



**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
HELD AT THE IMPERIAL HOTEL, LONDON, ON  
THURSDAY 6<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2008**

<b>Present:</b>	Peter Stocken	(Chairman)
	Sally Bugden	(Vice-Chairman)
	Michael Hill	(Hon. Treasurer)
	John Carter	
	Graham Jepson	
	Jeff Morris	
	Alan Nelson	
	Malcolm Oliver	
	Martin Pool	
	Steve Eginton	(Chairman, EBU Selection Committee for item 5 only)
	Barry Capal	(General Manager)
	Sandra Claridge	(Minute taker)

A minute's silence was observed in memory of Raymond Brock.

The first part of the meeting was a presentation by a lawyer specialising in applications for Charity status under the 2006 Charities Act, who outlined in depth the Union's options in regard to its structure. It was agreed that an application for charity status would not be pursued before autumn 2009.

**1** The Chairman reported that for personal reasons, Philip Mason had not felt able to continue as a Board member, and he was thanked for his valuable contribution over the last 12½ years. Andrew Petrie had been co-opted for the remainder of the year, and Malcolm Oliver had agreed to replace Philip as the Board's delegate to Bridge Great Britain.

**2** An apology for absence was received from Andrew Petrie.

**3** **MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF 17<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2008**

The minutes were signed as an accurate record.

## 4 FINANCIAL MATTERS

### 4.1 Forecast for 2007/8

The Treasurer reported that his updated forecast of a surplus of the order of £92K for the year to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2008 was a realistic figure. This had been achieved by overheads expenditure being held at a much lower level than originally expected, partly because of later than planned recruitment, but also because of significant savings on overtime and contract staff as a result of streamlining at Aylesbury. Higher net income had also been achieved from competitions and licences. He was also pleased to be able to report that Gail Nancarrow had been very successful in providing more accurate and detailed information in terms of cost areas.

### 4.2 Budgets for 2008/9

The Treasurer reported that the budget for the year indicated a projected loss of around £20K, largely due to a provision of around £20K for legal fees, and increased expenditure on publicity, marketing and staff costs. It was assumed that there would be a fall in membership numbers of 2%, but this would have little effect on income because of the 50p increase in the subscription.

The Treasurer expressed the view that in general terms the projections were satisfactory, but that savings must be made wherever possible, and running costs addressed on a long-term basis. The General Manager pointed out that specific criticisms made by the membership in regard to cost related to the Bridge Shop, staffing levels and Internationals. Sally Bugden said that the new teaching programme, subsidised by the Union, would hopefully generate new members.

Subject to a few minor adjustments the budget for 2008/9 was approved on the understanding that sustained efforts would be made to try to reduce the budgeted loss for the period.

## 5 POLICY FOR INTERNATIONALS

On behalf of the Selection Committee, Steve Eginton outlined aspects of its current policy and budgeting. He explained that budgeting was based on a 4-year cycle, and that apart from a substantial increase in the cost of the Camrose Trophy in the coming year due to England providing two teams as the host country, the only planned increase in expenditure was the appointment of a national team coach, which it was hoped would be a on a voluntary basis plus expenses, and the limited services of a Sports Psychologist.

It was noted that funding by the World Bridge Federation for the Mind Sports Olympiad was still rather vague and that no guarantees had been made. However, there could be financial benefits in sending an U28 team as this could reduce the worst-case scenario cost of Olympiad representation of around £43K. It was suggested by Jeff Morris that all England's teams in the Olympiad should have the same identifiable uniform.

Sally Bugden questioned the cost of Trials, which were intended to be self-financing. Steve said that the Committee would ensure that the reintroduced Premier League would be revenue neutral, or generate a small profit, which would be offset against expenditure in other areas of Internationals. The League was clearly seen as an excellent opportunity for experience of top level bridge, and the level of entries was much higher than expected.

In answer to a query about invitation events, Steve said that the experience was invaluable, and in most cases the cost was restricted to travel expenses.

The Chairman thanked Steve for his attendance.

## 6 STRATEGY PROPOSALS

The final document on the strategy proposals, produced following the last meeting of MDAG, was discussed at length, and the Chairman expressed his thanks for the enormous amount of work that the members had undertaken.

