



**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE EBU LIMITED
AT YOUNG CHELSEA BRIDGE CLUB, GOLDHAWK ROAD, LONDON, W12 8HA
ON WEDNESDAY 13th SEPTEMBER 2017**

Present: Jeremy Dhondy (Chairman) (JD)
Ian Payn (Vice Chairman) (IP)
Jerry Cope (Treasurer) (JC)
Heather Dhondy (HD)
Darren Evetts (DE)
Anthony Golding (AG)
Robert Lawy (RL)
Ron Millet (RM)
Graham Smith (GS)
Gordon Rainsford (General Manager) (GR)
Peter Stockdale (Minuting the meeting) (PS)

1. Apologies for Absence

None

2. Minutes of the meeting of 28th/29th June 2017

2.1 Accuracy

The minutes were approved as accurate.

2.2 Matters arising

2.2/2.2/5 – JD advised that the Laws & Ethics Committee had not yet had its next meeting, so there had not been any further discussion relating to the matter of the perceived disparity in the punishments given for certain offences. **UPDATE:** JD confirmed that he had asked for it to be on the agenda at the forthcoming L&E meeting.

2.2/2.2/11 – JD reported that the EBL had not yet produced a policy relating to gender identity. It was noted that the next event for which it may be relevant from the EBU's perspective would be the 2019 European Youth Team Championships, so it was not considered urgent, but nonetheless JD would in due course encourage them to make progress on the matter.

4 - GR confirmed that he had attended the course on the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), and would give more information later in the meeting. It was raised as to whether the regulations permitted GR to act as Data Protection Officer (DPO), given that he also served as General Manager. It was confirmed that this was permitted, and it was difficult to identify a suitable alternative. It was agreed that in order to help ensure that there were no conflicts of interest the Vice Chairman would act as a point of reference for the DPO for any issues which arise. It was confirmed that EBU would be appointing its own DPO.

- In reference to the assisting the counties with information on secondary allegiances, GR reported that rather than wait for any further input from the County Working Groups, something would be created based on what was believed to be of most use to them. If these assumptions were not correct then any feedback could then be incorporated. It was hoped that this could now be produced reasonably quickly. It was noted that the GDPR may have some implications in relation to county

memberships and may result in some revisions being needed to specific constitutions. JD advised of his intention to write to County Chairmen in due course regarding matters relating to the GDPR and when he did he would be in a position to highlight some of the potential issues which counties would need to consider.

5. Whilst Andrew Petrie would be attending the AGM in November to give an update to the Shareholders, as per the minutes of the last meeting, JD advised that at the Shareholders' Meeting in May the update would be given by Caroline Small – one of the Trustees – with focus on the research work which EBED was funding.

3. Financial report

3.1 Treasurer's Report for July 2017, inc. Reserves Policy

Prior to the meeting JC had circulated his report for the four months ending 31st July. He highlighted the improvement in the performance of The Bridge Warehouse, though this had been aided by the sales of the new Law Book. It was noted that in this period any losses in revenue which had been brought about by the change in the price structure had been offset by an increase in the volume of sales. This increase in the volume of sales was encouraging, though it was agreed that it was too early to fully consider the impact of the changes.

JC also highlighted the relatively disappointing figures from Competitions, and noted that the revenue from the Summer Meeting was down on budget. GR added, however, that there may have been some savings on costs for the congress, and this would be fully apparent when the final figures were produced.

JC had undertaken the annual review of the Reserves Policy. The Policy was to ensure a Liquid Ratio of not less than 1.5, and it was currently at 1.9.

3.2 Approval of 2016/17 Company Accounts

The accounts had been circulated to the Board prior to the meeting. It was noted that a footnote was required on page 10 to state that the 2016 figures in respect of employment costs and numbers had been adjusted retrospectively.

The Board endorsed the accounts.

3.3 2018/19 Prices

JC had circulated his proposed figures prior to the meeting. He advised that, contrary to previous expectations, it would not be possible to set prices which included fractions of a penny as this was not supported by the new IT system. As inflation was at 3%, however, an increase in the Universal Membership fee by a full penny was appropriate.

He explained that as Direct Debit was the primary – and indeed the preferred – method of payment for the majority of clubs it had been decided to remove the rebate for those clubs paying by that method. There would also be a switch to Direct Debit being the default method of payment except in instances when clubs were unable to do so (as it may not be an option on the account which they have), in which case exceptions would be made on a case by case basis. The money saved by the removal of the rebate would be returned to clubs through a reduction in the Club Affiliation Fee. JC reminded the Board that at the AGM he had been made aware that the current fee structure had a relatively adverse effect on smaller clubs, and this change would help to address this. He added that it was appropriate to continue to have an affiliation fee in some form as there were costs involved

with a club affiliating, irrespective of any other services used, and therefore a charge should be levied to cover this administrative work.

3.4 EBU Medium Term Finances

JC reminded the Board that at the AGM he had highlighted to the Shareholders that the current forecast predicted a loss across the next four years, and the Shareholders had been in agreement that this was unacceptable. JC had therefore produced a paper for the Board which outlined how this may be addressed.

