



**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE EBU LIMITED
AT YOUNG CHELSEA BRIDGE CLUB, GOLDHAWK ROAD, LONDON, W12 8HA
ON WEDNESDAY 22nd JANUARY 2020**

Present:

Ian Payn (Chairman) (IP)	Rob Lawy (RL)
Gillian Fawcett (Vice Chairman) (GF)	Ron Millet (RM)
Jerry Cope (Treasurer) (JC)	Patrick Shields (PS)
Gordon Rainsford (Chief Executive) (GR)	Sam Kelly (Minutes) (SK)
Anthony Golding (AG)	

1. Apologies for Absence

Bev Purvis (BP), Graham Smith (GS)

2. Co-option of Board members for 2019/20 and Board Director Responsibilities (IP)

Patrick Shields was co-opted to the board.

The Board of Director responsibilities were agreed as follows:

IP – Chair of the board; chairman of the tournament panel; BGB Representative 2020/21; EBED; Laws & Ethics
GF – Vice-Chair of the board; EBED Trustee; Internationals; Fund raising; Laws & Ethics
JC – Treasurer; Staff
RL – Education; Volunteers
RM – Membership; Strategy
PS – Strategy; Tournaments
AG – Constitution
GS – Warehouse; Counties
BP – Clubs

The Laws and Ethics Committee is chaired by Heather Dhondy (HD). GF and IP will not be attending each meeting, although they will be kept informed of all disciplinary matters. It was agreed that policy decisions made by the L&E committee should not be enacted until the board has had chance to read the minutes of the L&E meetings; this gives the board the opportunity to exercise its right to overturn any decisions.

IP will also take the lead with the relationship with EBED.

RM questioned if another director of the board would be co-opted. IP confirmed that this was not compulsory and that a decision would be made in due course. It was noted that some IT knowledge or experience and/or fund-raising knowledge would be beneficial to have at board level.

RM suggested adding an article at an appropriate time to the website to advertise for potential Board members.

3. Minutes of the Wednesday 30th October 2019

3.1. Accuracy

One small typo noted.

3.2. Matters arising

No matters arising.

4. Chief Executive's Report (GR)

GR circulated his report prior to the meeting and briefly highlighted certain points.

He highlighted the recommendation that as the current agreement with Bridge Overseas is due to come to an end next year, this would be an ideal time to change to a new travel company. GR has been in talks with a number including Arena Travel (First for Bridge) which looked better than the others. There was discussion around how a new contract would differ from what is currently in place. GR confirmed that the new contract would be very similar. He also stated that it would be best to move quickly on this decision.

The board agreed with the recommendation to appoint Arena Travel and left the finer details for GR to pursue.

GR then talked about the IT problems that happened over the Christmas period at the end of 2019. He confirmed that this was a potential ransomware attack, and that even though the issue caused significant inconvenience, it would have been worse if it had not taken place over Christmas, a time when our office was mostly closed. He confirmed that he has been in talks with Entrust IT (the remote desktop hosts), and he is happy with their confirmation that no data was leaked.

RM questioned if GR could find out if our data is stored on a system or the cloud and also what level of encryption is used in the storage of the data.

GR noted that he would like to trial a daily 12-board game on BBO, in addition to those on Funbridge. The board agreed with this.

In relation to the website, GR stated that the contractor who was possibly going to make the changes, is no longer able to work on this project. There are a number of issues, including that the platform used (Drupal 7) will no longer be supported after 2020. Following some discussion, it was agreed that GR will look to set up a meeting with a new contractor.

5. Financial Matters (JC)

5.1. Treasurer's Report & November Management Accounts

JC circulated his report prior to the meeting.

The overall thread of the report was that the financials are steady as you go but heading into a deficit. JC confirmed that the warehouse is in the last month down on sales but up on margins.

It was also noted that roof works are needed, which will need the board approval. After some discussion, the board approved the works to the roof at a total cost of £23.3k + VAT.

It was noted that because of this unbudgeted expenditure we will not meet this year's budget, this highlights the need for reserves.

5.2. Schedule for 2020/21 Budget

JC noted that he is struggling to balance the budget next year, with difficult decisions to be made in March. He is not over optimistic with the Warehouse and whether the current slight improvement Universal Membership subscriptions would continue. There is a lot of work to be done to get into the black as targeted.

