



**MINUTES OF A ZOOM MEETING OF THE EXPANDED COMMITTEE OF BRIDGE GREAT
BRITAIN HELD ON MONDAY 15TH MAY 2023.**

Present: Liz McGowan (**LMcG**) (Chairman, Scotland)
Helen Hall (**HH**) (Northern Ireland)
Dermot O'Brien (**DO'B**) (Republic of Ireland)
Ian Payn (**IP**) (England)
Ceri Pierce (**CP**) (Wales)
Sandra Claridge (**SC**) (Secretary)

1. There were no apologies for absence

2. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN TO 31ST MARCH 2024

Ceri Pierce had, with regret, confirmed that she was still not in a position to assume the Chairmanship on behalf of Wales, and it was agreed nem con that Ian Payn be appointed for the coming year.

It was agreed that from 2024, the Chairmanship would run annually from 31st May **or** the AGM, whichever is the sooner.

Ian thanked the Committee for his election, for agreeing to the postponement of the original meeting, and Liz for her contribution as Chairman during the last year.

3. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 9TH MAY 2022

The minutes were agreed as accurate, and there were no matters arising other than those included on the agenda for the current meeting. Adoption of the minutes was proposed by Ceri Pierce, seconded by Ian Payn and carried nem con.

4. ANNUAL ACCOUNTS & AUDITOR'S REPORT TO to 31st MARCH 2023

Helen and Ceri reported that the documents circulated appeared to have lost some of their formatting, and the Secretary agreed to re-send them. The Chairman proposed, seconded by Ian that they be adopted provisionally, subject to no major problems being identified.

The Chairman confirmed that the original BGB agreement with Scotland, England and Wales was at a time when there was a Simultaneous Event, subsequently taken over by the English Bridge Union. It was acknowledged at the time that the three Unions were not equal in size, and every effort was made to keep contributions from smaller Unions as limited as possible.

It was noted that the Gold Cup lost money each year with reducing entries, which appeared to be a common trend in knock-out events.

The Secretary reported that the financial activity was much the same as in previous years, and the current balance of 11K at Barclays Bank was sufficient to cover the period for BGB's current level of activity.

Ian Lindsay was thanked by the Committee for the production of the Accounts.

Action: SC

Subscription rate for the year to 31st March 2024

A proposal from the Chair, seconded by Ceri, that the subscription rate remain at £500 for the coming year, was carried nem con.

5. HOME INTERNATIONAL SERIES

5.1 Reports from the 2023 series

Reports from all the Home International matches played to date had been circulated in advance, and indicated a very satisfactory season. The Teltscher Trophy reports would be circulated shortly after the forthcoming event. All involved were congratulated, particular thanks going to Northern Ireland.

Ceri reported that the Welsh Bridge Union's finances remained very dire, with a loss in the last year of 16K. The Union has 1300 members with a subscription raised recently from £10 to £14, and only 4 junior members, and it was hoped that something could be achieved in future in terms of hosting Home Internationals on a more proportionate basis.

5.2 Hosting arrangements and draws for the 2024 series

Camrose Trophy 1:	5th/7th January – Wales
Camrose Trophy 2:	1st/3rd March – England
Junior Camrose & Peggy Bayer Trophies:	16 th /18th February – Northern Ireland
Lady Milne Trophy:	19th/21st April – Ireland
Teltscher Trophy:	17th/19th May – Scotland

Camrose

Team A:	Wales
Team B:	Ireland
Team C:	EBU
Team D:	Scotland
Team E:	England
Team F:	Northern Ireland

Lady Milne

Team A:	England
Team B:	Wales
Team C:	Ireland
Team D:	Northern Ireland
Team E:	CBAI
Team F:	Scotland

Junior Camrose

Team A:	
Team B:	
Team C:	Northern Ireland
Team D:	
Team E:	
Team F:	2 nd "host" team

N.B. The draw for the Peggy Bayer Trophy will be produced when entries are confirmed.

