



**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE SHAREHOLDERS OF
THE ENGLISH BRIDGE UNION LIMITED
HELD AT THE ROYAL NATIONAL HOTEL, LONDON
ON MONDAY 24TH APRIL 2006**

Present:	Denis Robson	Chairman
	Philip Mason	Vice Chairman
	John Neville	Treasurer
	Max Bavin	Acting General Manager & Minute Taker
(Apologies)	Sally Bugden	Board Member
	John Carter	Board Member
	David Harris	Board Member
(Apologies)	Graham Jepson	Board Member & Yorkshire Shareholder
	Jeff Morris	Board Member
	Alan Nelson	Board Member & Tournament Committee Chairman
	Martin Pool	Board Member, Laws & Ethics Committee Chairman & Sussex Shareholder
	Gerard Faulkner	Selection Committee Chairman, Vice President & Norfolk Shareholder
	Grattan Endicott	Vice President
	Keith Stanley	Vice President
	Peter Stocken	Vice President
	John Williams	Vice President
	David Graham	Membership Development Advisory Group Member
	Karen Durrell	Reception

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

1 APOLOGIES

As above.

2 MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF 15TH FEBRUARY 2005

2.1 Accuracy

Item 3.2 (Board Minutes)

First line of Item 6 should read 'ex-officio'.

Item 3.2 (Board Minutes)

Third line of Item 8 should read 'all' teams instead of 'most' teams.

Item 3.2 (Board Minutes)

Final Sentence. The Board meeting of February 15th had been in two parts: the first part confidential, and the second part a normal Board meeting for which minutes had been published.

Item 7.1 (Selection Committee)

Final sentence. The situation regarding the exclusion of "committee members" should include "ex-officio" members also.

Ian Spoons suggested that the wording of the same minute should reflect an instruction from the Shareholders to the Selection Committee rather than a recommendation. Denis Robson stated that, formally speaking, the Committees now report to the Board rather than to the Shareholders. In practice, the Board have undertaken to take careful note of the wishes of the Shareholders. The relevant minutes therefore remained unaltered.

Item 8 (Tournament Committee)

This should include a reference to an objection from Norfolk regarding a proposed One-Day Joint Venture clash between Norfolk/Suffolk and Northants/Beds in May 2007.

2.2 Matters Arising

Item 2.1 third point (Chat Room for Shareholders)

It was confirmed that this was on to 'to do' list.

Item 3.1 second point (Enterprise information service to Membership Secretaries)

Max Bavin confirmed that he had received details of the perceived shortcomings from the Surrey CBA, and that this matter was now being looked into.

Item 3.2 second point (Board Responsibilities)

The Board had not yet considered the suggestion that they should claim travel expenses when attending meetings of Committees of which they are not members. However, it was agreed by those present at the meeting that expenses could be claimed in future should the situation arise.

Item 4 (ex-General Manager)

There was some discussion regarding the current activities of the ex-General Manager now that he had left the EBU's employment. Denis Robson confirmed that the Board were watching developments closely. In answer to a question from Grattan Endicott, John Neville confirmed that he was satisfied that there were no financial irregularities within the EBU accounts.

Item 5 second paragraph (payments to County associations for 'BFA' members from 2007/08)

It was agreed to defer discussion of this item until recommendations have been received from the Membership Development Advisory Group.

3 ROLE OF CHAIRMAN

A paper from the working group had been circulated in advance to the Shareholders. A lengthy discussion followed, during which a broad consensus emerged for the view that the Board, via its Chairman, were primarily responsible for supplying inspiration, vision and strategy whilst the Aylesbury office, via the General Manager, was primarily responsible for the execution of the Board policy and for the provision of excellent services.

Board members with particular areas of responsibility should report to the Chairman, who in turn should liaise with the General Manager. Alan Nelson stated that the General Manager should not be seen as being a Chief Executive: indeed, that the role should be 80% operational and administrative and only 20% development. The interview panel for the next General manager proposed to proceed on this basis. The Shareholders offered their full support of this view.

4 MEMBERSHIP DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY GROUP

Philip Mason, John Carter and David Graham supplied a presentation outlining the current thinking of the group. The key area is to make EBU membership attractive through the provision of services, and in this regard services to Clubs was seen as central. The group would be visiting numerous clubs during the next few months to investigate the sort of services these clubs might welcome, and would report back in October. They would also be visiting a few County Associations as part of a pilot scheme. Alternative financial models were also being investigated such as two-tier membership or membership via clubs.

5 KETTERING

Alan Nelson referred the Shareholders to the Board Minutes of March 14th which contain a detailed report about Kettering and the proposals for next season. In general, the input from members regarding the playing conditions and venue has been positive. The majority of the Board remain committed to the idea of a National Bridge Centre, albeit not necessarily in Kettering.

