



**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE YOUTH COMMITTEE
HELD AT THE WEST MIDLANDS BRIDGE CLUB, SOLIHULL
ON WEDNESDAY APRIL 16TH 2008**

Present :	Clive Owen	Chairman
	Sally Bugden	EBU Vice-Chairman
	Jeff Morris	Board Member
	Graham Jepson	Board Member
	Chris Duckworth	Nominated Member
	Paul Bowyer	U25 Squad
	Michael Byrne	U20 Squad
	Mike Amos	EBU Youth Officer - Secretary

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Sandra Landy who was unwell. Comments from Sandra on the Agenda were received and circulated.

2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (16.01.2008)

The minutes were accepted.

Matters Arising

Terms of Reference

Chris Duckworth had drawn up a draft Terms of Reference for the Youth Committee (attached to these minutes). These had been sent to the Board but had not yet been formally accepted.

Code of Conduct

Paul Bowyer was asked if the U25 Squad had all completed the Code of Conduct. He reported that all those attending Squad Training had signed forms and he had electronic or paper acceptance from the majority.

Junior Membership

Graham Jepson reported that 2008/9 subscriptions had been fixed and published. He would submit the Youth Committee's request for standard "free" County membership for the 2009/10 season. He believed that this should not be for all U25 players, but for those in full-time education for all or part of the relevant membership year. This was agreed.

Youth Educational Trust

The Chairman commented that we still needed to publicise the Trust and especially the Gift Aid scheme which would maximise the value of donations.

Channel Trophy

Some concern was expressed that because there was insufficient public rooms at The Royal National Hotel, a venue had not yet been booked for the Channel Trophy 2008. The committee were assured that the matter was being dealt with by the Aylesbury staff.

3. CHARITABLE DONATION

The Committee was reminded by Sally Bugden of the offer made to the EBU to make an application for a donation of £60,000 over three years to develop our work with young people. The key element was that the project should be sustainable and the donation thought of as start-up money. The Committee needed to put forward a professional application which would pay attention to the return on the investment.

A wide-ranging and extensive discussion followed. It was generally agreed that some kind of pilot scheme/s would be appropriate. It was recognised that there are some areas where successful teaching and encouragement of Youth Bridge is already taking place and it was felt that it was vital to base new work on existing centres of experience. The committee were reminded that the 7-11 age-group mentioned in the original documentation was intended as an example rather than as prescriptive. There was a discussion about how schemes could be sustainable and it was suggested that appropriate payments would need to be made for Junior Bridge Clubs and teaching. It was suggested that there could be some spending on resources for teaching, perhaps in a variety of media. It was noted that the EBU's overall strategy for increasing participation in Bridge was aimed at the 40+ age-group and that Junior Bridge events provided an opportunity for "taster" sessions for parents. There was considerable discussion about the effectiveness of attempts to introduce more Minibridge in Primary Schools by involving teachers. There were those on the Committee who believe that continued efforts should be made to stress the educational, cognitive, social skills and life skills aspect of bridge and to campaign for local authorities to include Minibridge in curricular activities. There were those who believe that a dedicated and committed teacher can make a huge difference but who doubt if this can be replicated on a large scale. It was also recognised that the transition from mini-bridge to Bridge was of vital importance. Michael Byrne suggested that the way Cedric Cockcroft had worked in Harrogate provided a model that could be copied. Minibridge was taken to a number of Primary Schools and a Bridge Club provided on Saturday mornings in the local Club premises where Bridge was taught. Graham Jepson believed that 9-11 was a more suitable age-group to target and that it was important to involve the right kind of people. He also suggested that earlier discussion had suggested the production of a CD introducing Minibridge. Many Bridge Clubs had space and could provide room for a Saturday morning Junior Club. It was agreed that while many Bridge Clubs would have volunteers willing to help, if Junior Clubs and teaching were organised on a regular basis, a Teacher or organiser would need to be paid. Jeff Morris believed that the scheme proposed by David Adelman which essentially provides INSET training for primary school teachers was the right approach. Individual primary Schools could be approached through the Local Education Authority and training provided to teachers on a no-cost basis to the Schools.