He started by saying that he did not believe that there could be any reliance on an increase in income – assuming the Board stayed with its policy of not increasing prices more than inflation – and therefore it would be necessary to look at cutting costs. His paper highlighted six areas, and the Board was happy to endorse the principles that JC had put forward. JC would report on its content in broad terms at the AGM.

Prior to the meeting RM had circulated a paper in which he provided figures (based on clubs in Yorkshire) which estimated that 15% of the members of affiliated clubs were not playing in sessions which were submitted for Universal Membership – e.g. ‘beginners sessions’, or social games of ‘Chicago’. In reference to ‘beginners sessions’, GR advised that some session codes had been (re)introduced to enable clubs to submit more sessions under Universal Membership, and that Bev Purvis – the Club Liaison Officer – was working hard to educate clubs as to how they could involve more members in activities which were submitted. Regarding ‘Chicago’ games, etc, the Board recognised that the EBU was responsible only for Duplicate Bridge, and therefore it would not be appropriate to include any such games. There was agreement, however, that work could be done to enable clubs to offer games of duplicate bridge which would appeal to those who were instead opting to play other forms of the game. It was noted that some larger clubs were ‘mentoring’ smaller clubs, and offering guidance and practical help on how this could be achieved, and that this relationship should be encouraged.

4. General Manager’s report

GR had circulated his report prior to the meeting. He noted that since the report had been circulated some of the IT tasks had been completed.

In addition, GR reported that the EBU’s online games with Funbridge had started, with the participation levels being good, and higher than expected, for the first four games – an average of around 85 per game.

GR confirmed that he had attended the GDPR course, as mentioned earlier in the meeting. He noted his intention to have a meeting with key members of the Aylesbury staff, and he hoped at the next meeting to be able to report on the action that would be taken – and indeed that some work had already started. He had ascertained at the meeting that the changes which were necessary were unlikely to be as wide ranging, and labour intensive, as had been initially thought. Whilst some communication with the membership on the matter would be needed, assuming adequate procedures were followed, and made available to the members, then it would not require a universal ‘resetting’ of all communication preferences.

JD enquired on the progress of a new online shop. GR explained that efforts had been made to establish whether a suitable ‘ready-made’ platform was available, or whether one would need to be specifically made. It was been concluded that an existing platform would be suitable, and would be quicker – and therefore cheaper. He reported that, as the EBU was a not-for-profit organisation,

Michael Clark had been able to negotiate a good rate for one of the market leading pieces of software, and it was hoped that the shop staff would soon be able to trial a version of it. Assuming the staff thought it suitable, the Board were happy for GR to go ahead with authorising the changes.

5. EBED report and Trustee re-appointment

JD confirmed that Bernard Eddleston had been reappointed as the EBU Board's appointment to EBED's Board of Trustees. This would be his final term in the position, and this would end in 2020.

Donna Wright had been appointed as Chief Executive of EBED, JD reported, and was now working four days a week for the charity. She had appointed an additional member of staff, Claire Wheeler, on a short-term contract to help deal with updating some of the charity's procedures. JD added that Sue Maxwell would be retiring as EBED's Education Manager in the latter half of September. **Update:** In the week following the meeting Sue agreed to continue working with EBED until mid-October in order to complete outstanding tasks.

JD reported that the Junior Teach-In had taken place. The event had been reasonably successful, but the attendance was relatively low – around fifty children took part. The attendance at the EBTA Convention had been relatively better, with the event easily reaching its capacity of sixty delegates. Feedback relating to EBED's activities had reportedly been mixed, but constructive, though much of the criticism related to issues to which had already been recognised by EBED Trustees and/or staff, and work was in progress to address some of them. Issues which had been raised at the Convention which were to be prioritised were a database of teachers and teaching activity, and improvements to the EBED website.

The Fast Track Bridge Books had been launched, and were proving popular. The materials had been well received at the events for teachers which had been held around the country. It would be better known in six months whether this interest had converted in to sales, and then in to students who moved on to play in clubs.

RL reported that rather attending the meetings of the EBED Trustees, he would instead be attending the meetings of EBED's Education Advisory Group.

6. Article & Bye Law Changes

AG had circulated proposed changes to 'Best Behaviour at Bridge', and to the Bye Laws, to address issues relating to 'hate crimes'. These were intended to provide the means by which action could be taken should any member act in way which created an environment which was not considered safe or welcoming. The Board were in agreement that these changes should be introduced. It was noted that these changes were not intended to address the punishment for any offences, or even to define what constituted an offence in these instances – they would be matters for the Laws & Ethics Committee, and the Disciplinary Panel, to address on a case-by-case basis. The changes which were made were therefore general, and covered such offences in broad terms. GR would circulate a final version of the documents for approval by the Board. **Action: GR**

It was noted that the number of instances to date had been very small, and it was not anticipated that the introduction of these changes would prompt a large number of cases to be brought forward. The changes to the Bye Laws would be put forward for approval by the Shareholders at the AGM. The changes to 'Best Behaviour at Bridge' would be reported at the AGM, though as they were 'a policy' it would not be required to put them to a vote of the Shareholders. Following the AGM the changes would be included in the model constitution for clubs and counties, and it was hoped that clubs and counties would adopt a similar policy.

