



**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE EBU LIMITED**  
**via Zoom 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2021**

**Present:**

Ian Payn (IP)	Rob Lawy (RL)
Gillian Fawcett (Vice Chairman) (GF)	Ron Millet (RM)
Jerry Cope (JC)	Kay Preddy (KP)
Gordon Rainsford (Chief Executive) (GR)	Patrick Shields (PS)
Adrian Darnell (AD)	Gayle Webb (GW)
Cathryn Fox (CF)	Sam Kelly (Minutes) (SK)
Anthony Golding (AG)	

**1. Apologies for Absence**

None

IP asked the Board to confirm the co-option of KP to the Board. The Board agreed and welcomed KP to the Board.

IP asked the Board to confirm the co-option of CF to the Board. The Board agreed and welcomed CF to the Board.

**2. Minutes and Approval from the last meeting**

**2.1 Accuracy**

RL questioned the wording of the roles of the Board in the previous minutes. IP confirmed that the minutes did not need updating but that the website should be updated to reflect the roles confirmed at the previous meeting.

AD noted that he should be added to the previous meetings attendance.

**2.2 Matters Arising**

None

**3. Financial Matters (JC)**

**3.1 January Management Accounts & Treasurer's Report**

JC gave a brief overview of his report. He confirmed that the EBU is in a better place than envisioned last summer, but we are still showing a substantial loss. There are still some large one-off payments due before year end.

**3.2 Budget 2021/2022**

JC stated he had created a budget, balanced in risks and opportunities, but still showing a manageable deficit, with a little money for investment while still remaining prudent. There is therefore less money in the budget for instance for EBED, staff salaries and international team funding. Due to the current uncertainty, JC advised reviewing the budget in the autumn.

JC asked the Board for approval of the budget. The Board approved the budget unanimously, with no further questions.

#### **4. Chief Executive's Report (GR)**

GR gave a brief update, following his written report.

GR noted that the new IT group is functioning well, with expertise from Tim Anderson (TA), CF and Kiat Huang (KH). Following the launch of the new website, CF and TA will look into the possibility of savings and improvements for our IT systems. A full review of IT requirements is planned for the summer.

PS asked if the online social bridge rooms will remain following lockdown easing. GR confirmed that they would stay as long as there is demand.

#### **5. Internationals (IP/GF)**

##### **5.1 International Funding**

Alan Mould (AM) was invited to this section of the meeting to discuss international funding. The EBU has sought legal advice regarding the funding of international teams, with regards to the equalities act. AM confirmed that the EBU would be able to fund an open team or a mixed team without the need to justify the lack of funding for other teams. However, if there was funding given to a womens, seniors or juniors team without funding for other teams, this would need to be justified. AM noted that the juniors team could be seen to be promoting bridge to young people.

There was discussion around funding for international teams in the next financial year. It was decided that a minimum number of events would be fully funded. Such funding will include entry fees, uniforms, reasonable expenses for travel and hotel costs and a per diem expenditure. The fully funded events will be Blue Ribbon junior competitions and an Open team. Another set of events will be part funded. Any remaining events would not receive funding. Part funding will include entry fees. All funded teams will sign a contract.

Action: AM will put together a list of events that will be split into the fully funded, part funded and unfunded categories. This will be confirmed with GF and IP and the Selection Committee before being sent to JC for the budget.

##### **5.2 European Championships**

The Board decided that they would be prepared to support the existing selected teams' desire to attend the European Championships if the event is held face-to-face. The Board was asked to consider: 1. Considering the current state of play in England, how comfortable they were in sending a team to the Championships if the event does go ahead and 2. How comfortable they were with participating in an online event if the event is held online.

Following a discussion, the Board decided that they would be prepared to send a team to the European Championships if the event is held face-to-face, as long as the competitors agree to confirm in writing that they are happy to travel, are aware of the potential risks and have appropriate travel insurance.

If the event is held online, the teams will probably play in venues in England, with supervision for online play. An announcement is due on 31<sup>st</sup> of March from the European Bridge League.

## **6. Tournament Development (RL)**

RL discussed the Competitions Strategy Sub-committee report that was circulated to the Board prior to the meeting.

RL explained that the report was very much in draft form and that the group were looking for the Board to provide some lead in how they should proceed. RL pointed out that following lockdown, the current competitions and over-packed calendar need a full review.

RL explained that the subcommittee was cognisant of the need for the strategy to be fully joined up with the wider aspects of the EBU strategy.

The report set out to establish the terms of the future engagement of the EBU with Clubs and Counties.

The subcommittee were mindful of the revenue implications of removing events from the calendar. There was a discussion about the need for regulation and the role of the EBU in facilitating that.

JC raised concerns about not allowing counties to run online events even in a centrally co-ordinated programme. There was a discussion about the difficulty of allowing counties to run events online. GR noted that with face to face events, geography acts to limit tension between competing events run on the same dates, however this is not the case with online events. He noted that it is the job of the EBU to monitor competitions and protect smaller counties.

A number of suggestions were made, including limiting the number of online events as at present; limiting online county events to members within the county or the adjacent county; having a half price entry fee for local members.

It was agreed that the subcommittee should add in some more contextual information before re-presenting the suggestions to the Board.

There was general agreement that the subcommittee might take informal soundings on their suggestions and that once broad agreement was reached on the Board the suggestions would be sent out for consultation to various focus groups.

