



MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE EBU LIMITED
held on Zoom, Thursday 14th September 2023 at 1pm

Present:

Adrian Darnell (AD) (Chair)
Tony Russ (TR) (Vice-Chair)
Paul Gibbons (PG)
Rob Lawy (RL)
Patrick Shields (PS)

Ian Sidgwick (IS)
Abbey Smith (AS)
Gayle Webb (GW)
Gordon Rainsford (GR) (Chief Executive)

1. Apologies for Absence

Kay Preddy (KP) (Treasurer)

2. Minutes of the meeting 21st June 2023

2.1. Accuracy

One minor matter of accuracy was noted; a change to the paragraph relating to Junior Internationals funding, to highlight that part of the involved cost includes entry fees and staff costs as well as the expenses of the players, and that these are handled differently. The minutes have been updated.

2.2. Matters Arising

The Board discussed the actions from the previous meeting not covered by the agenda. They noted the following updates:

- IS has spoken to Lou Hobhouse (LH) and those involved in the English Bridge purchasing and advertising supply chain. He reported on progress in seeking cost savings and plans for tendering printing and delivery in 2024.
- AS has spoken to the Selection Committee and they confirmed they are working to engage with ideas for funding international events via multiple revenue streams.
- AS is working with Gail Nancarrow (GN) to add Youth Bridge fund-raising details on the EBU website to make the process more transparent.
- PS has started creating an action plan looking at further data analysis of membership trends, and how best to utilise the results.
- The Competitions Working Group will look at improving Sim Pairs. This is on their agenda for future meetings.
- IS confirmed that details were included in the previous *Updates from Aylesbury* email to clubs and counties, asking for expertise in various areas. Responses are directed to TR (two replies to date).
- GR noted that the CWG will discuss updating the NGS exemption rules at the next CWG meeting.
- GR confirmed JL wrote a broad report for the officers' meeting about the place of club liaison in the EBU, which will come to the Board. AD confirmed a further discussion of how best a club liaison officer can support all clubs should be on a future agenda, with this report.
- GR noted that Mike Rothwell had invited the EBU to take ownership of his bridge timing software. The Board agreed this would be worth pursuing.

3. Chair's Business

AD stated that if he were to remain Chair, this item would remain on the agenda.

AD, and the whole Board, noted their thanks to IP for all his work as a member of the EBU Board, Vice-Chair and Chair over a total of 15 years, including his period of leadership through lockdown and his very robust approach to improper behaviour at the bridge table and online.

AD, and the whole Board, noted their thanks to RL who is standing down from the EBU Board. RL is a long serving member of the EBU Board and has been involved in many successful initiatives, for a total of 9 years.

AD has written to the chairs of both standing committees (Laws & Ethics and Selection Committee) to introduce himself and he will, in time, set out his vision for how the standing committees operate in order to provide the Board with confidence in their work. The standing committees' decisions are made in the name of the Board and hence the Board is the accountable body.

AD plans to address the Articles of Association and all associated documents to improve them, modernise them and remove all ambiguities.

AD apologised for the lateness of papers for this meeting. He proposed that in future we would seek to circulate all papers and reports seven days prior to the meeting.

4. Financial Matters (11.49)

4.1 Treasurer's Report for July 2023

In KP's absence, PS confirmed that the report for the month of July had been circulated prior to the meeting. There were no questions on the content.

4.2 Draft 2022/23 Financial Statements

The latest draft of the 2022/23 Financial Statements was shared by PS during the meeting, who confirmed that GN will circulate the full report following the meeting.

IS asked about the amount owed to the EBU from debtors and GR confirmed that a large part of this is UMS which is always paid in arrears.

4.3 Final Draft Management Accounts for Year Ending 31st March 2023

PS noted that the final draft management accounts for the year ending 31st March 2023 were presented at the June Board meeting. There have been very minor changes made since the previous meeting, which will be presented at the next Board meeting in October.

4.4 Reserves Policy

PS confirmed there is nothing to report.

4.5 Assurances Report – Members Money

The assurance report is currently in progress. The accountant has a due date for completion at the end of September. This will give KP, GN, PS and GR time to react for internal feedback before the next Board meeting. The report will be circulated to the two chosen shareholders for review and comment prior to the AGM.

5. Chief Executives Report – Including IT Report (GR)

GR circulated his report (summarised at Appendix A) prior to the meeting. There were no matters arising.

6. EBU as a Charity

AD confirmed since the previous meeting, further Zoom meetings have taken place, the meetings included Andrew Petrie (AP), PS, AD and KD.

There are some financial benefits to becoming a charity. There is also a cultural aspect as becoming a charity may change people's behaviour towards the EBU. There is a lot of work involved in becoming a charity and the potential downsides are also recognised.

AD stated that the benefits of becoming a charity would be maximised if there is a large spend project which would benefit financially from Gift Aid. The benefits, given our present activity, are not trivial but are not huge.

The Board agreed that PG will explore the charity model further and look at all issues, in particular the funding of International Teams, and report back in due course.

