



MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF BRIDGE GREAT BRITAIN HELD ON TUESDAY 19TH MAY 2026

Present:	Liz McGowan (LMcG)	(Chair, Scotland)
	Andrea Knox (AK)	(Wales)
	Mike Hornung (MH)	(England)
	Dermot O'Brien (DO'B)	(Republic of Ireland)
	Brian Mullan (BM)	(Northern Ireland)
	Bob McKinnon (BMcK)	(Scotland)
	Gordon Rainsford (GR)	(England)
	Jeremy Dhondy (JD)	(Webmaster)
	Sandra Claridge (SC)	(Secretary)

1. An apology for absence was received from Ceri Pierce.

The Secretary welcomed the attendees, and paid tribute to Liz McGowan, the Chair and retiring Scottish delegate, who had made an enormous contribution to Bridge Great Britain over a very lengthy period.

The Secretary also extended the Committee's thanks to Ian Lindsay, Fearghal O'Boyle and Jeremy Dhondy for their much-appreciated contributions to BGB in terms of the Annual Accounts, System Review and BGB website respectively.

2. Election of Chair for the year to 31st March 2027

Opening the meeting Liz welcomed Bob McKinnon, the Scottish Operations Director, to his first meeting as delegate for Scotland.

Liz announced that since the original formation of BGB, which then included responsibility for the organisation of the Gold Cup, Home Internationals and Simultaneous Pairs events, the rotation for acting as Chair was shared between England, Scotland and Wales. She was very pleased to announce that Andrea Knox had indicated that she was able and willing to assume the office of Chair on behalf of Wales for the coming year, and Andrea was duly elected. The schedule for Chair would then be England in 2028 and Scotland in 2029, though consideration would be given to extending this to include the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland.

3. Minutes of the meeting of 21st May 2025

3.1 Accuracy

Brian wished it to be amended that his surname is spelt Mullan, not Mullen.

3.2 Matters arising

Item 3.2 A report by the outgoing Chair on guidelines of responsibilities of HNBOs in regard to behavioural problems, also incorporating the use of mobile phones and penalties for slow play and late arrival, was noted.

4. Annual Accounts and Examiner's Report to 31st March 2026

4.1 Matters arising

The question of the continuing annual financial shortfall on the Gold Cup was debated. It was confirmed by Liz that there was no intention to call in the debt accumulated during the past few

years and attributed to the three HNBOs, and it was agreed that the heading in the Annual Accounts would be amended to read “Gold Cup deficit”.

It was also noted that there was a discrepancy of £49 in the figures for the deficit in the year to March 2026.

The Secretary agreed to ask Ian Lindsay to make the appropriate corrections.

Action: SC

4.2 *Home Internationals subscription for the year 2026/2027*

It was agreed that the subscription for the year would be £500.

5. HOME INTERNATIONAL SERIES

5.1 *Reports from 2026 events*

Dermot apologised that his first weekend Camrose report was incorrectly dated as 9th-11th April, instead of 9th-11th January. He reported that the online line-up app used by Fearghal, and which Fearghal was happy to share, was widely applauded, though technically a little tricky to operate. It was agreed that Fearghal be asked whether he was willing to licence BGB competitions to use the app for all competitions.

The question of production of overnight line-ups was discussed, noting that changes can be made the following morning in the case of an emergency, and Dermot agreed to raise this matter with Fearghal.

Action DO'B

There was general agreement that whilst it might be difficult to regulate, every competing team in Home International events should be required to attend all the meals provided, which would result in greater certainty for the host HNBO in terms of negotiations with the hotel. In addition, Andrea suggested that any participants opting to stay elsewhere should be required to pay the host hotel cost regardless.

Dermot congratulated the EBU on its choice of hotel for the Teltscher Trophy.

McKinnon reported that the SBU had identified some excellent bridge club premises which might be suitable for the 2nd Camrose weekend in March, and asked whether this would be an acceptable option if transport was provided to and from the host hotel. It was asked that prior to a firm decision being taken, the SBU circulate full details of what was proposed. Jeremy confirmed that such an arrangement would comply with the regulations, provided that the distance problem can be overcome.

