



Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the English Bridge Union Limited
held at the Imperial Hotel, London,
on Wednesday 22nd November 2017

Present:

Jeremy Dhondy (JD)	Chairman	Graham Smith (GS)	Board Member
Jerry Cope (JC)	Treasurer	Tony Parks (TP)	Auditor
Ian Payn (IP)	Vice Chairman	Peter Stockdale (PS)	Minute Taker & Communications Officer
Gordon Rainsford (GR)	Company Secretary	Bev Purvis (BP)	Club Liaison Officer
Heather Dhondy (HD)	Board Member	Kay Carter (KC)	Reception
Rob Lawy (RL)	Board Member	Karen Durrell (KD)	Reception
Ron Millet (RM)	Board Member	Andrew Petrie (AP)	Chairman of EBED

Apologies:

Darren Evetts (DE)	Board Member	Anthony Golding (AG)	Board Member
--------------------	--------------	----------------------	--------------

Shareholders		Proxy		Shareholders		Proxy	
Present	Apologies			Present	Apologies		
Avon	Mrs S O'Hara	Mr R Lawy	London	Mrs C Duckworth			
Bedfordshire	Mr M Collins	Mr D Davey		Mr D Flint			
Berks & Bucks	Mr D Davey	Dr S Brown	Manchester	Mr J Morris	Mr R Lighton	Mr J Morris	
Cambs & Hunts	Mr P Grice	Mr A Bowden	Mersey/Cheshire	Dr C Raymond	Mr C Merrill	Dr C Raymond	
Channel Isles	Mrs P Panter		Middlesex	Mr P Hasenson	Mr H Patel		
Cornwall	Mr JM Booth						
Cumbria	-		Norfolk	Dr M J Dennis			
				Mrs S Gill			
Derbyshire	Mr J Parker	Mrs C Batten	North East	-	-		
	Dr A J McCance	Mrs C Batten	Northants	Mrs N Bainbridge			
Devon	Dr M Hamon	Mr T Treeby	Nottinghamshire	Mrs C Batten	Mr K Rodgers	Mrs C Batten	
Dorset	Mr M Hooper		Oxfordshire	Mrs S Claridge			
				Mrs S Nicholson			
Essex	Mr D Valtisariis	Mrs M Curtis	Somerset	Mr A Wilson	Mr T Russ	Mr G Rainsford	
		Mrs L Fleet	Staffs & Shrops	Mr P Hackett	Mrs P Booth-Jones	Mr P Hackett	
Gloucs	Mr J Simons		Suffolk	Mr M Carey			
				Mr M Pryor			
Hants & IoW	Mr K C Bennett	Mrs M Gale	Surrey	Mr J Allerton			
	Mr R Ray			Miss S Pritchard			
				Mr R Millard			
Hereford		Mr C Chowney	Sussex	Mr P Bates	Mrs J Mayall	Mr P Bates	
					Mr R Wheeler	Mr P Bates	
Hertfordshire	Mr G Conrad	Mr R Teesdale	Warwickshire	Mr C Lang	Mrs SJ Galvin		
	Mr R Livesey						
Isle of Man	-	-	Westmorland	Mr M Rothwell			
Kent	Mr M Lewis	Mr B Crack	Wiltshire	Mr P Green	Miss K Hodgson	Mr P Green	
		Mr P Jones	Worcestershire	Mr P Hammond	Mr D Thomas	Mr P Hammond	
Lancashire	Mr B Brelsford	Mrs J Wright					
Leicestershire	Mr D Benton		Yorkshire	Mrs J Latham	Mr N Woolven	Ms J Staniforth	
	Mr D Pollard			Mrs L Millet			
				Ms J Staniforth			
Lincolnshire	-						

Also present: Sally Brock, David Ewart, Barry Myers, Mervyn Wotton

Jeremy Dhondy, Chairman, opened the meeting by welcoming all those present.

1. Apologies for absence

There were no additional apologies for absence to record.

2. Announcement of Awards

The following award winners were announced. JD presented the award to the recipient unless otherwise stated.

SILVER AWARDS

The Silver Award is given for an outstanding contribution, and recognition of long service, at a national and/or county level.

