



**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS
HELD ON WEDNESDAY 28TH MAY 2008,
AT THE IMPERIAL HOTEL, LONDON**

Present:	Peter Stocken	(Chairman)
	Sally Bugden	(Vice-Chairman)
	Michael Hill	(Hon. Treasurer)
	John Carter	
	Graham Jepson	
	Jeff Morris	
	Alan Nelson	
	Malcolm Oliver	
	Andrew Petrie	
	Martin Pool	
	Barry Capal	(General Manager)
	Sandra Claridge	(Minute taker)

Opening the meeting, the Chairman welcomed Andrew Petrie to his first Board meeting. The Board paid tribute to the late Ian Spoor's and for his contribution over many years to the English Bridge Union both as the representative of the NEBA and as a National Tournament Director.

1 MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF 6TH MARCH 2008

1.1 Accuracy

Subject to the last line of item 4.2 being amended to read "of the 50p increase in the subscription" the minutes were signed as an accurate record.

1.2 Matters Arising

1.2.1 General Manager's Report

- The General Manager stated that the reported problems in regard to website advertising had now been resolved.
- The planned meeting with the Ian Fleming Society had been postponed, and would take place in early June, when the idea of a Simultaneous Pairs event in aid of the British Heart Foundation would be explored. The EBU would offer to provide expertise only if a high-profile charity event in London was planned.

1.2.2 Item 6

Sally Bugden said that should the Pay to Play strategy be adopted at the June Shareholders' Meeting, players under the age of 25 would be exempted from paying the fee.

1.2.3 Charitable Donation

The Chairman said that a sum of just over £1K was available to donate for charitable purposes - this sum being the total amount of money raised from licence fees from charity events run by clubs and counties during the year 2007/08. It was agreed that this would be divided equally between charities selected by Berks. & Bucks CBA and Somerset CBA in memory of Margaret Hatch and Paul Wickham.

2 FINANCIAL MATTERS

Michael Hill reported that whilst the final figures for the year were very close to those predicted in the spring, the surplus for the year to 31st March of just over £100K being 20% better than originally forecast. This was largely accounted for by favourable stock adjustments and provision for extra meetings which had not taken place.

On the Treasurer's suggestion, changes to the presentation of the Accounts, with effect from the current year, were agreed as follows:

- Honoraria for Youth Squad Managers and teacher course expenses would be removed from "Officers' Fees & Expenses".
- Income from Hilton Hotels would be removed from "English Bridge" and be included in "Other Income".
- A new heading entitled "Club Support" would be created which would include the cost of the Club Liaison Officer and related expenses.
- With the exception of a small proportion of diaries supplied by the Bridge Shop, the remaining cost would be charged to "Membership Cost of Sales".
- All attributable costs e.g. postage, staff etc. would be transferred to the appropriate areas as cost of sales. It was, however, noted that currently approximately 50% of staff costs were non-attributable.
- If the Pay to Play strategy were to be approved, Membership and Master-point lines would be merged.

The annual accounts to 31st March 2009 would indicate the changes in format.

The Chairman thanked the Treasurer for all his hard work in getting to grips with the Union's very complex financial arrangements.

3 STRATEGY PROPOSALS

A discussion took place on the reactions from clubs and counties to the final proposals document that had been sent out at the end of March. The majority of reactions have been positive, though qualified with the need to streamline processes centrally and develop the game at club level.

The General Manager confirmed that clubs would be able to select their payment method, and there would be a discount for payment by monthly direct debit. Contractual arrangements would be confirmed, and different options would be offered.

The Board agreed the following statement of intent, subject to Pay to Play being adopted on 4th June:

“As a result of Pay to Play, it is clear that to reflect the spirit of the Union’s Constitution, clubs affiliated to a county must also be affiliated to the EBU.”

The Chairman outlined the procedure for the forthcoming Extraordinary General Meeting, as advised by the Honorary Counsel, who would be present at the meeting.

Sally Bugden thanked MDAG members, and in particular Andrew Petrie, for producing spreadsheets to assist counties in determining what their Pay to Play contribution might be.

4 DISCIPLINARY MATTERS

A report of disciplinary hearings since January 2008 was noted.

5 AYLESBURY STAFF REVIEW

A discussion on the structure and staffing at Aylesbury took place, and the Chairman thanked Malcolm Oliver and Andrew Petrie for their very thorough review.

6 GENERAL MANAGER’S REPORT

The General Manager reported as follows:

- Michael Clark was now managing the EBU website. The Membership Centralisation IT project had been implemented on 1st April, and 25 counties were currently using it very successfully.
- Progress on an application for Charity Status had been deferred until Autumn 2009.
- Matt Betts was thanked for his very comprehensive report on recent communication activities, which included the filming of a pilot TV programme on 2nd May by a professional production team. It was hoped to have a cut of the programme in time for the Shareholders Meeting on 4th June, and thereafter attempts would be made to sell it to digital TV channels.
- Matt had also been involved in the Chairman’s visit to Hereford to present the Alec Salisbury Award to Richard Croot, in recognition of his achievement over the last thirteen years in teaching 500 young people to play bridge.
- It was agreed that in light of the increase in the price of fuel, the mileage allowance would be increased from 36p per mile to 40p per mile with effect from 1st June.
- In response to a request from the Botswana Bridge Association, John Pain had visited the country to assist with the training of tournament directors. The trip had been a huge success and John had produced a blog as well as being interviewed by a local radio station.

7 COMMITTEE REPORTS

7.1 Laws & Ethics Committee meeting 24th April 2008

Martin pool drew attention to the inclusion in the Minutes of comments by disciplinary panels, and the conclusion of the Committee that in future anyone suspended from

membership of the EBU would not be permitted to play in Simultaneous Pairs events. This would be published, for the benefit of event organisers, and the suspended member so informed.