Action: SC

Teltscher Trophy

Team A:	Northern Ireland
Team B:	England
Team C:	SBU
Team D:	Ireland
Team E:	Scotland
Team F:	Wales

5.3 *Revision of Friday starting times*

Dermot reported that there had been a problem with the venue hotel keeping the bar open late on Friday evening, and it was suggested that all Home International venues be made aware of the 23.25 finish on Friday.

There was general agreement that to change the Friday starting time would be likely to cause travel and refreshment problems, and that accordingly the starting time of 19.00 would be retained.

5.4 *Hotel rates for 2024*

It was noted that all HNBOs are experiencing income problems, hotel prices are rising dramatically, and in the case of Wales, some of the hospitality aspects such as the drinks reception and wine at the final banquet had been removed to achieve the budget limit for the package.

Helen reported that Northern Ireland were fortunate that their venue offered free function space and 6 complimentary bedrooms, but others had to downgrade from their preferred venues or stand any excess above the agreed rate of £330 and £230 (JC & PB). In the case of the JC & PB, it was now the case that single rooms were preferred, which significantly increased the cost.

Each HNBO outlined its arrangements in regard to support for their players, and whilst the costs of taking part were a significant factor, Ian stressed that competing was an important experience for all the players, and to revert to online matches would not only destroy the social element much valued by the competitors, but have a disastrous effect on the game as a whole.

A number of options were put by the Chairman to seek to reduce overall costs, as follows:

- (1) run Home Internationals in bridge clubs with participants staying in a nearby hotel, though this was noted to remove the social element
- (2) cut the Camrose Trophy to one weekend, which would need to be extended over 5 days.
- (3) increase the package rate

(1) and (2) did not find favour, and a proposal from the Chair that the rate be increased for the coming year to £340 for the Camrose, Lady Milne and Teltscher Trophies and £240 for the Junior Camrose & Peggy Bayer, or the equivalent in Euros, was agreed, and that any HNBO having a problem should approach BGB for assistance.

The Chairman requested that each HNBO seek to establish whether their costs can be reduced.

Action: all delegates

5.5 *Payment arrangements*

A request by the CBAI that to avoid each HNBO making payments to each other for accommodation costs, in future the netted-off balances be submitted at the end of each season. Whilst it might prove inconvenient in terms of possible delays and adjustments, the arrangement was supported and would be introduced where possible.

Action: all delegates

5.6 Behavioural problems & responsibilities of NPCs

There was general agreement that no behavioural problems would be tolerated, and that there should be a requirement for self-reporting, Ian confirming that there is now a Statute of Limitations of 3 months. The onus would be on the Captain of the player(s) involved to submit a report, and every instance would be dealt with.

It was agreed that each HNBO must ensure that selection of their NPCs is done in sufficient time to make fully aware of their responsibilities. Ian agreed to produce a document containing, amongst other things,

Submission of names of selected players to the Match Manager at least 14 days in advance of the event

Submission of personal data to RealBridge specifically for the event selected for

Standard of behaviour and reporting of incidents

System submission in sufficient time to Richard Fleet

Travel and venue details

Rooming requests

Dietary requirements

Biographies and photographs(?)

Emergency contact numbers

Uniform

Return of trophies

Action: IP

5.7 System submission

It was unanimously agreed that Richard Fleet has done the job that he was requested to do, and that the Regulations should be rigorously enforced and the published fines automatically imposed. Ian noted that some of the players go on to play in EBL and WBF events, and that accordingly it would be required that all convention cards be completed to conform to the WBF standard and format.

Action: All delegates

The Committee's thanks were extended to Richard, and it was hoped that he would agree to continue the good work!

Action: SC

5.8 Appeals process

It was noted that the current arrangement is that the TD in charge of a match gives a ruling which is final, and can only be appealed if it is demonstrated that there has been an error of procedure or that he had not adequately acquainted himself of the facts and/or failed to consult as necessary.

It was agreed that to seek to avoid any question of bias by the countries involved in an appeal, one of Gordon Rainsford, Fearghal O'Boyle and Tim Rees would be asked to serve as a "Scrutineer" of the TD's ruling, as appropriate.

