



**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 14th JANUARY 2015**

Present: Jeremy Dhondy (Chairman) (JD)
Ian Payn (Vice Chairman) (IP)
Andrew Petrie (Treasurer) (AP)
Jerry Cope (JC)
Heather Dhondy (HD)
Anthony Golding (AG)
Robert Lawy (RL)
Barry Capal (General Manager) (BC)

Peter Stockdale (Minuting the meeting) (PS)

The board members present unanimously approved the reappointment of AG.

1. Apologies for Absence

Darren Evetts (DE)
Ron Millet (RM)

2. Minutes of the meeting of 29th October 2014

2.1 Accuracy

The minutes were approved as accurate.

2.2 Matters Arising

2.3 / 2.1.3 – AP reported that he had spoken to Bridge Overseas but they were unlikely to take up the suggestion of enclosing their newsletter with copies of English Bridge.

4.1 – BC reported that Gordon Rainsford (GR) had not yet heard from Fotis Skoularikis from the Technology Committee at the WBF. It was agreed that GR would make contact again, and if that were unsuccessful JD would pursue the matter through different channels. BC advised that, as the necessary technology may not be available, the WBF may not be able to assist, though it was noted that establishing even a small overlap could be beneficial as it would mean not having to ‘start from scratch’. **Action GR (via BC)/JD**

11 – JD reported that he announced the introduction of the Tony Priday award at the memorial event held for him on 13th January. It was agreed that the award would be for excellence, whether in play or another area. The first award would be made at the 2015 AGM.

13 – JD reported that he had notified the counties of the end of the scheme from April 2016 in which a donation is made by the EBU to counties when a Bridge for All student had been a member for one year.

It was reported that DE had spoken to GR regarding the publishing of the dates which were under consideration if the date of a congress had not been confirmed. It was understood that, where possible, GR would ensure this happened.

There had been no developments regarding the possible simultaneous event with clubs in Singapore.

It was expected that the County Working group would report back in February on the topics on which they had been focussing. If that were the case then it was agreed these would be discussed at the strategy meeting in June.

BC advised that for 'supervised play session' no UM payment was made to the counties.

JD reported that GR had implemented the change in prizes, as outlined. Only one negative comment had been received from members about the decision.

3. General Manager's Report

BC had circulated his report prior to the meeting.

Enterprise replacement

He reported that two options were being considered as the replacement for the current membership database software – one provided by Workbooks, the other by the current supplier, TSG. He, JD, and some of the staff at Aylesbury, had met with both suppliers, and Workbooks would be returning to give a live demonstration of the software the following day (Thursday 15th January). He had not been able, so far, to arrange a similar demonstration from TSG but would continue to try.

It was agreed that as well as cost and performance, it would also be necessary to consider the payment structure, the financial stability of the supplying company, and the amount and quality of the technical support provided. This would be discussed at length once BC had acquired all the necessary information and feedback from staff following the demonstrations. BC advised that Enterprise would be supported until at least 31st August, and anticipated it could continue to be used for a period after that.

Other matters

Since the report had been circulated there had been enquiries about affiliation, and BC reported that one club, Shanklin Affiliated Bridge Club, had joined.

BC reported that progress was being made on the IT projects and the staff were moving solidly on to the Enterprise replacement. He advised that the new map on the website was in development – it had been delayed by the need for new member's area, but should be available by the end of the month.

4. Financial Matters

4.1 Treasurer's report & Management accounts

AP had distributed his report prior to the meeting. He highlighted that the accounts were showing a likely surplus, but the size of this would not be known until the end of the financial year. JD referenced the savings which had been made following the change in size of the magazine, and observed that the savings had been greater than initially anticipated. He hoped that the annual saving may be around £35K. BC commented that he believed there was a planned increase in postage prices, and this would therefore impact on the future cost of the magazine.

4.2. Licence Fees and other prices 2015-16

The prices had been circulated in advance of the meeting, and the proposals were endorsed.

4.3 2015/16 Budget

AP asked that board members contact the Accounts Manager, Gail Nancarrow, if they wished to have an input in to aspects of the 2015/16 budget.

i. EBED Settlement

AP made available figures which compared expenditure on Internationals, and on English Bridge magazine, with that on Education. He highlighted a disparity in the expenditure and proposed action be considered to bring the expenditure on Education more in line.