Michael Rothwell, Westmorland

Mike's major national, and international, contribution has been through the software he has developed. His Bridge Timer – which he made available to the EBU at no charge, and is very highly regarded - is used at all EBU events, and at many other events round the country and beyond. His Hand Generator software, which he kindly donated to EBED for use in its online Teachers' Zone, makes it easy to generate hands and insert them in to documents, or to create documents from existing deal files. This provides an excellent resource for producing commentaries, lessons, and other handouts. He also created, and made available, his Bridge Scorer software.

Mike has been a member of many committees at local and County level. He has been a 'core' member of the Westmorland County Bridge Association for several years in the role of Secretary. He has organised the very popular County Swiss Congress. He has also set up and run the 'CancerCare Bridge Tournament' which since 1994 has raised over £59,000.

He is one of the key trainers of Club TDs, running a number of EBED courses in the North West.

Richard Fleet, London [To be presented locally]

Richard has served on numerous committees throughout his bridge administration 'career'. He has sat on the EBU Selection Committee from 1982 to 2006 (with only one year off in the mid-1990s), five of those year's as Chairman. He has also served on the Laws & Ethics Committee for a total of 14 years from 1981 up to and including the current committee. He has also served on the EBU Constitutional Commission and was a member of the Conventions Working Party.

In addition to his work with the EBU, Richard has served on the committee of the London Metropolitan Bridge Association for 20 years, with ten of those as Chairman).

In 2016 Richard wrote a comprehensive book, 'Tournament Bridge in England: 1925-1945', which he donated to the EBU.

DIAMOND AWARDS

The Diamond Award is given to players in recognition of excellence and success over a sustained period for England's international teams.

Colin Simpson [Previously presented]

Due to ill health, Colin was presented with his award in May, as reported at the Shareholders' Meeting earlier in the year, though those present again applauded his achievements.

Sally Brock

Sally played in her first Lady Milne in 1976 and played in her first European Championship in 1979, with Sandra Landy, which they won. Since then she has been almost ever present in the British, and then English, Women's team - except for a break from international bridge to have children. She has appeared in major World and European competitions for Great Britain and England on 27 occasions, winning nine gold medals and numerous silver and bronze medals. She has also frequently represented England in the Camrose Trophy, Lady Milne, and Teltscher Trophy.

Her domestic successes include three victories in the Gold Cup and four in the Crockfords Cup.

Sally has recently taken over the leadership of the Under 26 Women's squad, and captained the team for its medal winning campaign in the 2017 European Championships.

TONY PRIDAY AWARD

The Award, in memory of Tony Priday, is given for an outstanding contribution to bridge and enhancing the game in all its aspects.

David Ewart

David Ewart is well known to many members as a bridge player, but his Tony Priday Award is given in recognition of an impressive contribution away from the table. When David Harris stepped down as Honorary Counsel in 2012, David Ewart, a Queen's Counsel specialising in tax matters, volunteered to take over. When the EBU decided to pursue its VAT claim against HMRC it approached not David, because it was felt that it was a lot on top of his regular support, but his wife, Sarah. Sarah is also a tax barrister and was happy to help, but as the case progressed she fell pregnant and had to withdraw. We looked no further than her husband for maternity cover, and since then he has researched, co-ordinated and pursued the case for us at every level, culminating in an appearance before the European Court in Luxembourg early in 2017.

That we now know the claim was unsuccessful does not detract from the amount of work and dedication David has put into it over a period of several years, levying no charge at all for his services, thus saving the members untold thousands of pounds. This was all to get Bridge recognition, and through that recognition not only benefit players, but also to help bring the game to a wider community, with all the health benefits that we know that involves.

The EBU Board was unanimous in deciding that in gratitude for his support to this cause, there is no more suitable recipient for the 2017 Tony Priday Award than David Ewart - QC and all-round decent chap.

DIMMIE FLEMING AWARDS

The recipients would have worked hard for bridge as volunteers in administration at county level, typically giving 10/15 years or more service:

Audrey Hartley, Essex

The 2017 AGM marked the end of an era in Essex Bridge with Audrey Hartley retiring as a member of the Committee as she enters her ninth decade. Aside from her administrative work, Audrey also represented England in the Lady Milne Trophy in 2008. Outside of Essex she has been instrumental in setting up two new clubs in London, based at the Young Chelsea.

