



**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE COUNCIL OF THE ENGLISH BRIDGE UNION
HELD AT THE IMPERIAL HOTEL, LONDON
ON WEDNESDAY 7 APRIL 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
	Alaine Hamilton	Board Member
	David G Martin	Board Member and London Delegate
	Jeff Morris	Board Member and Manchester Delegate
	John Neville	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
	John Pain	Development Officer
	Michele Attard	Minute Secretary and Office Manager
	Karen Durrell	Reception

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

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

See table on page 1.

2. MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS OF 21 JANUARY 2004

2.1 Accuracy

Item 2 on the agenda for the meeting of 7 April should have referred to both the Special General Meeting and the Council Meeting of 21 January, i.e. "Meetings of 21 January 2004".

The following amendments were identified:

On the attendees list of both minutes J Downing was shown as a delegate for Sussex. He is a delegate for Warwickshire, and had sent his apologies.

This was the only point of accuracy regarding the minutes of the Special General Meeting, which were **approved** as an accurate record.

Points of accuracy relating to the Council Minutes were identified as:

Item 3, additional wording agreed for paragraph 5: *"Mr Crack (Kent) expressed concern that the Union was paying an extra £11,700 for what seemed to be an inferior product."*

Item 7.1, 6th paragraph: Mrs Curtis had raised the issue at the County Committee meeting, not the Tournament Committee.

Item 7.1, Mrs Hatch noted that her comment regarding the big step to Green Points had not been recorded.

Item 9, paragraph 6, rewording agreed as: *"...more than adequate, and, if the team had not won the Gerard Faulkner Salver, there would have been an appropriate person available to present the trophy."*

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

2.2 Matters Arising

Item 3, 3rd paragraph: Mr Faulkner (VP) advised that he had not yet been contacted with regards to the new fees and allowances for the forthcoming financial year. The General Manager agreed to investigate this.

Item 7.1: The Vice Chairman reported that he had formed a small group, consisting of representatives from Kent, Yorkshire, Manchester and London, who would be meeting to discuss the Master Points Scheme. A report on the discussion group would be placed before a future meeting of Council.

Item 12, 1st paragraph: The Chairman advised that a draft proof of the new diary was available in the reception area for review during coffee break. Comments would be appreciated.

2.2.1 Constitutional Reform – Creating a Single Entity (item 6)

The Chairman reported that the draft Articles of Association and Bye-Laws had been received from Hammonds but still required fine-tuning prior to presentation to Council for final adoption.

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

3.1 *29 January 2004*

Mr Endicott (VP) requested clarification on the concern raised by Mr Harris regarding the “amount of money involved and the message given out” in relation to the L&E Committee’s request that retained appeal deposits be given to a charity at the end of each year (item 3.1, 2nd paragraph). The Chairman agreed to obtain clarification.

Mr Nunn (Notts) asked for an update on Jannersten’s position regarding duplimate machines (item 11.2, 3rd paragraph). The General Manager advised that Carta Mundi were testing machines that read the face of cards, in the meantime Jannersten machines were available.

In noting the discussions relating to a possible National Bridge Centre, Mr Faulkner (VP) requested costs associated with “expensive Option 3”. The Chairman advised that at this early stage there were no detailed costs. These would be prepared by appropriate consultants, if the project was to go forward.

Mr Faulkner noted that the 2nd paragraph of item 13 should have read that, post devolution, the SBU were still expounding their different views on the split of funds. Mr Hill (Glos) asked whether the EBU should be more sympathetic to the views of the SBU. It was generally agreed that the SBU and the WBU had been given considerable opportunity to get their funds in order, and the structure of the new agreement gave them more time.

Mr Crack (Kent) asked what was the benefit to the Union of the Board event at Maastricht (item 2.2.6). Mr Neville (Board) reported that he had participated in the event, and had found it useful. There had been an element of exchange of views in addition to it being an enjoyable tournament. The matter of the Bridgemate Terminals had been on the agenda. The EBU attendees felt that the event was very useful as a forum for exchanging ideas with our Continental counterparts, but that the frequency should be reviewed, and this would be raised at the event in 2004.

Mr Crack (Kent) commented that he was unaware of the other publications mentioned in item 4, 3rd paragraph. Mr Pain (EBU Development Manager) explained that *The Ruffian* was a *Bridge for All* publication and *The Accolade* was an EBUTA publication.

The minutes were **noted**.

3.2 *18 March 2004*

Mr Spoor (NE) asked what effect the changes in the presentation of the budget had on the Bridge Shop and Education. The Treasurer advised that the Bridge Shop budget now included the Really Easy series of books. This had been done to reflect the way in which Aylesbury operates, in that the Bridge Shop does the majority of work associated with selling the books.