He outlined some ways in which this could occur:

- i) Changing the allocation of staff costs so that the salary of a staff member who splits time between EBU and EBED work is paid in full by the EBU, but works full time on EBED matters.
- ii) A change to the pricing structure of TD training courses – from Buy One Get One Free, to a discount off all places – which would generate extra income for EBED, and at no cost to EBU.
- iii) Transferring the EBU Spring Sim Pairs to become the EBED Spring Sim Pairs, and reducing the EBU donation to EBED by the net income. This would represent no cost to the EBU, but EBED would gain by the amount of the VAT saved – approximately £3K per year.
- iv) The EBU make an additional donation to EBED for a specific purpose.

It was questioned why EBED should be receiving a greater financial contribution when they had yet to spend money from their existing budget. JC explained that as EBED had not yet received any substantial donations or sponsorship money then in order to get projects started they would need to spend 'business as usual' money. They therefore needed financial assistance to supplement this. It was agreed that money from the EBU would use in general terms to 'stimulate education', whether through materials, teachers, etc.

All four proposals were approved and would be included in the forthcoming budget planning process. **Action: AP**

With reference to proposal (i) it was noted that the staff member spent time working on EBUTA matters, and it was questioned whether EBUTA should become part of EBED. Whilst recognising that if EBUTA was part of EBED then it would be open to non-affiliated clubs, who may dissuade students from engaging in EBU activities, it was also acknowledged that others who would otherwise be outside the EBU's sphere of influence may be engaged. As the organisational advantages of the transfer would be beneficial it was therefore agreed that EBUTA would become part of EBED.

With reference to proposal (iv) it was agreed that the EBU would specify that the money be used for employing a bridge teacher to look at the teaching materials which already exist, and update, consolidate or discard some of them as necessary. RL agreed to be involved with the project. **Action: RL**

2. Other issues

AP advised that due to savings in operational costs, and a reduction in the rate of inflation, the accounts were likely to show a surplus against the budget, rather than a deficit. He therefore asked whether some of the surplus should be returned to the members.

It was recognised that 2015/16 may be a difficult financial year, so arguments could be made for keeping the money in reserves. AP advised, however, that the auditor had noted that the holdings in reserves may be too high, and he was reluctant to add more. He added that the costs for the forthcoming year were better known, so forecasting in the budget would be easier. It was therefore agreed that some of the surplus would be returned.

Possible methods were considered, and it was decided that the money would be returned via a donation of playing cards to every club. This would be of financial benefit to the club, and a tangible benefit to the members.

AP asked that all members send to him suggestions on how any future surplus in the reserves could be invested. **Action: all**

4.4 Principles of Tournament Finances

Prior to the meeting AP had circulated figures, and a proposed policy, relating to tournament finances. He highlighted that the inflation adjusted figures showed a decrease in income, but also that the operating margin had been maintained to give an average of 15% across the last seven years. He stated that tournaments showed a small profit when salaries and overheads were included.

The policy was approved. BC would archive the document and also pass it on to GR for his reference. **Action: BC**

4.5 Update on Bridge as a Sport

AP circulated a report outlining the current position with the appeal and arbitration service. IP advised that a colleague would consider the case with a view to a possible judicial review at a reduced fee. AP and IP would liaise in order to move things forward with IP's colleague as a decision

was needed by 3rd February. The board agreed that the officers could decide on the right course of action when necessary. **Action: IP & AP**

AP advised that Sport Resolution state that their arbitration should be binding, and he raised the possibility that, as the EBU may continue to contest the situation if the resolution were not in its favour, it would be wrong to use their services.

JD reported that he and AP had met with Sajid Javid, minister for Culture, Media and Sport, and had briefed him on the subject. He had been receptive, but concerned that it may 'open the flood gates'. JD added he would contact Mr Javid's secretary to ask how his enquiries were progressing, and would also notify Bob Blackman, a member of the All Party Parliamentary Group for Bridge who had arranged the meeting. **Action: JD**

The possibility of suggesting that members campaign on the EBU's behalf, and write to their MP, or that a profession PR firm be employed to raise the profile of the issue, was discussed.

5. Future of Standing Committees

JD had circulated a document prior to the meeting which outlined the position of the current Standing Committees. He proposed that although changes had been timetabled for May they should not take place until the AGM in November so as to not disrupt current committees. This was agreed, and it was decided that the change to the articles which would be needed would be discussed at the Shareholders Meeting in May and then at the County Chairmen's meeting in July.

