



**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE EBU TOURNAMENT COMMITTEE
HELD AT AYLESBURY OFFICES ON THURSDAY 15TH SEPTEMBER 2005**

Present:	Margaret Curtis	Chairman
	Alan Nelson	Vice-Chairman
	Max Bavin	Chief Tournament Director
	Heather Dhondy	
	Philip Mason	EBU Vice-Chairman
	Addis Page	
	John Neville	Board Member and Acting Treasurer
	Nick Doe	Secretary

- 1. Apologies for Absence**
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|----------------|-----------------|
| Malcolm Oliver | |
| Denis Robson | EBU Chairman |
| Paul Spencer | |
| Terry Collier | General Manager |

2. Minutes of Previous Meeting (8th June)

2.1 Accuracy

The minutes were agreed to be a true record and signed by the Chairman.

2.2 Matters arising

2.2.1 Possible Seniors Congress in the North (item 3.2.4)

Despite the fact that the Committee had decided to shelve the idea at the previous meeting, a further discussion took place as many seniors were in favour of such an event. The Committee noted that it had been suggested that BGB might be interested in staging an event in Peebles, but it was not in favour of this idea being pursued.

If such a Congress were to be established, it would be necessary to find a suitable date and a suitable venue. Dates were a problem in that it was not considered desirable to take any more dates away from Counties, but the nature of Seniors bridge was such that it was not considered a good idea to seek to clash the event with an existing Seniors event, even one at the opposite end of the country, because without such a clash significant numbers might be expected to attend both events.

As far as a venue was concerned it was thought desirable to choose a venue which was relatively easy to reach from London, so York was considered a front runner.

Mr Bavin was asked to investigate possible venues, including York, Scarborough and Tyneside, and Mr Doe was asked to make suggestions as to possible dates.

2.2.2 *Schapiro Spring Foursomes (item 5.11)*

Correspondence from Mr Fleet was noted. The Committee thought that it was essential to keep the event on a bank holiday weekend to minimise the amount of time off players had to take. It saw no reason to move from a Midlands venue, and thought that the present venue was attractive to many because of the variety of restaurants available within walking distance.

2.2.3 *Tollemache Cup (item 7)*

The Committee noted that the General Manager had recently visited the Kettering Leisure Village site, and had been informed that the works are ahead of schedule and will be completed on time. He had also reported that the central hotel booking service seemed to be working well. However, few Counties seemed to be using it; instead the hotels concerned were reporting significant numbers of direct bookings from bridge players.

Lord Tollemache had expressed an interest in attending a sponsored meal at the Tollemache Qualifier (awaiting confirmation), courtesy of the local Tourist Board, and all Counties would be urged to take advantage of this so that the players could experience what the venue has to offer in terms of food.

Work was in progress on scoring software, but whether it would be possible to introduce Bridgemates in time for the Tollemache Qualifier was not yet certain. Correspondence from Mr Petrie, critical of the lack of hotel accommodation in walking distance, was noted. The Committee was certain that questions of accommodation and food options were of concern to many players, and would influence the Board when making a final decision on whether to proceed with the full National Bridge Centre project

2.2.4 *Tournament publicity in English Bridge (item 9.5)*

The Committee noted that for another issue the material had not been shown to the Chairman in advance, and Mr Doe was asked to ensure that the request for this to be done had been noted in the appropriate quarters. The Committee also noted that the process of compiling tournament publicity for the magazine is initiated by the Editor, and competitions staff at Aylesbury are only involved if requested by the Editor. The Committee thought that it would be reasonable for a full page to be set aside for tournament publicity in every issue, although it recognised that someone would have to be commissioned to provide the copy.

2.2.5 *Afternoon simultaneous pairs (item 9.6)*

Mr Bavin apologised that the request to seek information from clubs other than those who actually play in the present (evening only) events had not yet been actioned, and undertook to ensure that it now was.

