



**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE EBU LIMITED
held at the EBU Offices, Aylesbury, Wednesday 21st June 2023 at 1pm**

Present:

Ian Payn (IP) (Chair)	Patrick Shields (PS)
Adrian Darnell (AD) (Vice-Chair)	Ian Sidgwick (IS)
Kay Preddy (KP) (Treasurer)	Abbey Smith (AS)
Paul Gibbons (PG)	Tony Russ (TR)
Rob Lawy (RL)	Gordon Rainsford (GR) (Chief Executive)

1. Apologies for Absence

Gayle Webb (GW)

IP thanked everyone for coming and welcomed PG, IS & AS to their first face-to-face Board meeting.

2. Minutes of the meeting 23rd March 2023

2.1. Accuracy

One minor matter of accuracy was noted, a change of initials from GW to GN in the actions list. The minutes have been corrected.

2.2. Matters Arising

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

1. Competitions Working Group to look at the Player of the Year with the potential to discontinue the prize money – This item has been carried over.
2. GR to look into the EBU potential to join an energy buying consortium – GR confirmed he has spoken to KD and Lou Hobhouse (LH) regarding their respective purchasing areas and they check details regularly. IP will introduce IS to LH for further discussions about the benefits of consortium purchasing.
3. GR, GW, IS & KP to discuss cost saving options for the EBU and present ideas at the next meeting – a meeting was held with productive discussions.
4. Report into potential VAT charges on BBO games due in May – Official advice has now been received which advises that VAT is not applicable. GR will discuss with SBU to determine if it has any remaining concerns.
5. AD to look at the finances of counties and report to the Board at the next meeting with proposals for collaborating with County Associations on investment into the future of bridge – this item is on the agenda for today's meeting.
6. KP to update the current funding policy for international teams – this item is on the agenda for today's meeting.
7. PS and AD to contact Lee Guy to discuss agenda for meeting dated 20th April – a meeting was held with productive discussion; further details will be discussed in today's meeting.
8. PS to continue strategy policy plans – this item is on the agenda for today's meeting.
9. All Board members to consider big picture ideas for the future of bridge – to be discussed at tomorrow's strategy meeting.
10. IS to look at gaining sponsorship – this item is on the agenda for today's meeting.

3. Finance Report

3.1 Funding Policy

KP talked through the updated International Funding Policy. It was agreed during a meeting in January that the entry fees for trials for the World Bridge Series would be used to fund the applications and expenses of players selected to represent England in the corresponding international events. KP noted that the chair of the Selection Committee Paul Barden (PB) recommended that the World Bridge Series should be funded to the same extent as the World Championships; PB also noted the difficulties of relying on and organising trials to fund events. PS confirmed he had spoken to PB regarding the funding of the World Bridge Series. It was agreed that its current status is not the same as that of the World Championships, which we do fund. PS also agreed with PB in that any funds raised from trials events would need to be supplemented from other income. The Board agreed that some additional amendments to the policy were required.

IP asked for PS to complete the required amendments and email the Board with the updated version.

PS asked if it would be feasible for the EBU to stagger support for international teams, rather than support all teams each year. The Board disagreed with this idea and noted it would be impractical to implement and might lead to resentment among the various teams.

AS commented on her experience contacting counties and requesting help with financial support for junior international teams. She noted that a lot of counties expressed frustration that they were being asked to provide funds for junior international teams a second time, they had assumed that a financial donation to junior international teams in 2022 was a one-off request. Counties also expressed frustration that junior players do not support counties by playing in their events or supporting the counties in other ways.

There was further discussion around financing of internationals. It was agreed that funding for international events should be sought from multiple sources; previously suggestions have included member donations, and pro-am type tournaments and donations. IP asked AS to ask the Selection Committee to engage themselves with the issue.

It was also agreed that the donation process should be fully transparent, AS will speak to Gail Nancarrow (GN) Accounts Manager about implementation.

3.2 Draft March Year-End Management Reports

KP noted that the March Year-End Management Reports will remain in draft form until finalised later in the month, but only low value adjustments are expected. The draft management accounts for year ending 31st March 2023 report a surplus of £23.7k against a budgeted deficit of £12k. There are many factors for the positive swing of £35.7k which are covered in the points below:

- Bridge Warehouse: This year reports an overall surplus of £8.6k, which is £2.7k more than the previous year. Whilst the volume of sales has increased from the previous year, the profit margin has reduced.
- Master Points: Actuals are very similar to the budget.
- Membership: UMS for March (£74k) exceeded the budget (£70.8k) by £3.2k, finishing the year with a total income of £571.5k, which exceeded the budget by £40.4k. Direct Membership of £36.6k was down on budget by £2.4k, with club affiliation fees also down on

budget by £1.1k. The full price UMS player stats for March 2023 were 140,528, compared to March 2022 which were 132,155. Costs were over budget by £2.3k and were due to overspends in the following areas: - the cost of free places on the club teacher training courses (£1.9k), discretionary grants (£0.7k) and postage (£0.7k).

