



**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE COUNCIL
OF THE ENGLISH BRIDGE UNION
HELD AT THE ROYAL NATIONAL HOTEL, LONDON
ON WEDNESDAY 21 JANUARY 2004**

Present:	Denis Robson Philip G Mason Tom J Bradley Terry Collier John Carter David G Martin John Neville Peter Stocken Grattan Endicott Gerard Faulkner Keith Stanley Max Bavin Michele Attard Kay Carter	Chairman Vice Chairman and Yorkshire Delegate Hon. Treasurer Secretary and General Manager Board Member and Hants & IOW Delegate Board Member and London Delegate Board Member Board Member Vice President Vice President and Norfolk Delegate Vice President and Glos Delegate Tournament Manager Minute Secretary and Office Manager Reception
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County	Delegates: Present	Apologies	Alternate	County	Delegates: Present	Apologies	Alternate
Avon	P Green	L Bennett		Lincolnshire			
Bedfordshire	D Gilling			London	D Martin (Bd)		
Berks & Bucks	J Allen R Brock Mrs M Hatch			Manchester	B Kaye J Morris (Bd) J Rudolf	G Rice	
Cambs & Hunts				Mersey & Ches	J Leather	D Herbert J Herbert	
Channel Islands	Mrs P Panter			Middlesex	K Drane P Kaufmann		
Cornwall				Norfolk	R Amey G Faulkner (VP)		
Cumbria		G Bell		North East	I Spoons	R Thompson	
Derbyshire		R McEwan		Northants	R Vajda	T King	
Devon		Mrs B Simmonds		Notts	E Nunn		
Dorset				Oxford	Mrs B Harris	P Baxter Mrs S Claridge Mrs J Pooley E Sutton	
Essex	Mrs M Curtis S Prince	P Spencer		Somerset	J Dilworth	Mrs P Poxon J Withers M Carey	
Gloucestershire	K Stanley (VP)			Staffs & Shrops	P Hackett		
Hants & IoW	J Carter (Bd) S Strachan			Suffolk			
Herefordshire	G Harrington	Dr S Munday		Surrey	P Bentley Mrs P Griffin Mrs L Lockhart Mrs J Virley		
Hertfordshire	B Eddleston M Minting			Sussex	P Bates Mrs K Batting P Kent M Pool M Allen J Pyner	J Downing	
Isle of Man		Dr E Slatcher		Warwicks			
Kent	B Crack R Manser	Mrs C Draper		Westmorland			
Lancashire	B Brelsford T Cordery			Wiltshire		Ms J Gray	
Leicestershire	R Northage	N Beasley Mrs P Watson		Worcester	Ms J Newton	Mrs E Boyes	
				Yorkshire	G Jepson Mrs J Latham P Mason (Bd) I Rodger		

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

As above.

2. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF 1 OCTOBER 2003 AND MATTERS ARISING

With the following amendments the minutes were **approved** as an accurate record of the meeting:

Item 15, 3rd paragraph, 2nd sentence, should read: “*Mrs Curtis advised this should be 2 to make it worthwhile,*”

Item 16 to be re-worded: *Due to the close proximity of the L&E Committee meeting to the Council meeting, minutes were not yet available, and it was not felt necessary for Mr Burn to attend Council.*

Item 17, additional paragraph: *It was noted that review of a constitutional change for Berks & Bucks County Association was outstanding.*

Mr Michael Hill (London) was noted as being in attendance, and accredited to items 11, 13 and 15. Mr Hill was not in attendance at the AGM of the EBU Council. Mr Hill (Glos) should be accredited to the items 11, 13 and 15.

The Chairman requested that all speakers clearly identify themselves and the County they are representing.

3. MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF EBU LTD – 4 November 2003

Mr Faulkner (VP) asked for an update on item 2.2.3 – Inland Revenue (Status of Tournament Directors). The General Manager replied that an update was to be presented to the forthcoming Board meeting, and that he was pleased to report that the matter appears to be coming to a satisfactory conclusion, and now was awaiting a written response from the Inland Revenue.

Mr Faulkner (VP) asked for clarity on the “significant space” in *English Bridge* to be provided to the on-line bridge club (item 2.2.5). The General Manager replied that the on-line bridge club was now an affiliated club, and that the service they provided to members was recognised as an added-value service of membership. “Significant space” would not be the full page they had previously received under the terms of the previous agreement, but would be at editorial discretion.

