



**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE COUNCIL OF THE ENGLISH BRIDGE UNION
HELD AT THE IMPERIAL HOTEL, LONDON
ON WEDNESDAY 14 JULY 2004**

Present:

Denis Robson	Chairman
Philip G Mason	Vice Chairman and Yorkshire Delegate
Tom J Bradley	Hon. Treasurer
Terry Collier	Secretary and General Manager
John Carter	Board Member and Hants & IOW Delegate
Jeff Morris	Board Member and Manchester Delegate
John Neville	Board Member
Peter Stocken	Board Member
Grattan Endicott	Vice President
Gerard Faulkner	Vice President and Norfolk Delegate
Chris Dixon	Selection Committee Chairman
Margaret Curtis	Tournament Committee Chairman and Essex Delegate
Martin Pool	Laws & Ethics Committee Chairman and Sussex Delegate

Nick Doe	Minute Secretary
Karen Durrell	Reception
Clare Farthing	Minute Secretary and Office Manager
Satish Khandke	Hammonds (for Item 6 only)

Apologies: Alaine Hamilton Board Member

COUNTY	DELEGATES:		ALTERNATE	COUNTY	DELEGATES:		ALTERNATE
	<u>Present</u>	<u>Apologies</u>			<u>Present</u>	<u>Apologies</u>	
Avon	P Green			Lincolnshire			
Bedfordshire	RR Davis			London	S Cochemè	J Smith	
	D Gilling				D Martin		
Berks & Bucks	J Allen			Manchester	J Morris (Bd)		
	R Brock						
	Mrs M Hatch			Mersey & Ches		J Herbert	
Cambs & Hunts						JA Leather	
						K Drane	
Channel Islands	Mrs P Panter			Middlesex	P Kaufmann		
Cornwall					I Tobias		
				Norfolk	R Amey		
Cumbria		G Bell			JG Faulkner (VP)		
Derbyshire				North East	I Spoons		
				Northants		T King	
Devon						R Vajda	
Dorset				Notts	E Nunn		
				Oxford	P Baxter	Mrs S Claridge	
Essex	Mrs M Curtis	P Spencer			Mrs B Harris		
		S Prince		Somerset	J Dilworth		
Gloucestershire	E Hill				E Sutton		
Hants & IoW	J Carter (Bd)			Staffs & Shrops	J Withers		
Herefordshire	G Harrington	Dr S Munday	R Underhill	Suffolk	M Carey		
				Surrey	Mrs P Griffin		
Hertfordshire	B Eddleston				Mrs J Virley		
	M Minting			Sussex	P Kent	P Bates	
Isle of Man		Dr E Slatcher			M Pool		
				Warwicks	M Allen		
Kent	B Crack	Mrs C Draper			J Pyner		
	R Manser			Westmorland			
Lancashire	JB Brelsford			Wiltshire	Ms J Gray		
Leicestershire	R Northage	N Beasley		Worcester	Mrs E Boyes		
		Mrs P Watson		Yorkshire	G Jepson	Mrs J Latham	
					P Mason (Bd)	I Rodger	

1. APOLOGIES

See table on page 1.

2. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF 7 APRIL 2004 AND MATTERS ARISING

2.1 Accuracy

With the amendments below, the minutes of the Council meeting were **approved** as a true record.

2.1.1 Appeal deposits (item 3.1, first para)

Mr Faulkner had raised this matter rather than Mr Endicott.

2.1.2 Treasurer's report (item 4)

It was noted that the year quoted should in fact be 2004 not 2994.

2.1.3 Selection Committee (item 9.1, last para)

Norfolk's invitation had been for a match against Norfolk players, rather than for the England team to play in existing Norfolk events.

2.1.4 Draw procedure (item 10.1, last para)

Concern was raised that teams were being allocated to the wrong County for the purposes of the draw procedure. It was explained that teams had a choice of which County to play in at registration. The Chairman suggested the wording be made clearer to the teams in the future.