On the ECBA Committee, she served a number of roles including Tournament Secretary and Secretary. The latter of these meant taking over from Margaret Curtis who had been Secretary for 55 years. She put her own stamp on the role including amendments to the constitution and setting up the disciplinary committee.

She has been an EBU shareholder and an Essex delegate since 2011, always attending the meetings and never afraid to speak up on behalf of the County.

Whilst teaching mathematics at the King Edwards Grammar School, she set up the school Bridge club and is also a County Director, directing many county events over the years. She is the longest serving member at the Chelmsford Bridge Club.

The Essex Committee would like to see Audrey's contribution to Bridge honoured by the EBU and wish to propose her for the Dimmie Fleming award in recognition of all the selfless work that she has put in over many years for Bridge in our County.

David Muller, London [To be presented locally]

David Muller is one of the "quiet men" of English bridge. An accomplished player who, after early retirement has run his own bridge club in North London, he has steadfastly supported his county for approximately three decades, serving on the committee since 1994, with only one or two short breaks, and before then as the County Youth Officer. He has also served on the EBU Selection Committee.

His current portfolio includes not only taking and keeping committee meeting minutes, but also running the LMBA web site, including a recent overhaul. Furthermore, he is organiser for several events (and has been in the past) and directs and scores without fee at London's massively popular (but difficult to administer) Café Bridge events, after which large sums (in the thousands) are donated to charity.

He retains his interest as a tournament player, both in county and national events, and despite making his living from bridge, takes on the tuition of younger players without charge.

You would never know, as most London members don't, how much, over the years David Muller has put back into the game of bridge. Perhaps a Dimmie Fleming Award would go some way to redressing this balance, and bestow some well-deserved recognition on this modest, but hard-working man.

Terence Treeby, Devon [To be presented locally]

Terence has just retired from the Committee of the Devon Bridge Association having been a stalwart of the committee for the past fifteen years holding for all that time the position of secretary.

His efforts as the secretary have been exemplary, his influence and determination in reality held the committee together, giving past chairman and committee members what can only be described as an easy ride.

He was one of those people who would happily fill a gap if it were necessary. He took on the onerous task of organising the Devon Congress when no one else would come forward, and made it the success which it has been for the last five years. He has agreed to fill this capacity one more time for the 2018 Congress.

During his time as secretary he organised the venues, the dealing and directors for all County competitions even standing in at times to direct when the need arose.

He was a person who properly filled the role of secretary not confining himself to taking the minutes of committee meetings but acquainting himself with the County rules and regulations such that if anyone had a problem he could usually give them an answer straight away.

He performed his tasks with cheerfulness and with much patience for he was never known to lose his temper with anyone.

Mervyn Wotton, Sussex

Mervyn has served the Sussex County Contract Bridge Association for very many years in multiple roles, particularly:

Membership of the Management Committee for 13 years from 2005 to date

Membership of the Tournament Committee for 12 years from 2006 to date

Webmaster responsible for the development and maintenance of the county web site for more than ten years from 2007 to date

EBU Master Point Secretary for more than 10 years from 2007 to date

Membership of the editorial team responsible for the construction and publication of the county year book for four years since its inception in 2014

Mervyn has made an enormous contribution to the success of Sussex bridge over a period of time which is now exceeding 13 years. However, it would be wrong to measure his service simplistically just in terms of time. The personal input he has provided and reflected on the level of commitment, determination and sheer effort involved, often under testing circumstances is exceptional.

PREVIOUSLY AWARDED

The following awards had been presented at the Summer Meeting in Eastbourne in August. These were:

Young Pair of the Year: Michael Alishaw & Stephen Kennedy

Young Player of the Year: Ben Norton

Tom Bradley Award: Jessica & Anton Mauve

Alec Salisbury Award: Sarah Bell [nee O'Connor] (St Paul's Girls' School)

3. Minutes

The minutes of the 2016 AGM were formally accepted at the Shareholders' Meeting on 11th May 2017

Minutes of the Shareholders Meeting of 11th May 2017

3.1 Accuracy

There were no matters of accuracy. The minutes were approved.

