

## **BIDDING FOR THE FUTURE 2008-13**

### **MEASUREMENT OF ACHIEVEMENTS**

At the shareholders meeting on 8<sup>th</sup> May 2013 we launched our strategic plan for 2013-18. This document summarises the achievements against each of the objectives set out in our first strategic plan Bidding for the Future 2008-13. These were reported in detail in the August issues of English Bridge in 2009, 2010 and 2011 and in the first Annual Report of the EBU's Board of Directors, published in 2012, available on our website and circulated to all shareholders with the papers for the May 2013 meeting.

### **OUR CLUBS**

*We will:*

- *Use our skills to provide low cost services and benefits to our clubs and their individual members.*
  - *Monitor the developing needs of our existing clubs through consultation.*
  - *Expand the number of new clubs through promotion of the game and investment in education programmes*
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- We set up the Club Committee. It was, and is a support network for clubs and their needs within the era of universal membership – for example help on IT provision. It continued this work and addressed a formal regional representation method for implementation after April 2010.
  - We negotiated a number of discounts and services for our clubs and their individual members and mailed details to all our clubs in their Pay to Play packs. For individuals these continue to include health care insurance, house insurance, discounted hotel accommodation and car hire. For our clubs these continue to include subsidised club teacher training and tournament director training, club insurance and an extension of the EBU's Directors Liability Insurance for club officers. We have also provided a model club constitution to assist clubs in applications for funding and/or registration as a charity as well as affording a framework for clubs and their members in dealing with disciplinary matters.
  - The Club Committee consulted on, amongst other things, the simplification of regulations resulting in the Tangerine Book, new club competitions, education, English Bridge and the revised regulations which will come in to force in August 2013.
  - We put a process in place for the new elected club committee to start its regional meetings. Each county should have either an elected or appointed club representative to meet in one of five regional forums. These regional meetings elect a representative to attend a national club committee meeting twice a year.
  - Since their launch in April 2010 our “buy one get one free” on club tournament director courses and our club teacher courses have proved very popular. We have trained over 220 club teachers and over 300 club tournament directors.
  - In October 2009 we projected that 580 clubs would be affiliated to the EBU in the first year of universal membership. We currently have 610 affiliated clubs and serve over 52,000 members. We still want more clubs to affiliate hence this objective is ongoing for 2013-18.

## **TEACHING AND LEARNING**

*Education is at the foundation of the development of Duplicate Bridge in England.*

*We will:*

- *Build an integrated and effective education strategy to ensure that our education programmes meet the needs of all ages and all levels of player.*
  - *Ensure that adequate investment is made in teaching and learning.*
  - *Develop an on-line teaching program which will be available freely on our website.*
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- Rob Lawy, Senior Lecturer in the Education and Life Long Learning Department of Exeter University provided us with a review of our education activities and suggested a strategy. His work formed the core for the creation of the 5 Year Plan for education
  - Our Online teaching program based on the ACBL Learn to Play Bridge program was launched on our website in October 2009.
  - We set up an Education Working Group under the Chairmanship of Suzanne Gill, which consulted with counties about their education and development programmes and looked at ways in which inter county and EBU projects can assist in generating more players at county level. We completed research in to current county education activities in March 2011 and at our county chairmen's meeting at the end of June in that year , we looked at best practice and discussed how we can further develop bridge teaching locally to encourage more people to play.
  - The Milton Damerl Trust provided £60,000 to fund Minibridge teaching in schools. Minibridge is promoted through the All Party Parliamentary Group and other initiatives including a Journalists Day held at the Young Chelsea Bridge Club at the beginning of 2012. We currently have over 120 schools registered with the scheme.

## **TOURNAMENTS AND COMPETITIONS**

*Through consultation and the use of surveys and research, we will:*

- *Explore and develop competitions in which our club players wish to take part.*
  - *Build an appropriate tournament programme for today's tournament players.*
  - *Make greater use of technology to create a seamless process from entering a score to reading it on our website.*
  - *Develop on-line purchasing for all our services including tournaments.*
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- In 2009 we carried out an online survey to determine the needs of our existing players; this was reported in English Bridge June 2009. We compiled a programme of new tournaments and competitions which was sent to the Club Committee. We consulted on a new master point system – Blue Points – which were launched in January 2013 and which we hope will enhance competitions at all levels - club, county, tournament and expert. Tournaments can now be purchased online through the membership area and we try to ensure that our tournament venues have the appropriate IT facilities to allow fast uploading of results.