Action: BMcK

It was noted that the vugraph presentation at the recent Teltscher Trophy had been very disappointing, with only 2 tables covered. Gordon said that strenuous efforts to recruit operators had been unsuccessful both at the Teltscher and the Premier League. Andrea expressed the view that vugraph operation was difficult to achieve accurately, and operator-error was very common. Mike said that the EBU was working to support the development of Bridge Owl, which will allow all tables to be covered by using LoveBridge tablets for the bidding and cameras using AI driven image recognition for the card play. The EBU also hoped to further develop a wireless camera system that removed the need for extensive cabling and would allow faster set up and take down. This will be tested at other events, with the aim that the introduction of BridgeOwl and LoveBridge would eliminate the need for human vugraph operators.

Mike confirmed that LoveBridge is licensed by the EBU and that other Home Unions would require their own licence if they purchased tablets. Currently there is no charge for BridgeOwl. He

assured delegates that Jonathan Lillycrop would be happy to offer whatever assistance was needed in terms of set-up and operation, and that a training session for players in the use of LoveBridge tablets could be offered prior to the first weekend of the Camrose.

It was agreed that the use of LoveBridge and BridgeOwl would be included in the Home International regulations where HNBOs wished to do so and the EBU would aim to utilise them for the first Camrose weekend in 2027.

Action: JD, GR & MH

5.2 *Mixed Teams event*

Dermot reported that this year's event had been very popular, and recommended it be continued. It was agreed to adopt the event into the Home International series, and the EBU offered to host the 2027 event on 13th & 14th March 2027.

5.3 *Junior Online event*

Gordon said that attracting entries this year had proved very difficult, and he suggested that the event be widely publicised well in advance as 2 sessions on 28th November, hosted by the EBU, the only costs being a Tournament Director and RealBridge. It was agreed that the hosting would alternate thereafter, and all HNBOs were asked to encourage entries.

Action: GR & all HNBOs.

5.4 **Hosting arrangements & draws for the 2027 season -**

Camrose Trophy 1: 8th-10th January, England

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

Camrose Trophy 2: 5th-7th March, Scotland

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

Junior Camrose & Peggy Bayer Trophies: 19th-21st February, Republic of Ireland

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

Lady Milne Trophy: 16th-18th April, Wales

- Team A: Scotland
- Team B: Northern Ireland
- Team C: Wales
- Team D: England
- Team E: WBU
- Team F: Republic of Ireland

Teltscher Trophy: 21st-23rd May, Northern Ireland

- Team A: Republic of Ireland
- Team B: Wales

Team C:	NIBU
Team D:	Scotland
Team E:	Northern Ireland
Team F:	England

5.4 2027 Deadlines for team details and approved systems

Event	Team details	System cards
Camrose 1:	Tuesday 7 th December	Tuesday 15 th December
Camrose 2:	Tuesday 2 nd February	Tuesday 9 th February
Junior Camrose & Peggy Bayer:	Tuesday 9 th February	Tuesday 9 th February
Lady Milne:	Tuesday 16 th March	Tuesday 23 rd March
Teltscher:	Tuesday 20 th April	Tuesday 27 th April

5.5 Cost of Home Internationals & Proposal for 2028 series

The increasing financial pressure on the HNBOs of running the Home Internationals was discussed. An outline proposal for combining the Home Internationals into a 5 day festival with the Teltscher trophy running in parallel with the first half of the Camrose followed by the Lady Milne running in parallel with the second half of the Camrose was considered, particularly the cost savings that could be achieved as well as the hope that such an event would attract greater public interest and increase the attractiveness of the series to sponsors.

Concerns were expressed over the potential for clashes where players might have played in both of the events that were being played simultaneously and the impact that that might have on the strength of the teams fielded.

Other formats including a 10 day format running each of the events sequentially were discussed.

It was agreed that each HNBO would refer the matter to their respective Board/Management Committee and provide feedback including any alternative proposals at the next BGB meeting in August.

Action: All HNBOs

5.6 Hotel rates for 2027 series

It was agreed that the cost of a package comprising 3 nights' dinner bed and breakfast, plus sandwich lunches on Saturday and Sunday in the Camrose, Lady Milne & Teltscher Trophies be increased to £475 per person, or the equivalent in Euros, calculated on a single room basis.

