



**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE EBU LIMITED  
AT ENGLISH BRIDGE UNION, BROADFIELDS, AYLESBURY, HP19 8AZ  
ON WEDNESDAY 13<sup>th</sup> JUNE 2018**

**Present:** Jeremy Dhondy (Chairman) (JD)                      Robert Lawy (RL)  
              Ian Payn (Vice Chairman) (IP)                      Ron Millet (RM)  
              Jerry Cope (Treasurer) (JC)                      Graham Smith (GS)  
              Bev Godfrey (BG)                                      Peter Stockdale (Minuting the meeting) (PS)  
              Anthony Golding (AG)

**1. Apologies for Absence**

Heather Dhondy (HD)  
Gillian Fawcett (GF)  
Gordon Rainsford (General Manager) (GR)

**2. Minutes of the meeting of 21<sup>st</sup> March 2018**

**2.1 Accuracy**

The minutes were approved as accurate.

**2.2 Matters arising**

8 – JD reported that the interviews for new EBED Trustees would take place on 28<sup>th</sup> June. It was noted that the presentation by EBED Trustee Caroline Small at the Shareholders' Meeting had been well received.

**3. Financial matters**

JC had circulated his report along with the Draft Accounts for 2017/18. These would be the basis for the final accounts which would be produced by September. He was pleased by the final figure, which was ahead of budget. This was aided by both the sale of the new law books, and the Portland Club waiving any royalty payments on these books.

He advised that some additional, unbudgeted legal costs had arisen for the cases with both Sport England and HMRC. These had been included in the accounts within the administrative costs, which was why this area was now over budget.

JC reported that he had spent time looking at the Universal Membership data in respect that whilst the total number of sessions had increased a small amount, revenue had stayed reasonably constant. He believed that this was caused by some clubs being slow to submit their sessions, and by the lag-time created by some clubs being invoiced only every two months, and therefore was not a cause for concern.

The Board was pleased to learn that fundraising for China had exceeded £40K. Whilst the target had been £60K, the budget had only included an expectation of £25K, so the extra was very welcome. He hoped that the donations will still continue as this would further reduce any strain on other areas of the budget.

JC advised that he continued to be happy with the four-year plan which he had developed, and that the forecast for 2018-19 was looking acceptable. He noted that the performance in the ongoing European Championships would impact on expenditure for the 2019 World Championships – the budget had made provision for 1 ½ teams competing. Only the entry fee and uniform costs are paid for the Senior team.

#### **4. General Manager's Report**

GR was absent, but had circulated a report prior to the meeting, and the Board discussed various matters which it raised.

Matters relating to the Aylesbury staff were discussed.

JD reported that GR had said that some clubs had been unwilling to sign the necessary contract relating to the sharing of data, brought about by the introduction of the General Data Protection Regulation. GR was working to address the issues which had been raised, and it was believed that most could be resolved. JC advised the Board that it may be necessary at the September meeting to consider what action to take if a satisfactory conclusion could not be reached with some clubs.

The Club Liaison Officer, Bev Purvis (BP), had continued to have a number of beneficial visits to clubs, and had encouraged some new affiliations – some clubs had narrowly voted not to affiliate (JD referenced one club where a majority wished to affiliate but its constitution required a larger percentage than that which was in favour).

Using iZettle – a method of taking electronic payment – at competitions had been researched. Whilst JC expressed some concerns about the administrative work that was required to ensure that all information was adequately entered onto the central systems, the conclusion amongst staff had been that it was likely worth adopting. BP understood that some clubs were interested in using it to collect payments at their sessions.

The Board expressed support for the Bridge Warehouse trying to use eBay and Amazon as a way to reach a larger audience. It was hoped that this may be adopted from September if the difficulties with currency can be resolved.

The cost of taking payments by cheque – now £1.50 per cheque cashed – was recognised. The Board hoped that members could be encouraged to pay by other means. They would ask GR for an update on when it was likely that members could use the credit on their account when entering a competition online, or buying from the Bridge Warehouse's website.

Issues relating to the compatibility of Sage with Workbooks were again discussed.

It was expected that work on a simplified version of EBUScore for clubs would likely start soon, however there was no timetable for its production.

The possibility of further changes to the NGS were discussed. It was recognised that whilst there was no statistical evidence to support many of the concerns which were raised, these misconceptions continue to affect whether people were willing to act as a 'mentor' at their club. The Board was reluctant to make changes simply because some players were unwilling to believe the data, however they recognised that the refusal of such players to act as a mentor adversely impacted both the volunteers organising the sessions, and the weaker players who would benefit from such sessions. Some possible adjustments were raised, and GR would be asked to consider them for the next

meeting. One specific problem mentioned was the effect of having too many pairs in the field whose NGS does not count as that would mean the session would be ungraded. Further efforts would also be made to educate clubs on the recent changes which had been made, and to again point to the information about whether your grade is affected by playing with lower graded players.

## **5. Monetary fines**

JD explained to the Board that if a member was found guilty of breaking a bye-law a Disciplinary Panel would determine their punishment. An option available to the Panel was a monetary fine – though this penalty could not be given to anyone under 18. The fine could not be more than £500, and in any situation it is not the only available punishment. The member would not be eligible to play until the fine was paid in full. The Laws & Ethics Committee had asked the Board to consider whether monetary fines should continue to be an option available to the Disciplinary Panel.

The concerns expressed by some members of the L&EC – that some members may not be able to afford to pay a fine, and that monetary fines may not be “morally appropriate” – were acknowledged.

The Board voted (with one abstention) in favour of monetary fines remaining an option open to the Disciplinary Committee.