3.2 Matters arising not otherwise on the agenda

3 – A representative from Cambs & Hunts referenced the minutes in which it was written “the EBU (has) a duty to fund participation in international events”. He queried whether this meant that another body would interject if funding was to be withdrawn from the international teams. JD explained that was not the case, and the minutes were not written with the intention to give that impression. He explained that rather it was the belief of the Board that the role of a national governing body should include enabling representative teams to compete in international events. He therefore agreed with the members observation that whilst funding international teams was desirable, there was no specific compulsion to do so, should budgets dictate that it was no longer possible. It was noted by JC, however, that it would be likely that expenditure in other areas would be trimmed in preference to the removal of all funding from the international teams.

4 – A representative from Surrey queried whether the changes to the Articles of Association made at previous meetings had been registered at Companies House. GR would check whether that had been done and would take any necessary action.

4. Resolutions

IP introduced the proposed changes to the Bye-Laws and Articles of Association, noting that AG would usually be the Board member dealing with such matters, however he was on holiday and therefore not able to attend the meeting.

4.1 Bye-Laws (Ordinary Resolution)

The changes to the Bye-Laws related to disciplinary rules, and IP noted that it the definition of 'away from the table' had now been expanded to address comments through social media. It was queried whether this example needed to be broader, however it was agreed that the inclusion of 'in any medium' made it sufficiently broad, and that 'social media' could be seen as only one example of an internet-based medium.

A representative from Oxfordshire proposed a change of wording to item 7.1. This change to the proposed amendments was approved.

A representative from Cambs & Hunts queried how these changes would fit with a policy reported in the minutes of the meeting of the Laws & Ethics Committee, that members who had served a punishment imposed by the state would not be punished a second time. IP explained that the policy outlined by the L&EC related to incidents unrelated to bridge, whereas these Bye-Laws would deal with bridge-related incidents where further action could be taken if appropriate.

A public vote was held, and the changes to the Bye-Laws were approved.

4.2 Articles of Association (Special Resolution)

The proposed changes to the Articles of Association would give the General Manager (GM) a voting position on Standing Committees. IP explained that this was intended to allow the GM to have a broader role in developing and implementing policy. It was the Board's intention the GM position would, over time, evolve in to a role more akin with the position of Chief Executive, and this would be an early step in that transition. JC added that, as the Board comprised only volunteers, he would welcome one of the key professional staff of the EBU having oversight on major decisions made by the Standing Committees, particularly in relation to financial matters, thus assisting the Board members in their roles.

At present the Board appointed AG to the Standing Committees, but JD explained that the Board would undertake not to appoint an additional Board member to Standing Committees in future, thereby maintaining the same number of non-elected members on the Committee. Some Shareholders expressed an opinion that if that were to be the case then there should be a formal resolution to that effect, rather than relying on a pledge by the current Board, thus ensuring it was not reversed by a future iteration of the Board.

There was concern expressed by several Shareholders that the role of the GM was already demanding, and that any involvement in the Standing Committees would take them away from addressing other key tasks. Others responded, however, that the resolution stated the GM 'may' vote, and not that they 'must'. They therefore believed that the GM should be trusted to prioritise their workload and only interject in matters debated by the Standing Committee when strictly necessary and/or time permitted.

Some Shareholders were of the opinion that whilst the resolution may be appropriate for the current GM, it may not be appropriate in future, and they were reluctant to give blanket approval to anyone serving in the position. Members of the Board responded that they would hope that the Shareholders would have confidence in their ability to appoint someone to the role of GM who could contribute appropriately to the Standing Committee, and that anyone who couldn't was unlikely to be employed in the position. This sentiment was reflected in the comments of some Shareholders. Reiterating previous points, it was noted that if the GM had no opinion on, for example, the composition of an international team, they did not have to contribute. The appointment of a GM in future who had detailed knowledge of the elite players was therefore not necessary – that the

current GM had that knowledge was a bonus. It was only intended that the GM would be involved on significant matters of policy, such as budgeting – on which it would be expected that any GM would be able to provide important input.

When asked for his opinion, GR commented that he was happy with whatever was considered to be best by the Board and Shareholders. JD added that the Chair of the Selection Committee was happy with the resolution on the proviso that the Board honour their intention to remove their appointment of AG to the committee, thereby maintaining the same level of Board involvement.

As a show of hands suggested that the 75% required to pass the resolution would not be forthcoming a formal vote was not taken, and the resolution was withdrawn.