- IP noted that clubs that are doing well are generally the ones who have implemented innovative ideas. TR confirmed ideas are underway to share innovative ideas across clubs.
- PS agreed that he will create an action plan looking at further data analysis into membership trends and how best to utilise the results.
- Licences: Licenced income received was £47.3k, which is slightly down on last year's £49.9k. Green Pointed (GP) licence income was reduced whilst other income streams are on the rise, with the most noticeable being from overseas income.
- Internationals: Overall, trials income of £20.1k was on budget, with costs £3.4k below budget.
- Jnr Internationals: The total amount raised from donations was £15.2k, to which we can add income of £1.1k from the Jnr Squad Sim Pairs of February 23. The total costs for the year (entry, expenses, staff costs) amounted to £46.7k which was £11.4k over budget, and not all of the donations were spent. From the reserve ("bursary") fund of £10k, a further £3.2k was allocated to players for assisting with travel and accommodation, with £1k allocated for squad training.
- Competitions: Overall, competitions returned a surplus of £59.9k, which was close to the budgeted surplus of £62k. The last page reports the income and costs in detail for each event.
- Sim Pairs: This year indicates a further decline in entries with the income falling below budget in each event. The income for the British Summer, Autumn and Winter were similar, averaging £5.2k, whereas the British Spring was slightly lower at £4.6k.
- English Bridge: This year reports that the total income from advertising was down on budget by £7.2k. For interest, the best printed issue for advertising revenue was August with £8.7k, with the poorest being April at £5.8k. Whilst there were overspends and underspends within costs on several codes within different issues, overall, the total costs were in line with the budget set.
- IP asked for IS to expand his conversation with Lou Hobhouse (LH) (English Bridge editor) to include advertising. It was also agreed that a short article should be published on the website and in the Updates from Aylesbury emails, asking for expertise in advertising and marketing. IS will liaise with Samantha Kelly (SK) (Communications Officer).
- Laws & Ethics: Costs of £39.8k were £11.1k less than budgeted however, they currently have a new case which could see more funds required. The Board discussed the current case and the current budget for the L&E Committee. There were no disciplinary hearing costs which resulted in an underspend of £5k and an underspend of £6.1k was reported within professional charges.
- Computing: Whilst overall, the yearly costs of £91.8k are close to the budget set of £90.7k, there are significant variances within certain costs to note. The positives – there were underspends within system development - £2k, software licences - £1.2k and hardware depreciation - £1.1k. The negatives – there was an overspend of £5.7k within software subscriptions. KP asked for the IT Working Group (ITWG) to produce a report quantifying potential risks and contingency plans.
- Overheads: Total costs exceeded the budget by £6.5k. As reported during the year areas of overspend are Waste (additional spend in skips to ready the office for rental purposes), Light and Heat, Insurance & Repairs Renewal & Maintenance.
- Admin General: Income of £10.2k is £3.2k greater than budget mainly arising from EBU score exceeding the budget by £1k and investment interest exceeding the budget by £1.6k. Costs are less than budget by £18k, of which the larger underspends are Audit - £11.5k, Salaries &

Pension costs - £2.6k, Meeting Costs - £3.8k, Stationery & Photocopying Costs - £2.5k and Franking Machine Lease - £3.3k, and the overspend of note is the Go Cardless Fees where the actual cost was £9.4k, compared to a budget set of £4.2k. This is caused by a delay of changing to a different processor which we hope and expect will be completed soon. The Go-Cardless overspend was noted to be a one-off.

- It was noted that meeting costs are reduced due to more meetings being held online, this is likely to continue, with each committee holding one face-to-face meeting annually.
- Membership Campaign: The two tranches, each for £5k, included in the budget for teaching costs and promotional materials have not been spent, and as such, coupled with no meeting costs, this cost centre has come underbudget by £10.7k.
- EBED Support: Income of £14.5k has been received from EBED for use of the office. Donations of £36k were made during the year (as per the budget), together with subsidy payments of £7.3k for discounts given to EBU members attending EBED training courses (TD & Teacher Training), for which a budget of £5.4k was set. This year we have opted to include and report on, the contribution of £5.4k which EBU made to EBED's salary costs.

