



**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE EBU TOURNAMENT COMMITTEE
HELD AT KETTERING LEISURE VILLAGE ON TUESDAY 8TH MARCH 2005**

Present:	Margaret Curtis	Chairman
	Alan Nelson	Vice-Chairman
	Max Bavin	Chief Tournament Director
	Tom Bradley	EBU Treasurer
	Heather Dhondy	
	Philip Mason	EBU Vice-Chairman
	Addis Page	
	Denis Robson	EBU Chairman
	Gerard Faulkner	Vice-President
	John Neville	Board Member
	Terry Collier	General Manager
	Dawn Mertens	Minute Secretary

1. **Apologies for Absence** Malcolm Oliver
Paul Spencer
Nick Doe Secretary

2. **Minutes of Previous Meeting (6th December 2004)**

Margaret Curtis explained that the previous minutes were 'noted' rather than 'approved' at the latest Council meeting and that further discussion of those minutes could take place at the April Shareholders' meeting.

2.1 **Accuracy**

Item 5 Tournament Accounts: the wording should be changed to "the income from Brighton had been slightly down". Subject to this correction, the minutes were agreed to be a true record and signed by the Chairman.

2.2 **Matters arising**

2.2.1 *Age qualification for Seniors*

No further update from the WBF was available, so the situation remains as previously minuted. Current indications are that the age limit will continue to be increased one year at a time until a minimum age of 60 is reached.

2.2.2 *Draw Policy for Knock-out events*

The matter of a new office draw program is still being progressed.

2.2.3 *Prize distribution policy*

This item was deferred at Alan Nelson's request until he has time to formalise his proposals.

2.2.4 Overseas Congress 2006

The General Manager reported the results of the questionnaires regarding the overseas congress and recommended to the Committee that a second overseas congress should be held from 2006. Luxor, Egypt was proposed as the venue for February 2006 (with an option of extending the holiday to include a Nile trip), Turkey for October 2006, and a return to Madeira for February 2007. The Committee agreed to these proposals. It was also agreed that a complete package be offered, with a higher bridge surcharge for non-package users.

2.2.5 English Riviera Congress

The congress details are now all on the website, together with an accommodation booking form from the Riviera Centre. A small supply of entry forms has been mailed to all County Secretaries in the South West and entry forms have been sent out to all competition entrants with their acknowledgements. The Committee was asked to consider the possibility of holding the event earlier next year to avoid the clash with school holidays and Max Bavin suggested that maybe a move to the Shrewsbury date was in order, as the Albrighton Hall Hotel were becoming increasingly disenchanted with us.

2.2.6 Possible Gold Point Event

Heather Dhondy reported that a letter had gone out to a potential eight sponsors, asking them to reply by the beginning of March. However, only one positive response had been received to date, with an offer of part sponsorship. Without full sponsorship it was felt that the event would not attract the top players. The General Manager pointed out that there was growing interest from television companies who wanted to be involved in new events such as this, and this would be attractive to potential sponsors.

2.2.7 Possible Seniors Congress in the North

Philip Mason had not yet had chance to look for suitable venues and it was agreed that he should progress this further.

3. **Tournament Accounts**

Tom Bradley reported that additional results from the two Year End Congresses and the Swiss Teams were now available, and that for the ten months to date a £45,000 surplus had been achieved against a budget of £36,000. By the end of the financial year the target was £58,000 against a budgeted surplus of £45,000. The budget for the forthcoming financial year had been set at the same £58,000 surplus, which could be slightly optimistic against the background of declining membership. It was acknowledged that the competitions department's contribution to the company was very valuable and Margaret Curtis congratulated Max Bavin on reducing costs. Gerard Faulkner queried the loss at the Swiss Teams event, which was caused by the hotel once again putting up their charges. The event will be moving to Daventry (or Kettering) next year.

4. **Tournament Reports**

The Committee had already received a detailed report from Max Bavin about recent tournaments.

4.1 **NICKO Final**

Played and won by Coventry 'A'.

