorporated.

Our network and hardware is now being supported externally on a cost effective basis.

We are currently moving to host our web server externally. This will help reduce costs and make our service technically more reliable.

9. MARKETING GROUP

Sally Bugden gave a brief update of her meeting with the General Manager where they discussed providing services for social bridge players, investigating two university research projects on the benefits of playing bridge, the development of the EBU website and the formation of a sponsorship committee. Further investigation has shown the Officers' recommendation not to proceed with the married couple's membership, was correct, based upon reasons of financial viability.

The General Manager outlined a possible joint promotional campaign with a leading vitamins manufacturer. Whilst the promotion is commercially confidential at this stage, it was noted that it offered excellent opportunities to promote both *Bridge for All* and EBUTA on a national basis.

10. GOLD POINT SPONSORSHIP

Only one sponsor had agreed to become a partial sponsor of this event and therefore, the Tournament Committee has reluctantly advised that they can not proceed at present. We will, however, thank the sponsor and continue to seek other offers of support.

The Chairman advised that he had received a letter from Bernard Teltscher offering to sponsor a seniors' Camrose trophy, to be named the 'Teltscher Cup'. Unfortunately, there appears to be little support for this at present. The Chairman therefore agreed to contact Bernard with our sincere thanks.

11. BGB MATTERS

John Neville advised that key participants have expressed their concerns about the format of the new Camrose weekends, but without alternatives it is difficult to suggest a compromise. The Selection Committee proposes to discuss the Camrose at its next meeting.

It was noted that the next BGB meeting is on 29th March 2005.

The Treasurer has reviewed the BGB Draft Accounts and advised that he is satisfied with what he has seen.

12. EBL AND WBF MATTERS

David Harris updated the Board on the successful Youth seminar last month, in Turin. It was focused on declining membership, across most of Europe and highlighted the importance that youth development plays in introducing new players to the game.

13. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Jeff Morris advised that the definition of 'Mind Sports' in connection with the Charities Bill was recently discussed in the House of Lords. Unfortunately it was not successfully received and due to the forthcoming general election, further progress is unlikely this year.

Chris Dixon volunteered to produce a draft review of Roles of Committees and Terms of Reference for the May Board meeting.

Sally Bugden confirmed that she is delighted to take on Board responsibility for EBUTA and asked for assurances that the *Bridge for All* branding would remain, it was confirmed that it would.

The Chairman advised he has received Sussex's Zero Tolerance Policy and would like to explore ways of introducing this nationally. It was agreed that this should be raised at the County Chairmans' Conference.

***The next Board meeting will be held on Wednesday 11th May 2005
at the Kettering Park Hotel, Kettering
at 9.30am***