- We launched a new Club Simultaneous Pairs in March 2011 which is stratified meaning that individuals can compete against their own level across the country.
- We developed software so clubs and counties can stratify any or all of their events.
- We addressed the length and location of our tournaments and offer shorter and more local tournaments to attract players on a daily basis. Brighton Lite 2013 is a prime example of this type of activity.
- We have developed software to enable us to run simultaneous pairs, not just for the national organisations but for counties and groups of clubs too. From April 2012 we have run English and British simultaneous pairs competitions. We were able to substantially reduce the price of entry to these events and our membership knows that any surplus generated goes in to the development of the game.
- We set up a working group to create a specification for a National Grading Scheme project which complements the current Master Point system of life time achievement.

We tested the scheme amongst volunteer clubs which took part in the initial pilot. We launched the scheme in March 2012. It provides a measure of a player's current performance. On our website, there is a great deal of information about the scheme which is envied by many of our fellow national bridge organisations.

### ***SIMPLIFICATION OF REGULATION***

*We are committed to reducing the amount of regulation and simplifying it wherever possible and in line with the laws of Duplicate Bridge.*

*We will:*

- *Ensure widespread consultation with, amongst others, the Club Committee and the Tournament Committee before changes to regulations are formalised.*
- *Investigate the procedures that other countries undertake in terms of regulation and disciplinary matters and address any reform required in our system.*
  - The Laws and Ethics committee produced the Tangerine Book – a simple, shorter version of the Orange Book for clubs and a series of easy to follow flow charts on the most common law infractions.
  - We introduced a mediation service to help clubs and counties settle disputes.
  - During 2012 the Laws and Ethics Committee consulted with the Club Committee on the revision of our regulations, with a new book in the pipeline which will be shorter in length and have a few revisions.

## **PLAYING TO WIN – INTERNATIONAL FUNDING AND SUCCESS**

*We will:*

- *Ensure the most effective investment of time and funds in our players' coaching, training and international experience to achieve the best possible chance for our country to regain the success of years gone by.*
  - The Selection Committee accepted a policy on declaration of interest which they strictly follow. The budgeting process is much clearer and they continue to develop excellent player performances whilst managing a reduced budget. They have also taken on the selection and development of the junior internationals.
  - We launched the Bridge England Simultaneous Pairs event in 2011 to raise funds for our teams' international activities.
  - We have achieved some excellent results from our Junior, Open, Women and Senior teams in the last five years, including Gold and Silver medals in the World Mind Sports Olympics (2008 and 2012), a European Championship win for our Women and a World Championship win for our Seniors alongside a World Championship Silver Medal for our Under 21s.

## **MANAGING THE ORGANISATION**

*We will:*

- *Ensure the creation of working groups which will provide time-tables for the delivery of each aspect of the strategy.*
- *Review the allocation of overheads in our financial reporting to deliver the most accurate costings possible of all EBU activities.*
- *Make the best use of information technology to ensure that all our management and service delivery processes achieve great effectiveness.*
- *Review the strategy on an annual basis.*
  - We have reviewed the allocation of overheads in our financial reporting and we now believe we have more accurate costings of our activities.
  - We created a sponsors pack and started negotiations with several organisations about commercial partnerships that will be of benefit to our members, these are based mainly on teaching and holidays.
  - To avoid unnecessary IT problems created by our servers, we have changed server providers.
  - Our IT programs for universal membership provided us with a much more streamlined approach to management of master points allocation and the gathering of subscription income.
  - The launch of the new system for universal membership was seamless and at a significantly reduced cost against budget. Congratulations go to Michael Clark who has been the architect of the system and to the whole team at Aylesbury who have managed the administrative changes and streamlining so effectively.
  - Two full time members of staff have retired and have not been replaced.

- We produced 5 Year plans for all aspects of the organisation and these were distributed to shareholders at the beginning of 2010.
- Aylesbury now manage the largest number of members the EBU has ever had with a considerably reduced staff.