2.2. Matters arising

2.2.1 Minutes of a meeting of the Board of Directors of EBU Ltd, 29 January 2004 (item 3.1, first para)

The Chairman reported that it had been felt that as well as the money was negligible, giving the forfeited deposits to charity might effect the judgement of the Appeals Committee.

2.2.2 2005/06 – Year of Membership (item 7, third para)

It was agreed that a new category of "trial membership" would be incorporated into the new Bye-Laws.

3. MEMBERHIP RENEWALS

Deferred to Item 5 –Treasurers Report.

4. MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF EBU LTD

4.1 12 May 2004

4.1.1 EBU Trust (item 2.2.1)

The Chairman was asked if the proposed trust would be charitable, and confirmed that it would be.

4.1.2 Ryder Cup event (item 2.2.2)

The Chairman reported that the EBL had been keen to support such an event, but not to fund it. The possibility of an event in association with the 2006 Ryder Cup in Ireland would be explored with potential sponsors.

4.1.3 Mind Sports Council (item 2.2.6)

It was reported that the Tessa Jowell of the DCMS did not have the time to meet with the MSC until after the Olympics, but it would continue to seek a meeting with her.

4.1.4 Presentation and style of minutes (item 9)

It was suggested that the new minute style was a retrograde step, in that it did not give shareholders an adequate idea of how Board members were performing, which could be a disadvantage come election time. It was noted that other organisations did not generally attribute views expressed. The Chairman took the opportunity to ask whether Council wished to follow the Board's lead and it was **agreed** to do so by a substantial majority.

4.1.5 Enterprise (item 10.1)

In answer to a question the Chairman confirmed that the detailed report referred to in the minutes was available from Aylesbury on request for such Council members as wished to see it.

4.1.6 Daily Telegraph article (item 15.1)

It was suggested that the minute was uninformative without details of the article. The General Manager reported that he had a meeting with Mr Forrester. Although the article had been critical, the meeting had been constructive and there was a further meeting planned to discuss future collaboration, with particular reference to the newspaper's claim to have a daily readership of 375,000 bridge players.

4.1.7 Sport Show (item 15.3)

The Chairman was asked whether any report was available. Although the matter would be covered in the minutes of the Board meeting of 5 July 2004, he invited Mr Morris to report to Council. Mr Morris indicated it had been a good learning and PR exercise, although the show as a whole had not been as well attended as had been hoped. The presentation by Mr Cochemé had been particularly good.

A question was asked as to how many new members had been signed up. Mr Morris responded confirming that this was not the real purpose, as it had been primarily a PR exercise. The General Manager advised that 61 enquiries had been logged, of which 14 were from schools requiring additional information, all of these enquiries had now been followed up.

4.1.8 Resignation of a Board member

The resignation of Mr Martin from the Board was acknowledged at the Board meeting of 5 July 2004.

The minutes were **noted**.

5. TREASURER'S REPORT

The Treasurer's report was tabled. He commented that the figures for 2003/04 showed that the Bridge Shop was disappointing despite a price increase, and that a decline in membership figures were a concern. Competitions had had a splendid year that helped the figures. *English Bridge* was below budget, although the overall situation was still an improvement on earlier years. NBO had an unexpected contribution from BGB.

The Board's policy was to restore the reserves over time following the very expensive year in 2002-03. Unfortunately, it had not been possible to make any serious progress towards this during 2003-04, nor was such progress budgeted in the 2004-05 year.

The Treasurer advised he had not circulated figures for the current year, as only two months' figures were available, which were not particularly informative. However, it was encouraging to note that the surplus was ahead of budget with some early evidence that the drain on membership might be reversed.

The draft accounts for 2003-04 were available for Council members to take away. Mr Parks (auditor) would be invited to attend the AGM as usual. Council members were asked to notify the Treasurer in advance of any queries they proposed to raise at the AGM.