The Treasurer said that under the current membership system, annual spending was broadly even, unlike income which was obviously significantly higher in April and May when subscriptions are collected. If the Pay-to-Play proposals were to be approved, the implications on cash-flow must be addressed to safeguard the Union's reserves, currently standing at £300K. The implementation costs of the proposals would be in the region of £150K. However, in addition to that, the cash flow impact of billing Pay-to-Play two months in arrears would be in the region of £150K, the two together leaving no reserves to handle any overall shortfall in Pay-to-Play income, if, for instance, more clubs disaffiliated than expected.

A proposal was carried, as follows:

- (i) The Pay-to-Play fee would be set at 29p, billed on a 2-monthly basis in arrears.
- (ii) A discount of £2 per month per club would be offered to clubs who signed up to a monthly direct debit system.
- (iii) The Union would have an option of borrowing against the Aylesbury building to fund development costs, if necessary.

It was agreed that the document would be amended to include agreed changes, an option for non-acceptance of a capping rebate, clarification on the status of students and registered teachers, and that a summary page of Management Accounts would be appended. It would then be despatched to Board members, County Secretaries, County Membership Secretaries, Club Secretaries and Shareholders during the week commencing Monday 17<sup>th</sup> March, and published on the EBU website. In addition, an implementation group would be formed after the 28<sup>th</sup> May Board meeting.

If approved, the Pay-to-Play rate for implementation on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2010 would be set at the Annual General Meeting in October 2009, when all necessary constitutional amendments would be made. The Board agreed that county representation would

remain the same for the first year of pay-to-play, and John Carter offered to produce a suggested representation table for 2011 onwards, also taking into account the possible effects of charitable status.

## **7 GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT**

The General Manager reported as follows:

- The membership centralisation system continues to be improved by Michael Clark, and was ready for implementation.
- Advertising on the EBU website was proving problematical.
- The Communications Officer was holding a meeting on 13<sup>th</sup> March with the Ian Fleming Society, which had expressed an interest in staging a bridge event to celebrate the centenary year of the author's birth.
- The Policy & Procedures Manual would be expanded, and circulated to all members of standing committees.

## **8 DISCIPLINARY MATTERS**

This item was deferred to the next meeting. A paper included on the agenda would be passed to the Honorary Counsel.

## **9 COMMITTEE REPORTS**

### **9.1 Laws & Ethics Committee - 11<sup>th</sup> February 2008**

#### *9.1.1 Conduct Committee*

It was noted that Martin Pool, Malcolm Oliver and Jeremy Dhondy would undertake research into procedures adopted by other NBOs, and produce recommendations to the Board. The Chairman expressed the view that the conduct aspect of the game should be separated from the technical side. Martin said that delays in hearings were unfortunate but it was imperative that procedures conformed to recent legislation. Tribunals training had commenced, and comprehensive training would be given to Panel TDs to enable them to use their discretion when problems arose.

### **9.2 Tournament Committee - 4<sup>th</sup> March 2008**

Alan Nelson gave a verbal report on the meeting. The Committee Secretary would be instructed to ensure that papers for the meeting were distributed earlier, and that all correspondence was acknowledged.

### **9.3 Selection Committee - 21<sup>st</sup> February 2008**

A proposal that the Union's policy that, with the exception of Home Internationals, it would not host international events for the foreseeable future unless there were financial arrangements in place to safeguard the EBU membership, was agreed.

## 10 BRIDGE GREAT BRITAIN MATTERS

Jeff Morris requested that at its meeting in April, Bridge Great Britain would consider the addition of a sixth team to both the Lady Milne and Junior Camrose trophies, the host country being given the option to provide the additional team.

The Match Manager's report from the recent Junior Camrose & Peggy Bayer held in Manchester was noted. The Chairman reported that whilst the event had been very successful in bridge terms, the accommodation and travel arrangements fell short of the expected standard. It was agreed that positive steps should be taken to ensure that such problems were not repeated, and defined procedures produced, particularly in the case of junior events.

## 10 WBF & EBL MATTERS

The Chairman reported that he and the Vice-Chairman would be visiting the European Championship in Pau in June.

## 11 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

### 11.1 Youth Committee

Graham Jepson stated that the Youth Committee had written to all County Associations to encourage them to offer free membership to juniors. It was noted that there are currently no plans to reduce the EBU subscriptions for junior members, currently at £2 and £5.

Jeff Morris reported that the British Universities Sports Association was amalgamating with another body, and that every effort must be made to demonstrate that University Bridge was healthy.

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Next meeting</b> Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> May at 12.30 pm McAlpine Offices, 40 Bernard Street, London</p>
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