8. EBED Report *(This item was moved earlier in the meeting to accommodate AP's early departure)*

JD invited AP, Chairman of English Bridge Education and Development (EBED), to address the meeting to give an update on the work of the charity in the three years it has been operational.

AP began by saying that he hoped that the Chief Executive of EBED would speak to the Shareholders at future AGMs, but as she was new to the role he was better placed to speak on this occasion.

He had provided a report to the Shareholders which provided the bulk of the information. It is attached to these minutes. **Appendix C.**

AP stated his belief that EBED had been a success, and that a lot of good work had been done, however there were some reservations. He added that he believed some errors or shortcomings were perhaps to be expected in a newly formed organisation. He gave his thanks to the bridge players, clubs, counties, and EBU Board for the generous support given throughout this period, noting that the support of the EBU for the work of the charity had been unwavering. He also gave his thanks to the staff and Trustees of EBED – past and present – for their contribution to EBED's work over the last three years.

He gave his thanks for the financial contribution which the EBU makes to EBED, though noted that this was only a portion of the costs of running the charity, and that EBED was doing well to generate its own income streams to support its work. He advised that EBED had slowly built up reserves, and was in a position to reinvest some of this, so Shareholders should not be surprised or concerned if EBED appeared to operate at a loss over the next few years.

AP outlined two broad aims for the charity – firstly to improve the aspects of the work it current does and the services it provides; secondly to expand the range of its work and the services on offer, though only if resources allowed. He asked the Shareholders to be aware that resources were limited, so the expectations from all stakeholders needed to be realistic. He went on, however, to refer the Shareholders to the appendix of his report, which outlined the minimum level of service which EBED would deliver. He told the Shareholders that if they felt EBED fell short of delivering this level of service then they would be within their rights to air their concerns.

He closed by noting that EBED will soon be looking for new volunteers, and he hoped that the Shareholders would consider whether they could give time to the charity, and also encourage others to put themselves forward.

5. Chairman's Annual Report

The annual report had been circulated to Shareholders. It is attached to these minutes. **Appendix A.**

A representative from Oxfordshire asked whether there should have been a consultation of the counties before the County News was removed from English Bridge magazine. JD replied that it was

a decision taken by the Editorial Board based on the survey of the membership which took place earlier in the year, and that this was a sufficient consultation on which to base the decision – he believed that a further consultation with the counties was not necessary. He was asked how the space which was created would be used. He replied that it would be a decision for the editor in each issue, but there would be efforts made to include more content aimed at less experienced players, and also that suitable activities at a local and regional level would be given prominence when possible. When asked why County News could not continue online, he replied that it was believed that as the counties were already doing a good job in providing all the information online on their own websites, the time and effort spent by the county contributors and EBU staff in creating the County News columns could be better spent elsewhere.

A representative from Sussex referenced declining membership numbers and asked for an update on the membership campaign which was taking place in Yorkshire. JD and RM replied that membership numbers were fairly static, and the number of sessions played, were not declining. It was, however, acknowledged that the number of members who were playing infrequently or not at all (represented as UM₀ and UM₁ in the figures which form part of the annual accounts – appendix B) was increasing. RM reported that the membership campaign in Yorkshire was progressing well. 80 new members had been recruited to the clubs which were part of the scheme, but it was too early to know whether this would be successful in generating 'long term' members for the clubs. Consideration would need to be given to the cost effectiveness of the scheme, and to how the methods used could be translated to other settings, so that it could be adopted in other areas. He added that he was very happy for any Shareholder to contact him to discuss the matter in more detail.

A representative from Middlesex asked whether it was appropriate to include UM₀ members (those who were members of an affiliated club, but played no sessions which were submitted for Universal Membership) in the membership figures, with particular reference to determining the number of Shareholders the county had, or how many teams it could enter in representative competitions. He was concerned that doing so disincentivised counties 'cleaning up' their databases. JD replied that he believed that all members should be included, and also that the Shareholders had previously wanted UM₀ members included, and to change the membership status of such players would require a fundamental change to the Articles of Association.

6. Directors' Report and Accounts for the year ending 31st March 2017

The published list of members by county as at 31st March 2017 is attached to these minutes - **Appendix B**

JC reported that the accounts for the year ending 31st March 2017 had finished ahead of budget. This was in part due to good control, but also due to the good fortune of the new computer system being delayed, thereby meaning there were no monthly costs paid in the latter part of the financial year.