2.2.6 *Possible National Business Houses competition (item 12)*

Mr Mason reported that there had not so far been any progress. The Committee thought that it was unfortunate that the item in *English Bridge* had not asked for expressions of interest, as had been anticipated.

Mr Page offered to speak to the organisers of existing Business Houses competitions to ascertain various details of how they operate and how they publicise their competitions, which was accepted with thanks.

2.2.7 *Reference from the Laws & Ethics Committee (item 14.4)*

Mr Doe reported that the matter had been resolved without the need to contemplate withdrawal of reciprocal privileges.

3. *Tournament Accounts*

Mr Bavin apologised that he and Messrs Collier and Neville had not yet managed to have the proposed discussion to arrive at a suitable format for presenting financial information to the Committee. Meanwhile the figures were presented in the traditional format.

They showed that there had been a somewhat slow start to the competition year. The last Shrewsbury Congress had not been a financial success, due to increased hotel charges, but this had been anticipated. The Garden Cities Trophy had suffered from fewer entries than normal. Whilst the precise reason was not known, there was no reason to think that it was an ongoing problem.

4. Tournament Reports

A paper from Mr Bavin was tabled.

4.1 Pachabo Cup

31 Counties had been represented. A home-written spreadsheet-based computer program had been used to score the event and publish results.

4.2 Garden Cities National Final

The event had been won by Coventry Bridge Club with a match to spare.

4.3 One-day events (June)

The numbers of tables in play were as follows (Swiss Teams unless otherwise specified):-

Saturday

Kent	44	
Norfolk	40	Swiss Pairs
Oxfordshire	59	Swiss Pairs

Sunday

Cumbria	15	
Herefordshire	45	
Suffolk	37	
Sussex	74	

The numbers seemed much as expected, and there had been no problems.

4.4 Shrewsbury Summer Congress

An average of 76 tables had been in play in the main events, which was slightly down, but not surprising in view of the large increase in hotel prices, as a result of which the congress is being discontinued in favour of the new English Riviera Congress taking over the date.

4.5 Summer Seniors and Veterans Congress

There had been an average of over 100 tables in play in the main events, which is consistent with previous excellent results at this congress.

Mr Bavin had suggested that having a separate Veterans Pairs Final did not really work in view of the numbers, and that it would be preferable to play primary and secondary finals instead with separate Veterans prizes. If so, there was a case for seeking to move one of the large sponsored prizes over to the Swiss Teams. The Committee agreed on both counts (subject to sponsor approval in the latter case). The change of format would come into force from the 2007 event.

Mr Bavin had also suggested playing 7 x 7-board Swiss Teams matches, instead of 6 x 7. The Committee agreed to implement this change from 2006, but without changing the starting time on Sunday until 2007.

4.6 Hubert Phillips Bowl Final

This had been played at the Peterborough Bridge Club and won by Miss Hinden's team.

4.7 One-day events (July)

The numbers of tables in play were as follows (Swiss Teams unless otherwise specified):-

Saturday

Derbyshire	35	Swiss Pairs
Essex	61	Swiss Pairs
Lancashire	31	Swiss Pairs

Sunday

Gloucestershire	31
Hertfordshire	64
London	29
Manchester	35
Nottinghamshire	34

The numbers seemed much as expected, although one or two were low by historical standards. The Committee noted that the financial surplus from the North-West events at Risley was likely to be low, as the venue used is large, and really needs more than 30-odd tables to justify the hire costs.

4.8 Northern Summer Congress

There had been 89 tables in play for the main Swiss Pairs event, and 74 for the teams on Friday, which seemed very satisfactory numbers in view of the purposeful clash with Torquay.

The Committee agreed to move to 12 x 7-board matches in the Swiss Pairs, from the present 10 x 8, in line with the format successfully used at the English Riviera Congress. Mr Bavin had had some doubts as to the ability of the scorer to cope with the faster turn-around times involved, in view of the large size of the field, but Mr Mason, who had spoken to the scorer concerned, assured the Committee that this would not be a problem.