Mr Martin (Bd & London) expressed deep concern that item 3.1 (p) did not accurately reflect the matter he had raised regarding the proposed salary increase for EBU staff. He also expressed concern that item 10.1(a) was not a true reflection of his comment regarding the project management costs associated with the implementation of the new membership and event management software.

The Chairman advised that Mr Martin’s concern would be dealt with at the next Board meeting.

4. TREASURER’S REPORT

The Treasurer presented figures for the eleven months ended 29 February 2004, and was concerned about the decrease in membership, and the knock-on effect this would have elsewhere. *Bridge for All* was less than budget, whilst Competitions had had a very good year. He confirmed that the NBO income included the £10,000 from BGB.

The Treasurer felt confident that the end of financial year would show a break-even outcome.

5. FIVE-YEAR PLAN AND BUDGET 2004/05

The Treasurer drew Council's attention to page 5 of the tabled Forecast, Budget and Five-Year Plan – the Profit & Loss Account. The Bridge Shop line takes account of the move of the Really Easy series of books from Education. Online Bridge would not be included from this next year, as it is no longer a direct EBU service. It is expected that Competitions will repeat and maintain this year's performance, but it will be a heavy and challenging year for Internationals. Development/Education is a new item in support of the restructuring of the Education Department in Aylesbury.

The Treasurer advised that the Selection Committee had requested additional funds for squad training. The Board were sympathetic to the principle, but did not wish to modify the budget since there had been no mention as to how the money was to be spent. The Board had, however, agreed that the Chairman and Treasurer could consider proposals from the Committee for squad training, and agree funding, if appropriate. Mr Dixon (Chairman, Selection Committee) informed Council that an ad hoc group from the Selection Committee had met, and a paper had been prepared, which proposed an outline for training and preparing squads. The paper had, however, not been presented with the request to the Board for the funds. He felt that this year was very important in the International field, and that success in this arena would be beneficial for the Union, but money would need to be spent to achieve this. Council were sympathetic to the request from the Selection Committee, but felt that the subject of funding for International teams needed exploring further, under the aegis of the Board.

Mr Hackett (Staffs & Shrops) noted that the budget for Internationals for 2005/06 was £144,000, and asked why the figure was so high if there were no Internationals that year. The Treasurer advised that a budget for 1½ teams to go through to the World Championships had been allowed for. If no teams go through, there would be a potential saving of £40,000

Mr Kaye (Manchester) expressed concern in regard to reimbursement of expenses for delegates to travel to London. It was confirmed that Board members have a right to attend Council. However, if they attend as a delegate, then the responsibility for their expenses rests with the County.

Mr Crack (Kent) felt that the proposed budget and forecast did not reflect the work required on the Development Plan, nor the fact that the aim of the Plan was to double membership, which would have an effect on many of the cost/profit centres. The Chairman advised that the forecast dealt with the costs involved, but not the extra income generated from the increased membership. It had been felt that it would be very unwise to budget for increased EBU membership, and the Treasurer had, therefore, produced a realistic budget, which shows that the EBU can remain solvent.

6. TOPIC FOR DISCUSSION

6.1 *Bridge for All*

The General Manager presented a discussion paper on *Bridge for All*. He felt that the scheme should be considered in three areas: as a membership generator; a teaching programme; and publications. In terms of membership, 10,000 people had gone through the scheme, but only 704 had been converted into members. However, it is an excellent teaching programme, although its introduction had caused a divide amongst teachers. He advised that of the 980 EBUTA members, 750 are trained to deliver *BfA* classes, but 591 of those teachers are not currently teaching *BfA*. The Really Easy series of books have been very successful, generating £214,000 surplus, which offset the £345,000 that *BfA* had actually cost. The General Manager reported that the teaching material was being re-packaged into a single workbook containing units 1&2 and later, units 3&4 and 5&6; and that responsibility for future sales of the Really Easy series would pass to the Bridge Shop, who would explore new markets. He suggested that a new category of membership be introduced under a title still to be considered, with events geared to the student's progression through the scheme.

The General Manager felt it was now time to relaunch the scheme, taking account of its three separate entities, and opened the discussion to the floor.