3.3 EBU Reserves

The Board considered the report setting out the EBU's finances with respect to the reserves policy and noted that the finances are within the limits set out in the policy.

3.4 Four-Year Plan

The Board discussed the report.

The additional potential income from renting some of the office was noted and that the VAT position was still being clarified. GR confirmed that he expects the rental income to be more than indicated in the draft plan.

The four-year plan does not allow for any exceptional expenditure and assumes current trends continue. KP asked that GR consider whether it would be wise to make allowance for any significant expenditure that may be required particularly with regard to exceptional IT spend. GR will consult the IT working committee in this regard. It was agreed that the Board should continue to assess ways in which it might be possible to reduce expenditure or increase income. It was noted that this was a subject of a later agenda item.

3.5 Clubs & Members by County 31 March 2023

The Club & Members numbers were discussed previously in the meeting. PS noted that the numbers of UM1 & UM2 have increased, while UM0 category members numbers have fallen, which is positive.

3.6 Assurance Report

The assurance report for the accounting year 21/22 was written in July 2022 and distributed at the AGM for the EBU Shareholders. The shareholders asked for two of their number to review the report on their behalf and provide some suggestions for the scope of the next assurance report.

The shareholders chosen to review the report were Norman Inniss (NI) and Peter Grice (PGr). The Board noted that the report contains the scope, the independent auditor's findings and the EBU's

response to those findings. NI and PGr considered the report and agreed there is no further action required.

Following discussion with KP, NI & PGr proposed items for the 2022/23 assurance report as follows:

1. Bank balances. Check the EBU's record of bank balances and transactions are correct and that the deposits are invested according to its procedures.
2. The EBU Shop. To follow three different types of transaction in relation to the shop looking at both system and manual processes to ensure that the transactions are correctly processed. The three transactions are: A single purchase made in £ for an asset purchased in £. A purchase made in £ for an asset purchased in non-£. A purchase of multiple items. The review should include an assessment of the VAT charged and the records and processing of the VAT.
3. Member's money. This has two components:
 - a. To follow three different types of transaction in relation to the handling of member's money looking at both system and manual processes to ensure that the transactions are correctly processed e.g., crediting a member when a prize is received; processing tournament entry fees for a member; payments of moneys held to a member.
 - b. To review the holding of member's money. This should answer the question: Is the way in which the EBU holds and processes member's money appropriate? This will look at (among other things): the distribution of money held by each member by value, the distribution of money held by age of balance; the number, value and age of stagnant money; what is allowed and what should be the EBU's policy in respect of stagnant funds which may belong to someone bereaved.

The Board discussed the proposed items for the 2022/23 assurance report. The Board were happy with proposed items 1, 2 and 3a but it was decided that item 3b was not suitable for the scope of the assurance report. KP noted that the scope of the assurance report may change due to auditor practicalities.

It was agreed that GR will ask GN to produce a report into item 3b, to be emailed to the Board and discussed at the next Board meeting.

IP thanked NI and PGr for their work.

4. Chief Executives Report (GR)

GR circulated his report (summarised at Appendix A) prior to the meeting. He highlighted a few points including:

- The new teacher directory enquiry form has been circulated to clubs and counties and is now up and running. It has been used a few times since the launch and GR is hopeful about its usefulness. PG asked if there was a need to encourage more teachers to register their details for the directory. PS suggested publishing success stories in English Bridge or on the website. It was confirmed that the new directory is in addition to the existing directory, however there is open dialogue with EBED, and it is hoped that we will combine search engines, with joint work by Mark Humphris (EBED CEO) and Tim Anderson (IT Officer).
- The NGS exemption rules, for people who play host regularly and play with people who may find it difficult to find a regular partner. GR asked if the Board would be happy for the CWG to discuss relaxing the exemption rules a little. The Board agreed they are

generally in favour of the CWG to find practical solutions to the issue of players who find it difficult to get partners, whether due to medical conditions or otherwise. GR will discuss the details with the CWG.

IS asked if there was scope for the Bridge Warehouse to extend their offers to NIBU as well as SBU & WBU. GR thought that the cost of postage to Northern Ireland might be different to Great Britain.

KP suggested that club visits be extended to other members of staff, committees, and squad members, including juniors. She asked that Jonathan Lillycrop (JL) (Club Liaison Officer), set out the purpose of the visits and any feedback in a report.