Mr Faulkner (VP) asked whether the in-charge bonus had been decided (item 3.4)? The Treasurer advised this was to stay the same, and that the mileage allowance would be increasing as from 1 April 2004. He reassured Mr Faulkner that all those concerned would be contacted with regards to the changes.

Mr Faulkner (VP) welcomed the offer made to County Associations for a Board member or the General Manager to attend an early meeting of their association (item 4.1.2). The General Manager advised that some Counties, including Norfolk, had already accepted the offer, and dates had been planned.

Mr Faulkner (VP) expressed concern about the incorporation of the yearbook into a diary, and asked for clarity on the costs associated with this (item 4.3.2). The Chairman explained that the net cost of giving a free diary to all members would be in the region of £11,700, and that various pages of the old diary would be removed to incorporate the relevant information from the yearbook.

Mr Kaye (Manchester) raised a concern from one of his members regarding the appearance of the current diary – this related to the watermark logo and lack of lines on the diary pages. The General Manager advised that he had dealt directly with the member in question, stating that lines would be in the new diary and the watermark logo would be removed.

Mr Morris (Bd & Manchester) felt that the new style diary-yearbook would be a good promotional tool, offering wider exposure of the EBU. The Chairman felt that a free diary for members was a good service, and, whilst acknowledging the concerns raised, asked that the new style was given a chance.

Mr Faulkner (VP) stated that he was aware that discussions had been held with a competitor regarding bridge stationery, and asked that we remember the reasons for the EBU selling stationery was to provide a service to members and help regulate the marketplace. The Chairman confirmed that discussions had taken place, and that this was connected to a review of Bridge Shop activities in line with the Development Plan.

Mr Hackett (Staffs & Shrops) asked for an update on the National Bridge Centre. The Chairman explained that a site in Kettering was being considered, and a report was going to a future Board meeting. There are many issues to be considered and resolved before the matter is brought to Council.

Mr Spoor (North East) asked about the commitment to BGB and expressed disappointment that Council had not had an opportunity to discuss the relationship with BGB. The Chairman explained that a 60:20:20 split agreement was with Scotland for signature. The agreement would be for 3 years, after which it was proposed that the split would be 70:15:15 for a further 3 years, then a final 80:10:10 split.

The minutes were **noted**.

4. TREASURER'S REPORT

The Treasurer reported that as at 31 December finances were very close to budget. Although the Bridge Shop was near budget, the price rise had not really manifested itself in the finances. Membership was not likely to reach budget. *Bridge for All* was also below budget. Competitions are doing well. The increase in Internationals of some £6-7,000 was due to last minute participation in the World Championships. *English Bridge* was not yet achieving what was expected.

Mr Northage (Leics) asked for further enlightenment in regard to *English Bridge*. The General Manager explained that there had been recent staff restructuring at Blue2, and that there was sound indications that advertising revenue was increasing.

Mr Martin (Bd & London) expressed concern that membership appeared to be in decline. The Treasurer confirmed that, at the end of December, membership was down by 1,000. Mr Kaye (Manchester) asked whether the change in agreement with the on-line bridge club had had any impact on membership? The General Manager advised that the on-line bridge club had reported an increase in membership.

Mr Morris (Bd & Manchester) asked for an update on the promised funds from Bill Fung. The general Manager reported that he expected these to be transferred to the EBU shortly by way of a BACs payment.

5. MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS (for information only)

Mrs Virley (Surrey) expressed concern about the club renewal letter. The General Manager stated that a new letter had been produced and would be forwarded to Mrs Virley.

6. CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM – CREATING A SINGLE ENTITY

The Chairman welcomed Mr Satish Khandke from Hammonds.

The Vice Chairman presented the paper tabled with the agenda, explaining that this new paper was in response to Council's request for further clarity.

Dr Strachan (HIOW) asked if there is a single entity, what would happen if it went under? Mr Khandke advised that if the company was to go bankrupt and there was no wrongdoing on behalf of the company, then there would be no disqualification from setting up as a new company.

Mr Faulkner (VP) requested clarity on the accountability of the sub-committees. Mr Khandke stated that it was envisaged that the members of sub-committees would be nominated by Council, then appointed by the Board. He further explained that by being sub-committees of the Board, the committees would be brought within the limited liability and therefore protected.