4.2 **Year End Congress (London)**

Some equipment had been stolen and an insurance claim has now been made. It was agreed that the poorly supported Ladies Pairs event should be left as it is for the moment, but with a change in format considered in a year's time.

4.3 Year End Congress (Blackpool)

A player had reported that he had been told on the telephone that the event was full, which was obviously not the case. No explanation could be offered for this.

4.4 National Swiss Teams

As previously discussed, there will be a new venue for this event in 2006.

4.5 National Women's and Men's Pairs

Max Bavin agreed to respond to a letter of criticism from Jonathan Hoffman and Alan Nelson is to review the prizes in respect of this event.

4.6 Tunisia Congress

The dining arrangements were discussed, and it was agreed these should be flexible, depending on the location of the Overseas Congresses.

4.7 Tollemache Cup Final

The Butler scoring had proved very popular and it had been requested that it be used in the qualifying rounds. However Max Bavin reported this was extremely difficult given the lack of head-on matches.

4.8 National Women's Teams

It was anticipated that this event would result in a substantial loss, due to the hotel being very expensive and the number of entries being six down on previous years. It was pointed out that the competition used to be held in Eastbourne and attracted a much larger number of teams from the South. A change in venue needs to be considered, maybe together with a review of the calendar.

4.9 Harrogate Congress

A full entry and the Congress went well.

4.10 GolfPrint Regional finals

The regional finals went well and six teams have qualified for the finals at the West Midlands Bridge Club.

4.11 Ranked Masters Pairs

80 tables in total. The Hanover International coped well with 220 players for dinner, and the reception was very well organised (the hotel has now been taken over by the Paramount group). There was a very low entry for the bottom rank event, until the last minute when Warwick University entered 8 pairs. In the future, perhaps a Portland Pairs type event could be considered, held in regions, for the lower ranks.

5. National Bridge Centre

A presentation by David Atkinson and Ted Blair of Kettering Leisure Village took place prior to the start of the meeting.

5.1 Progress and timetable

At present the major stumbling block was uncertainty about the incorporation of hotel accommodation into the proposal. Two independent hotels were interested in the site and five larger operators had until the end of March to express a firm interest. Funding is available for the owners to build the hotel themselves, and it was envisaged that the hotel would have 100 bedrooms. The owners have local planners' acceptance of this usage of the site. A refurbishment programme of the existing buildings (taking into account our suggestions) could be completed by September 2005. Negotiations on a room hire basis would be taking place, and the costs would probably be similar to present hotel rates; different delegate rates could also be offered, for instance including dinner and hotel. There are three other hotels at present within a couple of miles of the leisure village.

5.2 Preliminary consideration of events to be transferred to the NBC

It was felt that the Year End and Easter Congresses, and the seaside events; Brighton, Scarborough, Bournemouth etc would probably stay as they are. Other events could be moved in stages; the Pachabo, Corwen, Garden Cities, Crockfords and Trials could be moved in six months with events such as the Seniors Congress, Ranked Masters etc in a year's time, with possible new events to follow. Max Bavin agreed to look at this further.

5.3 Any other issues

It was felt that it should be ensured that any upgrades made to the building should be to our specification.

6. Masterpoint Changes

6.1 Current State of proposals

The Master Point proposals had been considered by Council, who agreed that Tournament Committee should review the suggestions.

6.2 Implementation

It was agreed that a sub-committee be formed consisting of Philip Mason (chairman), Max Bavin and Alan Nelson, to carry out the review.

7. Tollemache Cup

7.1 Participation of Welsh Districts

It was agreed, provided it was acceptable to Lord Tollemache, that entries would be accepted from Welsh Districts. Individual EBU membership would not be required (WBU membership would be sufficient), but players representing a Welsh district would become 'cup-tied' for the purpose of the Corwen and Pachabo i.e. they could not then represent an English county in one of these events in the same competition year.

7.2 Possible changes to the format of the Qualifier

Due to uncertainties regarding the Welsh District entrants and the proposed move to Kettering, Max Bavin withdrew his proposal for a format and/or venue change for the time being.