IP thanked GR & KD for their work on updating the building to accommodate renting out some of the space available.

5. Update From Chair's Meeting (TR)

TR gave a brief overview of the most recent Chair's Meeting. The meeting was well attended, with 29 counties represented. There were four points covered during the meeting:

- An update from EBED
- A presentation from Paul Littlewood about the funding of chess and particularly Youth Chess
- A presentation from PS about changes in the Competitions Programme
- A discussion led by PG about the role of an EBU Shareholder

TR noted that while the meetings are going well and have been well received by the counties, it is becoming more difficult to find topics for discussion and people willing to contribute. He proposed the next meeting will focus on the roles of the County Chairs and the proposed "Festival of Bridge" due to be held in 2024. The Board agreed with the proposed agenda.

KP congratulated TR on his good work.

6. EBED Update (AD) - Approval of Agreement

IP confirmed that a meeting was held between EBED Trustees and members of the EBU Board. The meeting was very successful, and a Heads of Agreement document was produced, which the Board was asked to approve. The Board discussed the document and IP confirmed he will reply on behalf of the Board that there is acknowledgment of the document.

It was agreed that the Education Working Group will continue with the current formation, meeting at minimum annually with EBED and with additional conversations throughout the year.

IP thanked AD for his work in successfully strengthening the relationship with EBED.

The Terms of Agreement agreed between EBED's representatives and the team from the EBU were considered promising, and they were approved by the Board, in the expectation that experience over the ensuing twelve months might cause them to be refined, or more closely defined.

7. Sponsorship Update

IS gave an update on his work into potential sponsorship for EBU events. He held a meeting with a previous colleague with expertise in sponsorship, who suggested the EBU define what we offer and

our demographic, this will help determine potential sponsors. He noted, the most successful sources of sponsorship are likely to be people who are already bridge players or already have ties to the bridge world. We will need to define what any potential sponsors would receive from a sponsorship deal, e.g., naming rights. AD pointed out that it would be appropriate at some point to consider the development of an Ethical Sponsorship Policy.

The Board also discussed other means of fund raising from members via donations, noting that to be successful donation would need to be for a specific cause appealing to the membership rather than for an expense that would be considered routine and ongoing.

IP suggested IS continue with his work into potential sponsorships but recommended that it may be beneficial for two more Board members to assist.

8. Investment into the Future of Bridge

AD circulated a report into the finances of various County Associations. He noted that there are enormous variances between counties websites and information available. He suggested that it may be beneficial to encourage counties to have more uniformity in the detail that is available online.

IP thanked AD for his work.

9. Income Opportunities & Cost Saving Options for EBU

KP circulated a document prior to the meeting. GW, GR, IS & KP held a meeting and came up with potential cost saving ideas, ranked by viability.

KP noted each point, with a brief discussion about each option. Further discussion will be had during the strategy meeting tomorrow.

10. Updates from Sub-Committees

10.1 Competitions Working Group

Much of the update had been covered previously in the meeting. Over the last few months, the CWG have updated the competitions calendar into a more coherent series of events.

The Online One-Day Green-Pointed events are performing well, with over 100 pairs participating in the most recent event. It is hoped the new series of 9-High will be similarly well received.

There has also been an increase in the number of counties returning to hosting face-to-face competitions, which the Board welcomed.

The CWG meet monthly to discuss future plans. It was agreed that further changes will be needed to the competitions calendar, and that this will be an ongoing project. However, current changes should be given the time to prove.

10.2 IT Working Group

GR gave a brief update from the ITWG. This group consists almost entirely of EBU staff, with Kiat Huang (KH) providing input as an expert with an outside perspective. The group meet weekly to discuss all ongoing projects and updates.

It was agreed that the ITWG would look at producing a new-style report, to be less technical and more impact-focussed, for the Board to provide updates on their output and ongoing projects.

10.3 Marketing Working Group

TR gave a brief update from the MWG. He confirmed that the group have split into three smaller groups each tasked with a different aspect of marketing. The groups all have a good integration of Board members, staff, and volunteers, working well together and empowering staff.

IP thanked TR for his work.

10.4 Education Working Group

AD confirmed that the priority for the EWG, following their successful meeting with EBED, is to fill in any gaps in knowledge or services that are currently lacking.

11. EBU Strategy Policy & Plan Updates (PS)

It was agreed that strategy policy and plan updates would be discussed at the strategic meeting tomorrow.

12. Award Nominations

12.1 Diamond Award

IP requested suggestions of nominations.

12.4 Others including Junior Awards

No decisions were made with regards to any other awards.