The possible composition of the sub-committee was discussed. It was agreed that the wording used by the Charity Commission would be adopted to allow for flexibility in their composition. AG would ensure the articles were properly amended. **Action: AG**

6. Disciplinary Panel

JD had received an application from Norman Innes of Kent to sit on the Disciplinary Panel. This was approved. JD would inform him. **Action: JD**

7. Brighton 2016

The results of the survey which was sent to all 'tournament players' in November were circulated prior to the meeting.

The survey results showed that whilst the members were happy with Brighton as a location, many were concerned about the costs associated with attending. As moving to the possible venue in Eastbourne would help address some of these concerns it was agreed that BC should ask Brighton for a better offer – and if that were not successful then the Eastbourne option should be investigated further. **Action: BC**

It was agreed that a brief outline of the survey results would be reported in English Bridge to keep members updated.

8. Sponsorship

RM had spoken to a company, an existing partner of the EBU, with regard to a possible sponsorship arrangement, and had submitted a report prior to the meeting. Whilst all were in agreement that an

arrangement would be beneficial and should be pursued, it was thought that the proposal outlined in RM's report was too time consuming to administer. BC would therefore liaise with RM with a view to suggesting to the company a simpler method. **Action: RM & BC**

9. Bridge for All and Education Offers

It had previously been noted that in recent years a lot of teaching schemes had been developed, but few had been formally ended and so each had been superimposed on top of the others. It was therefore agreed it was necessary to look at what was in place, recognise what was needed, and ultimately pare it back to a single scheme.

It was agreed that developing the methodology for the scheme may be a matter for EBED to undertake, but they should first be guided by the EBU board on the matter of 'what' should exist. JC and RL would therefore look at what currently exists – including assessing the purpose and structure of Bridge for All – and outline the principles of what should form a future scheme. These 'bullet points' would then guide EBED's future consideration of how a scheme could be put in place. **Action: RL & JC**

10. Bridge Club Live Update

BC reported that Bridge Club Live had become an Online Affiliated Club as of 1st January 2015. He advised the board of the financial arrangement, and that they intended running a trial sim pairs event in a few months.

11. Scoring Programs Update

BC reported that Ian Mitchell in the Aylesbury office was comfortable using the Jeff Smith software so would be able to offer the necessary support from the transfer point later in the year.

JD advised that decisions would need to be made regarding the pricing structure for supporting the Jeff Smith software. The current pricing structure may not be appropriate, so it would be necessary to develop a new structure which gives benefits to EBU members without dissuading others – non-affiliated English clubs, clubs in the rest of the UK, and overseas clubs – from using the software.

12. EBL/WBF matters including Champions Cup

HD reported that she and IP had contacted some of the CBAs in the 'Home Counties' to ask for sponsorship of the Champions Cup, but had not receive any positive responses. A potential 'playing sponsor' had been identified, however, and HD had sent information to them and would follow up in the near future. **Action: HD**

JD reported that he understood that the EBL President, Yves Aubry, would be making a 'site visit' to the Champions Cup venue in due course, but he had no further details at present.

13. Any other business

13.1. June Board Meeting

JD proposed that the June meeting, to be held in Aylesbury, follow a similar format as previous years, with a meeting on the first day, and a 'strategy discussion' on the second day. The staff would be invited to share a buffet lunch at Aylesbury on the first day.

13.2. Diamond Award Update/Priday Award

JD had addressed the topic of the Tony Priday award earlier in the meeting.

The Diamond Award would be presented by JD at the Lederer Memorial Trophy event. RM is arranging for a trophy to be produced. **Action: RM**

Other business

JD recommended that consideration start to be given to award recipients for 2015, including the Tony Priday Award. He expressed his hope that awards for teaching would be given out in 2015 now that EBED was fully operational and able to accurately gauge the contributions made.

BC reported that the donation of South Bucks Bridge Centre would be completed on Friday 16th January. The current manager would be leaving the position on 27th February, and the replacement would be signing their contract soon. The arrangement of costs between EBED and the EBU would shortly be agreed. It was recognised that members of EBU/EBED should attend an event at the centre in the near future to make themselves known and to support the centre.