Action: SC

5.9 Eligibility

At the request of the WBU, it was agreed that there was a discrepancy between the eligibility clauses of BGB and the WBF, that our Regulations be amended to include "parent or grandparent", and that an amended sentence covering adoption be produced. Subsequent to the meeting, the following was agreed to replace clause 4.2:

"They have a parent or grandparent who was born in that country. (Parents by legal adoption count for eligibility; parents by marriage do not)."

Action: EMcG

5.10 RealBridge

The Committee discussed a communication from the organisers of RealBridge offering various services and assistance with the Home Internationals.

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It was agreed that it would continue to be the relevant HNBO's Match Manager's decision on whether to use RealBridge or BBO.

There was general agreement that RealBridge had done a good job promoting our events, training of operators, improving their service and recruiting commentators, but that the current requirement for a 30-minute delay in projecting the play had been very unpopular for both spectators and NPCs, and every effort would be made to have this reduced to 5 minutes.

In terms of publicity by RealBridge in the media, it was agreed that such would remain under BGB's control, as would consent for data to be used other than for marketing purposes, and this aspect would be included in the Conditions of Contest.

6. ONLINE JUNIOR EVENT

It was agreed that the Online Junior Event be postponed until a date in September to be determined, and Dermot requested that all delegates ensure that everyone is made aware that the May event has been cancelled, and that they publicise as widely as possible the event to be held in September.

Action: All delegates

Helen, on behalf of Northern Ireland, offered to host the 2024 event.

7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

7.1 Vugraph presentation of the Junior Camrose & Peggy Bayer

Helen raised the question of the public presentation of the Junior Camrose and Peggy Bayer, and it was agreed that it was adequate to cover 3 tables of the Junior Camrose, and unnecessary to expose some of the weaker players.

Helen confirmed that Northern Ireland would not be in a position to field a 2nd team in either the Junior Camrose or the Peggy Bayer in February.

7.2 Introduction of a "Celtic Nations Team"

Ceri requested that for HNBOs with a fairly limited number of players who would be sufficiently experienced to compete in a Home International, clearly not including England(!), consideration be given to the introduction of a "Celtic Nations Team" to make up the numbers. Dermot indicated his support to the notion of a composite team, and Ceri was asked to put together a proposal on how best to proceed in terms of participation and selection for the next meeting.

Action: CP

Dermot and Helen then left the meeting and were thanked for their attendance and contribution.

8. GOLD CUP & SILVER PLATE

8.1 2023 Entries

The Secretary reported 75 entries to the Gold Cup with an entry fee of £92 per team, and an entry of 35 teams for the Silver Plate. It was agreed to maintain the status quo in terms of the entry fee, and the Chairman volunteered to be proactive in seeking to persuade more Scottish teams to enter. If successful, the possibility of a Scottish heat would be considered, with entry to the main competition determined on a pro rata basis. The closing date for the 2024 was confirmed by the Secretary as Friday 6th October.

Action: EMcG

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8.2 Arrangements for 2023 Finals

The Secretary confirmed that arrangements had been made for the face-to-face Semi-Finals and Final to be held at the Mind Sports Centre in London on Saturday and Sunday 7th & 8th October 2023. Whilst it was agreed that to hold the final stages alongside a congress would have more appeal, it was conceded that in the current climate it would be difficult to achieve.

Changes to the Gold Cup[Regulations were agreed as follows:

- That the definition of “early rounds” would be corrected.
- That Quarter-final matches can be played online by agreement, but the default would be face-to-face.
- That in rounds 1-3 which have a geographically-based draw, teams registering as “Online” would have the advantage in terms of the arrangements for the match, but from Round 4 onwards they would not have preference.
- That wherever possible matches would be played face-to-face, but by agreement between the teams could be played online.
- That teams registering as “Online” for medical reasons must register as such on entry, but not in specific terms.

Ian agreed to provide the necessary wording for the changes to the 2024 Regulations.

Action: IP

8.3 Dispute in Round 4 of the 2023 Gold Cup

Following a lengthy discussion regarding a dispute between two teams who had failed to agree a date for their match, or the basis on which the match would be played, it was agreed to inform Team A that they must offer a date on which they would play the match face-to-face, and Team B would be encouraged to accept the date offered.

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