4.9 English Riviera Congress

There had been 67 tables in play for the main Swiss Pairs event, and 57 for the teams on Friday. Mr Bavin considered these to be excellent figures for an event in its first year which had not been publicised in the diary, and thought that the choice of format had been the right one, in particular the decision to play Swiss teams rather than Multiple teams on the Friday.

The early start on Sunday had proved popular, and Mr Bavin considered that there was a strong case for moving to more "continental" timings (i.e. early start, play through with only a short break, finish before dinner) on the Saturday. The Committee agreed, but the change would only be made for 2007, as the starting time for 2006 had already been published in the diary.

4.10 Brighton Summer Congress

The fact that entries were down by a full 10% on both weekends (257 tables of pairs and 210 teams) was noted with a degree of concern, although the financial impact had been minimised by close attention to both staffing and prize levels. Mr Bavin indicated that there were possible reasons for the reduced numbers which would not be applicable next year, although it was difficult to be sure what had caused the drop. By contrast, numbers midweek had been reassuringly stable, apart from the impact on the Monday and Tuesday evening events of the fact that the Seniors are in play.

The Committee agreed to dispense in future with the final Sunday evening Open Pairs on the second weekend, which had been down to just 6 tables. Instead, entrants to the Swiss Teams would be offered free entry to the Friday afternoon Open Pairs.

Mr Bavin reported that the event had gone very well in terms of organisation. The slightly reduced numbers had allowed good table spacing, and it had not been necessary to use the less satisfactory areas of the venue in terms of lighting and ventilation. However, the posting of results

on the internet had gone poorly, as the wireless technology installed in the hotel had not been able to cope. The Committee considered that some dedicated IT support was needed for the Congress in future.

Mrs Dhondy said that she had been asked to raise the possibility of introducing a carry-over score for qualifiers for the teams finals. The Committee noted that this had been suggested before, albeit not recently, and preferred to leave things as they were.

4.11 Gerard Faulkner Salver Final

This had been played at Aylesbury, and won by Mr Monachan's team by 1 IMP.

4.12 NICKO, Crockfords Plate and NICKO Plate Finals

The finalists are known but arrangements have so far only been made for one of the three finals.

5. Entries for knock-out events

5.1 NICKO

Entries were down 29 (7.4%) at 363 teams, representing 171 different clubs (down 2). This was mildly disappointing. It would remain to be seen what effect the timing change would have for next year.

5.2 Crockfords

Entries were down 4 (2.4%) at 160 teams. The Committee noted some points raised by Mr Doe in connection with the seedings, and considered that it would be helpful to be able to include Welsh Gold Point totals in the calculations, for players whose Master Point records were maintained by the WBU.

5.3 Gerard Faulkner Salver

Entries were particularly disappointing at 75, down 17 (18.5%), when it had been hoped to build on last year's increase.

6. Master Points

The Committee considered the proposals appended to the minutes of the previous meeting, and made a number of decisions.

The creation of a new rank, to be called "Premier Master", was approved. The qualification would be 5000 Master Points, including 10 Green Points.

The creation of a new rank, to be called "Premier Grand Master", was approved. The qualification would be 1500 Green Points (Local Points irrelevant).

The allocation of modest Green Point awards to EBU sim pairs was approved. The top award would be 1 Green Point (much reduced from the original proposal), with equal blocks of 1, 3/4, 1/2 and 1/4 to the top 10% of the field. It was not considered practicable to find a week for a new sim pairs event; instead the Committee decided to allocate Green Points on this basis to both existing weeks of EBU sim pairs. Similar awards would be offered to BGB for their events, but the awards would not be extended to other sim pairs events.

The reduction of the top award for the National Newcomers Pairs to 3 Green Points (currently 6, previous proposal 4) was approved, to reflect the fact that this is now a one plus session sim pairs event.

