



**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS
HELD ON TUESDAY 8TH MAY 2007 AT THE AYLESBURY OFFICES.**

Present:	Peter Stocken	(Chairman)
	Sally Bugden	(Vice-Chairman)
	John Neville	(Hon. Treasurer)
	John Carter	
	Michael Hill	
	Graham Jepson	
	Philip Mason	
	Jeff Morris	
	Alan Nelson	
	Martin Pool	
	Barry Capal	(General Manager)
	Sandra Claridge	(Minute Taker)

The Board joined the Chairman in expressing sorrow at the recent passing of Jimmie Arthur, a formidable figure in Scottish bridge, and one of the most successful non-playing captains of British teams.

1 MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF 20th MARCH 2007

John Carter wished it to be recorded that his absence had been caused by illness. Subject to the inclusion of the above, the minutes were signed as an accurate record.

1.2 Item 2.2 Educational CD

Graham Jepson confirmed that the CD had now been located, and would be returned to the EBU in the near future.

1.3 Item 2.3 Trust Account

The General Manager reported that the dedicated Bank account had now been set up and the necessary documentation was ready to submit to the Charities Commissioners.

2 MEMBERSHIP DEVELOPMENT ACTION GROUP'S STRATEGY PROPOSALS

The Chairman thanked all members of the Group, including Peter Kaufmann and David Graham who had been involved in the earlier stages, for the considerable time and effort they had devoted to this project over the last eighteen months. The Shareholders and the Board had presented them with a formidable task and he felt that the Group had put together some very coherent proposals, which he hoped would provide a blueprint for the future, enabling the EBU to fulfil the Board's 'vision' – as agreed at its December 2006 meeting – of universal membership by April 2010.

Philip Mason, the Chairman of the Group, said that much work had indeed been done. Sally Bugden reported that many ideas had been put forward, examined, discussed and rejected. This proposed strategy had evolved as a result of extensive research both here and abroad. In addition, the visit by the Chairman, Vice-Chairman and General Manager to the recent EBL NBOs Conference in Rome had proved invaluable in drawing on the experience of those countries in Europe whose membership was increasing.

A proposal from the Chair, that the Board should support the proposed strategy put forward by the Membership Development Action Group, was carried. The Group was asked to prepare a strategy document for presentation to the Shareholders' meeting in June. The Shareholders would be asked to take this back for discussion within their counties and with their clubs and their members, so that a full and informed discussion could take place at the Annual General Meeting in October. Information on financial models, background research and risks will be made available if requested during the consultation period.

Michael Hill noted that the current EBU Membership database did not include Life Members and possibly not all *Bridge for All* members. The General Manager agreed to look into the matter.

3 FINANCIAL MATTERS

John Neville said that further work was being undertaken by the Union's Auditor on the forecast for the current year and budget for the following year, and on improving documentation of procedures. It was expected that the projected surplus for the year to 31st March would be achieved, despite writing off old *Bridge for All* stock to the value of approximately £10K. In general, the Union's financial position was sound, though considerable expenditure was planned for the coming year.

It was confirmed that full financial statements would be presented to the Board at its July meeting, and that sufficient information would be available in June to provide the Shareholders with a general impression of the results for the year. It was agreed that, unless anything unexpected came to light in the meantime, the Auditor would not be required to attend the July Board Meeting.

The only comment received on the forecast and budget circulated to Shareholders focussed on Management Charges, which the Treasurer conceded were significantly out-of-date, and the Bridge Shop. The Board agreed that the latter was considered by members and Clubs to be a valuable service.

The Treasurer reported that arrears on the Union's account with its advertisers were being dealt with. A routine VAT inspection was being carried out shortly during which the annual VAT rate on subscriptions would be reviewed.

The Treasurer was pleased to report that the Union's long-term investments had proved very successful, and, subject to suitable safeguards, it was planned to put a significant amount into the money market.

The Chairman congratulated the Treasurer and EBU staff on the work they had done.

4 GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT

The General Manager reported as follows:

- Mike Amos had recently been appointed as the Union's Youth Officer, on a 1½ days per week basis.
- Interviews were currently being held for the full-time post of Club Liaison Officer.
- Interviews would shortly be held for the full-time post of Communications Officer. The role would involve creating and maintaining contacts with the media, counties, clubs and members and developing appropriate information on a regular basis.
- Information would be presented to the Shareholders in June on what constitutional changes - for ratification at the Annual General Meeting – were proposed.
- The Policy and Procedures Manual would be updated and circulated to the Board to establish its accuracy.