13. Any Other Business

The Board discussed details for tomorrow's strategy meeting for which a summary of the discussion is attached below.

Next Meeting:

Thursday 14th September (Zoom) to start at 1pm

Future Meetings:

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

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

Meeting closed at 17.45

Actions –

1. PS: Competitions Working Group to look at the Player of the Year with the potential to discontinue the prize money.
2. IP: to introduce IS to LH for further discussions about the benefits of consortium purchasing and advertising.
3. IP: Board members to consider big picture ideas for the future of bridge, to be discussed at the strategy meeting.
4. PS: to complete funding policy amendments and email the Board with the updated version.
5. AS: to ask the Selection Committee to engage themselves with ideas for funding international events via multiple revenue streams.
6. GN: to outline the donation process, making it fully transparent.
7. PS: will create an action plan looking at further data analysis of membership trends, and how best to utilise the results.
8. Competitions Working Group to look at improving Sim Pairs.
9. IS: to liaise with SK regarding publishing an article on the website and in Updates from Aylesbury emails, asking for expertise in various areas.
10. GR: IT Working Group to produce a report quantifying potential risks and contingency plans.
11. GR: will ask GN to produce a report into the holding of members' money, to be emailed to the Board and discussed at the next Board meeting.
12. GR: will discuss updating the NGS exemption rules with the CWG.
13. GR: will ask JL to write a report setting out the purpose of and feedback from club visits.
14. TR: to run the next County Chairs meeting with the focus on the roles of the County Chairs and the proposed "Festival of Bridge" due to be held in 2024.
15. IP: will reply to EBED on behalf of the Board acknowledging the Heads of Agreement document.
16. IS: to continue with his work into potential sponsorships, with two more Board members to assist.
17. IP: Further discussion of Cost Saving Options for EBU.
18. PS: Discussion of EBU strategy and planning.

Appendix A: Chief Executive's board report for June 2023 – bullet points

- PS, GN & GR had a very productive meeting with Sue Humphris at which lots of practical ideas were proposed for increasing the turnover of the Warehouse and it was decided to have similar meetings on a quarterly basis.
- Agreement is almost finalised with tenants to use the back half of our ground floor, the library has been moved upstairs in preparation for this, and our new office space on the first floor is complete.
- Threatened defamation action against the EBU has been responded to by our barrister.
- A check of our various HR and other policies, has confirmed that we have a "solid set of policies and procedures".
- After a slow start, the Easter Congress was full for the Swiss Pairs and overall the congress could be considered a success, though the cost of the venue makes it hard to break even.
- We have plans for new formats for next year's Crockfords Cup and some changes to the Masters Pairs and Ranked Masters Pairs that we hope will make them more attractive.
- The Spring Fours ended up with 48 teams and Bristol was welcomed as a location, though there were some issues with the hotel itself. This was the last year with it being sponsored by Helen Schapiro and we are looking for a replacement sponsor for it
- The new-format National Pairs had good entries for the regional finals but we still failed to get the full 50 pairs for the final.

- The first OODGP event had a good turnout and ran smoothly, but following various problems with the second one, the decision was made to hold future OODGP events on RealBridge for the time being.
- The Spring Bank Holiday Congress was successfully run on our behalf by Oliver Cowan.
- Discussion is underway to consider relaxing the requirement that hosts are limited to a maximum of three NGS exemptions for each partner.
- The various communications emails continue to be sent to members, clubs and counties.
- The new carousel on the website is working well.
- Jeremy Dhondy continues to help with updating the archive for previous winners and awards.
- The May issue of English Bridge reached members in early May and work on the 2023-25 diary continues.
- No Trial Affiliation clubs have finished their trial since last report. Future club visits are being planned by the Club Liaison Officer.
- The second club seminar discussing club websites and social media was well-attended and provoked lots of useful discussion.
- Publicity for the EBU Club Pairs program (a simplified version of EBUScore) has created some interest and four clubs (in addition to the one already using it regularly) have submitted a session using Club Pairs.
- We have developed an enquiry form for the teacher directory to match teachers with prospective students, which is mostly automated and seems to be working well so far.
- A lot of work is taking place behind the scenes to update and rationalize our webserver and IT operations.
- We have been considering migrating away from our existing CRM system, but there are a number of potential risks with doing so and we have renewed our current contract to give us time to investigate it further.
- We have replaced the phone system with a cheaper alternative and also need a new server.
- We have adopted a new internet service for leave management, which lets staff book their own leave and other absences, and reduces the staffing needed for this.
- We have recently added the ability to link the EBU bridge calendar with personal calendars, a feature from the old Google events calendar, which is no longer kept up to date.

