



**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE SHAREHOLDERS OF  
THE ENGLISH BRIDGE UNION LIMITED  
HELD AT THE IMPERIAL HOTEL, LONDON  
ON WEDNESDAY 15<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2006**

<b>Present:</b>	Denis Robson	Chairman
	Philip Mason	Vice Chairman
	John Neville	Treasurer
	Max Bavin	Acting General Manager
	Sally Bugden	Board Member
	John Carter	Board Member
	David Harris	Board Member
	Graham Jepson	Board Member & Yorkshire Shareholder
	Jeff Morris	Board Member
(Apologies)	Alan Nelson	Board Member
	Martin Pool	Board Member, Laws & Ethics Committee Chairman & Sussex Shareholder
	Heather Dhondy	Tournament Committee Vice-Chairman
	Gerard Faulkner	Selection Committee Chairman, Vice-President & Norfolk Shareholder
	Grattan Endicott	Vice President
	Peter Stocken	Vice President
	Karen Durrell	Reception
	Clare Smith	Minute Secretary

<b>County</b>	<b>Shareholders:</b>		<b>Proxy</b>	<b>County</b>	<b>Shareholders:</b>		<b>Proxy</b>
	<b>Present</b>	<b>Apologies</b>			<b>Present</b>	<b>Apologies</b>	
Avon				Lincolnshire			
Bedfordshire	Mrs V Lawson	RR Davis	Mrs V Lawson	London	S Cochemé MRD Hill J Smith GD Rice		
Berks & Bucks	R Brock Mrs M Hatch	JE Allen	Mrs M Hatch	Manchester		JA Smith	GD Rice
Cambs & Hunts				Merseyside & Cheshire			
Channel Islands		Mrs P Panter		Middlesex	K A R Drane		
Cornwall				Norfolk	R Amey		
Cumbria				North East		MJ Baker	MG Oliver I Spoons
Derbyshire				Northants	RF Vajda		
Devon				Notts		Mrs J Burgess	EH Nunn
Dorset				Oxford	Mrs AJ Claridge Mrs B Harris	P Baxter	
Essex	Mrs M Curtis SJ Prince			Somerset		Mrs S Stuttard	J Dilworth
Gloucestershire	E Hill			Staffs & Shrops	PD Hackett	J Withers	
Hants & IoW				Suffolk		MR Carey	
Herefordshire	G Harrington	Dr S Munday		Surrey	MR Curtis Mrs J B Virley	P Bentley Mrs M Griffin	
Hertfordshire	M Hancock M W Minting	BN Eddleston		Sussex	P Kent	PJ Bates	
Isle of Man		Dr EF Slatcher		Warwicks	M Allen JS Downing		
Kent	BR Crack			Westmorland			
Lancashire	J Brelsford	A Cordery		Wiltshire	P Green		
Leicestershire	RH Northage J Wilcox			Worcester		Mrs L Boyes PD Hammond	NR Forward DR Thomas
				Yorkshire	Mrs J Latham I Rodger		

## 1 APOLOGIES

As above.

## 2 MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF 5TH OCTOBER 2005

### 2.1 *Accuracy*

It was noted that Simon Cochemé (*London*) was also present, and that the word “minute” is incorrectly spelt under the Treasurer’s report. It was also noted that it would be more appropriate to describe minutes as being “subject to approval” rather than “will be approved”.

#### ***Item 4.1 Proposal from Gloucestershire.***

The word “bridge” should be replaced with “Squads” in paragraph (A) of the proposal, and “could” with “should” in paragraph (B). The correct proposal is contained in an appendix to these minutes.

#### ***Item 17 Chat Room.***

It had been agreed that various “Chat Rooms” would be provided via the EBU website, including one for Shareholders.

#### ***Item 20 Membership Subscriptions for 2006/2007***

John Neville was asked to clarify the proposal; he confirmed that there would be a price increase of 50 pence for 2006/07.

### 2.2 *Matters Arising*

#### 2.2.1 *Proposal from Gloucestershire*

Gerard Faulkner explained that the Selection Committee would be considering a revised set of guidelines at its next meeting, which would cover not only Junior Squad players but also players, non-playing captains and coaches selected to represent England at Open, Women and Senior levels. Such selected players would be required to accept the conditions contained therein in order to represent England in an international competition. It was confirmed that whilst the Junior Squad Manager has authority to remove a player from the squad, any such decision would be subject to review by the Selection Committee.