It was agreed to rationalise the Green point awards for the early rounds of all National knock-out competitions, to eliminate fractional Green Points (except in the Plate competitions). The awards proposed are as follows (entries in bold denote changed figures):-

	Round of ♠								
	512	256	128	64	32	16	QF	SF	F
Crockfords		2	2	3	4	6	♥		
Hubert Phillips			2	2	3	3	4	6	8
NICKO	1	1	2	2	3	3	4	6	8
Faulkner Salver			1	1	2	2	3	4	6

♠ in some cases the number of teams involved at each stage is somewhat different because of the entry of seeds at a later stage

♥ separate awards for 8-team final

The Committee noted that the Board had decided to terminate the award of pens on promotion from one rank to another. This decision was clearly a matter for the Board, and the Committee had no strong views, but it did think that the proposed improved certificates should be sent direct to the players rather than to clubs (even if – which seemed doubtful – it was possible to identify the player's main club).

With the exception below, there was to be no change to awards at EBU Congresses.

The introduction of Green Point awards for the midweek evening sessions at Brighton was approved. For the Mixed Pairs (the largest event), the top award would be 2 Green Points. For the other evening events the awards would be approximately in proportion to the relative size of the entry, as compared with the Mixed Pairs. Mr Bavin was asked to devise detailed scales.

It was agreed to increase the proportion of the field awarded ranking points at One-day Green-pointed events from one-eighth to one-sixth. It was noted that this would entail minor adjustments to the top awards to avoid anomalies, and Mr Bavin was asked to deal with these.

The Committee agreed that the new awards should come into force with effect from the 2006/07 playing season (1st September 2006) except for those for Brighton, which would be introduced from the 2006 event.

It was agreed that a more thoroughgoing review of the whole Master Points system would be instituted in two years' time, with a view to publication of a new Master Points Handbook.

7. Prize distribution policy

The proposals made by Mr Nelson, noted briefly at the last meeting, were again considered, in the light of some comments from Mr Bavin on the practicality of changing the proportion of the field which is awarded prizes in events of different numbers of sessions.

The Committee decided to make no major changes to its policy, but minor adjustments would be made in events of at least three sessions to add session prizes where possible. Existing category prizes for juniors and non-experts would remain.

It was noted that some Counties prefer to allocate the bottom prize in One-day Green-pointed events to an ascenders prize rather than a final ranking prize, and the Committee confirmed that this was perfectly acceptable, at the County's option.

8. One-day Green-pointed events and Green-pointed County Congresses

8.1 Financial Structure

The Committee noted that at the last shareholders' meeting the Chairman had expressed the view that the proposal to change the financial structure appeared to be in danger of getting bogged down by going back and forth between the Committee and shareholders. It had therefore been

agreed that the new basis proposed by the Committee, namely a licence fee, would be implemented on a trial basis for two years, i.e. 2007 and 2008.

The Committee noted that there was a snag with this in that applications are sought some considerable time in advance, so that a decision on the financial structure to take effect after the two-year trial would need to be made while the trial period was still in progress. In practice, it would probably be necessary for applications for 2009 to be sought on the alternative basis of the continuation of the licence fee basis, or a return to the traditional joint venture basis. It was agreed that a feedback form should be devised and issued to all Counties staging events during the trial period, so that the Committee could evaluate the success or otherwise of the trial on the basis of the best possible information.

The amount of the licence fee proposed by the Committee, namely £7 per table per session, had been decided when the proposal had been to implement the new financial structure from 2006. Now that the proposal was to start in 2007, it was necessary for the Board to determine the appropriate level of licence fee. The Committee endorsed Mr Neville's proposal that a recommendation should be made to the Board that the licence fee for 2007 should be £7.25 per table per session, with an appropriate increase for 2008 to reflect inflation.

