



**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE YOUTH COMMITTEE
HELD AT THE IMPERIAL HOTEL, RUSSELL SQUARE, LONDON WC1
ON WEDNESDAY OCTOBER 25TH 2007**

Present :	Clive Owen	Chairman
	Peter Stocken	EBU Chairman
	Jeff Morris	Board Member
	Chris Duckworth	Nominated Member
	Sandra Landy	U25 Women and Selection Committee
	Paul Bowyer	U25 Squad
	Michael Byrne	U20 Squad
	Mike Amos	EBU Youth Officer - Secretary

Apologies for absence: Graham Jepson Board Member

1 Report from Peter Stocken on Shareholders' Meeting (3rd Oct 2007) and Board Meeting (23rd Oct 2007)

Peter Stocken reported that the Shareholders' Meeting had given almost unanimous approval for the establishment of an appointed Youth Committee. In turn the Board had given the Committee its full backing.

2 Chairman's targets

The Chairman began the meeting by suggesting that it might help to focus the work of the Committee in its first year to adopt three modest targets

- 1 Double the Junior Membership of the EBU
- 2 Set up a Charitable Trust for Youth and ring fence from the Youth Budget
- 3 Improve the preparation of our Junior International Teams

On the first point, the EBU database shows something like 220 Junior Members which is exceedingly disappointing. It was felt that there were probably youngsters who were bridge players in Schools or Universities but who had not joined, so one aspect of this was to encourage those already playing to sign up. It was clear that there were very large discrepancies in Junior participation in different clubs and counties. Darlington and Manchester were highlighted as Clubs where Juniors had been welcomed and encouraged. The Committee deplored the inclusion on the EBU website of the message in the Club section that Juniors were not welcome at particular clubs. It was agreed that we should seek to have this message removed. Bridge Clubs in locations where there were University Clubs should be encouraged to forge links.

It was not clear to the committee why there should be such variability in subscription fees for Juniors from county to county. It was questioned whether there was a need for counties to charge an additional fee for Juniors above the EBU flat rate.

It was agreed that where there was success, it was often down to the enthusiasm of an individual or a small group. It was agreed that attempts should be made to harness the energy and interest of recent “graduates” from the Junior ranks. Simon Cope and Ben Green had attended the recent U25 trials as observers and had contributed helpfully to the selectors’ discussions. Susan Stockdale had expressed an interest in helping with preparation of a U25 Women’s Teams in the future.

There was an extended discussion of the use of sponsorship to fund youth training and squad weekends. It was felt that there was a lack of clarity about what the EBU’s policy was in relation to refunding costs, especially accommodation costs. While Mel Starkings was involved Loughborough was a central and cheap centre for squad weekends. Other alternatives needed to be examined especially for the U25 Women.

A discussion about the role of the Youth Committee and the Selection Committee followed. It was felt that it was important that there should be liaison if the Youth Committee was to be responsible for U25 and U20 selection so that promising players could be “passed on” and their future careers as international players developed. It was noted that Sandra Landy’s membership of both Committees could facilitate this. It was agreed that the Selection of the U28 team for the 2008 Mind Sports Games was beyond the remit of the Youth Committee and should be dealt with by Selection.

The Chairman reminded the Group that the role of the Committee was not just to deal with the “elite players” of the international squads. There was an important task to be faced in co-ordinating and supporting the work of the County Youth Officers. It was felt that great improvements could be made in the EBU website. Reference was made to the “Really Easy Bridge” website which had recently been developed. This was a model which was worth examining and copying. Chris Duckworth agreed to look at the website and consider how we could make progress.

Mike Amos thought that it might be valuable to organise some regional meetings of CYO in order to offer support and encouragement and share experience and best practice. Some counties such as Sussex and Manchester were highly successful, as

were Gloucestershire and Harrogate. This was often due to the dedication of individuals, but there was much that could be learned from each other.

3 Feedback from Squad Managers

The Squad Managers agreed that the free entry policy for squad members was helpful in organising worthwhile training and experience. Paul Bowyer had prepared a paper on integrating training with events, so that for example there could be some training on one or two days of a congress alongside a training session. This had not so far taken place.

It was agreed that The National Women's Teams and the Women's Pairs were appropriate events to be added to the list of competitions which squad members could qualify for free entry.