The matters raised included:

- The need to encourage teachers to return to teaching *BfA*, to take greater responsibility for encouraging their students to become EBU members, and to ensure that their students learn in a welcoming and friendly environment, including the provision of a comfortable progression route into clubs.
- The need for County Associations to take greater responsibility for supporting their *BfA* teachers and following up *BfA* students as they progress through the scheme.
- Clubs to be more welcoming and supportive of beginners, especially as it was felt that the quickest way of learning is to learn at the playing table.
- There was lack of support for the title of “Diamond” category of membership.
- Provide membership services that would be of interest to beginners.
- We should promote Standard English.
- Working with Counties, establish a list of beginner-friendly clubs, where teachers could take their students as an introduction to club bridge, and publish the list on the website.
- Develop a strategy for teachers to encourage students to join the EBU, and provide support and guidance to teachers.
- Work with Counties on how free membership could be offered to students for their first year, as a way of getting students to experience the benefits of membership, and then encouraging them to maintain that membership thereafter.
- Membership fees should be used to provide services to student members, rather than generating income for the EBU and Counties.

Mr John Pain (EBU Development Manager) thanked everyone for their valuable comments. He agreed that there is a need to get away from the unit-based system, and that the workbook could be made more widely available, raising the profile of the scheme and the EBU. He felt that there was a need to discourage Local Education Authorities from using unqualified bridge teachers. He accepted that there was an issue wherein non-*BfA* EBUTA members had felt devalued, and there was work to be done to bridge the divide.

6.2 *Suggested Discussion Topic for next Council*

The following suggestions were made:

- The development and future content of *English Bridge* - Ms Hamilton (Bd & Chairman, Editorial Board).
- The benefits of teaching MiniBridge to children as young as 6/7 years old – Mr Kaye (Manchester)

Following a show of hands, it was **agreed** that the next topic for discussion would be *English Bridge*, and that an invitation be extended to the editor, Mr Brian Cook, to attend. The Chairman suggested that the MiniBridge be considered as a future topic.

7. **2005/06 – YEAR OF MEMBERSHIP**

The General Manager presented a paper proposing that 2005/06 be the year of membership, in support of the aim of the Development Plan to double membership within the five years of the Plan. He explained that “doubling membership” did not necessarily mean bringing more people into playing bridge, but to encourage those club members who were not EBU members to become EBU members. Membership should be the core activity of the EBU, and whilst the services provided should be economically viable, they should be in support of the core objective of providing a valuable service to members and potential members. The current membership form needed revamping, to include the benefits and services which had been developed over the past year. In addition, consideration would need to be given as to how the EBU works with its County

Associations, and whether a flexible approach could be operated in regard to their membership levies.

Mrs Curtis reported that the recent National Newcomers event had been very successful, with 19 heats and 330 pairs taking part. The event had been scored on the night, with the results being published on the website. Feedback from attendees had been very positive, and they had been encouraged to go back to their clubs and encourage others to attend the next time. She expressed her thanks to all those involved in making the event so successful. Mrs Harris (Oxon) commended the use of local venues for this event, but was concerned that the event was open to those with 5,000 or less Master Points, which did not necessarily mean it was a beginners event. She suggested the level of 5,000 be reduced, open it to non-members, those who were new to the game, and had been learning/playing for 5 years or less. Mrs Curtis advised that the Tournament Committee would review eligibility for this event.

The subject of free membership to the EBU as an introductory offer was raised. Mr Faulkner (VP) felt that there would be ramifications regarding the effect of this on County shareholdings/votes, and that it may contravene Bye-Laws. As the Bye-Laws are currently in revision, it was considered appropriate to review the matter of the repercussions of free membership, and this would be presented with the Bye-Laws to Council in July. Mr Martin (Bd & London) felt that it should be made very clear that members could only ever receive one year's free membership.

The Chairman thanked everyone for their contribution to the discussion, and noted that the general principle for adopting 2005/06 as the Year of Membership had received support from Council.

8. BRIDGEMATE TERMINALS

Mr Carter (Bd & Hants & IOW) presented a paper on Bridgemate Terminals, a wireless board result recording and scoring system. The equipment had been encountered at the event in Maastricht, and was considered to be the way technology was being used within bridge. He explained that Bridgemate is a stand-alone table top terminal which can be used to record the score achieved at each table for each hand. In addition, a computer would be required nearby to receive and process the score information – scoring software would need to be installed on the PC. He advised that the manufacturer was looking for a UK supplier, and it had been agreed to trial the terminals in an English club with the support of the EBU.

Mr Dixon (Chairman, Selection Committee) confirmed that he had used automated devices such as this, and welcomed the opportunity for a trial to be held. Mr Spoor (NE) raised concern regarding the security of the device, as they are small and easily removed from the table.

Mr Faulkner (VP) accepted it was an exciting development, but was concerned about the cost of providing such equipment for an event such as Brighton. The Treasurer advised that there was no budget for this equipment, however, the product was also not yet available.

