

President:  
Mr Harold Curran

Vice President:  
Mr Jim O'Sullivan

# The Irish Bridge Union



## MINUTES IRISH BRIDGE UNION

A meeting of the Irish Bridge Union Council was held on Monday 28th of February 2022 at 7.00pm in the CityNorth Hotel, Gormanstown, Co.Meath.

Present:

(NIBU) Anne Fitzpatrick (Joint Hon. Secretary/Treasurer), Ian Lindsay, John Murchan, Brian Mullin

(CBAI) Peter O'Meara (Vice-President), Martin Brady (Joint Hon. Secretary/Minutes), Rhona Bolger, Seamus Costello, Pat Duff, Freda Fitzgerald, Gordon Lessells, Paul Porteous, Aileen Timoney,

In attendance: Dermot O'Brien (CEO)

### 1. Apologies

Apologies were noted from Emer Kee (CBAI); Harold Curran (President), Helen Hall, Heather Hill, Michael McFaul (NIBU).

In the absence of the President, Peter O'Meara (Vice-President) took the chair. Council offered its best wishes to the President for a speedy recovery.

Peter O'Meara noted that continuing COVID interruptions had hindered the President in his year in office, and offered (on the precedent of Jim O'Sullivan, 2019-21) to delay his entry to office to allow Harold Curran an uninterrupted year in more 'normal' circumstances. Council was in agreement that this was an appropriate step.

### 2. Minutes of the meetings of 10<sup>th</sup> August 2020 and 6<sup>th</sup> November 2019

These were adopted on the proposal of Ian Lindsay, seconded by Freda Fitzgerald.

### 3. Matters arising

Council expressed interest in reading the delayed report from the D'Orsi Bowl, which would be taken under item 13.

### 4. Review of Emergency Committee meetings, 13<sup>th</sup>/14<sup>th</sup> November 2021

The Standing Committee (Peter O'Meara (Vice-President), Martin Brady (Joint Hon. Secretary), Anne Fitzpatrick (Joint Hon. Secretary/Treasurer); also in attendance Aileen Timoney and Dermot O'Brien; apologies from Harold Curran (President)) met virtually to

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discuss the status of the Interprovincials, in the light of rising COVID-19 case numbers in the Republic of Ireland and feedback from a few players.

Emergency Committee concluded at that meeting that, given the relatively few members expressing concerns, and the precautions already in place in the hotel and in organised bridge in general, the event should proceed as planned. A detailed notice spelling out precautions and regulations would be circulated among captains, and regulations would be strictly enforced on the day. Martin Brady would act as COVID Compliance Officer. A full and formal notice was issued to all captains on the morning of 14th November, and was met with some significant feedback indicating extreme reluctance from several quarters. In addition, several further players withdrew from the event during the course of the day. Emergency Committee reconsidered its position via email and phone calls, and with great regret concluded that the safest and most responsible course was to cancel the live event. All of the Committee were very grateful to Aileen for the hard work she put in to organising and to liaising with the Cavan Crystal, and were very sorry on her behalf that the IBU couldn't see it through to completion.

Council noted and endorsed Emergency Committee's actions.

## 5. Finance

Anne Fitzpatrick circulated an updated budget. There was no longer a need to make provision for teams qualifying for the 2022 World Championships, so the four year projected deficit was now €43k, down from the initially budgeted €71k.

The Funding Subcommittee reported from its December meeting. As well as seeking corporate or personal sponsorship, it proposed an all-Ireland raffle, to launch in September 2022. Council expressed reservations about this timescale, and about legal issues regarding the running of a raffle in Northern Ireland (ACTION: Funding Subcommittee to contact GAA or IRFU to request information on whether and how they were able to run cross-border raffles). Other recommendations included:

- Prize fund should include a very substantial and attractive top prize (suggested figure €10k).
- Price should be no more than €5 per ticket (perhaps £4 in NIBU territory).
- Both Unions were still struggling to encourage a return to live bridge, and fundraising efforts, particularly a raffle, should not detract from this core task.
- ACTION: Fundraising Committee to produce detailed plans for a variety of scenarios, based on a price of €5/£4 per ticket.
- ACTION: Fundraising Committee to consult with regional secretaries and other parties who would be essential to a successful rollout to gather opinions about prize structure, logistics, and other relevant feedback.