The Committee was pleased to hear that all four nations had accepted invitations to enter an U25 Women's Team so that there would be three competitions this year for the first time. With the co-operation of the Selection Committee, who were still responsible for the selection process the following teams had been selected. It had been agreed that the budget set aside would be sufficient to fund three teams.

U25

Alex Morris – Mike Bell
Ed Jones – Ben Paske
John Atthey – Chris Owen

Reserves: Dave Cropper – Steven Raine
NPC: Steve Eginton

U20

James Paul & Graeme Robertson
Rob Myers & Daniel McIntosh
Adam Hickman & Tom Paske

NPC Michael Byrne

U25 Women's Team

Fiona Brown – Susan Stockdale
Jennie Marvin – Elizabeth Roberts
Laura MacDougall – Alice Kaye

Reserves: Laura Perryman – Emily Middleton
NPC: Sandra Landy

It was reported that invitations for two teams had been received for the *White House* event in Amsterdam (*March 9th-16th*) from Kes Tammens. There was some

discussion about the possibility of a U25 Women's Team and whether it would be appropriate to ask if a further team could be accommodated. It was suggested that this was premature, because the dates might be difficult and costs needed to be considered. The Dutch had also expressed some interest in bringing some Juniors to Brighton in 2008 and Mike Amos would find out more about their intentions, when visiting the Channel Trophy.

Mike Byrne reported that he wanted to take two teams of U25 to the WBU's Llangollen Swiss Teams Congress, as this would be good training for the Channel Trophy. Funding of £500 had been donated and so this could take place. It was suggested that in these circumstances the team should play as England U20 Squad and wear squad shirts. Mike Amos was asked to check that shirts were available or if new supplies were needed. (*There is stock held at the EBU- MA*)

There was a discussion about the Code of Conduct for the Squad after some regrettable incidents at the U20 training weekend in Manchester. It was agreed that Michael Byrne had handled the matter well and that appropriate disciplinary action had been taken by The Board members responsible for Youth matters after discussion with Michael. The Chairman felt that peer pressure was often the most potent force in controlling behaviour. It was agreed to review the Code of Conduct at a future meeting.

4 Junior Camrose 2008

Despite the keen support of one committee member it was not felt that it was appropriate to try to promote a change of format in the Junior Camrose to include a sixth team – in this case an English U25 Women's Team for 2008. This was a BGB decision and not for the EBU.

The Junior Camrose and Peggy Bayer would be held:

Chancellors Conference Centre, Manchester 15th – 17th February 2008

Mike Amos was to be Match Manager

It was agreed that the Junior Camrose should provide a focus for the promotion of Youth Bridge in the Manchester area. A number of Schools were receiving tuition in minibridge and they could be invited to attend. We should provide an exhibition of minibridge and teaching materials and Taste Bridge sessions. Mike would liaise with Manchester CBA to arrange support. Matt Betts, the EBU Communications Officer has offered his support and help and would be taking every opportunity to publicise the event.

The following U25 team was proposed and agreed

Mike Bell / Alex Morris
Dave Cropper / Steve Raine
Fiona Brown / Susan Stockdale
Reserves: Ian Angus / James Rogers
NPC: Steve Eginton

Mike Byrne asked for a delay in the selection of the team for the Peggy Bayer. This was agreed.

5 Schools Sims and MiniBridge

John Pain in the EBU office had offered to continue to run these competitions. Details were available on the EBU website

6 Portland Bowl

This is technically not an EBU event but a British event run by the EBU on behalf of the Portland Club who host the semi-final and finals each year. The winners have in the past been selected to play in alternate years either in the European or World University event. In 2006, Durham had played in China after considerable finance had been raised. In 2007, Oxford played in Bruges. It was recognised that this does not provide the strongest possible team, but is the reward offered in the past to the winners of this event. Mike Amos would liaise with Ian Mitchell to obtain details of the new competition.

7 AOB

It was agreed that more effort was needed to involve recent juniors and other younger players to play a part in the work of the EBU. Besides the help of Ben Green and Simon Cope at the recent Junior Camrose Trials where they made valuable contributions, Duncan Happer and Alan Shilitoe offered considerable help to Mike Byrne with the U20s. We should consider how to involve these and similar players.

8 Date of next Meeting

11.00-2.00pm

16th January at West Midlands Bridge Club