There was brief discussion relating to procedures to deal with those who had committed a crime, and how procedures may differ depending on whether they had yet to be convicted, were currently serving their punishment, or had completed their punishment. It was agreed that it may be appropriate to ascertain how, under the Data Protection Act, information relating to convictions could be gathered, stored, and shared amongst relevant parties.

On separate matters, AG put forward proposed changes to the Articles which related to the role of the General Manager in relation to Standing Committees. These would be put forward at the AGM for approval by the Shareholders.

7. Junior World Championships 2018 & Sponsorship

DE advised that a short article had been written for the next issue of English Bridge to inform the members of the desire to seek sponsorship towards the cost of the junior teams participating in the Junior World Championships in China in 2018. He explained that this article was intended to solicit initial reactions and to hopefully identify a way forward. Some possible ways in which funds might be raised were considered.

8. Awards

8.1 Dimmie Fleming Awards

The Board approved the nominations which the Awards Sub-Committee had confirmed and passed on.

JD commented that there were some Counties which had not made a nomination for many years, and that there were likely to be suitable candidates who had not been rewarded due to the inaction of the relevant county committee. When he next wrote to the Chairmen JD would raise the matter, and encourage such counties to nominate their deserving volunteers.

8.2 Silver Awards

Three nominations had been received. The Board approved one nomination, and rejected another on the grounds that the candidate had not made a sufficient contribution to the game at the national level. In regard to the third candidate it was agreed that those who made the nomination be asked to provide additional information to support their case.

8.3 Diamond Award

Three possible candidates to receive a Diamond Award were considered, and a recipient was chosen.

8.4 Tony Priday Award

The Board agreed that the likely recipient considered at the June meeting would be given the award.

9. County Chairmen's Meeting & County Working Groups

GS gave a brief summary of the main sentiments which were raised at the County Chairmen's Meeting in July. He explained that he would be producing a full report in due course, but gave a summary of some of the possible main action points which had arisen. Two areas in which action had already been taken were the work to provide an IT system relating to county membership – see

agenda item 2.2 – and the inclusion in English Bridge magazine of more content aimed at beginners and improvers.

The County Chairmen had been contacted to establish with which neighbouring counties they would want to work, were there to be a reconfiguration of the CWGs. The feedback was that the vast majority were happy to be in their current group, although it was clear that the Southern group should be split in to a South East and a South West group, and that the 'provincial' group should be disbanded and those counties would join an appropriate group based on their location.

It was clarified that the CWGs exist to enable lines of communication – both amongst the counties and between the counties and the Board/EBU staff. In order to improve these lines of communication it was agreed that GR, Bev Purvis (Club Liaison Officer), and Donna Wright (Chief Executive of EBED) would be ex-officio members of the CWGs, with the intention that one would try to attend each regional meeting.

It was noted that in some instances there would need to be improvements to the methods of communication within a county – it was apparent that in some instances the Shareholder, and county official who was part of the CWG, did not adequately share information.

GS reported that the Midlands CWG were working to develop Terms of Reference for the CWGs. The initial draft was, in GS's opinion, a good start, though he would wish to seek input from AG before they were confirmed.

It was agreed that there would not be a formal County Chairmen's Meeting in 2018, however it was hoped that something could be arranged through the CWGs.

10. Sponsorship & Fundraising

This was addressed as part of item 7.

11. EBL/WBF matters – Senior Age Criteria

JD explained the changes which were to be made by the WBF, and consequently by the EBL and Bridge Great Britain, to the age criteria for participation in Senior's events. He and GR advised that it was intended that the change not be made for EBU congresses until 2019 as promotion had begun for the 2018 events. After a change in 2019 the rest of the changes would stick to the WBF pattern with the revised age of 65 being reached by 2026. It would be necessary, however, to change the criteria for the trial events which were taking place in December 2017 and February 2018 as these would be selecting teams to participate in EBL and BGB competitions which would be using the new criteria. Detail would be published immediately on the website.

12. Calendar of meetings for 2018

The dates for the meetings in 2018 were discussed. It was agreed that there would not be a strategy day in June, and the meeting would therefore be a single day. It was noted that the main project for 2018 would be the development of the 5-year plan, and work on that would be undertaken over a period of time. Details would be confirmed by the next Board Meeting.

13. Any Other Business

JD reported that he had not received any disagreement from the Chairman of the Laws & Ethics Committee to the proposed changes to the Committee's Terms of Reference. The Board therefore noted, and agreed to, the changes with a minor revision.

JD reminded the Board that action would need to be taken at the AGM to better align the end dates of the current Board members' terms as promised at the 2016 AGM. How this may be achieved was discussed.