Kettering do have plans to upgrade the facility fairly quickly; not just an onsite hotel (which could well take at least 2 years), but things such as lounges, bars, a new reception and a theatre. The Board therefore propose to continue with the venue for at least one further year with the expectation that there will be genuine signs of development by the time the new season starts in September. The compulsory £3.50 per person per day surcharge for tea and coffee will be dropped in exchange for a £2.00 per person per day increase in the room hire charges. Entry fees for Kettering would return to normal, and the additional venue hire costs would be absorbed centrally. It was acknowledged that this now makes Kettering one of our more expensive venues, so Max Bavin has been asked to make enquiries elsewhere regarding costs and availability in case the promised development of the Kettering venue does not materialise.

Several people present at the meeting voiced their dissent and strong opposition to the Kettering project, and found it strange that the costs should be so high in what is currently a low-cost part of the country. On the other hand, Paul Hackett

reminded the meeting that the venues previously used in Coventry and West Bromwich had been unsatisfactory.

6 TREASURER'S REPORT

John Neville re-affirmed his forecast for a modest surplus on 05/06, and stated that the 06/07 budget had also been set so as to achieve a modest surplus. The 06/07 budget was assisted by the fact that this is a relatively light year in terms of International competitions and spending.

Paul Hackett suggested that the proposed surcharge for non-Direct Debit payments would be better expressed as a discount for paying by Direct Debit. Ken Drane pointed out that only about 40% of people pay by Direct Debit at present, and felt that any attempt to increase subscriptions for the majority of members by as much as £2.50 at a time that membership was in decline would be self-defeating. The Board have yet to discuss these details fully, so it was agreed to return to this subject at a later date.

Gerard Faulkner suggested that it might be time for a review of the *English Bridge* advertising services offered by 'Blue2'. Sally Bugden stated that this was already in hand.

7 MINUTES OF MEETINGS OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF EBU LTD

7.1 15th February 2006

These were noted without comment.

7.2 14th March 2006

Jeff Morris expanded on the detail of the sort of tournaments Junior Squad players could enter free of charge, e.g. the Schapiro Spring Foursomes, and confirmed that there is now a formal list of suitable tournaments.

8 COMMITTEE REPORTS

The meeting were advised that, sadly, the EBU Committee Secretary Nick Doe has decided to return to a career in the legal profession after nearly 8 years service with the EBU. The Committee Chairmen, and the meeting in general expressed their gratitude for his services and wished him well for the future.

8.1 Minutes of a meeting of the EBU Tournament Committee – 27th February 2006

These were presented by Alan Nelson. Margaret Hatch advised the meeting that Berks & Bucks have withdrawn from the One-Day Joint Venture schedules next year as the new costing system would be prohibitive for them. Alan Nelson acknowledged that it was inevitable that there would be winners and losers under the new system, and stated that this matter could be re-examined after a 2-year trial period. Malcolm Oliver stated that NEBA have now taken up the congress option instead, and that this has proven to be hugely successful.

Comments were also made about the recent National Newcomers Pairs, although the Committee hadn't met since the event took place in order to evaluate it. However, it was confirmed that neither the £2.50 non-EBU member surcharge nor the attempt to 'flight' the event would apply next year.

Gerard Faulkner commented that minute reference 7.2 (One-Day Joint Venture clashes between Norfolk/Suffolk and Northants/Beds) was somewhat overstated, for which Alan Nelson apologised.

The meeting also asked the Tournament Committee to revisit the subject of penalties for mobile phones (minute reference 8.2), which Alan Nelson undertook to do so.

8.2 *Minutes of a meeting of the EBU Selection Committee – 22nd February 2006*

These were presented by Gerard Faulkner, who advised that suitable contracts have now been agreed with the English players. Alan Mould had regrettably had to decline the non-playing captain position at the forthcoming European Championships Women's team due to pressure at work, and his place would now be taken by Martin Jones.

A suggestion has been received to allow up to 12 teams into the Camrose trials next year rather than the 8 originally envisaged by the Committee, and this proposal would be given due consideration.

8.3 *Minutes of a meeting of the EBU Laws & Ethics Committee – 24th March 2006*

These were presented by Martin Pool, who advised that the new 'Orange Book' was virtually complete and would be distributed to tournament players, County Associations and affiliated clubs with the June edition of *English Bridge* ready for implementation in August at the Brighton Summer Festival.

It was confirmed that additional copies will be freely available via Aylesbury and the website. The next edition of *English Bridge* will contain articles about 'announcements' and 'alerts', as well as provide a summary of previous articles relating to the new 'Orange Book'.

9 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

It was agreed that the June meeting in Kettering was not now required this year, and that the next meeting should be the AGM in October.

However, it was agreed that financial statements would still be circulated in June/July as usual, and the Treasurer undertook to make himself available to answer questions relating thereto should the need arise.

(Please note these minutes are unapproved, until the next Shareholders Meeting)

The next Shareholders meeting will be the Annual General Meeting
on Wednesday 4th October 2006
at the Imperial Hotel, Russell Square, London

(All meetings commence at 12:30 pm unless otherwise indicated)