Gambling Act

It was agreed that clarification of the status of duplicate bridge in terms of the new Gambling Act would be circulated to all County Associations and published on the EBU website, when available. The initial opinion of the EBU's Honorary Counsel was that as Duplicate Bridge had been defined as a game of skill and was therefore exempt under the terms of the previous Act, it was unlikely that there would be any problems.

5 COMMITTEE REPORTS

5.1 Laws & Ethics Committee

Martin Pool reported on two disciplinary hearings under the Bye-laws. In light of the problems experienced in one case, it was agreed that the Chairman would seek advice from the EBU's Honorary Counsel on the possible introduction of a Regulator.

The Board confirmed its responsibility for ensuring Best Behaviour, and stressed that the powers already vested in Tournament Directors should be reinforced, and current procedures strengthened.

5.2 Selection Committee

The Chairman reported that the Vice-Chairman and he had had a meeting with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Selection Committee, and this had been very productive. They had agreed upon the need for a comprehensive plan for the future, detailing what the Committee's aims and objectives were, together with the necessity each year for a mutually acceptable budget. It was also agreed, in view of recent misunderstandings, that there should be a rationalisation of the administration of youth matters (see 6 below).

As requested by the Committee he had brought to the attention of the European Bridge League the disproportionate entry fee for the Under 25 Women's European Championships, and was awaiting clarification from the WBF on its financial commitment and standing in regard to the 2008 World Mind Sports Games. Jeff Morris said that an increase in the age limit for the Games to twenty-eight was a positive move, as would be the reintroduction of competitions for Under 35s, which might reverse the trend of losing players who had moved out of the Junior game but who had insufficient experience to succeed in the Open category.

The Board supported the view expressed by the Selection Committee that there was a role for experienced players on the Committee, and that, to get the right balance, the constraints on membership of the Committee should be relaxed as a matter of policy.

It was noted that the Selection Committee had generated around £3.5K by reducing venue and staffing costs and by increasing entry fees for next season's Trials. Additional expenditure was therefore sanctioned for a hotel in Shanghai with improved facilities for the Venice Cup team, as well as the limited services of a Sports Psychologist.

The Committee expressed its gratitude to Sandra Landy for the work she had undertaken in forming five pairs of women interested in competing in the Under 25s 2007 European Championships, and in assigning experienced mentors to each pair. Jeff Morris mentioned that three pairs would be competing at the Grand Re-opening of West Midlands Bridge Club.

5.3 Tournament Committee

The General Manager reported that he was seeking to obtain a favourable deal to buy a further 100 sets of Bridgemates at a cost of around £10K, which could be hired to counties and clubs. The investment was agreed, but it was noted that the scoring problems must be resolved before the purchase was made. Reports of a new Danish dealing device would be investigated.

The Chairman reported on a useful meeting between the Vice-Chairman, the General Manager and himself with Alan Nelson and Heather Dhondy, Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Tournament Committee. A wide range of topics had been discussed, including the necessity of an overall policy for our tournaments. In particular it was agreed that the existing TD Promotion Panel should be replaced by a Tournament Directors Assessment Panel: this would be formed of one representative of each of the following: the officers of the EBU, the Tournament Committee and the Laws and Ethics Committee. It would sit in isolation from any employees of the EBU and would assess the TDs not only on technical knowledge but also on their technological prowess and customer care ability. It would also assess the need for training existing tournament directors as well as identifying new tournament directors.

The first meeting would take place at the Brighton Summer Meeting in August and it was intended the new panel would be in place by the end of May, with those affected informed shortly afterwards.

Philip Mason was very disappointed to note the poor entry at the Blackpool Easter Congress, and stressed the need for suitable arrangements for the opening and closing of tournaments. The Chairman noted that historically there had been a prescribed pecking-order for prize-giving ceremonies. It was agreed that these two matters be referred back to the Committee.

It was noted that a number of complaints had been received concerning clashes of events over the past twelve months, and it was agreed that these would be referred to Alan Nelson and Max Bavin, as would the pressing need for confirmation of one-day events in 2008.

5.4 Editorial Board

Sally Bugden said that advertising revenue had increased. Elena Jeronimidis, the new Editor of *English Bridge*, has put forward some exciting new ideas for the magazine along with suggestions for new contributors. Elena, Sally and Barry Capal had met with Blue2 and successfully agreed the operational processes of the magazine under Elena's editorship.

6 YOUTH MATTERS

Following the meeting with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Selection Committee (see 5.2 above) the Chairman had asked Jeff Morris to prepare a paper outlining the background to the administration of young players.