The Gloucestershire Proposal as appended herein was carried nem com.

## 3 MINUTES OF MEETINGS OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF EBU LTD

### 3.1 *27th September 2005*

#### ***Item 2.2.1 Lancashire Constitution***

It was noted that the constitution referred to was the actual Lancashire constitution rather than a draft. It was also noted that the matter had now been resolved satisfactorily.

#### ***Item 4 EBU Website and Development***

Jean Virley, (*Surrey*) reported views previously expressed that the information Membership Secretaries receive under the Enterprise system is inferior to that which was received under the previous scheme. Max Bavin suggested that she contact him directly to explain further where whereupon he would investigate.

**Item 5 Membership Development Update**

Sally Bugden gave a positive report on visits made to Burnham and West Sussex Bridge Clubs and discussed with them ideas for the services they desire from the EBU. The Membership Development Committee will meet again on the 7th March 2006 and will report their findings to the Board. John Carter proposes to give a presentation on the subject at a future meeting.

It was suggested that when expanding the consultation process with Bridge Clubs that clubs which rent their premises should feature prominently therein.

**Item 6 Roles and Terms of Reference for Committees**

It was noted that only the Selection Committee have these so far. The Laws & Ethics and Tournament Committee would be considering the matter at their next meetings.

**Item 9.2 Kettering**

John Neville outlined the current arrangements which were for a venue hire cost of £4.50 per person per day (VAT exempt) plus a compulsory charge of £3.50 per person per day (VAT included) for the provision of tea & coffee. The effect of the £4.50 rate is that the cost averages out at almost the same as the cost of the venues previously used for the equivalent of tournaments.

A clear majority of the Shareholders present were clearly opposed to the compulsory £3.50 surcharge. However, it was understood that any attempt to renegotiate this would have an inevitable effect on the basic room hire charge and the basic charge for purchasing tea & coffee on a casual basis. Heather Dhondy advised that the Tournament Committee would be considering the matter at its next meeting, and read out the questionnaire results from three events already held at Kettering; these results were actually rather more encouraging than the views being expressed by the majority of the Shareholders.

It was confirmed that there is no fixed long term contract with Kettering, and no plans whatsoever for the move of the Aylesbury HQ in the immediate future. David Thomas (*Worcestershire*) pointed out that County Associations were being hit particularly hard by this surcharge as the Tollemache, Corwen and Pachabo are all involved in the equation, these being events for which the County Associations normally pay the entry fee.

**3.2 1 November 2005**

**Item 4 Bridgemates**

Max Bavin reported that we now own 90 Bridgemates plus a current version of the "Scorebridge" scoring software. However, major software development is still required in order to fulfil all of our somewhat unique requirements and we are still investigating various possibilities in this regard. Martin Pool stated that the term "East Sussex" in the November minutes should read "Sussex" and that Sussex CBA'S declared interest in the matter is a financial one.

**Item 6 Board Responsibilities**

Raymond Brock (*Berks & Bucks*) noted that the officers of the Union are ex-officio members of the main committees and asked whether they felt a duty to attend meetings of these committees as a consequence of their office. It was confirmed that at least one Board member does attempt to attend each meeting. Gerard Faulkner (*Norfolk*) suggested that the Board should reconsider their decision to not pay travel expenses to other Board members who also might wish to attend such meetings. It was agreed to reconsider this decision.

**Item 8 BGB Matters**

Brian Crack (*Kent*) pointed out that date extensions had been allowed in the Gold Cup even though the Conditions of Contest clearly stated they would not be allowed in the early rounds. Moreover, all teams who were involved in these extensions had been granted a "Bye" in the following round. John Neville undertook to look into the matter at the next BGB meeting.

**Item 11.2 CCPR**

Jeff Morris explained that this is a reference to the Central Council for Physical Recreation. There may well be a need to work in conjunction with the CCPR in the future as the EBU and other sports bodies probably will not be making a large enough volume of applications to remain as a registered body with the Criminal Records Bureau in their own right for the purpose of obtaining clearance for adults working with children.