7. Fundraising and Sponsorship

IS reported from a meeting between himself, PS and AD, out of which he has drafted a communication to be sent to members regarding sponsorship opportunities. This will be finalised and actioned.

AD is looking at the grant and other funding opportunities for bridge clubs. He will compile a short database of organisations who might support bridge. AD noted that bridge clubs do not need to have charitable status to receive grants and funding.

8. AGM – Royal National Hotel, Agenda items discussed

AD confirmed that shareholders will be advised there is a need to update our Articles and other documents, and that this will be addressed during the next year.

The Board discussed the scope and responsibilities of the standing committees (Laws & Ethics and Selection). The Board will ask the Chairs of the two Standing Committees to make a short report at the AGM.

It was agreed that AD will ask EBED if there is anything they think would be appropriate to report as an agenda item at the AGM, either in person or via AD.

9. Approval of Members of Disciplinary and Prosecution Panels

The list of members of disciplinary and prosecution panels was circulated prior to the meeting. The Board approved the list for continuation.

The Board confirmed that the list of the Prosecution Panel members could overlap with members of the L&E Committee but that the list of members of the Disciplinary Panel should not overlap with the Prosecution Panel or the L&E Committee. The Disciplinary Panel is required to be impartial.

10. Updates from Sub-Committees

8.1 County Chairs meetings

TR confirmed the next County Chairs meeting will take place next Wednesday. The agenda is all set. AD sent his apologies for not being able to attend the meeting.

8.2 Competitions Working Group

RL confirmed PS is now chair of the CWG. PS noted there were no major updates. The CWG is pleased with the running and popularity of the Online One-Day Green Pointed events. A new 9-High and Jack-High calendar of events is being developed by PG. TR asked if the CWG could provide a paper to distribute to the County Chairs prior to the imminent County Chairs meeting (action:PG).

8.3 Technology (IT) Working Group

The IT report was covered in GR's CEO report. There were no questions about the IT report.

8.4 Membership/Marketing Working Group

TR circulated a paper prior to the meeting. TR gave an update on the *Bridge - It's a Big Deal* festival due to take place in September 2024, confirming that Cancer Research UK was the selected charity and they were being very supportive, and The Board congratulated TR and the team on the progress to date.

8.5 Education Working Group

AD confirmed the EWG continue to develop their plans, and that the Heads of Agreement with EBED has clarified the situation.

PS gave an update on the Joint Youth Strategy between EBED and the EBU. EBED have confirmed they would like to appoint a youth officer before proceeding. TR asked if there was any progress on forming the liaison group with EBED and if this project would be an ideal starting point. AD noted that the liaison group has not yet been formed but that he would progress this with EBED. PS and TR volunteered to join the liaison group for the EBU.

PS gave an update from the Selection Committee. He discussed the two major recent events; the under 26 team received a last-minute invite to the World Championships in Veldhoven, and the 2023 Premier League is now up and running. He noted the Selection Committee now has a new Chair (David Bakhshi) and Vice-Chair (Abbey Smith). The committee is addressing the management of conflict of interest and the organisation of team selections for the European Championships due to take place in 2024.

The Board discussed the current conflict of interest policy. The Board agreed that the conflict-of-interest policy should also follow the NOLAN principles of public life.

The Board confirmed their support for both AS and PS on their roles with the Selection Committee.

GR gave a brief update from the L&E Committee. The main areas of activity have been the updates to the Blue Book and White Book. The hope is that there will be no new updates to these books for some time as the updates were extensive. There are still some disciplinary cases ongoing, although much fewer than previously. One ongoing case is due to go to court for costs.

11. EBED - Update

AD confirmed that Lee Guy (LG) is happy to attend future EBU meetings to report on how the donations to EBED have been utilised and explain the potential need for future donations.

It was noted that the Heads of Agreement with EBED is subject to an annual review.

12. BGB Nomination

IP was the nominated person; his current nomination will run to May 2024. The Board accepted IP volunteering to continue in the role until then.

13. Annual Report

GR has started work on the annual report. He will liaise with AD to finalise.

14. Awards 2023

The Board discussed the differences between a Dimmie Fleming and Silver Award. The distinction has traditionally been between national (Silver) or county (Dimmie Fleming) service, but the wording on official documents is not as clear as it should be. GR suggested to improve the wording and the Board approved this.

The Board discussed and agreed the awards for 2023.

11.1 Dimmie Fleming Award Nominations/Silver Awards

The Board discussed and agreed the nominations for Dimmie Fleming and Silver.

11.2 Tony Priday Award

One nomination was received and approved for the Tony Priday award.

11.3 Diamond Awards

There were no Diamond Awards

11.4 Young Pair & Young Player Awards

The Board discussed and agreed nominations for the Young Pair and Young Player of the Year.

11.5 EBED Awards – Alec Salisbury & Tom Bradley

GR will confirm with KC the details for the EBED awards.

