

FOUNDATIONS FOR THE EBU STRATEGY : 2020 ACTIVITY

1. Initial proposal was to run with the existing split of the Strategy into strands, to understand that some of these were covering the Business-As-Usual of running the EBU, while others were about delivering services to members. And this latter camp needed to be developed with contributions from others.
2. First steps were taken on most strands when the crisis hit, and it was all shelved.
3. Decided on a restart in May 2020, agreed that we shared the mission (to promote bridge) with many others, and agreed on a structured process (necessary to get buy-in) which started with “understand our mission” and “understand our past performance” and for these we need to listen to others.
 - Partners are EBED, County Associations, Clubs (including non-Affiliated clubs)
4. We decided we would have VISION / MISSION / VALUES statements to set the context for the strategy, to clarify for partners and potential partners what we cared about. This went to a County Chairs meeting and onto the EBU Forum and useful feedback was received. Versions finalised in Nov20 are
 - VISION : To bring Bridge to Everyone
 - MISSION : The EBU exists to regulate the game for the benefit of players in England, and to enrich the Bridge playing experience of its members, by supporting their affiliated Bridge Clubs and by running EBU competitions.
 - VALUES : Collaboration, inclusivity, transparency and integrity.
5. To get feedback on past performance and future priorities, services which the EBU provides were listed and advertised; discussion ensued on the Forum but little useful feedback was obtained.
 - Support to recruiting, teaching and development of bridge players.
 - Running a variety of competitions for English bridge players.
 - Communications about bridge for player members (magazine & diary & website).
 - National grading schemes (Master Points and NGS).
 - Provision of regulations for competitions in England.
 - Support to the interpretation of the Laws in England, TD services.
 - Disciplinary processes and dispute resolution.
 - Advice and support to affiliated bridge clubs on club management.
 - Promoting the game of bridge as a healthy and sociable pastime.
 - Representing English bridge players in BGB/EBL/WBF and in the Laws development.
 - Managing international representation.
6. A proposal that there should be six strands in the next strategy was developed, but it did not receive much attention. This and a 5-step process were presented to the Sep20 County Chairs meeting.
 - Player Recruitment and Development Strategy, this is catering primarily for those who are potential players, but also providing support for the development of existing bridge players.
 - Competitions Strategy, delivering opportunities for players to enjoy playing the game in a variety of different formats and at all skill levels.
 - Representative Events Strategy, managing opportunities for players to represent England in competitions with other nations.
 - Membership & Communications Strategy, which explains how we engage with the bridge playing population, and grow the EBU membership appropriately over time.
 - Financial & Commercial Strategy, which explains how we raise funds for the organisation and manage the organisation’s activities within that budget, proving good value for money for our members.

- Technology Strategy, which explains how we support the technology on which we rely today, and how in the future we will use technology to enhance the bridge playing experience of our members and the efficiency of the organisation.
7. The position of the EBU on various key issues was identified as unclear and attempts were made to determine a number of aspects of this, which led to improvements to the Mission Statement. We have confirmed that
- The EBU wants to be both a member-focused and a club-focused organisation.
 - The EBU has a responsibility for promoting the game with non-players.
 - The EBU has a responsibility for ensuring newcomers can get access to suitable teaching.
 - The EBU will support both face-to-face bridge and online bridge in the future, recognising that both have different strengths which are valuable in different contexts to large subsets of our membership.
 - The EBU needs a good spread of player players across all age groups if the game is to thrive in the future, and we must work to recruit from a wide spectrum of sources.
 - The EBU must be relevant and provide useful services to bridge players of all standards, and to both social and competitive players.
8. Brainstorming was done on the key issues and changes to the environment that need to be addressed in the future strategy, and these were documented.
- Too many people do not know what they are missing or find it too difficult to learn.
 - The average age of a bridge player is increasing as more people are learning to play later.
 - Many people learn how to play bridge but never get sufficiently involved in Duplicate Bridge.
 - The bridge playing population has (in numbers) veered significantly away from strong competition.
 - Many players will want to continue playing bridge online, and online facilities will develop significantly.
 - Online learning will dominate learning approaches at all age groups.
 - Footfall at bridge clubs will fall and a number of small clubs will fold.
 - Geographical boundaries will be irrelevant for much of online bridge.
 - More online social bridge will lead to a migration away from organised duplicate games.
9. The benefits of membership of the EBU were re-cast in the light of the emergence of online bridge as a serious part of the future and in terms of the services identified above.
- **BENEFITS TO MEMBERS**
 - i. Access to a wider variety of style and standard of competition.
 - ii. Ability to track development and progress through Master Points and a National Grading Scheme.
 - iii. The EBU website, EBU News magazine and the EBU Diary with masses of bridge related information.
 - **BENEFITS TO CLUBS** [] under consideration
 - i. Clubs get support in club management, Tournament Directing and defining Regulations.
 - ii. Clubs get access to supported facilities for processing of tournament results.
 - iii. Clubs can have their results processed for NGS and MPs.
 - iv. For clubs, EBU can broker relationships, fees, etc with online platforms.
 - v. [International online club matches might be facilitated by the EBU.]
 - vi. [For clubs, EBU might provide an online payment service to collect table money for games]
10. This clarified picture of the EBU as an organisation is to be available at the time of the AGM.