Mr Faulkner (VP) asked whether it was necessary for the committees to report directly to the Board? Mr Khandke replied that it was envisaged that the sub-committees report to the Board, and for the Board or Committee Chairman to report to Council. However, the structure of the reporting line was a decision for the EBU to make, for instance, the Board could approve the Committees decisions but the shareholder could have the right to refer items back if in disagreement. Mr Martin (Bd & London) reminded Council that, at present, the Board had the right to over-ride a decision made by a committee if it was felt that the decision was not in the best interests of the EBU.

Mr Faulkner (VP) asked what would be the rights of the Vice Presidents under the single entity? Mr Khandke stated that these could be enshrined in the Articles of Association, giving right of attendance and to speak at Shareholders and Committee meetings.

The Chairman asked for a show of hands with regards to progressing to the next stage in the creation of a single entity. Before the vote was taken Mrs Newton (Worcs) asked the Chairman to ensure that Council were very clear as to what was being voted for. The Chairman advised that the next stage would be for a further report and draft Memorandum of Articles and Bye-Laws to be approved prior to moving finally to a single entity. The vote was cast with a majority for progressing further.

7. TOPIC FOR DISCUSSION

7.1 Master Points

The Vice Chairman opened the topic for discussion. He stated that he was a big supporter of the Master Points Scheme, but recognised that it was introduced some 50 years ago, and was in need of a complete review in this modern world. He stated that 10% of membership were Life Masters or above, and that this was far too many, thereby devaluing the "currency". He felt it was time to review the philosophy behind the scheme, and had made suggestions for discussion in the agenda paper.

Mr Manser (Kent) was appalled at the suggestion that Master points should be awarded to the top half. Mr Bates (Sussex) also expressed concern regarding the award to the top half, but felt that the capping of Master Point awards in Sim Pairs events and the introduction of a lower Green Point rank were good ideas.

Mr Northage (Leics) felt that the paper did not address the concerns raised by Council, and expressed concern about the awarding of Master Points to the top half. He felt that a ranking system should take account of both successes and failures. The Chairman advised that, in line with the implementation of the Development Plan, a meeting was being held to discuss the introduction of a ranking/handicap system and how this could be achieved. Mr Martin (Bd & London) endorsed the comments that members would be keen to see a ranking system, and advised that Young Chelsea currently use such a system. He did feel, however, that the introduction of a proper ranking system could have a

detrimental effect on the Master Points Scheme, and may have to contemplate the financial implication of not having revenue from the Master Points Scheme if this were the case.

Mr Kaye (Manchester) asked for an update on the current situation regarding the collection of Master Points fees due to the EBU from clubs. The Treasurer advised that the situation was improving, and that the number of clubs dodging their obligation was quite small. The main difficulty stemmed from computerised Master Points. The recent staff sickness at Aylesbury had impacted on the chasing of clubs who were not forthcoming, but this was now in hand with the return of the administrator.

Mrs Curtis (Essex) reported that the Master Points Scheme had been raised as a topic at the Tournament Committee, where it was felt that the Gold Point system did not achieve much. It was felt that if the level was brought down to say 3 Green Points, then a ranking list may have some value.

Mr Pyner (Warks) was concerned about using CASS as a part of a ranking system. Mr Martin (Bd & London) suggested that an interface was written so that other computerised systems used by clubs could be linked to the ranking/handicap system.

Mr Kaufmann (Middx) felt that the concept of awarding Master Points to the top half was absurd, and that, as Master Points were so popular, they should not be interfered with. Mr Crack (Kent) also agreed that Master Points were extremely popular, but felt that Sims Pairs had been instrumental in devaluing the scheme. He felt that one way to stop debasing the system and to start developing a ranking scheme would be for every level to have a minimum which would not count, i.e. the “norm” suggestion.

Mr Hackett (Staffs & Shrops) felt that every encouragement should be given to members to collect Master Points; players rankings should be made public on the EBU website, although the Data Protection Act would need to be taken account of; and ranks achieved should be for life. He felt that the majority of players earning Gold Points were experienced players and would not relish another tournament.

Mr Jepson (Yorks) expressed his delight that such a discussion had taken place in Council and so many delegates were taking part. He felt that ranks should not finish, but that there should always be a goal to strive for. Mr Hackett (Staffs & Shrops) explained that players who get so high in the EBU rankings then usually move onto the European and World rankings.

Mrs Latham (Yorks) was concerned that there was so much inconsistency at the moment that there would be difficulty in assessing standards in order to introduce a handicap system. The Chairman confirmed that the meeting about a ranking/handicap system was purely just a brain-storming session.