6. Disciplinary Panel & Prosecution Panel 2020-21 Confirmation

The report by Nick Doe (ND) was circulated prior to the meeting. JD will be invited to the Prosecutions panel for 2020. IP noted that there are three items pending for disciplinary hearings, and he may run out of people for each case. The board noted that people could be added ad-hoc as long as the decisions are presented to the board before-hand. It was also decided that if a member does not respond to the re-appointing email then they would not be re-appointed to the panel. The panel was approved.

7. EBU Strategy Review (JC)

The strategy review document was discussed, along with the communication of the report detailing the current progress made. It was also noted that when the current report is published, this will also include details of items of focus for the next 12 months. The strategy should be seen to evolve from year to year.

There was discussion around the new strategic plan for next year.

The strategic overarching message is that we have made some good progress and that we are getting there but there is still a lot more work to be done.

PS questioned if some of the strategic aims should be treated as business as usual enabling greater focus on key issues.

All strategic leads were asked to send firm updated objectives for 2020 to PS by 31 January.

8. EBED Matters (IP/RL)

IP confirmed he attended a meeting in December 2019 with Andy Margetts (AM) (EBED Chairman), Donna Wright (DW) (EBED Chief Executive Officer) and Mary Sharp (MS) (EBED Trustee). Although there were no final decisions made during the meeting, overall it was positive, with some quantified objectives due to be finalised in the next few months. It was also agreed that both the EBU and EBED have a shared aim to getting more bridge players playing in clubs. It was also agreed that both organisations are committed to working closely. EBED also confirmed that they have plans to expand the club teacher training to more areas.

IP noted that when JL, TA or GR visit clubs, they should be on the same page as EBED. It was also agreed that (only) where there were clear shared project plans, staff in the two organisations should be working as one team. Communication must improve between both organisations. AM and IP agreed that they will have at least two meetings per year. DW will send a version of her monthly report to the EBU board.

RL & GF noted that from their experience working with EBED that their trustees and committee members have a very positive attitude. They also reminded us that neither organisation could complete their aims alone.

IP stated that EBED are looking to overhaul the EBTA qualification.

IP finished by reaffirming that now is a time to concentrate on the future, and it is important that everyone embraces this, and adopts a positive culture of progressing this.

9. Selection Matters – Funding (GF)

The international budget is sizable; the new chair is currently completing a review of this.

A discussion was had around which events are supported and if this should change in future.

Currently the EBU only provides full funding for the Open and Women's events. There is also funding for the junior teams, with teams for the Under 16; Under 21; Under 26 and Under 26 Women's categories. The WBF has also announced a new Under 31's category.

No funding (except entry fees and uniform) is given to senior or mixed teams.

The board decided that the focus for funding should be the Open and Juniors teams. The Selection Committee should be given the option to decide how the funding for the teams is broken down, but with the overall shape to be approved by the board before being implemented.

It was decided that while the international teams will continue to receive support, in order to promote duplicate bridge on the world stage, there should be more consideration given to being more efficient with funds, for example when booking flights.

GF will report the decisions to the Selections Committee Chairman Alan Mould.

10. Membership Update (RM)

RM started by stating that the membership will take time to grow. He noted that the position of regional development officer is a lonely one and that any new appointees will require a lot of support. He suggested having people from the EBU as a central support for counties.

RM also noted that some clubs and counties are choosing not to see the current problem and that this in itself is a problem.

RM also noted that TA is working on stats for the clubs, and has found for example that clubs with two or more club nights a week, results in more than double the activity from members. PS noted that he had worked on something similar for his club. RM asked if the process behind this could be made available to other clubs.

11. County Working Groups – Update (GS)

There was no County Working Groups update to the GS' unavoidable absence.

12. Agenda for County Chairmen's Meeting May 2020

IP requested ideas agenda items for the County Chairmen's meeting taking place in May.

PS suggested Transition from classroom to clubroom; transition from clubroom to tournament play; and how to work with unaffiliated clubs in your area.

There was also the suggestion of developing bridge administrators.

13. BGB Representative 2020-21

IP volunteered to be the BGB representative for 2020-21.

14. Any Other Business

None.

Next Meeting: 18th March 2020

FEBU