GR asked for some short term decisions on upcoming competitions. It was agreed that the Tollemache Qualifier will be played online, but the Tollemache Final will be held face to face. The Northern Year End has been in decline for a couple of years, so this will not go ahead in 2021, instead online events will be added to the London Year End Congress. GR confirmed there are very few competitions not happening at all, some have been moved to online rather than face to face. He noted that holding competitions with a large number of boards online can provide savings.

## **7. Restart Committee (PS)**

PS highlighted three strands

- EBU competitions, this was covered in the previous section
- Giving help and advice to clubs about making a decision to re-open
- Following a decision to re-open, how to help clubs with a successful re-opening

It was noted that the EBU will not be encouraging clubs to re-open. We are instead investigating whether we can provide clubs with an updated, professionally aided, risk assessment form. Refresher courses for TD's will also be needed. PS confirmed EBED are willing to help with this.

KD asked about the next steps. PS said that we needed to confirm that the risk assessment form is viable, and then the next step is to identify pilot clubs to use it. This will be a mix of small, medium and large clubs. IP suggested Richmond Bridge Club and asked for a short list of clubs to be produced soon. RM also noted that clubs without their own premises may not be entirely in control of their opening date.

### **8. Funding Applications (JC)**

JC confirmed this was covered in section 3.

### **9. EBED Update (IP)**

IP confirmed that Lee Guy has accepted the role of Vice Chair, with a view to being move up to Chair following Andy Margetts departure.

IP then handed over to AD to discuss EBED strategy. AD referred to the paper he had circulated prior to the meeting, which focused on the EBU education strategy as these aims will require negotiation with EBED. AD asked for the Board to agree the strategic parameters in order to move forward, a proposal of these were set out in the paper. These include measurable outcomes to increase EBU members; working with EBED on a strategy for classroom to club room; looking at the formation of new clubs; and improving classes for current EBU members of all standards. Following discussion of the details, the Board agreed with the aims of the paper, but noted that the first two points should be prioritised.

Action: AD will circulate some new measures for agreement, and then discuss these with EBED before the next Board meeting. RL and KP will also assist.

### **10. Membership Update (RM)**

RM circulated an update about Yorkshire's membership development prior to the meeting. He highlighted some details from the report. RM confirmed that Yorkshire CBA have purchased additional add-ons to their Zoom account to facilitate more people being able to learn during a session. He noted that the waiting lists for people wanting to learn bridge have overwhelmed bridge clubs with their number. The bottleneck is currently supervised play sessions following teaching sessions.

RM thanked EBED for the use of their resources for teaching. The teaching was handled with the county, with the supervised play sessions devolved back to the clubs, in an effort to encourage club membership. There will be follow-up sessions with clubs to discuss their progress. RM confirmed Yorkshire is willing to help a rollout of the model across the country for EBU clubs.

KP asked about the next steps of promoting to other counties and what is needed to make a rollout successful. RM advised that a more detailed version of the report will be created, with step-by-step details for clubs. PS suggested distributing via the County Working Groups. It was noted that the most important aspect is enthusiastic volunteers. GF asked if RM was planning to recruit enthusiastic volunteers, RM answered that he hoped to do so. GW advised adding the details to a package to be sent to successful clubs. JC noted there may be other initiatives across the country that we are unaware of.

Action: It was agreed that GR will look into finding out further detail about similar initiatives currently ongoing at Young Chelsea Bridge Club, with KP to assist as necessary. The item will also be added to the County Chairs meeting for discussion.

### **11. EBU Strategy (PS)**

PS stated that the six strands to the strategy update are progressing but he wanted to speed things up. He gave a brief presentation of the over-arching ambition and asked for comments during and following the meeting.

PS set out the six strands as follows:

- Player Recruitment & Development
- Competitions
- Representative Events
- Membership & Communications
- Financial & Commercial
- Technology

PS set out the scope and expectations of each strand and asked the Board to confirm if this reflects their expectations.

JC stated that the membership and communication strand should be widened to include membership services generally. A number of minor adjustments were suggested for the exact wording of the ambitions for each strand. PS also asked if as part of the strategy, there should be a strand about "the way we work with others". The Board agreed this was a good idea, but suggested minor changes to the wording.

PS thanked the Board for the comments and confirmed a copy of the final wording would be sent to all following the meeting.

Action: PS agreed to finalise the wording by the strategy meeting in June.

### **12. County Working Group Update (PS)**

PS gave a brief update about the status of the County Working Groups.

The Midlands CWG continues to remain active, meeting biweekly, with 18 different counties involved so far this year. This increase is likely due to attendance being easier for online meetings.

The Northern CWG meets on a less frequent basis, but is equally as active and involved.

PS has an outstanding action from previous meetings, to contact counties that have been less active and encourage them to make progress.

### **13. County Chairs Meeting May 2021 – Agenda Items (IP)**

IP noted a couple of topics have been suggested during this meeting for the County Chairs meeting. IP advised he would like to send a short list of approx. three items to County Chairs.

The following suggestions were made:

- How counties can help make clubs re-opening a success
- Membership development rollout
- Competitions strategy and what it means for counties – discussion

IP will write to the counties with the above suggestions. The meeting will be held on 26<sup>th</sup> May, via Zoom.

### **14. EBL/WBF matters**

IP confirmed that the annual subscriptions for the EBL and WBF are due in April. The EBU is looking to negotiate a reduction in payment, deferred until the end of the year if possible, as the last payment was reduced and made in December. GR confirmed he had received an acknowledgement from the president of the EBL to the EBU request for such an approach.

### **15. Any Other Business**

None

#### **Next Meeting:**

Wednesday 9th & 10th June

**Meeting closed at 16:12**