JC was asked why the EBU's payment as a National Bridge Organisation had increased, and he explained that it was due to the change in exchange rates, rather than a significant change in the amounts charged.

JC commended the accounts to the Shareholders, and all were in favour of accepting them.

7. Treasurer's Report, year to date

JC reported that the accounts to date were ahead of budget, in part due to strong performance by the Bridge Warehouse. He thanked GS and the shop staff for their work which had led to this improvement. JC also reported that competition finances were improving. He expected to be a little ahead of budget at the end of the year.

He advised that the legal costs for the case with Sport England had been finalised, and these had been paid. A small amount would appear in the accounts for this financial year. In response to a question, JC replied that the amount paid by the EBU was roughly equally attributable to the EBU's costs and to Sport England's costs. It was not expected that there would be any unbudgeted costs to be included from the VAT case.

JD reported that he had suggested to the Portland Club that it was no longer appropriate that the EBU be expected to make a royalty payment to them from sales of books of the Laws of Duplicate Bridge. They had agreed, and this would therefore represent a significant saving in the current year (when sales of the new law book would be at their highest) and a small saving in future years.

A representative from Norfolk enquired as to whether interest was being earned on the EBU's positive bank balances, and whether the rates received were the best available. JC explained that the options were regularly reviewed, and at present it was considered not to be ideal to commit to saving options which required the money be untouched for long periods. He noted that such options may be pursued in future, but not until such time as the rates received were more competitive.

9. Appointment of Auditors for the year 2017/2018

It was agreed to re-appoint the auditors.

10. EBU Fees 2018/2019

The proposed fees had been circulated to the Shareholders. These are attached - **Appendix D**. At a previous meeting JC had mentioned that he hoped it would be possible to charge fees which included fractions of a penny, thereby allowing for increases which better reflected inflation rates and changing costs. He advised that this was not going to be possible, so the fees proposed were therefore changing by full pennies.

JC reminded the Shareholders that at the 2016 AGM he had been asked to give consideration to the affiliation fee, and whether it was disproportionately affecting smaller clubs. He had also considered the rebate which was given to clubs paying Universal Membership fees by Direct Debit. As Direct Debit was now the norm in the majority of instances for such payments, he proposed the removal of this rebate, thereby saving money and administrative effort. He added that he would expect that all clubs pay by Direct Debit – again reducing the administrative burden on the accounts department – except in instances where the club had specific reason why payment by Direct Debit was not possible (he cited the fact that some clubs have accounts where payment by Direct Debit is not provided as an option). In such instances alternative arrangements would be made with the club. The removal of this rebate would be accompanied by a reduction in the affiliation fee for clubs, and in so doing addressing the perceived disproportionate impact on smaller clubs.

JC explained to the Shareholders that a rebate was paid annually to members who played more than 150 sessions for which a UM fee was charged. He added that the majority of those receiving a rebate were getting less than £10 per year. As a measure to save money, and reduce the administrative burden on the staff, he advised that the Board was minded to discontinue this rebate from April 2018. The Shareholders responded favourably to this suggestion. A representative from Oxfordshire asked whether it could be phased out, rather than stopping immediately, but JC noted that this would leave the same administrative burden on the accounts department. Most Shareholders were in agreement that the decision to play extra sessions in the year was based purely on a desire to play more bridge, and was not affected by the fact that it was becoming marginally cheaper for the member to play. They therefore they did not believe that removing the rebate would affect how often these members played, and saw that it was a reasonable way to address the forecasted budget deficit. It was also noted by the Shareholders that the table money taken by the club, and the amount remitted to the EBU as UM on behalf of the member, did not change when members played more frequently, and yet the rebate went directly to the member – they believed this relationship

was “a little strange”. All Shareholders, with one exception, were therefore in favour of removing the rebate from April 2018, and the Board duly took note of this opinion.

JC outlined other areas in which he hoped that the forecasted budget deficit could be addressed so as to avoid needing to increase fees significantly in future. He added that he hoped it would also be possible to include more in the budget in future for work being done to increase the membership. The possible areas he highlighted included: trying to control staff costs – he advised that this had already begun as there not been like-for-like replacements when GR took the position as GM; trying to reduce the number of people who received a printed copy English Bridge, in part by encouraging more people to read the online version; trying to restrict spending on international activities; trying to continue the recent increase in revenue from The Bridge Warehouse.