STRATEGY STATUS - June 2023

Last update: 26 June 2023 (post Board discussion)

This note was prepared for the June Board meeting.

1. The rationale for getting what we think of as “the EBU Strategy” documented still stands; it is that
 - a. It enables better checking that the right decisions are being taken, and those to whom the Board is accountable have more confidence in EBU activities if they can do that check.
 - b. It makes it easier for partner organisations (particularly EBED and CBAs) to learn how they can best work together with the EBU where there are shared objectives.

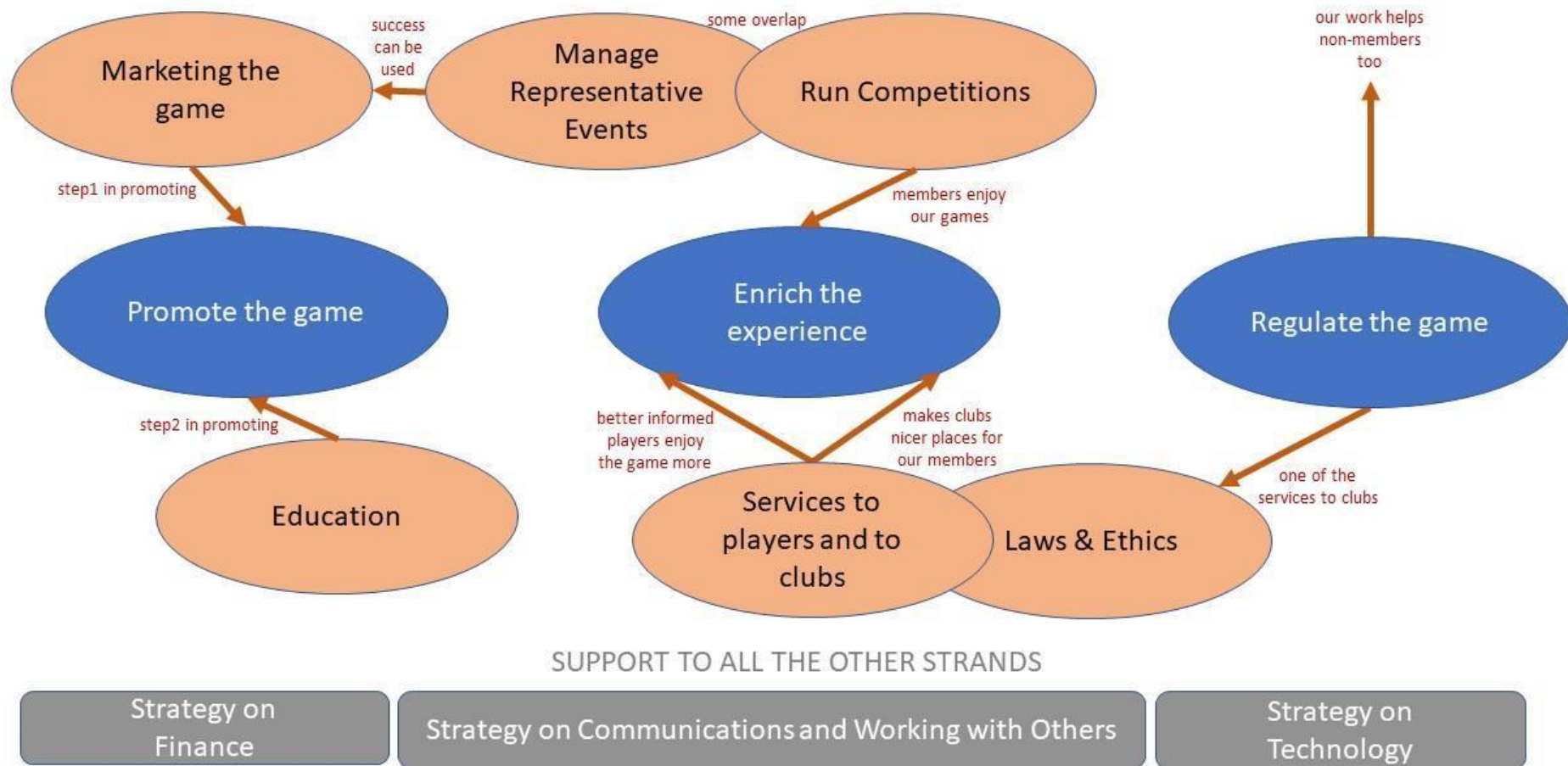
So building and maintaining a documented strategy is still recommended.