8. One-Day Joint Ventures and Green-pointed County Congresses

8.1 Changes to existing schedules

The Summer Seniors and Veterans Congress in Eastbourne in July 2006 may have to move back a week owing to non-availability of the venue on the required weekend. Were this to happen, One-Day Joint ventures, at least in the South of England, would be likely to have to move forward a week. The affected counties are Essex and Herts, who have already confirmed that they can accommodate this change.

8.2 Future scheduling – 2007 and 2008

Due to correspondence from Berks & Bucks and Bedfordshire expressing their worries that their events could be financially unviable, a yet further discussion took place regarding the proposed licence fee basis for the funding of One Day events. Suggestions to alleviate these worries, including a sliding scale of licence fees depending on the number of tables, or building in some sort of a safety net, were discussed. However, it was concluded that the original proposal should be put to Shareholders, accompanied by a new paper written by Margaret Curtis, with a recommendation from the Tournament Committee that the Licence fee system be adopted. Future scheduling of events should be delayed until after the Shareholders' meeting.

9. Any other business

9.1 Summer Festival (Scarborough)

Due to space constraints arising out of the refurbishment of the Spa a careful eye needs to be kept on numbers (68 tables maximum for the teams only). The problems should be pointed out to entrants and the Riviera Congress promoted as an alternative. Full congress entries should be given priority over 'teams only' entries.

9.2 Permitted methods in EBU Tournaments

It was agreed that the proposal by the Laws & Ethics Committee that all EBU events should be Level 2 or 4, which was previously adopted by the Committee, should take effect when the new *Orange Book* comes into effect (probably 2006/7).

9.3 Possible "Super-NICKO"

The Committee did not consider it appropriate to design a new tournament solely for the purpose of being able to accept a potential invitation to the EBL European Champions Cup.

9.4 County Major Teams competitions

Clarification had been sought by the Herefordshire CBA regarding the Green Point rules for the county major teams championship. It was confirmed that the final stages have to be knock-out, although this does include the possibility of just two teams qualifying. The Master Point working group were invited to consider this matter when they met, but no changes were recommended for the time being.

9.5 Tournament publicity in English Bridge

Margaret Curtis was particularly unhappy with the promotion of EBU events in *English Bridge*. The recent edition had no mention of either the National Newcomers Pairs or the Portland Pairs, and no results were published from recent events. It was agreed that Michael Clark (EBU staff member) would provide information from the website to go into the magazine and copy would go to Margaret Curtis for review before printing.

9.6 Afternoon sim pairs

Only a small number of clubs have previously expressed an interest in holding an afternoon event. However, it was agreed to re-ascertain whether there was any interest the next time an email circular is being sent to clubs.

9.7 Possible National Business Houses competition

There are already existing Business House Leagues running in some parts of the country, most notably in London. The Tournament Committee agreed that Philip Mason should progress the idea of a National Business House league based around the twelve Baker Tilly regional offices.

9.8 TD dress code

There is an existing dress code for Tournament Directors and it was felt that Max Bavin should approach any individual who it was felt was not appropriately dressed.

9.9 Master Points

A letter from the Allingham Bridge Club suggesting that serious consideration should be given to allowing clubs to issue Master Points only to those players who wanted them was discussed and rejected. It was pointed out that clubs could run one duplicate night with Master Points and one without, if this is what they wished.

9.10 Camrose Match Schedule

John Neville was unhappy that the second weekend of Camrose matches clashed with the Ranked Masters, and was scheduled to do so again in 2006. Now that the Camrose only takes place over two weekends it should be possible to avoid such clashes, and he agreed to raise this matter at the next BGB meeting.

9.11 *Tsunami Appeal*

30 clubs participated in the event and an excess of £10,000 had been promised from various sources, £8,500 of which had already been received by the EBU. The Committee were very pleased with this excellent result and Denis Robson commented that not enough publicity was given to the large amount of funds raised for charity by bridge players.