The Committee were reminded that detailed costings and proposals needed to be put forward. Two strands had emerged from the discussion. On the one hand there was

the idea of providing Inset so that Primary School teachers could teach Minibridge to their classes as part of curriculum enhancement. On the other hand, there was the proposal to develop Saturday morning Bridge teaching and Clubs through the use of existing Bridge Clubs. Sally reminded the Committee that she needed concrete and costed proposals to take back to the donor. Jeff Morris agreed to cost and develop a proposal based on David Adelman's proposal and Graham Jepson agreed to investigate Bridge Clubs in his area with a view to making a proposal for Junior Clubs and teaching.

4. SQUAD AND JUNIOR MATTERS

Peggy Bayer

The Committee received reports from the U20 NPC for the Peggy Bayer and White House tournaments. The loss to Scotland in the Peggy Bayer had been disappointing and it was agreed that the strongest team needed to be selected in future. Although it was noted that the team's behaviour had been excellent. The Match Manager's Report was also received. There had been a shortfall in accommodation in the hotel which had necessitated three teams staying in alternative accommodation. This had not been satisfactory. Apart from this the Chancellor's Conference centre had been an excellent venue and overall the event had been enjoyed by everyone.

White House Amsterdam 2008

The Squad Manager's Report was received. A weakened team of only four players had to be fielded because of school and university commitments. The team was one of the youngest in the field and performed well against some of the stronger teams. Michael commented that this was the most valuable tournament of the year for preparation. It was recognised that next year's tournament would be vital in terms of preparation for the European Championships, but however much we wanted to field our strongest teams there were times when work and academic commitments simply had to take priority.

Squad Weekends

A joint squad training session at Reading Bridge Club had been well attended by U20s who had been trained by Chris Dixon. Attendance of U25s and Girls Squad members had been disappointing. Paul Bowyer reported that he was still experiencing difficulties in getting responses from his squad. An U20s weekend was organised for 12th -13th April in Harrogate. The Squad would take part in the Bridge Awareness day in the York Railway Museum on Sunday. The U25 Manager reported that he had organised training for the 26th-27th April in London.

Disciplinary Matter

The problems arising from bad behaviour at a squad weekend in December 2007 had now been resolved. The player had belatedly replied to the Chairman's request for an apology and an assurance of better behaviour. His first reply had not included any commitment to better behaviour and had not been considered satisfactory. A second response had been acceptable. It was noted that the player concerned had played in a number of tournaments and had been friendly and well behaved, even in situations where his partners were much weaker players than himself. The matter was considered closed and full squad rights were restored.

Dutch Visit to Brighton

Michael Byrne confirmed that the Netherlands Junior Squad would be bringing 10 or so Junior players to Brighton. Subject to this fitting in with other plans for Brighton it

was agreed that we should go ahead and try to organise some training matches in the midweek period. Mike Amos and Michael Byrne would liaise.

China Preparation

Michael Byrne gave a report on the preparation of the U20 Squad for China in October. There was some reforming of partnerships because the large gap in experience and current performance in one pair no longer meant that this was a viable pairing. One of the pairs were unlikely to go to China because the tournament coincided with the start of university term and this was a difficult time to miss in the first year. Nonetheless Michael believed that a sound team of three pairs could be sent. He expressed some concern about the lack of practice opportunities between now and October (see below on the European Youth Pairs).

9th European Junior Pairs

These are to be held in Wroclaw Poland on July 15th - 18th 2008. There was no allocation in the budget to send pairs to this event but pairs could apply and be accredited by the EBU so that they could enter. Some concerns were expressed that this was a high-level event, but that we were not entering players. The opinion was expressed that to make the expenditure worthwhile it was necessary to send a NPC or little feedback or worthwhile information would result. The question was raised as to whether there were funds in the training budget that could be utilised. It might be possible to raise sponsorship. Michael and Paul would circulate their squads and explore interest levels and availability.

Cadet Pairs Pau

The French Bridge Federation had sent details of an teams event to be run alongside the European Championships in Pau aimed at 15-17 year olds. There was no budget set aside for this and because the age range was so narrow it was not thought appropriate to pursue this matter.

World University Championships

This is also taking place in Poland in early September. The winners of the Portland Bowl will be invited to enter, but England could nominate another team, but again there is not funding for this.

FISU Questionnaire

FISU had posted a questionnaire on Ecatsbridge site for NBOs to complete. Mike Amos has this in hand but would welcome comments from other committee members.