## **6. Education**

RL had attended the recent event held by EBED for those who run the courses to train bridge teachers. He reported that this was a good event, and he was encouraged by the progress in this area. He advised that work was being done toward having a system of assessment for bridge teachers, so they could become ‘accredited’.

## **7. Membership matters**

### **7.1 Refusal of Membership**

In light of recent incidents, AG had been asked to consider whether it was possible, within the current byelaws of the EBU, to refuse membership to an individual. He advised that there were currently provisions within the byelaws to exclude an existing member in certain circumstances, but not to prevent anyone becoming a member in the first instance. It was recognised that when appropriate there was provision through the safe guarding policy to restrict attendance at events in order to protect young people.

A club could do as it wishes in this respect, assuming its actions were lawful and conformed with its constitution. It was noted that the model constitution included a line saying players ‘should apply for membership’ – implicit in that is that club can refuse membership if it has grounds to do so.

The difficulty of monitoring EBU membership through Universal Membership was recognised – whilst the EBU may wish to exclude someone, it was difficult to ensure they did not become a member by joining an affiliated club which may be unaware of the situation in question.

The Board recognised its duty to ensure that all members be able to play in an environment in which they both felt, and were, safe. There were, however, also comments pointing to the fact that everyone is entitled to be presumed ‘innocent’ until proven otherwise – in this case it should be assumed that they will behave appropriately in the bridge environment in question, but should they not then, as a member, the current byelaws would allow for their exclusion.

All were in agreement that should any provision to refuse membership be included in the byelaws, then it would be necessary to have a robust system for so doing. This should include strong 'checks and balances', and an appropriate appeals procedure should the player wish to challenge the decision.

As any change to the byelaws would need approval from the Shareholders, in due course it may therefore be appropriate to seek input from the County Working Groups.

It was agreed that the first step should be to seek to establish whether any similar organisations had any such provision within its byelaws, and be guided by an organisation such as the Sport & Recreation Alliance. JD would try to establish some benchmarks. In addition, AG would give thought to what form a process for exclusion (and appeal) may take. The issue would be considered again at the September meeting.

## **7.2 Membership Project**

RM reported that work had begun on rolling out the membership campaign to other areas, with interest expressed by several Counties/regions. He was leading the subcommittee in guiding these interested Counties through the initial stages. The Board believed these Counties provided a good mix of situations – different locations, demographics, membership size and finances of the counties involved, etc. They would therefore indicate the methods which could be used – and the likely returns – if the scheme was rolled out more widely.

RM advised that work was being done to produce data which would both reveal counties and clubs which were in need of help – though noted that such counties/clubs would need to want to be helped – and provide data for comparison in due course to show whether there had been any improvements.

In GR's absence, PS reported that he, BP and GR were working to create the job description for the potential employee to assist in the membership campaign. It was hoped that it would be advertised later in the month.

## **8. County Working Group**

GS reported that the County Working Groups (CWG) in the East and South East were yet to start, however there was some activity in the South West, with a few counties keen to start collaborating. It was likely that two or three counties would start things going via email or Skype, and hopefully other counties would join in future.

It was hoped that once the South West group was active it would be possible to create a National Working Group. If the counties in the East or South East had yet to meet as a CWG, then interested parties would still be encouraged to be involved in the early stages of the NWG.

GS advised that the Chairs in the East and South East would be contacted to share the Terms of Reference, and highlight the work done in the Midlands and the North, so as to show what could be achieved and to encourage their involvement.

## **9. Awards**

### **9.1 Diamond Award**

JD recused himself while nominees for the Diamond Award were discussed. The Board agreed the two recipients, and these would be announced and presented at the AGM.

## **9.2 Tony Priday Award**

The Board agreed to consider this further at the September meeting.

## **9.3 Tom Bradley and Alec Salisbury Awards**

The Alec Salisbury Award recognises an outstanding contribution to junior bridge by a school teacher. The Tom Bradley Award recognises an outstanding contribution to junior bridge by a non-school teacher. Nominations had been received and processed by EBED, and they had given their recommendations to the Board. The Board approved their recommendations. These awards would be made around the time of the Summer Festival in August.

## **9.4 Young Player and Young Pair of the Year Awards**

The Selection Committee, with input from the junior squad leaders, had provided a list of nominees for the awards. The members of the Board present felt ill-equipped to make a decision between the candidates, so asked JD to liaise with GF. The Board was happy for them to make a decision on their behalf.

## **10. WBF/EBL matters**

JD reported that the videos to help with understanding some of the more common infringements had needed to be updated following the changes to the Laws in 2017. These updates had now been made, and the new videos were online. These had been partly funded by the EBL and WBF, and other NBOs could arrange to have them re-subtitled in another language (for a fee, though none of the money would be received by the EBU).

The EBL elections had been held during the European Championships. A new President was elected – he had stood on a platform of greater financial transparency and accountability, which the Board welcomed.

## **11. Any other business**

- JD notified the Board of his intention to write to all Shareholders and County Chairmen to follow-up on the discussions at the Shareholders' Meeting regarding the additional meeting which was held each year. He would ask for views as to whether the additional meeting was still wanted, and if so whether there was any desire for it to be done differently.

It was noted that there was nothing in the Articles of Association which necessitated the second meeting, however there was provision for a vote to mandate that there be one – it would therefore be necessary to double-check that no such vote had ever been taken before any change was made.

- RM commented that the Northern CWG had queried whether more should be done to widen the general population's knowledge about bridge – i.e. advertising not to encourage potential members to play, but simply to increase awareness of the game. It was agreed that this would be something to consider later in the membership campaign, though it may be prohibitively expensive, given the budgets available and the potential benefits.