Mrs Virley (Surrey) commented that Master Point certificates should all have “Return to the EBU” on them, and that she had found it difficult to download Master Points to the EBU. The Chairman suggested that she might like to consider trying the recent version of CASS issued to clubs, and then forward any comments to the EBU. The General Manager reported that CASS had been sent out free to clubs over the Christmas and New Year period, and several hundred clubs had registered their interest in using it.

Mr Brelsford (Lancs) commented that the majority of Master Points were awarded at club level, and many were not won by EBU members. Mr Minting (Herts) stated that many clubs in Hertfordshire are not affiliated to the EBU because they do not wish to be involved with Master Points, and asked how these clubs should be encouraged? The Chairman felt that a ranking system might encourage these people to join the EBU.

Mr Kaye (Manchester) expressed concern regarding the number of Master Points awarded at Sims Pairs events. Mrs Curtis (Essex) explained that the idea of Sims Pairs was to raise money for BGB and the EBU, and that if the number of Master Points was reduced, then there may well be a decrease in attendance.

The Vice Chairman thanked everyone for their contribution to the discussion. There had been many ideas put forward, which showed a diversity of views and opinions. In view of the positive reaction to the discussion, he suggested a small group be formed to discuss this further, and feedback to Council at a later meeting.

7.2 Topic for next discussion

Following a show of hands, it was **agreed** that the topic for discussion at the next Council meeting would be the *Bridge for All* scheme.

8. MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE SELECTION COMMITTEE – 15 October 2003

Mr Chris Dixon, Chairman of the Selection Committee, presented the minutes.

Mr Dixon explained that it had been decided to extend the invitation to the Junior Trials. Mr Morris advised he had spoken to all members of the Under-25s squad and no objections had been raised with regards to the invitation to the two additional players. It was felt that they added benefit to the team.

Mrs Newton (Worcs) expressed her disappointment that the Selection Committee had not acceded to Council's wishes in terms of the selection of the youth squads, and asked whether the matter referred to in item 4.2 of the presented Board minutes had anything to do with the resignations? The Treasurer explained that there was a fundamental belief that the majority of the resignations were triggered by the decision from Council that the Selection Committee be responsible for selecting the youth squad. However, he felt that this was likely to have happened anyway, as many had found the parameters within which they were being asked to work unacceptable. Christine Duckworth's recent retirement also put things in a grim light. However, he was pleased to say that there had been a great deal of good will from those who had resigned in ensuring that the existing programme of youth events was maintained.

After much discussion, Mr Mel Starkings and Mr Paul Bowyer had accepted the positions as Squad Managers for the Under-20s and Under-25s. A proposal was being put to the forthcoming Board meeting to appoint the two managers as their representatives for youth matters on the Selection Committee; and to approve the setting up of a Youth Squad Committee, comprising of Mr Tom Bradley as Chairman, the Chairman of the Selection Committee and the two Squad Managers, to oversee squad activity. The Treasurer felt that a good job had been done with youth matters over the last 15 years, and asked for a vote of thanks from Council to those concerned, but in particular to Mrs Su King. It was **agreed** that the Chairman would write a letter of thanks to Mrs King on behalf of the Selection Committee and Council.

The Treasurer advised that he had had a positive response from members of the youth squads.

Mr Endicott (VP) asked whether Mr Dixon felt that the Terms of Reference gave sufficient power to the Selection Committee to allow them to carry out the job they had been tasked with? Mr Dixon felt that they did.

Mr Hackett (Staffs & Shrops) asked why there had been no mention of the World Junior Championships to be held in New York? Mr Dixon explained that this had not yet been discussed at the Selection Committee.

Mr Dixon reported that the open trials had progressed satisfactorily, and he had attended all weekends of the trials. The format of the trials were widely welcomed, and he was pleased to say that the bridge had been of the finest quality. Mr Kaufmann (Middx) asked whether the final was open to the public with Vu-graph, to which Mr Dixon confirmed that the final was public, but that future consideration would be given to the use of Vu-graph.

Mr Crack (Kent) noted that there were only 3 teams in the women's trials. Mr Dixon explained that the split-up of the team in the Venice Cup had had a knock-on effect to the women's teams, as had the emigration of a player to France.

Mr Martin (Bd & London) asked for clarification on the policy regarding sponsors also being team members. Mr Dixon stated that there never had been a policy not to permit sponsors being team members, but disclosure of interest was expected.