NPC

A discussion about NPCs and the future events took place. Chris Dixon had agreed to continue as NPC in the lead up to the Junior European championships 2009, although there was a question mark about his availability depending on the exact dates of the tournament. Steve Eginton had served as NPC for the two recent tournaments. It was felt important to give others experience at other events or as assistant NPC alongside a more experienced captain. There were a number of younger people who had expressed interest, Simon Cope, Ben Green and Susan Stockdale. Duncan Happer and Alan Shillitoe were already involved in the U20 Squad training. A question was raised about a wider range of people being involved and if top-level bridge experience was required. The consensus was that such experience was necessary to understand the challenges that faced the player in a long and tiring tournament. It was also important that NPCs knew the players and vice versa. However it was recognised that there were other hosting functions that could be carried out by others. Now that the Youth Committee had responsibility for selection of U25 and U20 teams it was important that a list of suitable NPCs should

be drawn up. Anyone involved with those under eighteen years of age had to be CRB checked. The committee was assured that this applied to all those currently involved.

5. PROMOTION AND DEVELOPMENT OF JUNIOR BRIDGE

Blogging

The Secretary had circulated an email from Michael Clark, the EBU's webmaster about Committee blogs. The committee were reminded that everything posted on the web-site had to be checked by Sally Bugden to ensure that it conformed with EBU policy. Nonetheless the Secretary did emphasise that it would help a great deal if Committee members did communicate items for inclusion on the web.

York Awareness Day

The Junior Squad have been involved in arrangements for this day on April 13th and will play exhibition matches against a team from York Bridge Club. There will be demonstrations of Minibrige.

Regional Meeting for CYOs

Harrogate Bridge Club have kindly agreed to offer their premises for a meeting of interested parties. Clive Owen and Mike Amos will invite CYOs to come and visit Harrogate's Junior Saturday Club and spend some time discussing how Junior Bridge can be promoted and supported. Date to be confirmed.

Review of Existing Competitions

Mike Amos reported. Junior Championships for U25 and U19 Pairs take place at the Easter Festival alongside the Festival events on Friday and Saturday in London, principally the three session Championship Pairs. Stronger U25 pairs will undoubtedly benefit from playing in the Championship rather than the U25 pairs, but this devalues and diminishes the U25 Pairs. Entries for both U25 and U19 Pairs are in decline and it was questioned whether it is appropriate to continue to run qualifying heats for the latter competition. With the Youth Bridge Challenge being held at the end of the Spring Term also we ended up this year running competitions in successive weeks, which seems inappropriate. The U25 Pairs could possibly be upgraded by being used as part of a trials process or indeed by sponsorship. There are difficulties because an alternative venue and time might involve costs. It was suggested that midweek in Brighton might be a suitable time and place for some Junior events. It was agreed that Mike Amos should consult others with a view to bringing forward some proposals for the Committee to discuss at the next meeting.

One-Day Teach-In Surrey

The Surrey CYO Bomi Kavarana had written to say that some of his Juniors were put off coming to Loughborough by the cost, although indeed most people think it excellent value and it is heavily subsidised. He proposed to try and organise a one day event in Surrey. Mike Amos suggested he contact other CYOs in the area and co-operate with them to organise such an event. Chris Duckworth has agreed to help if possible.

Junior Teach-In Loughborough

Mike will circulate teachers and discuss plans for courses this year. We need to discuss ways of making the top groups more manageable and this will involve breaking them down into smaller groups. Mike expressed a concern that in some of the groups a clearer expression of what is to be covered and learned is desirable. Application forms are widely available. Counties need to be encouraged to support

and promote the Teach-In. Some counties already offer considerable financial support to youngsters coming to the event.

6. AOB

Junior Camrose

Jeff Morris congratulated Paul Bowyer on his commentary at the Junior Camrose. He asked whether a sound relay could be fixed from the Open Room to the Vugraph theatre so that the comments of the players on system and the like could be relayed to the audience.

Charitable Donation

Sally stressed that time was very important and that she required detailed proposals and costings by the May 1st 2008

Jeff Morris asked Squad Managers to copy to him emails sent to Squad Members so that he could stay informed.

7. DATE AND PLACE OF NEXT MEETING

11.00am 25th June 2008 at WMBC Solihull