**Item 11.3 Membership Renewals and Services**

It was confirmed that the 1st August cut-off date relates solely to the provision of services, and has no effect whatsoever to one's membership status and hence to EBU or County Constitutions. It was suggested that the Membership Renewals Notice which came with the February edition of *English Bridge* could be more clearly marked (e.g. "Important notice; please see overleaf") in bold letters on the reverse side of the label, and that reference to the notice could have been highlighted within the magazine itself.

**Board Minutes of 24 January 2006**

Denis Robson explained that this entire meeting had been confidential, and that minutes will not be made publicly available. Likewise for the first part a meeting which had been held on 15<sup>th</sup> February 2006 (the second part of this meeting was a formal Board meeting, for which Minutes will be made available).

**4 GENERAL MANAGER**

Denis Robson advised that an advert for this position had been placed in *English Bridge* and on the EBU website, and that some applications had already been received. It was proposed to extend the circulation of the advert by sending a copy directly to affiliated clubs; Shareholders were asked to arrange for the same advert to be placed on their County Association Websites. The Board were in the process of drawing up a Job Description, and this would be sent to all applicants.

Several Shareholders and Vice-Presidents expressed the opinion that it was first essential to examine the precise role of the Chairman of the Union within the overall structure before one could sensibly define the role of the General Manager. It was agreed to set up a small working party comprising of Gerard Faulkner, Malcolm Oliver, and Peter Stocken together with two Board members to define the roles of the Chairman of the EBU and the General Manager. There would then be a special Shareholder's meeting to discuss their findings; this meeting could be either in addition to or instead of the next scheduled Shareholder's meeting, depending on the exact timing.

Some concern was expressed about a document produced by the ex-General Manager regarding a Company he appeared to be setting up under the name of "Bridge UK". Denis Robson advised the meeting that a confidentiality agreement existed between the Union and the ex-General Manager, and that various safeguards were already in place. He had also received assurances from Bridge Overseas that they would not be entering into a partnership with "Bridge UK" even though they had been named in the project document (apparently without their consent).

John Neville confirmed that he would continue to visit the Aylesbury office on a regular basis during the interim period and that Brian Smith of the Aylesbury Office is now the Company Secretary during this period.

## **5 TREASURER'S REPORT**

John Neville reported that the forecast for the current year was for a small surplus very much in line with the original budget. Savings in development costs have largely compensated for areas of unbudgeted spending such as the Venice Cup. Likewise the budget for 2006/07 was looking satisfactory. The international schedule was relatively light in 2006/07, so again a modest surplus should be possible. However, declining membership continues to be a major source of concern and he expressed the view that we would need to be increasingly thoughtful before embarking on any new, potentially expensive projects.

Bridge Shop and Licensing price reviews have already been announced with effect from 1st April 2006. The *Bridge for All* Package has been slightly re-packaged and re-priced (downwards). However, the £3.00 fee payable to County Associations has been omitted from the calculation. This will therefore come from central funds in 2006/07, but it is proposed to discontinue this payment to County Associations thereafter although BFA members would continue to count as being members of the relevant County Association. Shareholders were invited to consider this proposal ready for discussion at the next meeting.

Details of a membership initiative to be entered into with Bridge Holiday Operators were also outlined, wherein non-EBU members can join the EBU for the first time for £10.00 provided that they do so by paying by Direct Debit; of this the EBU will receive £5.00 and the Bridge Holiday Operator will also receive £5.00. County Associations would therefore not gain financially in the first year, but the normal subscription service would resume thereafter assuming that the Direct Debit was continued.

Master Points are also due to rise in price from 36 pence to 38 pence with effect from 1st April 2006. However, notification was missed out of the February edition of *English Bridge*; hence notification will be included in the April edition, and the price rise will become effective on 1st May.

*File Note: It was discovered after the meeting that the Master Point price rise was notified to all affiliated clubs in February English Bridge via the subscription renewal notice, quoting an effective date of 1st April. The price rise will therefore come into effect on 1st April as originally envisaged.*

In reply to questions from the floor, John Neville confirmed that advertising income in *English Bridge* is indeed less than has originally been hoped for. He also confirmed that the Board were comfortable with both the relative costs and benefits of employing outside agencies to maintain and develop the Aylesbury computer hardware and software rather than employing a full time member of staff to perform the function.