Recommendations for subscription rates for 2005-06 were tabled and decisions would be made at the AGM. Licence fees had last been reviewed in March 2002 and a 10% increase would be made from 1 October 2004, except for charity events. No increase in Master Point rates was planned in the short term.

A question was raised as to the value the Board placed on a new membership. The Chairman advised that the Board considers a number of matters when deciding how much should be spent on a membership drive, but it had not been thought appropriate to assign a specific figure to each new membership achieved.

The Treasurer was asked if it had ever been considered appropriate to change the financial year to conform to the playing season. He did not think so, although it was certainly feasible if thought desirable.

6. SINGLE ENTITY

This item was presented by Mr Stocken. He thanked those who had responded to the request for comments, in particular Michael Allen, David Burgess, Brian Crack, Gerard Faulkner, John Neville, and Robert Northage.

In response to the request for comments a number of matters had been identified which required action or advice from Hammonds. A number of matters either required a decision from Council or were worth specifically drawing to Council's attention.

[Secretary's note – the numbering follows that in the new Articles/Bye-laws]

Articles

- 1.1** It was **agreed** that the Secretary should be appointed by the Shareholders upon the recommendation of the Board.
- 4.9** It was **agreed** that there were sufficient reasons to retain the status quo in respect of the timing difference between the date on which Counties' delegate entitlements are calculated (31 March) and the date on which individuals' memberships lapse (31 July).
- 10.11** It was **agreed** that no change was required to the Chairman's right to exclude business. The new draft followed the existing position, and problems had never arisen in practice.
- 12.2** Hammonds confirmed that it was possible to introduce an age limit for directors, but it was **agreed** not to introduce one.
- 12.12** Given that it is not intended to have a President, it was **agreed** that there was no need for a specific provision.
- 15.3** It was **agreed** not to add a provision that the General Manager should be added to the list of persons who could not become Directors.
- 17.8** It was noted that Council's previous decision that active Tournament Directors should be ineligible to become Chairman of either the Laws & Ethics or the Tournament Committee is not reflected in the current Bye-laws. It was **agreed** that in principle it should be added to the new Bye-laws, but that there should be a discussion at a later date to determine whether the prohibition should be maintained.

Bye-Laws

- 6.** It was noted that the disciplinary code had not been circulated with the new Bye-laws. These would be ready for circulation with the rest of the new Bye-laws in advance of the AGM.

8. It was noted that changes to the Articles of Association currently required a 75% majority, whereas it was proposed that changes to the Bye-laws in the future should only require a simple majority. After some discussion this change was **agreed**.

Changes to the Bye-laws made in January concerning Youth representatives on the Selection Committee would be included in the new Bye-laws.

Mr Khandke of Hammonds, who was present to answer questions, was asked to give a brief summary of the transition. He confirmed that it is proposed that the Company resolves to change its Articles and the Union resolves to dissolve itself. The new arrangements should come into effect the day following the AGM, in order not to disenfranchise delegates who are not shareholders.

The Chairman thanked Mr Khandke, Mr Stocken and the General Manager for their combined efforts.

7. ***FUTURE COUNTY MEETINGS***

Council **approved** a paper from the General Manager explaining the proposal that the County Secretaries' and County Membership Secretaries' meetings be discontinued in view of the fact that he and the Chairman had had direct meetings with most of the Counties.

8. ***NATIONAL BRIDGE CENTRE***

The Chairman reported that this had been discussed at the last Board Meeting and that the owners of the Kettering site were prepared to proceed either on the basis that EBU set up a new development/operating company, or that they do so. If the latter was adopted then we would be required to enter into a user agreement in respect to our bridge use. Further information has been sought prior to the Board coming to a conclusion.

The Chairman confirmed that Kettering is the only option currently under consideration.

9. ***TOPIC FOR DISCUSSION***

9.1 ***English Bridge***

Brian Cook, the Editor of *English Bridge* presented his paper.

