

## **Restructuring the EBU: A Proposal for Economic Sustainability and Growth**

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As businesspeople, we believe that the current EBU structure is inefficient. The EBU focuses on the elite game, but fails to dedicate sufficient effort to the essential, ongoing work of promoting bridge.

### **The Bridge Shop**

We propose closing the shop and selling the business. Bridge equipment will continue to be available through the new business owner, and we will also work to secure member discounts where feasible.

### **The EBU Magazine**

We recommend moving from quarterly to monthly production and transitioning to an online-only format. Those who prefer hard copies will have the option to subscribe separately. This change is expected to save £120,000 annually.

### **The EBU Diary**

We propose discontinuing the production of the diary, which would result in an estimated annual saving of £40,000.

### **Staff**

We suggest operating the administrative side of the business with a staff of four: an office manager, an accounts manager, and two administrators, under the direct supervision of a Board member. This would generate an estimated annual saving of £370,000. A further £50,000 would be saved in office running costs by moving to smaller premises.

**Annual Saving: £580,000**

### **The Aylesbury HQ**

The Aylesbury building, valued at approximately £1,100,000, would be sold. The proceeds would be used to support counties in establishing new bridge centres across eight regions. Our vision is to ensure every major city has a bridge centre. After consulting with the counties, we envisage creating and/or supporting centres similar to the London MindSports Centre in cities such as these, for example:

- Birmingham
- Bristol
- Exeter
- York
- Manchester
- Newcastle

- Nottingham
- Southampton

These centres will be strategically located for optimal transport connections and will accommodate around 30 - 40 tables. Hosting most tournaments in these centres will significantly reduce the cost of hiring hotels and transporting tables.

Beyond bridge, these centres will offer facilities for other games, such as chess, creating synergies that we expect will see some chess players, who tend to be younger, take up bridge.

### **Capital Released for Investment: £1,100,000**

#### **The Replacement Office**

We propose renting a small office in Aylesbury for the four administrative staff, at an estimated cost of £10,000 per year.

#### **Major One-Off Costs**

- Restructuring: £130,000
- Capital Gains Tax: £50,000
- Property sale costs: £30,000
- New IT system: £100,000
- UMS freeze: £20,000

#### **Additional Annual Costs**

- Office rent: £10,000
- Additional magazine editorial costs: £10,000
- Outsourced IT support: £10,000

#### **Summary**

£1,100,000 investment in national bridge centres

£550,000 annual investment in promoting bridge, especially to young players

£330,000 one-off costs in year one

#### **Grassroots Clubs**

We believe the ever-increasing UMS is discouraging club affiliation with the EBU. As more clubs leave, the need to increase UMS escalates, creating a vicious cycle. To address this, we propose

freezing UMS for at least three years. During this period, we will reach out to hundreds of smaller clubs, offering heavily discounted UMS to encourage them to join the EBU.

This transitional arrangement is designed to boost club affiliation. As more clubs join, the increased UMS income would cover costs going forward. We have allocated £20,000 to support the UMS freeze in the first year, with the expectation that growing club membership will sustain it beyond that.

### **Communication, Marketing and Public Relations**

We will appoint two full-time officers under the direct supervision of a Board member. Instead of hiring an external PR consultant, we will engage two bright young graduates for these positions. We have budgeted £80,000 for their salaries, including National Insurance and pension contributions, and £20,000 for expenses.

### **Investment in Youth**

We will invest £450,000 a year in promoting bridge to younger players.

We have allocated £40,000 plus £10,000 in expenses for a dedicated officer, who will be a third young graduate, also operating under the supervision of a Board member. Their role will be to promote bridge at 20 universities initially. We have budgeted £3,000 per university to cover the costs of promotion and to pay bridge-playing students to teach non-players.

The program will initially target the following:

- University of Bath
- University of Birmingham
- University of Brighton
- University of Bristol
- University of Cambridge
- University of Durham
- University of Exeter
- University of Leeds
- London - Imperial College
- London – King’s College
- London - University College
- London – School of Economics and Political Science
- University of Manchester
- University of Newcastle
- University of Nottingham
- University of Reading
- University of Oxford

- University of Southampton
- University of Warwick
- University of York

Once established in these universities, we will expand the scheme to include all universities.

We will also promote bridge in schools. We will support existing school programmes by providing free teaching materials and creating a network of teachers. We have set aside £10,000 for this.

We have allocated a further £40,000 plus £10,000 in expenses for a second dedicated officer, who will be another young graduate, also operating under the supervision of a Board member. Their role will be to organise bridge teaching in schools. Initially, our efforts will focus on London schools. Once established in London, we will roll out the scheme nationwide.

Funds will be used to pay bridge teachers to teach bridge in schools. Mainly they will teach children, but we also intend to teach bridge to schoolteachers. This will amplify interest and extend the reach of the game to more students across various schools. It will help build a stronger foundation for bridge education, fostering greater engagement from a younger audience.

#### **Summary**

£100,000 annual investment in promoting and marketing bridge

£450,000 annual investment in teaching bridge to youngsters

#### **Reserve Fund**

As of 31 March 2023, the EBU held £489,466 in cash in the bank, with net current assets of £470,561. We would reduce this substantially, with the exact reduction to be determined following a forensic examination of the EBU's finances.

#### **Auditor**

We would reinstate the requirement that the EBU's accounts are independently audited.