Peter Stocken (*Vice-President*) reinforced the seriousness of the current decline in membership, observing that the current figure is now back to the same level as it was in 1992 or pre-1984 if one disregarded the BFA membership.

## **6 MINUTES OF MEETINGS OF THE EBU LAWS & ETHICS COMMITTEE**

Martin Pool presented minutes of meetings of 30th November 2005, 11th January 2006 and 25th January 2006. He advised that the new "Orange Book" is on course for publication in June ready for implementation in August.

In response to comments received from Grattan Endicott (*Vice-President*) prior to the meeting, it was agreed to re-examine item 3.4 of the minutes of 25th January 2006 – partnership agreements following opponent's infractions. Robert Northage (*Leicestershire*) requested that the new EBU 20B (Convention Card) be made available on-line as soon as possible.

## **7 MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE EBU SELECTION COMMITTEE**

### **7.1 15 November 2005**

Gerard Faulkner presented the minutes of the meeting. He began by apologising for expressing the opinion at a previous Shareholder's meeting that a Selection Committee minute regarding the Commonwealth Games did not reflect accurately the view of the Committee. In fact the minute was accurate and did reflect their view. However, this view was based on the assumption that the cost of sending a team would be approximately £5,000; in actual fact the cost will be considerably less than this.

Attention was drawn to a proposal from the Junior Squad Managers regarding the development of promising young players in non-European Championship years by selecting good, but not necessarily the very best teams in junior competitions. Jeff Morris believed that Council (as it then was) had already agreed to this principle some time ago. Following further discussion, the Shareholders in any case gave their approval of this proposal.

A discussion then followed regarding the main Camrose competition itself. Whilst no change to current policy was proposed regarding selection, it was noted that there was a great deal of dissatisfaction with the new format. Our BGB representative was asked to make note of this point.

Val Lawson (*Bedfordshire*) observed that an elected member of the Selection Committee had been required to leave the room whilst Junior matters were discussed owing to a potential conflict of interests and stated that this was regrettable as the member concerned would probably have had a valuable contribution to make in this area. Gerard Faulkner stated that the matter was on the agenda for discussion at the next meeting, and that hopefully a position could be reached in future wherein the exclusion of committee members or ex-officio members could be limited solely to occasions where there was a direct and obvious conflict of interest.

## **8 MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE EBU TOURNAMENT COMMITTEE**

Heather Dhondy presented the minutes of a meeting held on 5th December 2005, and highlighted a new Northern Seniors Congress starting this year, and a 64-board match knock-out teams event to be held midweek at Brighton starting in 2007.

Gerard Faulkner (*Norfolk*) commended the initiative of the new senior's congress, but suggested that York might have been a better location than Harrogate. Philip Mason explained that neither the date nor the venue were fixed beyond 2007, but that there had been very few realistic options available in terms of getting the congress off the ground this year. He also highlighted a potential clash of Joint Ventures in May 2007 between Norfolk/Suffolk and Northants/Beds, which Heather Dhondy undertook to look into.

Suggestions were made regarding the desirability of including email addresses on knock-out draw slips, publicity for the national newcomer's pairs and potential clashes in the draft schedule of one day Joint Ventures all of which will be looked into. It was also noted that the once proposed Business House competition is no longer being pursued.

**9 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

None.

**APPENDIX**

**Proposal from Gloucestershire CBA**

The Gloucestershire CBA propose that:-

- a) A separate and comprehensive code of conduct for young players is prepared, independent of the Child Protection Policy, which must be signed up to by all players in Youth Squads. (The 18-25 group of players are not minors nor are they 'adults responsible for young players' but they are adults who are the peers of minors in this instance). This policy should include those sanctions that may be applied if the code is breached. This would ensure clarity for all concerned and eliminate fears of legal challenge.
- b) A sanction is applied, in cases of gross misconduct, that suspension from the squad means suspension from the team for a period of time. This suspension should be reviewed by the selection committee at the earliest opportunity.

The GCBA consider that these measures would strengthen and clarify the management of junior bridge to the advantage of players, their parents and the managers themselves.