It was noted that BGB had ceded responsibility for disciplinary measures to the Home Union of which the player(s) was a member, or in which an incident took place, whichever was most appropriate.

It was anticipated that the Home Unions and Bridge Great Britain would have formalised their position in terms of tournament organisation, prior to the implementation of the new Duplicate Laws in August. Suggestions for the Gold Cup and Silver Plate were sent by the Laws & Ethics Committee to Bridge Great Britain.

A request was made that details of rulings should not be published on websites which might prejudice the procedures of local appeals committees.

It was agreed that no decision would be taken in regard to the introduction of a conduct committee until further examination had been undertaken of procedures adopted by other NBOs.

There was general agreement that no change would be made to the format of Committee minutes presented to the Shareholders.

7.2 Selection Committee meeting 15th April 2008

It was confirmed that the team representing England in the forthcoming Seniors Camrose Trophy was the team that won the Trial, with the exception of the substitution of John Holland for Peter Czerniewski.

Some concern was expressed about the EBU's programme of trials, and it was agreed that research would be undertaken by John Carter into selection procedures employed by other NBOs, for the benefit of the Selection Committee. The Chairman also expressed the view that whilst it was appropriate for members of the committee who were being considered for selection to absent themselves when such decisions were made, all members of the Committee should be permitted to express their opinions on format and procedure.

It was agreed that the roles of the three standing committees would be re-examined as part of the Strategy Proposals.

7.3 Editorial Board meeting 10th April 2008

Sally Bugden reported that the new contract with Blue2 was working very well. The balance of the magazine had been much improved by reducing the number of pages of advertisements, and it was now more coherent and structured.

The major topic for the next meeting would be copyright.

7.4 Youth Committee

7.4.1 Meetings of 16th January and 16th April 2008

The Chairman reported that sponsorship had been offered to fund a second team in the World Universities Championship in September, which could be either a team selected by the Youth Committee, or the runners-up in the Portland Bowl (the winners of the Portland Bowl qualifying by right).

Jeff Morris reported that a number of English pairs were entered for the European Youth Pairs in July, and funding had been supplied by the Youth Educational Trust. However, two pairs had applied after the grants had been allocated by the Trust, and it was suggested that they approach our own Trust. A discussion took place on how our Youth Trust might attract donations. It was agreed that Jeff Morris would produce for Matt Betts for leaflets at the Brighton Summer Meeting, and advertising on an appropriate 'charitable cause' website.

Graham Jepson said that it was hoped to take advantage of a possible donation to facilitate a pilot scheme to get Mini-bridge taught in up to 95 schools. Sally Bugden said that ideas for a sustainable 3-year project had been requested. No other initiatives had been suggested, and accordingly the above proposal would be put to the potential donor for their consideration.

7.4.2 Terms of Reference

The terms of reference for the Youth Committee were approved, subject to a number of amendments, and Christine Duckworth was thanked for all the work she had undertaken in producing them.

8 SPONSORSHIP

A paper produced by Malcolm Oliver was discussed. There was general agreement that whilst recent approaches had been unsuccessful, the proposals had been pitched at the right level. It was acknowledged that the Union had a commodity to sell and packages would be put together, capable of modification, to offer a variety of options with a realistic maximum of £10K.

Sally Bugden pointed out should any of the Standing Committees be successful in attracting sponsorship, she would be grateful if they referred the matter centrally to Malcolm Oliver, who is responsible for sponsorship matters, so that it could be dealt with centrally, as with any other commercial transaction.

9 BGB MATTERS

The Board congratulated the English team on winning the Lady Milne Trophy.

Malcolm Oliver reported as follows:

- The Lady Milne Trophy had been increased to six teams from 2009, the host country providing the additional team.
- For reasons of expense, staging difficulties and in some cases the uncertainty of being able to produce and/or afford additional teams in both categories, it was agreed that

the status quo would be maintained in the case of the Junior Camrose and the Peggy Bayer Trophies.

- Bridge Great Britain had accepted that its royalty agreement on sales of the Laws of Duplicate Bridge would be terminated when the 2008 Laws come into force in August.
- It was noted that there would be no change to the current arrangements for Bridge Great Britain Simultaneous Pairs events should the Pay to Play strategy be approved.
- The budget for the year to 31st December 2008 had indicated a shortfall of some £2K, and avenues for cost-saving were being investigated.

10 WBF & EBL MATTERS

The Chairman reported that a royalty of one-third of the selling price of the new Laws had been negotiated with the Portland Club.

It was agreed that should the Pay to Play strategy be approved, efforts would be made to renegotiate England's annual subscriptions to the WBF and EBL.

The Chairman was joined by the Board in thanking David Harris for the considerable amount of work he had undertaken on the Union's behalf over a number of years as delegate to both organisations.

11 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Jeff Morris reported that the Mind Sports Council was currently formalising its structure and producing a draft Constitution as a 'company limited by guarantee'. It was agreed that it would be beneficial for the Union to remain as a member.

Jeff pointed out that on 24th August England would formally become the next Olympic host, and the Olympic Organisation was keen for organisations to hold events to publicise the Games. The General Manager asked that anyone planning to do so should contact Matt Betts, the Union's Communications Officer.

Jeff Morris reported on a very successful Bridge Awareness Day in York. He did, however, suggest that future events should be linked to the Chess Federation and other Mind Sports organisations, and be held in public venues, preferably free of charge. Matt Betts would be investigating suitable areas and also how to attract press coverage.

Michael Hill reported on his recent visit to New Zealand. The country has universal membership with a subscription structure for its 16,000 members of £12 to the federation and £3 to the local region, with an extra charge for its magazine.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday 8th July at 1.00 pm. Stubbs Common Farm, Stubbs Walden, Doncaster.