The Committee noted that Counties were finding that venues which had not previously charged VAT were now doing so, and the question had been raised whether there was anything which could be done to mitigate the effects of this. The Committee understood that it might be possible for the Union's half share of the VAT to be reclaimed for 2006 events if the Counties affected were able to ensure that the contract with the venue was in the name of the joint venture rather than the County, so that the resulting invoice could be addressed to the County and the EBU jointly. However, this would not work for 2007 or 2008, as under the new financial structure it was clear that the County would have financial responsibility for the event.

8.2 Changes to existing schedules

The Committee noted that a number of outstanding scheduling matters had been resolved, and the final schedule for 2006 was approved as follows:-

Dates	Double-headers	Saturday events	Sunday events
11 th & 12 th March	Leicestershire London Manchester with Merseyside	None	Avon Bedfordshire Channel Islands Hants & IOW
13 th & 14 th May	Lancashire with Merseyside	Kent Northants	Devon Sussex Warwickshire
17 th & 18 th June	Gloucestershire with Herefordshire	Bedfordshire Kent Staffs & Shrops	Berks & Bucks Suffolk
8 th & 9 th July (revised dates)	Essex with Hertfordshire Nottinghamshire	None	None
15 th & 16 th July (original dates)	Lancashire with Manchester	None	None
30 th September & 1 st October	Derbyshire Surrey	Oxfordshire	Avon Cornwall Hertfordshire

The Committee also noted that Oxfordshire had reported that they had had no objections from their neighbours to their proposed Congress, and approval was therefore confirmed. The Committee thought that it would be helpful to publish the current list of "Congress option" approvals, which is as follows:-

County	No of GP events	Date
Cornwall	1	March
Cumbria	1	March
Devon	1	April
Gloucestershire (Cheltenham Congress)	1	April
Isle of Man	1	March
Middlesex	2	November
Norfolk	1	April
Northamptonshire (Bedford Congress) ♦	1	September
North-East	2	November
Oxfordshire	1	June
Somerset (West of England Congress)	2	October
Staffordshire & Shropshire (Telford Congress)	1	April
Warwickshire (Midland Counties Congress) ♣	1	January
Worcestershire (Malvern Congress)	2	October
Yorkshire	2	June
♦ joint venture Bedfordshire / Northants		
♣ joint venture Warwickshire / Worcestershire / Staffs & Shrops		

8.3 Future scheduling – 2007 and 2008

The Committee noted that applications had been sought and were beginning to come in, and a draft schedule would be considered at the December meeting.

9. Any other business

9.1 Overseas Congress – 2006 and 2007

The Committee noted that entries were going well for Luxor in February 2006, and it was likely that a venue in Turkey for Autumn 2006 would be confirmed shortly. It was hoped that one of the events in 2007 would return to Madeira.

Mr Nelson suggested Tenerife as a future venue, but the Committee noted that this would be unlikely to be attractive to the sponsor because the availability of independent flights was such that the take-up of the sponsor's package was likely to be low.

9.2 Kettering Conference Centre – events in 2006/07 and 2007/08

The Committee noted that Mr Bavin was making provisional bookings for the same list of events as 2005/06. Criticism was voiced of the decision to schedule the Eastern Regional Final of the National Pairs in Kettering, which appeared to be a Midlands rather than an Eastern Counties location.

The Committee also noted that a suggestion had been made that the Great Northern Swiss Pairs should be renamed the National Swiss Pairs and relocated to Kettering. Mr Bavin said that it was true that the event was somewhat anomalous in that most other events which involved only a one night overnight stay (or none) were being moved to Kettering. Mr Nelson thought that this was a regional event and it had never been the intention to move such events to Kettering. The Committee endorsed Mr Neville's comment that it was for Kettering to establish itself as a venue of excellence, and that until that had been done it was important to retain regional goodwill.

9.3 *End of Committee year*

The Committee noted that there would be a contested election at the AGM, as three nominations had been received for two available places. Mr Mason wished to place on record the Committee's appreciation of the contribution made by Mrs Curtis in a total of 9 years as Chairman of the Committee, and the Committee endorsed his comments with enthusiasm.