### **CORPORATE GOVERNANCE AND DEMOCRATIC REPRESENTATION**

*We will:*

- *Thoroughly investigate conversion to a charity by setting up a small working group to address all aspects of registration through the Charity Commission.*
- *Help our volunteers by providing a definition of roles and responsibilities when they become involved at national level with the EBU.*
- *Examine the best form of representation for a membership organisation in the 21st Century, looking at regionalisation and one member one vote.*
  - We have done a great deal of research on setting up as a charity and on corporate governance in the 21st century.
  - We have provided role descriptions, terms of reference and application forms for all volunteers at national level including directors of the Board.
  - We have proposed changes to the Articles to provide continuity to Board tenure and to provide the option to fill skill gaps. These have been accepted.
  - We promised to consult our members regarding one member one vote. The counties were asked to consult all their clubs and members to determine whether the existing system of democratic representation could be improved on. Counties reported back to the Board by the end of December 2010. We asked all our members to take part in having a say about this important aspect of their membership of the EBU.
  - The responses from the county's consultation on democratic representation resulted in the retention of the existing system based on the parliamentary model. We urged all members to exercise their rights and use the shareholders, their county representatives, to put any relevant issues to the AGM.
  - Succession planning and organisation development was addressed with the county chairmen at their meeting in 2011.
  - We worked closely with the Charity Commission which paved the way for several clubs to achieve charitable status. The application process is now relatively straightforward.
  - We have been requested by the Charity Commission to assist in reviewing clubs applying for charity registration.

- We met with the Charity Commission resulting in more detailed investigations in to EBU charity registration. We worked hard over a period of 3 years to determine whether the whole of the organisation could register. Our duties as a national bridge organisation to provide teams for international representation and competitions were not recognised as a charitable objective by the Charity Commissioners and we concluded that the most effective outcome would be to register the education and development activities as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation.
- We hope to launch a new education and development charity in April 2014.

### **UNIVERSAL MEMBERSHIP**

*We will:*

- *Update the membership on progress in each issue of English Bridge and Club Focus.*
- *Report to the Shareholders on progress at each meeting.*
  - The Universal Membership Project Board worked tirelessly with Aylesbury to ensure that the Pay to Play project was implemented in a timely and efficient manner.
  - We tested our system with many clubs who kindly volunteered to help iron out problems, we developed software that works with all scoring programs and we now have a system that is the envy of much of the bridge world.
  - We reported progress at all shareholders meetings, in English Bridge and Club Focus.

### **PAYING OUR WAY**

*We will:*

- *Continue our prudent financial management to achieve a secure future for the game.*
  - In the past five years we have managed the finances to ensure that we have a surplus to invest back in to the game to achieve everything that is written about above. The losses that we budgeted for with the implementation of universal membership were far less than expected and we are now in a position where we have a healthy level of reserves for the organisation.
- *Improve our access to funding from charitable trusts, corporate sponsors, the government and lottery.*
  - We have raised over £70,000 to fund youth education initiatives with substantial donations from the Milton Damerall Trust and the Ormus Trust as well as individual and club donations to the Youth and Education Trust.
  - In a period when corporate sponsors have reduced their investments, we have managed to raise over £50,000 in corporate sponsorship from companies such as Baker Tilly Chartered Accountants, Bridge Overseas, Adams and Remer's and Fred Olsen.
  - It is hoped that the new education charity will be successful in raising funds from organisations including charitable trusts in the next five years.

• *Consider projects and services that can be funded from outside organisations and businesses that will benefit all our members.*

- We have worked with several bridge holiday organisations and hotels to provide value added services to our membership, including Bridge Overseas, Gill Cruises, Barcelo Hotels and Fred Olsen Cruise Lines

### **TALKING TO EACH OTHER**

*We will*

• *Communicate effectively with all the individuals and groups who have an interest in Duplicate Bridge, including those who can help us promote the game and achieve recognition to increase our funding.*

• *Explore the further use of information technology to realise this goal, and ensure that we use those channels already available to us to reach all our members and potential members.*

- We consulted with our club players on English Bridge so that it has become more representative and was ready for our new club members when universal membership was implemented.
- We have set up the following online communications each targeted at different sectors of the membership
  - Club Focus which has evolved to Club Management Focus
  - Tournament Focus
  - Appeals Focus
  - Events Focus
- We have increased the circulation of our magazine to over 44,000 readers.
- The All Party Parliamentary Group for the development of bridge was set up at the beginning of 2009 with the help and support of Baroness Henig. The group and its members help us gain recognition for the importance of bridge playing for young people in schools as well as the benefits for us all in terms of health, well being and social activities as we grow older.
- We have launched a new website.
- We will be launching a new online shop by the end of this year.

### ***And finally...***

I would like to thank all the staff and all the volunteers who have enabled us to complete the vast amount of work detailed above during the past five years.

Sally Bugden  
Chairman EBU  
12<sup>th</sup> May 2013