Mrs Hatch (Berks & Bucks) had experienced use of the terminals for a month. She reported that there had been a great deal of antipathy from players who were not technologically-minded, and it had slowed play down.

9. MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE EBU SELECTION COMMITTEE

Mr Dixon (Chairman, Selection Committee) presented the minutes.

9.1 *11 February 2004*

Mr Dixon reported that the trials had concluded, and had determined Open, Womens and Seniors teams for the European Championships and Olympiad; and the format of the trials had also been determined for the 05/06 session. He advised that player representatives had been invited to attend this meeting for the purpose of commenting on the trial format. This had proved valuable, and would be repeated in future.

Mr Northage (Leics) asked for clarification on item 3.4., in which Mr Bowyer, who was an entrant to Open Trials, could have a vote on Junior matters. Mr Dixon advised that Mr Bowyer was a “co-opted” member of the Committee for the purpose of discussing and voting on youth matters only.

Mr Spoons (NE) felt that the new format of only two weekends for the Camrose could cause difficulties for Counties, and asked that the usefulness of the Camrose as a training event for English teams be re-considered. Mr Dixon advised that the Selection Committee deplored what had happened to the Camrose, feeling it had been devalued. They would, however, still hold trials and provide teams.

Mr Endicott (VP) asked if it was consonant with the Bye-Laws for players to play in teams bearing the England name, when they had not been selected by the EBU Selection Committee. Mr Hackett (Staffs & Shrops) explained that tournament organisers often invited teams to play in their events, by-passing their federation, and then called the team “England”. Mr Dixon agreed to review such invitations.

Mr Dixon thanked Mr Amey (Norfolk) for his invitation for the squads to take part in Norfolk County tournaments. He advised that the Under-20 squad would be playing against the Ladies team this week.

The minutes were **approved**.

9.2 ***10 March 2004***

There were no matters arising, and the minutes were **approved**.

10. MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE EBU TOURNAMENT COMMITTEE

10.1 ***24 February 2004***

Mrs Curtis (Chairman, Tournament Committee) presented the minutes. She reported that the arrangements for next year’s Overseas Congress, to be held 4-11 February 2005 in Tunisia were now well underway.

Mrs Hatch (Berks & Bucks) advised that she had not yet received notification that awards made at Green-pointed County Pairs events would be capped at a maximum of 7 Green Points rather than 6.

Mr Rudolf (Manchester) asked whether consideration could be given to moving the Tollemache. Mrs Curtis said she would ask Mr Max Bavin (EBU Tournament Manager) to review this, but moving events was not easy.

Mr Faulkner (VP) raised a query regarding the prize fund for the Gerard Faulkner Salver, since he believed the amount was nearer to 16%, rather than the agreed 20%. He also expressed concern regarding the knock-out draw procedure and that this did not appear to be “random”. Mrs Curtis explained the procedure, and stated that the Tournament Committee had reviewed this and were happy with the present procedure.

The minutes were **approved**.

11. MINUTES OF THE EBU LAWS & ETHICS COMMITTEE

11.1 *14 January 2004*

Mr Pool, Chairman of the Laws & Ethics Committee, presented the minutes.

Mr Endicott asked if the Committee were happy enough with the way they were dealing with psyches, to which Mr Pool replied that they were.

There were no other matters raised and the minutes were **approved**.

12. PROPOSALS TO APPROVE CHANGES TO COUNTY CONSTITUTIONS

It was noted that the Berks & Bucks constitutional change still required formal approval.

13. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

13.1 *Use of the website for distribution of information*

The proposal for publishing council, committee and board minutes on the website raised concern, especially if there were any sensitive or confidential matters raised within them. It was suggested that separate Council minutes could be produced when there was such material, and only the non-sensitive minutes be published. The General Manager advised that only approved minutes would be published.

With regards to using the website for distribution of agenda papers and minutes, it was recognised that there would still be papers which would need to be sent out by post, but those counties who wished could opt to have papers sent electronically if they wished.

13.2 *Matters raised*

Mr Spors (NE) raised concern that Council had not approved some of the decisions made within the BGB on behalf of the EBU. Mr Neville advised that he reports all matters to the Board, who also receive copies of the BGB minutes.

Mr Hill (Glos) asked for clarification of the process taken to choose Bridge Overseas Holidays as the next travel operator for the Overseas Congress. The General Manager advised that proposals had been requested from any interested operator, and the Board had decided on BOH.

The next Council meeting will be held on Wednesday 14 July 2004, 12.30 p.m.,
at the Imperial Hotel, London