Attention was drawn to the need to bear in mind that Council members' views were not necessarily the same as those of the average EBU member or potential new member.

A number of comments and suggestions for the content and style of English Bridge were discussed. Comments included:-

- the magazine comes across as bland as it tries to cater to too wide an audience
- the personality of the editor does not come through

Suggestions included:-

- expanding the social element e.g. more pictures
- the more eye catching articles should be at the front of the magazine

- there should be two focuses – satisfying existing members and attracting potential new members
- Counties should be encouraged actively to promote their events in advance in the County News section
- the target should be beginners and intermediate players without worrying too much about the more advanced
- nevertheless it was important to continue publishing tournament results, as people do like to see their names in print
- scores of the annual Master Point competition should be published throughout the year not just at the end
- the possibility of making the magazine available to download from the internet should be explored
- the letters section should be expanded if practicable (suggested by unfavourable comparisons with Mr Bridge's magazine, which is popular with our target audience) – it was not necessary that the content should be confined to what some might consider as appropriate or sufficiently serious
- the magazine should seek to amuse and provoke as well as inform and teach
- more articles about bridge personalities rather than bridge hands should be considered
- youth should be promoted more (it had apparently been agreed to devote two pages to youth matters but this did not seem to have happened)

It was noted that a number of Counties had been concerned at the expensive advertising rates, and in response a new format had been devised for advertising One-Day Joint Ventures.

9.2 *Topic for the first meeting of the New Year*

Mr Mason proposed that the topic should be Master Points, about which his working group had some potentially radical proposals to make. He envisaged that there would be a detailed paper in October so that feedback could be obtained prior to the topic being discussed in January.

The topic for January and the proposals for consultation were **agreed**.

10. *MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE EBU TOURNAMENT COMMITTEE*

10.1 *9 June 2004*

The minutes were presented by Mrs Curtis, who highlighted a number of issues.

The new format of the National Newcomers Pairs had been a success, but the Committee was keen to build on that by possibly creating further categories for the event. There were concerns about players who entered the event year after year, but there was no obvious solution.

The Committee had decided that better advertising of events and in particular reminders of closing dates for knock-out competitions were needed. The existing promotional leaflets for EBU events could be circulated more widely in advance. It was suggested that promotion could be targeted via clubs in areas where events being held.

An event was being contemplated for leading Gold Point holders.

Although the WBF and now the EBL were to increase the qualifying age for seniors to 60 the Committee had no plans to follow suit at present.

The WBU had expressed possible interest in participation in the Tollemache Cup. Council was against the participation of a team representing the whole of Wales, but happy in principle to allow the participation of teams representing the four Welsh Districts, if they wished.

In order to make the Gold Point ranking list more representative of the strong events, the Selection Committee had asked the Tournament Committee to consider sanctioning the issue of Green Points for international trials. The Committee would consider this further.

It was suggested that it was a problem that too many knock-out competitions have their closing dates at a similar time of year. The Committee would consider this, particularly in the light of a change to the timing of the Gold Cup, which might exacerbate the problem.

Mr Carey (Suffolk) explained why his County wished for flexibility to include cost of refreshments in entry fees for Green Point Joint Venture events. Local players found £19 entry fee expensive compared with other local events. Suffolk firmly believed that if they could include refreshments for the £19, they would obtain significantly more entries, and the profit, both for them and for the EBU would be greater despite an effectively lower entry fee for the bridge itself. With the existing arrangements they just did not get the entries and would therefore be likely not to hold such events at all, and both they and the EBU would lose out. It was agreed that it was difficult to devise arrangements which all Counties considered appropriate, as local conditions vary, particularly with regard to costs. Revisiting the idea of charging on a licence fee rather than a profit-sharing basis might be considered as a way around this, it was agreed that this matter should be raised again with the Committee.