2. The work of 2020, disrupted rather by the Covid pandemic, established the Vision statement (“To bring bridge to everyone”), Mission statement (“The EBU exists to regulate the game for the benefit of players in England, and to enrich the bridge playing experience of its members, by supporting their affiliated bridge clubs and by running EBU competitions”), and Values (“collaboration, inclusivity, transparency and integrity”) which reflect the purpose of the EBU. These still stand and provide a constant check on all activities.
3. During 2021 a model of the business was developed and documented, and this gives a basis to the division of what we call “strategy” into parts; over the years the number of strategy strands has varied, and now stands at nine (brown and grey boxes in the diagram at the end of this paper). [The recently finalised Volunteer Policy is a component of our WWO Strategy]
4. In the first half of 2022, against each of the Strategy Strands, we identified an Objective which documented the (medium/long) term intent, and said something about why this strand is important. We also documented the current status against each of these strands. These were to be Appendix B in the June Board minutes but they are missing from the online copy of these (and nobody has noticed!) and the objectives are copied below.
5. For a majority of strands we need to identify a group or individual who is responsible for progressing EBU interests there, in accordance with the documented objective. Putative assignments are shown in the table below. The objectives are very much in the Business-As-Usual context; we need to consider whether during the coming year there needs to be a drive for change. **The assignments and any short term directives are up for discussion.**
6. As routine business, we should adopt the practice of an annual review (at the January Board meeting) of the set of Strategy Strands and their objectives, and having done that we should ask each responsible party to update their statement of “Current Approach” for review by the Board at their March meeting, after which the objectives and approaches should be published on the website.
7. Following a suggestion earlier in the year to split short/medium term strategy from the longer term, at the June 2022 Board meeting we did an initial brainstorming on where the thought things would be in three years’ time. This analysis focused on two strands – what we thought the bridge world would look like in 2025, and what we wanted the bridge world to look like in 2025. The plan was to follow this analysis up with identifying actions which would (a) avoid the undesirable aspects of the future forecast, and actions which would (b) encourage those aspects of the desired future which needed help if they were to happen. The latest version of this - following some exposure and inputs from outside the Board - is [on the shared Google drive](#). I propose that **work on this continues offline, and matters which arise are referred into the appropriate Strategy Strand.**

THE END

TOPIC	OBJECTIVE(S)	OWNER + SHORT TERM ISSUES
Marketing the game	To improve awareness of the game; to attract new players to bridge; to welcome and attract lapsed players; to give a positive impression of bridge and the EBU (and its clubs and counties) so that interest is sustained; to attract non EBU associated players to be associated; to market the competitions that EBU, clubs and counties provide; to inform interested parties of the services provided by the EBU, clubs and counties.	Marketing WG lead
Representative Events	(A) To deliver success which can be useful in marketing the game, and (B) To offer opportunities different bridge experiences to our members, and (C) To enhance the reputation of the game in this country, and of the EBU abroad.	Selection Committee Chair
Competitions	To ensure that competitive bridge players in England have access to a wide enough range of Duplicate Bridge games to satisfy their appetite for the game, and that these offerings are attractive enough to encourage others to join the duplicate game.	Competitions WG Lead
Education	To ensure that anyone interested in taking up the game can be shown a path which will take them from novice to regular player in a reasonable time.	Education WG Lead
Club & Player Services	To provide such services as the EBU can afford which make the experience of playing Duplicate Bridge more enjoyable, and which facilitate the smooth running of a bridge club.	<TBD>
Regulating the game	To fulfil the obligations of a National Bridge Organisation - making choices as a Regulating Authority where specified in the Laws of Bridge, and to communicate these clearly to the EBU membership, and to manage any disputes as to the interpretation of the Laws of Bridge.	Laws & Ethics Secretary
Finance	To balance revenue against expenditure over any 4-year cycle, and to maintain an adequate reserve to handle any emergency, while delivering the services the membership expects of the EBU.	Treasurer
Comms and WWO	To ensure that all parties which share our ambition to promote the game understand each other and work together to best achieve that aim.	EBU Chair
Technology	To make efficient and cost-effective use of new technology as it becomes available to support the operation of the EBU and to support the delivery of Club & Player Services.	Chief Executive Officer, as lead of the Technology WG

