



**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE EBU LIMITED
AT BAKER TILLY MANAGEMENT LIMITED,
2 BLOOMSBURY STREET, LONDON WC1B 3ST
ON WEDNESDAY 15TH JANUARY 2014**

Present: Jeremy Dhondy (Chairman) (JD)
Ian Payn (Vice Chairman) (IP)
Andrew Petrie (Treasurer) (AP)
Jerry Cope (JC)
Heather Dhondy (HD)
Ron Millet (RM)
Malcolm Oliver (MO)
Barry Capal (General Manager) (BC)

Peter Stockdale (Minuting the meeting) (PS)

1. Apologies for Absence

Darren Evetts (DE)

2. Minutes of the meeting of 30th October 2013

2.1 Accuracy

The minutes were signed by JD as being an accurate report of the meeting.

2.2 Matters Arising

Tournament working groups

IP reported that a Brighton working group had been established within the Tournament Committee. He would give further information on any additional working groups at the next meeting.

Action: IP

Update on VAT Claim

AP reported that there was no new information. It was thought that the delay was probably positive. AP stated that there were additional claims he could pursue but it was agreed that the claim should be resolved first before any new action was taken.

Board Response to Middlesex Letter

JD reported that no reply had been received from Middlesex on this matter. He had used some material in the letter as part of his forthcoming article in EB

Disciplinary panel

JD stated that letters of thanks had been sent to the retiring members of the disciplinary panel.

Charity and Charity Partnership

BC reported that there had been approximately 30 enquiries regarding the vacant position, and twelve formal applications. Four candidates had been invited for interview and these would take place on 19th February.

Sims Promotion

It was reported that the promotion of the Simultaneous Pairs events had taken place, but probably too late to have made a significant impact on the January figures, which had shown a decline in entrants similar to other events.

The Aylesbury staff would soon be calling clubs who do not take part to encourage them to participate and to gather feedback on why they have not played in the past.

EBL/WBF matters

JD reported that he, IP, HD and BC had met with Yves Aubry and David Harris. Nothing significant was mentioned with regard to the possibility of hosting a future EBL event, although HD stated her belief that the EBL were struggling to find potential hosts so the cost would probably not be as high as would perhaps have been expected. JD added that he and BC would be attending the EBL meeting in Berlin later in the month, so more may be mentioned then.

MO asked if there had been any discussions on transparency, or on 'member counting'. JD replied that these had not been discussed. JD had asked why there had been no EBU Tournament Directors invited to EBL events despite their excellent performances at courses. He had been asked for a recommendation, which he had happily given.

Possible Survey

JC reported that he had received advice on the survey. The 'expert' believed that it would approximately cost between 50p and £1.50 per response, that 1000 responses would be needed to be representative of the membership as a whole, and that the response rate would be around 15-20% if both 'paper' and e-mail methods were used.

BC stated that on the previous two occasions when surveys had been undertaken the response rate was higher, and was very high on the first occasion – though the highly

contentious nature of the topic in question was acknowledged. He added that when the survey was untargeted there were twice as many 'paper' responses as online, although that is likely to be different now as more people have internet and e-mail access. He also believed that an online-only, qualitative survey could be undertaken for around £500.

The cost implications of using a 'paper' method were discussed, and how the response rate would be affected by this methodology.

RM suggested that the project could perhaps be given to a student with the necessary skills, as both their expertise and labour would be cheaper than using a professional company and/or Aylesbury staff.

It was agreed that as a change in the publishing schedule for the magazine is not imminent there is no need to move forward with this at present – there is no necessity to do so for 'interest's sake'. There was, however, an acknowledgement that some information prior to a decision process beginning may be necessary. It was suggested that the counties could be asked to solicit opinion on the board's behalf – potentially through DE.

JC suggested that the counties could also be asked for their opinion on alternatives to changing the magazine publishing schedule, for example an increase in UM fees.

JD reported that the forthcoming online version of the magazine will carry additional content so as to encourage greater online readership, and the board approved of this approach. It was suggested that in time further incentives could be considered, for example a voucher for discounted tournament entry.

JD reported that the New Zealand Bridge federation had announced that they would be switching to an online magazine. It was suggested that he and BC could ask European federations in Berlin how they are approaching the matter of their magazines, and likewise feedback could be sought regarding the recent changes made by UK publications.

Action: JD/BC

The Board all expressed their regret at the resignation of Sally Bugden (SB) from the board and her position with the charity, and acknowledged and thanked her for her significant contribution to the EBU, particularly in her roles as Chairman and Vice Chairman.