The suggestion was made that if travelling was thought to be a deterrent to players entering knock-out competitions, then the Committee should consider abandoning the rule that teams are not drawn to play other teams from their own County in the early stages. Teams might be given the option when entering, whether they wished to play teams from the same County or not. The Committee would consider this.

In response to a query as to whether there is a compulsory start time for Green Point Joint Venture events, it was confirmed that departures from the standard time (1pm) do not need the Committee's specific sanction, but should be reported to Aylesbury in advance, as there may be security considerations.

Mr Crack (Kent) sought an assurance that Counties applying for Green Point events who are flexible about possible dates should not be disadvantaged, and that if necessary those who were inflexible should be at risk of not being allocated events. Mrs Curtis was happy to give that assurance.

The minutes were **approved**.

11. MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE EBU LAWS & ETHICS COMMITTEE

11.1 21 April 2004

Mr Pool presented the minutes. He did not wish to draw particular attention to anything other than plans to revise the Orange Book. It is planned to have a first draft by the end of 2004, but the Committee would appreciate help from Council in devising its new alerting arrangements. In particular there was a suggestion that if some form of announcements were introduced it could be possible to simplify the alerting rules.

The appropriateness of revising the Orange Book prior to the introduction of the proposed new laws was questioned. Mr Pool said that revising the White Book would have to be the priority once the new laws were in place, and to leave the revision of the Orange Book until after the introduction of the new Laws would leave the Committee with so much to do that too long a delay in the Orange Book would be likely.

Doubt had been expressed as to whether less-experienced players in particular would find it difficult to cope with the introduction of announcements, but it was noted that one prominent club uses this procedure and it does not seem to cause any difficulties to the players.

The suggestion was noted that in addition to allowing simplification, the introduction of announcements would be likely to lead to a situation where fewer changes were made over time.

It was agreed that Council was interested in the possibility of the introduction of announcements in some form, and was happy for the Committee to continue its work along the lines so far set out and present detailed proposals in due course.

Council was asked whether it wished to re-examine its mandate to the Laws and Ethics Committee not to permit non-penalty doubles of one no trump openings at Level 3. It was agreed that it was not appropriate to discuss this without notice.

The minutes were **approved**.

12. MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE EBU SELECTION COMMITTEE

12.1 3 June 2004

The Chairman congratulated the England Open team on their recent qualification for the Bermuda Bowl.

Presenting the minutes, Mr Dixon drew attention to the selection of teams for the European Youth Championships and the fact that there had to be changes to the England Open team for the recent European Championships and also the World Teams Olympiad, due to the unavailability of a player.

It was noted that the points raised by London with regard to venues for trials had arisen because a number of London members had expressed concerns. It was suggested that Leeds should be considered as a possible venue, and this would be included as an option in the canvass of players' opinions which was planned.

The minutes were **approved**.

Mr Dixon took the opportunity to report on the European Teams Championships in Malmö, which had been generally well organised, albeit with a few problems relating to the Women's and Senior events. These had been drawn to attention of the EBL, and it was believed that improvements would now be made.

The England Open Team had qualified for the Bermuda bowl in 5th place, the Women had been close to qualifying for the Venice Cup but had eventually finished 7th, and the Seniors had started well but faded badly. An England Team had been invited to contest the European Champions Cup in Barcelona in October and it was agreed to send the current England team if available.

It was hoped that an exhibition/practice match against international opposition could be arranged in advance of the Olympiad, and the assistance of any Counties willing to host such an event would be welcome.

Mr Dixon was asked about selection for the 2005 European Under-25 Women's Championships given that no team was being sent to the 2004 event. Mr Dixon cautioned that there may not be enough eligible women players. The Treasurer indicated that no decision to fund participation in the event had yet been made.

13 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There were no matters raised.

The next Council meeting will be held on Wednesday 6 October 2004,
at the Imperial Hotel, London, starting at 12.30pm