Summarising, Jeff Morris said that upon the dissolution of the BBL Youth Committee in 2000, the EBU had created the Youth Working Party that covered all youth bridge from the grass roots to the selection of teams; it comprised all the regional youth officers, the two squad managers, EBU staff responsible for youth bridge and the Board members who had been given that responsibility. Various problems had arisen in the following years, but the present arrangement stemmed from a Selection Committee discussion at the January 2004 Council Meeting and the subsequent acceptance by the Board of Tom Bradley's recommendations at its meeting on January 29th 2004, which were that:

- a. The Junior Squad Committee be established as a sub-committee of the Board.
- b. Tom Bradley be appointed Chairman of the Junior Squad Committee.
- c. Mel Starking and Paul Bowyer should represent the squads on the Selection Committee and to vote, in accordance with Bye-Law 25.2 and the period referred to in Bye-Law 27.

This, however, did not cater for the basic finding and teaching young players from scratch and though there had been talk of creating a Youth Development Group, and a meeting had been held at Kettering some time back, the idea seems to have fallen into desuetude.

Two and a half years on, the situation had drifted: two members of the Board, Jeff Morris and Graham Jepson had overall responsibility for all youth matters according to the Board decision of January 2004, yet the Selection Committee had recently formed its own Youth sub-committee, which reported directly to the main committee, comprising the Vice-Chairman, Steve Eginton, Sandra Landy, David Muller and Chris Dixon, together with the two squad managers, Michael Byrne and Paul Bowyer. To complicate matters further, these squad managers were appointees of the Board. The net result of these ill-defined arrangements was that the Selection Committee resented the interference of the Board members, whilst the latter had felt frustrated by their own inability to carry out their function.

Sally Bugden said that it was important that lines of communication and responsibilities were established, and that the Squad Managers' functions were clearly defined in terms of the squads' development; the Officers in their meeting with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Selection Committee had undertaken that the Board would do just this.

Others felt the Board should go further and come to a solution that would encompass all youth matters. The Chairman said that dealing with young players required a different set of skills from that required in handling the adult game.

A proposal by Martin Pool that to avoid confusion there should be “a single sub-committee of the Board responsible for Youth Matters comprising two members of the Board, the two squad managers, a member nominated by the Selection Committee, together with the Youth Officer” was carried unanimously.

Jeff Morris reported that the 2006 awards to young players were announced at the Young Bridge Challenge at Loughborough at the end of March, and these were congratulated, as follows:

Young Pair of the Year : *James Thrower & Tom Rainforth*

Young Player of the Year : *Ed Jones*

Alec Salisbury Award for an adult who has made an outstanding contribution to the development of Youth Bridge by a school teacher: *Dean Bunnell* (Queen Elizabeth Grammar School, Wakefield)

Tom Bradley Award for an adult who has made an outstanding contribution to the development of Youth Bridge by a non-school teacher : *Dave Bessant* (Isle of Wight)

With the exception of Dave Bessant whose presentation would be made at the Hampshire CBA Annual General Meeting (and announced at Brighton), all other presentations would be made at the Brighton Summer Meeting and highlighted in *English Bridge* and on the EBU website.

Jeff Morris said that whereas an undertaking had been given in September 2006 that a policy document detailing procedures for caution and exclusion from junior squads would be produced, it was his view that the Youth Contracts, now signed by all members of the squads, were the tools for disciplinary matters.

7 BGB MATTERS

Philip Mason reported that Linda Greenland (Wales) had been appointed as Chairman for 2007.

The main agenda item at the recent meeting had been to establish a pattern for the sixth team for the Camrose Trophy, and it was agreed that the sixth team should rotate between each country, with the team hosting the second weekend providing the team that year. If for any reason that country was unable to field a second team, then the holders from the previous year would be invited to field a second team.

Recommendations for the introduction of the Seniors Camrose, subject to sponsorship, had been agreed, the suggested date for the first match being the last weekend in May 2008.

7 EBL & WBF MATTERS

The Chairman announced that he would be attending the 2007 European Championships, and would exercise England's votes on behalf of the Board.

8 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Jeff Morris said that he had been invited to attend a forthcoming meeting with the English Chess Federation and its legal advisors to discuss the implications of the Charities Act, and the way forward.

Sally Budgen said that a suggestion for Pro-Celebrity Bridge from Simon Cochemé would be an agenda item for the next meeting.

Next Meeting
Tuesday 10th July at 1.00 pm
Stubbs Common Farm, Stubbs Walden, Doncaster