3. EBED

AP referenced the document circulated prior to the meeting. He emphasised that it had been necessary to stress to the Charity Commission that the charity would be independent from the EBU.

The resignation of SB from the trustees left a vacancy which had to be filled by nomination from the Board. JC was nominated by IP, seconded by HD, and was unanimously elected. He was then appointed by the Board to the position of Chairman.

BC reported that four people had expressed an interest in being a trustee, and it was agreed that AP and JC would discuss a process for appointing the additional trustees. **Action: AP/JC**

It was confirmed that the Youth and Education trustees had discussed and agreed that the charity would be wound up before EBED commenced operations.

The funding of the new charity was discussed. AP explained that there would be an annual donation of £50,000 to cover running costs, and a one-off £45,000 donation to cover initial costs of establishing the charity. There would also be £20,000 transferred from the Youth and Education Trust, but that was restricted to certain expenditure.

AP requested a resolution be passed to allow the one-off donation to be made in the 2013/14 Financial Year. This was proposed by JD, seconded by RM, and unanimously passed. This donation would be a transfer from the EBU funds and would appear on the Profit and Loss account (as opposed to being a simple balance-sheet exercise). **Action: AP**

AP explained that the hours done by the existing Aylesbury staff would be considered a donation from the EBU to the charity but he acknowledged that it would be useful for a tally of the hours to be kept so that the approximate 'cost' could be monitored.

JD commented that once the Education Manager was in place it would be necessary to make decisions regarding the future of EBUTA.

The Board expressed its thanks to AP for his work and guidance during the establishment of EBED.

4. General Manager's Report

BC had circulated this by e-mail prior to the meeting. He gave a further update on the progress of the online shop, and stated that it would be created in the next two weeks. Prior to that the server capacity would triple in size to handle the increased traffic – he added that the cost of the larger server was less than that of the current server. The shop would function like any other online store, and would go live in the new financial year. It was agreed that the new shop would be promoted in the magazine, in the diary and in CMF and that a voucher or discount would be considered to encourage sales in the initial period. BC confirmed that orders could still be placed via the telephone in the current way.

Action: BC

BC drew attention to Andrew Urbanski's report, stating that 21 clubs had affiliated or re-affiliated in 2013, so BC concluded that the current policies and actions must be effective.

Staff Pay was discussed and agreed.

BC reported that there had been problems with the scoring software at the Tollemache, but he believed these had been resolved, and that there had also been a problem at the end over an incorrectly entered result. This had highlighted the need for a reassessment of the Conditions of Contest and an emphasis that entry into a competition indicates an agreement to abide by these conditions. It had also been recognised that the conditions for congress entry were hard to find on the website, and were not a single document. This would be addressed, along with provision added for the use of photographs of any competitor taken during an event. The Tournament Committee and L&E committee would also consider at their forthcoming meetings items that arose from the above decision. **Action: BC**

5. Financial Matters

5.1 Treasurer's report and Management accounts

AP had circulated his report in advance of the meeting. He had nothing further to add, but drew attention to the success of the Lake Garda event and that this may hide the fact that competition entry revenue is generally in decline. He stated that he had asked Gordon Rainsford (GR) to write a report on the subject which could be put to a future meeting. RM commented that Yorkshire had arrested its declining numbers by focussing its events more on novices and players of a lower standard, and that as the nature of bridge players is changing the competitions needed to reflect this. AP confirmed that this has been expressed to GR.

HD questioned the separate entry for Junior Internationals on the report. It was agreed that keeping figures separate was potentially beneficial as the information may be useful to have, however AP confirmed that the Selection Committee could treat it as a single budget if they wished. HD stated that the Selection Committee commonly took this approach.

BC stated that the reforecast is likely to result in a surplus around the figure in the report. He was asked if anything should be brought forward into this financial year, particularly if UM fees would increase in 2014-15. BC stated that he did not believe there was anything which could be brought forward. AP stated there was the option to make a provision for specific expenditure.

AP stated that he had spoken with Gail Nancarrow and that the re-forecasting was on schedule. He added that expense allowances would be unchanged in 2014-15.

5.2 Licence Fees and other prices 2013-14

It was acknowledged that the title of the agenda item should refer to the 2014-15 financial year. AP requested that BC ask the Aylesbury staff to implement the change and that the relevant information be displayed in the website where appropriate. **Action: BC**

6. Award Structure

RM had provided a report in advance of the meeting. He stated that he believed the structure he proposed was not new, but an evolution of the current system with new awards to reflect new areas (play and education). The new education awards would be worked out in conjunction with EBED.