The package rate for the Junior Camrose Trophy and Peggy Bayer Trophy is increased to £360 per person, or the equivalent in Euros, which may be calculated on a shared room basis. If single occupancy is required the rate is increased to £420 per person, or the equivalent in Euros. All costs of single and double rooms must be confirmed, and a rate for non-residents and meals costs negotiated.

Action: All HNBOs

5.7 Helen Hall's draft Match Manager's Handbook

Helen was thanked for producing the document, which was adopted. DO'B urged that all HNBOs be fully conversant with its contents, to ensure that they were of their responsibilities, and the timescale(s) thereof.

A paper by Liz on the responsibilities was also noted and approved, and any additional content would be included in the 2027 Home International Regulations.

Action: All HNBOs, SC & JD

5.8 Proposal by Wales for amendment to junior eligibility regulation

AK declared an interest and left the meeting.

The Welsh proposal was approved, and would be extended to all other HNBOs. Gordon urged the need to encourage more young players to take up the game.

Action: All HNBOs & JD

AK rejoined the meeting.

5.9 Age qualification for Teltscher Trophy

It was agreed that the wording for the Regulations would be brought into line with the wording used by the EBL for its Seniors events.

Action: JD

5.9 Revision of timing of information provided by HNBOs to host HNBO, System Reviewer and Webmaster

Jeremy reported that Fearghal is constantly under considerable pressure having to chase team details and systems prior to the deadline, despite the Secretary sending out details in good time and a reminder a week beforehand. It was therefore imperative that HNBOs inform their NPCs of their responsibilities in this regard, and make sure that everything is completed in a timely fashion.

It was agreed that the deadline for submission of system cards would be brought forward a few days so as not to fall immediately before a weekend and that a separate deadline one week earlier would be introduced for confirming team details. In addition to a 1VP fine for late submission of a system, a 1VP fine would also be imposed in the case of a late submission of team details.

Action: All HNBOs & JD

5.10 Provision of team photos

It was confirmed that it is the function of the Match Managers to ensure that team photos are taken at all Home Internationals and sent to Jeremy as soon as possible thereafter for the website.

Dermot also requested that team photos and biographies for event programmes be sent to the relevant Match Manager as soon as selections are made.

Action: All HNBOs

Dermot and Brian left the meeting at this point, and were thanked for their attendance and input.

6. GOLD CUP & SILVER PLATE

The Secretary reported as follows:

- There were 69 entries in 2026 with an entry fee of £90 per team, including one free team.
- The Silver Plate for teams losing in Rounds 1, 2 and 3 of the Gold Cup will commence in early July 2026.
- Arrangements are in hand for the Finals to be played on 12th & 13th December at the Mind Sports Centre, London.
- The closing date for entries to the 2027 Gold Cup is Friday 30th October.

6.1 Entry fee for 2027 event

It was noted that the reduction in the entry fee in 2026 hadn't resulted in an increased entry. It was agreed that the entry fee for 2027 be increased to £100 per team, with players under the age of 26 on the 30th October having free entry. Additionally, the four semi-finalists will pay a further £100 per team as a contribution towards the staging cost of the Finals.

Action: SC

6.2 Review of regulation concerning offer of dates for online matches

Jeremy explained that correspondence from two teams in 2025 had highlighted a difficulty in offering and agreeing dates on which to play a 48-match in 2 halves on separate days.

It was agreed that the relevant section of the 2027 Gold Cup Regulations would include a statement that if no agreement could be reached in relation to dates, or reduce the match to 40 or

32 boards to be played on one date, the default would be to agree a date on which to play a 48-board match.

The 2027 Regulations would also include instructions on how to set up a match on Realbridge costing £5 per table, or enlisting the help of the EBU by accessing the relevant link on the EBU website.

Action: JD

7. TRANSGENDER BRIDGE PLAYERS

Jeremy reported that the current transgender policy is on the BGB website. It was agreed to defer further discussion on this matter until the August meeting at which point it was hoped that the Government would have finally released updated EHRC guidance on this matter.

8. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next meeting was fixed for **Wednesday 19th August at 10.00** to which all delegates would be invited. The major discussion item will be the plans for the Home Internationals in 2027.

Action: SC