Mr Morris noted that a new event had been proposed from the EBF to encourage women into international levels, in particular this event was aimed at under-25s. Mr Dixon advised that it was unlikely that a team would be sent this year, but there was approval for the concept.

The Minutes were **approved**.

9. MINUES OF A MEETING OF THE TOURNAMENT COMMITTEE – 18 November 2003

Mrs Curtis, Chairman of the Tournament Committee, presented the minutes.

Council's attention was drawn to items:

- 4.2.8 A venue was still being sought for the National Women's teams.
- 4.2.9 The sponsor details had now been released, and Mrs Curtis was pleased to announce that Mrs Helen Schapiro was the sponsor for the Spring Foursomes, and this was being sponsored in the memory of her late husband, Boris. The sponsorship was very generous, and Mrs Curtis was asked to forward a note of thanks to Mrs Schapiro on behalf of the EBU.
- 5. The Tournament Committee expressed concern regarding the incorporation of the Yearbook into the diary, but agreed to give the new style a chance. There was a recognition that scheduling of dates would need to be done earlier in order to meet publication dates, and Mrs Curtis advised Council that they would be asked to approve dates at the January Council meetings in future.
- 12. Thirteen venues had been found for the National Newcomers pairs.
- 16.2 There were no plans to increase the qualifying age for the Seniors from 55, but the qualifying age for Veterans would now be 70.

Mr Martin (Bd & London) felt that the entry fee for the National Newcomers was too high. However, Mrs Curtis advised it was only £5.00 per pair.

Mr Minting (Herts) expressed concern that the Tournament Committee minutes of 13 May had referred to an amendment regarding Green Points, and that he had recently received notification from the Tournament Secretary that Green Points were now 6. It was **agreed** that Mr Max Bavin (Tournaments Manager) investigate the matter.

Mr Dilworth (Somerset) asked for clarification on the White Book. The Chairman advised this matter was being raised at the forthcoming Board meeting, and would duly be reported to Council.

Mr Faulkner (VP) expressed concern regarding the wording of item 9.9, and felt that the refreshments had been more than adequate, and, if he had not won the Gerard Faulkner Salver himself, there would have been an appropriate person available to present the trophy. He also expressed concern regarding the draw for this competition, and asked that this be reviewed.

The minutes were **approved**.

10. MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE LAWS & ETHICS COMMITTEE

Mr Martin Pool presented the minutes on behalf of the Laws & Ethics Committee.

10.1 22 October 2003

Mr Pool expressed thanks to Mr David Stevenson for his work on the White Book. It was **agreed** that the Chairman would write to thank Mr Stevenson on behalf of the EBU.

The minutes were **approved**.

10.2 14 January 2004

Mr Pool advised that the WBF were issuing new regulations on 1 January 2006, which would necessitate a re-write of the White Book. The Law & Ethics Committee were, therefore, not pushing for publication of the White Book at this time. However, copies were available to download from the website. Mrs Hatch (Berks & Bucks) stated that she had not been successful on downloading, and asked if a copy could be sent to all Counties. The General Manager advised that the White Book had also been included on the CASS CD which had been sent to clubs after Christmas.

Mr Pool asked for comments on the Orange Book to be forwarded to the L&E Secretary, Mr Nick Doe.

The minutes were **approved**.

11. PROPOSALS TO APPROVE CHANGES TO COUNTY CONSTITUTIONS

The Chairman advised that the change put forward by Sussex County Council had been reviewed and it was proposed that the change was accepted. Council **ratified** the change.

Mrs Lockhart (Surrey) expressed concern over the amount of time being taken to scrutinise the changes being requested. The Chairman advised that this had been reviewed, and matters would be dealt with more timely in the future.

The General Manager agreed to investigate the delay in ratifying the change proposed by the Berks & Bucks County Association.

12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Mrs Virley (Surrey) expressed concern regarding the thickness of the new style diary. A “dummy” was available at the meeting, which was the same size as the existing diary. Mrs Virley also asked whether the calendar of events could be separated into “serious” and “just for pleasure” bridge events. Mr Northage (Leics) felt it would be helpful if SBU and WBU events also appeared in the diary. The Chairman said these requests would be considered, but no promises were being made.

Mrs Hatch (Berks & Bucks) asked for a progress report on entries to events being made over the website. The General Manager advised that there were some teething problems, but it should be soon.

The next Council meeting will be held on Wednesday 7 April 2004, 12.30 p.m.,
at The Imperial Hotel, Russell Square, London