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It was agreed that we would run an all-Ireland raffle if possible, or if not, to organise two separate raffles, one in NIBU territory, the other in CBAI. It was also agreed that planning should focus on a September 2023 launch, to allow both unions to focus on COVID-19 recovery plans.

## 6. European Open Championships 2023

Paul Porteous reported on the possibility of hosting this event in the Belfast Waterfront. This would cost £170k, to be raised from subscriptions with no cost to the IBU. There would be no liability at all to the IBU. Visit Belfast had already pledged £100k, and Paul would seek commitments from other potential backers.

**ACTION:** Paul Porteous authorised to seek commitments to raise the funding. If this would not be possible, we would withdraw with no liability. This matter is to be regarded as confidential to Council for the moment.

## 7. International Committee

International Committee had co-opted Heidi Lillis as its fifth member, and Council endorsed this.

John Murchan had circulated a report prior to the meeting, including the teams so far chosen for the European Championships in Madeira, June 2022:

Open: Hanlon & McGann, Fitzgibbon & Mesbur, and Carroll & Moran with Grainne Barton acting as NPC. Reserve pair is Tommy Garvey & Donal MacAonghusa.

Ladies: Kenny & Fitzgerald, O'Keefe & Pender and Greenwood & Rigney with Paul Porteous acting as NPC. Reserve pair is Hilary Dowling Long & Siobhan Part.

Senior: Milne & O'Brien, Goodman & Walsh and Micheal and Pdraig O'Briain with Derek O'Gorman acting as NPC. Reserve pair is Glynn & Keaveney.

The Mixed team would be selected in early May, when the trials that began in March 2020 could be concluded.

Council agreed that in the case of a team of four qualifying from any future trials, we would no longer leave the selection of the third pair to the team themselves, but International Committee would select, with ratification by Council.

Reports from the 2019 D'Orsi Bowl and the 2021 World Online Qualifiers were circulated for noting. It was noted that several NPCs had expressed reservations about Council's decision not to fund any of the teams. The IBU was now in a better financial position for not having to plan for 2022 World Championship participations, and so this decision could be revisited. On the proposal of John Murchan, seconded by Martin Brady, it was agreed to

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disburse a stipend of €100 per player to all participants in the 2021 World Online Qualifiers, to be distributed by the Treasurer through NPCs.

## 8. Competitions

Senior Congress: Hotel rental at the Cavan Crystal has gone up to €200, with room rates of €306 for two nights B&B plus one dinner, or €252 single occupancy. The hotel is holding 20 rooms for participants. Advertising will commence shortly, including a flyer and notices on the websites. For the moment, the Wednesday night social would not go ahead, but it would resume in 2023.

The Moylan Trophy will be held face-to-face at Malahide Regional Bridge Club, as normal.

The Club Pairs will proceed in online format, in an effort to sustain the strong number of entries from 2021. Various formats were proposed, including sessions on consecutive Friday nights, or running the Master and Intermediate events in parallel. ACTION: Joint Hon Sec to consult with CEO in designing final format.

Plans for the Egan Trophy are well advanced. The La Mon hotel is unavailable, but it will return to host the 2023 event as normal.

## 9. Correspondence

Congratulations to Fearghal O'Boyle, who has been promoted to EBL Chief Tournament Director; and to John Phelan, who attended the EBL TD workshop in Bucharest in November 2021, and was awarded an A grade.

## 10. AOB

John Murchan had been approached with a complaint about the timing of CBAI trials, which Dermot O'Brien reported was being resolved.

Next meeting: Monday May 23<sup>rd</sup> 2022.



8.8.22

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