Completion of the Mission – V2



BOARD OFFSITE: 22 June 2023

Strategy Update

1. PS talked through the status report on the definition of EBU Strategy (Attachment 1). As recommended in paragraph 5 of that, we discussed who would be best placed to act as leader for each strand and assignments were made for most of these, as is now documented in Attachment 1. We noted that there is a need to ensure the right balance of effort from staff and from the Board in each Strategy Strand.
2. The Board discussed the need to specify any short-term objective against a Strategy Strand:
 - a. Under Representative Events, charging the Selection Committee with improving the performance of England teams was deemed to be too much to ask. We noted that more funding could be a help, and that we might want to consider training for coaches and NPCs as one way forward. We discussed whether or not it was best to fund all four categories in the likes of a European championship - and decided that we would consult more widely before making any decisions.
 - b. Under Education, we should task the EWG with “to define, with EBED, how we can act together to best effect, in accordance with our recent Heads of Agreement”.
 - c. Under Club & Player Services combined with Regulating the Game we identified the need to work to improve the “unfriendly” tag some clubs get, and the “officious” tag associated with some EBU events. We noted also that improvement of the tolerance of some long-standing players towards newcomers might be key to this. We were reminded of the “EBU Assured” concept which had once been postulated as a means of encouraging clubs to improve standards at the same time as giving players confidence on what to expect; we agreed that an absolute standard was not the right target and that we did not want to generate competition between clubs. A template of club features, with self-assessment but no ranking of clubs should be considered. We identified as a short-term objective to “to consider how the appearance of officiousness at EBU games can be lessened, and make appropriate proposals”.
3. We brainstormed a few of the potential issues which might arise in coming years:
 - a. We discussed what our strategy would be were we to receive a cash windfall. It was not clear whether that would be best used to restore the cuts which have been made in recent years (funding of internationals, size/quality of the magazine, etc) or would be better spent on new promotional activities - perhaps employing professionals to better market the game, or offering free books or lessons for newcomers.
 - b. We discussed our limited experience and expertise in the handling of social media, and wondered whether any of the membership (perhaps even junior members) would have the skills to help the EBU promote the game more effectively. We discussed the value of articles about bridge in local newspapers - which serves both as a reminder to non-players that there is an interesting game they might wish to learn, and as a source of information for existing players.
 - c. We noted that the NGS service offered by the EBU is unique and that a number of bridge organisations across the world have expressed interest in adopting it. The status of the Intellectual Property therein was unclear and GR will investigate this. Earlier analysis reports that adoption of the current implementation by another group would not be a straightforward task.
 - d. We noted that there are a large number of EBU clubs (and non-EBU clubs) dependent on Bridgewebs to provide them with easy communications with their members. It was agreed that it was important to bridge in England that the Bridgewebs service continued to thrive. GR will approach the owners to relay this and ascertain its status.

4. We agreed that further work on the vision of the future, as described in paragraph 7 of Attachment 1, would continue offline and inform the various Strategy Strands as appropriate.

Festival of Bridge

5. TR made a proposal that the EBU organise a Festival of Bridge during a one week period in September 2024. A suggested slogan for the event was "Bridge - It's A Big Deal" (BIABD). In partnership with a national charity (some suggestions for which were discussed and will be investigated) such an event could provide a major contribution to the promotion of the game, in a timeframe suitable for new lessons starting in the autumn of 2024. A number of the practical issues which need to be addressed were identified, and the concept was given a strong thumbs-up by the Board. The concept will now be presented to the next meeting of the County Chairs (expected early September 2023) and with their backing, a Steering Group and a Working Group of interested parties will be formed and detailed planning will be carried out in the autumn of this year. It was suggested that a handshake with the relevant charity needs to be done by the end of September, and that we should look into the involvement of non-Affiliated clubs in this venture.

EBU as a Charity

6. The Board had been provided with a review of the issues around any move by the EBU to obtain charitable status; it had been prepared by Andrew Petrie, and the Board were very grateful for the effort he had put into this. The two key points which emerged from the report were (a) that there are potential financial gains for the EBU by becoming a Charity, and (b) there would be considerable work involved in the transition (and no way back). It was agreed that the investigation of the possibility should continue and that the first steps were to make a stab at quantifying both (a) and (b) above.

ACTION: KP to pursue means of quantifying the financial benefits

ACTION: IP to pursue with Andrew Petrie how to quantify the cost of change

ACTION: PG to investigate how England Croquet tackled these issues recently.

7. If we were to progress this, it would need to be put to the shareholders at the AGM in November 2023, and it would need at least a year to complete the transition after that. The matter will be considered again at the September Board meeting.

THE END