15. EBL/WBF Matters

GR confirmed there was very little to report. In January there will be the bi-annual NBO seminar. The EBU have accepted an invitation for two people to attend. The EBU will pay travel expenses with the

EBL covering all other expenses. Prior to IP's resignation it had been discussed that AS and GR would attend. A decision will be made in due course if AD will attend rather than GR.

16. Any Other Business

GR noted that IP was the previous chair of the Editorial Board. He asked if AD would like to replace IP as chair and noted that otherwise the previous chair of the Editorial Board Jeremy Dhondy (JD) had offered to fulfil the role.

There was also a request from the counties of Westmorland and Cumbria to consider if they would be allowed to merge into one county if they wished to. The Board said they would have no objections.

Next Meeting:

Thursday 19th October (Zoom) to start at 1pm

Future Meetings:

AGM: Wednesday 29th November (The Royal National Hotel, London) to start at 1pm

Meeting closed at 16.20

Actions –

1. AS is working with Gail Nancarrow (GN) to add fund raising details on the EBU website to make the process more transparent.
2. PS has started creating an action plan looking at further data analysis of membership trends, and how best to utilise the results. It is ongoing.
3. The Competitions Working Group will look at improving Sim Pairs. This is on their agenda for future meetings.
4. GR noted that the CWG will discuss updating the NGS exemption rules at the next CWG meeting, due to take place tomorrow.
5. GR will share JL's report with the Board.
6. Further discussion at a future meeting of how best to utilise the benefits of the club liaison officer for all clubs.
7. Terms of Reference and Articles of Association to be improved to avoid ambiguity.
8. Each agenda item for Board meetings to have an attached paper, which will be sent a minimum of seven days prior to the meeting, Board members to read the papers prior to the meeting.
9. GN to circulate the 2022/23 Financial Statements
10. KP, GN, PS and GR to provide the Board with feedback from the assurance before the next Board meeting.
11. PG to explore the charity model further and look at issues, particularly if becoming a charity would affect how the EBU funds international teams and if it would restrict any present activities.
12. IS to finalise communication to be sent to members regarding sponsorship opportunities.
13. AD to write up details of his experiences of requesting grants and funding for bridge clubs, including a list of businesses who support such activities.
14. AD to address the scope and responsibilities of the standing committees (Laws & Ethics and Selection) with the chairs of the two standing committees, for clarity.
15. The Board to ask the chairs of the standing committees to make a short report at the AGM.
16. AD to ask EBED if there is anything they think would be appropriate to report as an agenda item at the AGM, either in person or via AD.

17. CWG via PG to provide a paper to distribute to the County Chairs prior to the County Chairs meeting.
18. PS and TR to form a liaison group with EBED.
19. The appointed Board member for each sub-committee and the standing committees, to produce a report for the Board meetings.
20. The Board to look at the heads of terms of agreement with EBED annually.
21. GR to liaise with AD and finalise the annual report.
22. GR to improve the wording of the Dimmie Fleming and Silver Awards for clarity.

EBED

Appendix A:

Chief Executive's bullet-pointed board report for September 2023

- Bridge Warehouse income has increased although so have costs
- Our tenants have moved in downstairs in Aylesbury and we have agreed a shared service agreement with them.
- Our most recent high-profile cheating case has concluded with the defendant losing his appeal.
- The events run for us by Oliver Cowan have been successful and indicate potential for growth next year.
- The Summer Meeting was also a success and is likely to show a surplus of more than last year.
- Numbers are continuing to increase for the OODGP events. Discussion is ongoing about the best method of alerting for online events.
- Regular email broadcasts are currently
 - Monthly informative emails are sent to all club and county officials' email addresses
 - Tournament players are sent details of upcoming competitions in the form of an Event Focus email, also sent out monthly.
 - The Crisp Competitions Communication is sent to all members. This has information about previous events and winners, as well as upcoming EBU events, and individual competition emails are also sent.
- The carousel on the website is working well.
- The September issue of English Bridge will include the EBU diary.
- The marketing group will be launching a photo competition.
- Nine clubs will finish their trial period between now and end of October and two new clubs started trial affiliation in July. Two clubs are dis-affiliating.
- Club visits can be used for EBUScore training and the Club Liaison Officer has also started to do EBUScore training over Zoom.
- There was a recent club seminar about charitable status and a forthcoming one about *Gentle Duplicates*.
- The EBU website needs an upgrade from Drupal 9 to Drupal 10.
- We are working on revisions to the Youth Bridge section of the website.
- Our new teacher enquiry service is working well but we need to encourage counties and clubs to link to our site if they do not have a teaching programme of their own.
- Various IT hardware updates have recently taken place.
- We have conducted an age survey with the result that over 7,500 members shared their information with us, greatly improving our statistics. We have 36,493 members who have played in a session since August 1st 2022. Of those, we now know the age of 15,184.
- We have plans to email our members after a session with their results and information on progress with NGS, master points, and other stats.
- Our knockout management system has been revised this to take account of team preferences for online vs face to face matches.
- Our custom bridge calendar has fully replaced the old Google calendar.