AP thanked RM for the report but stated a belief that some of the awards could be highly contentious, and believed a firmer set of criteria should be put in place to guide the selection of the recipients, in particular for the Gold and Silver awards. RM responded that he believed awards such as these will always have a subjective element, and in the particular case of the Gold and Silver awards the committee would be able to recognise a worthy candidate without the need for specific guidelines. It was agreed that both opinions were correct.

AP also expressed an opinion that he would prefer a 'Hall of Fame' rather than an award for outstanding International performances. It was agreed that this would have the benefit of allowing numerous inductees, particularly in the first year of creation, so may reduce the likelihood of dissatisfaction at someone being overlooked, however the issue of 'criteria for inclusion' may still

exist. HD would raise the matter with the Selection Committee and gather their comments.

Action: HD

There was disagreement on whether there would be greater interest, both in the media and amongst players, in an induction into a Hall of Fame or in the receipt of an award such as the Gold Award. The success and prestige of the American Hall of Fame was cited. It was also discussed whether non-players would be eligible for the Hall of Fame or whether a separate category would be needed. It was agreed to suspend any further discussion until the views of the Selection Committee were known.

JC expressed concern that giving the 'growth' awards based purely on figures could misrepresent the situation. It was agreed that figures should only be used for the establishment of a shortlist, and not the final decision.

It was agreed that the roll out of the new awards would take place over the next two years, and that nothing should be rushed for 2014. The Junior awards would be presented at Brighton so it would be necessary to soon begin the process for establishing the recipients of those awards. The remainder of the awards would be presented at the AGM in November so there was greater opportunity to consider any changes to those awards. It was agreed, however, that there would need to be an 'introductory period' prior to the implementation of any changes, or any new awards, so 2015 may be the earliest that any changes could be made.

It was agreed that, regardless of any changes, the main priority should be to ensure that the awards in 2014 are undertaken properly and to best effect to reward the recipients, raise the profile of the awards and promote the EBU. RM was asked to liaise with the Aylesbury staff to ensure this was achieved.

Action: RM

RM stated that he believed there should be a move towards the recipient of an award being presented with a personalised, engraved trophy. He showed examples of trophies which he believed would be suitable. There was general approval of this suggestion and of the examples shown. When the process reached a point when trophies would be considered further it was suggested that RM discuss the matter with the Competitions staff in Aylesbury.

7. EBU Shop

This had been discussed as part of agenda item 5.

8. Governance

JD reported that shareholders had been advised of likely updates to the guidelines and bye laws. He stated that at the April meeting he wished to raise the fact that there was no method by which a Vice President could be dismissed from the post. It was agreed that a special resolution be included and the wording for this was established. It was questioned whether legal advice should be taken on the matter. BC believed that would not be necessary, but JD would seek informal clarification. Action would also be taken to change 16.2.2 to bring it in to line with changes made at the last AGM.

Action: JD & BC

There was some discussion over the role of Vice President which had never been properly defined. It was agreed that an ambassadorial role was a part of what was hoped for. It was not clear at this

stage whether the board would recommend any further vice presidential appointments and this would be a topic for future discussion.

9. County Working Groups Progress

DE reported prior to the meeting that the Midlands and Northern County Working Groups had met, the Eastern County Working Group was meeting today, the Western County Working Group were set to meet when a date can be agreed and the Metropolitan County Working Group was yet to find a volunteer to organise a meeting. The response to the new structure had been generally positive. The main point which had been raised was that of communication - an online forum has been set up for these groups, but the uptake has been minimal to date. DE also reported that in the second half of the year a national county group meeting was likely to take place.

RM stated that he had attended the Northern group meeting and that it had been very positive and 'forward-looking'. JD commented that this was pleasing and it was good that counties were having an input.

10. EBL/WBF matters

The meeting with Yves Aubry, and the impending trip to Berlin, had already been discussed and JD had nothing further to add.

11. Any other business

The board approved the appointment of William Nicolle to the disciplinary panel. AP suggested, as a result of comments fed to him, that those without a legal background may benefit from either some formal training, or from an introductory period where they are invited to act only as a spectator at hearings.

JD reported that as SB had stepped down from all her positions this would include her role with the All Party Parliamentary Group. RM is to take her place, and whilst SB had already relayed this information to Baroness Henig JD would contact her to confirm the change. **Action: JD**