The proposed Universal Membership fees for 2018/19 were put forward to the Shareholders, and were unanimously approved.

11. Election of Directors

Four nominations had been received for three positions. Jeremy Dhondy (60 votes), Ian Payn (52 votes) and Rob Lawy (42 votes) were re-elected to the board. Paul Roberts (39 votes) was not elected.

11.1 Election of Chairman

Jeremy Dhondy was re-elected uncontested.

11.2 Election of Vice-Chairman

Ian Payn was re-elected uncontested.

12. Appointment of Company Secretary

Gordon Rainsford was re-appointed as Company Secretary.

13. Election of members to the Laws & Ethics Committee

There were four nominees for four positions. Elections were held to determine the length of term of the candidates.

Three year term: David Burn - 55 votes; Heather Dhondy - 54

Two year term: Martin Pool - 51

One year term: Alan Wilson - 38

14. Election of members to the Selection Committee

There were four nominees for four positions. Elections were held to determine the length of term of the candidates.

Three year term: Gillian Fawcett - 55 votes; David Bakhshi - 54; Jeremy Willans - 40

Two year term: Paul Barden – 29

15. Minutes of the meetings of the Board of Directors

15.1 28th June 2017

The meeting considered the minutes. There were no questions.

15.2 13th September 2017

The meeting considered the minutes. There were no questions.

16. Minutes of the meetings of the Laws & Ethics Committee

16.1 31st May 2017

It was noted that the minutes on the website were still showing as draft despite having been approved at the October meeting. It was also noted that they were slow to be produced and circulated – GR advised that he was addressing both points.

The meeting considered the minutes. There were no questions.

16.2 11th October 2016

The meeting considered the minutes. There were no questions.

17. Minutes of the meetings of the Selection Committee

17.1 14th June 2016

The meeting considered the minutes. There were no questions.

18. Dates for Shareholders' meetings for 2018

Thursday 16th May

Shareholders' Meeting

Wednesday 28th November

Annual General Meeting

All meetings would start at 1pm, and will be held in the Tudor Room, Imperial Hotel, London.

19. Any Other Notified Business

- Surrey had asked for an update relating to the forthcoming introduction of the General Data Protection Regulation. GR advised that it was coming into effect in May, and that the EBU staff were hoping to have information for clubs and counties ready in January, giving them time to work through putting in place any measures as required. He explained that counties were able to use the website of the Information Commissioner's Office to self-assess whether they needed to register as Data Controllers. It was his belief that most counties may not need to do so, but he advised that all counties, including those registered as charities, should judge for themselves. He added that the EBU would be providing information for all counties, whether they were Data Controllers or not.
- Northamptonshire asked how the Board planned to develop the next 5 Year Plan, and what involvement there would be from the counties in its preparation. JD advised that it would be discussed at the next Board Meeting in January and this would provide a 'road map' for its production.
- Northamptonshire asked how the Board would balance the services provided in future, to reflect the amount of revenue which was being received from 'ordinary members'. JD responded that efforts were being made to get more people playing in clubs. He noted that the introduction of Blue Points, and Really Easy Events, had been done with the intention of providing additional competitive events for players at that level, and whilst these events had enjoyed some success there was an ongoing appraisal of whether more, or different, competitions should be provided to try to increase participation levels.

JC asked the Shareholders to be aware that EBU competitions make a profit. Whilst it was less than in the past, those participating in those events were still making a contribution to

the finances of the EBU. He believed that there was a misconception that such events, and 'competition players', were being supported by the 'ordinary member' – that is not the case.

A representative from Gloucestershire observed that the members who were arguably not contributing sufficiently to the EBU's finances were those who played only in competitions at a County level. Those playing in clubs, and those who play in national events, were making sufficient contributions, but the pricing structure possibly meant those playing only in County events were not. JC expressed sympathy with that observation.

- Gloucestershire asked for an overview of the data for the online magazine. PS replied that it averages just over 2,500 visits per issue. Once the magazine has been opened it can be downloaded at any time to read offline – no data can be tracked for which pages those members are reading offline, nor is it known at what point when moving through the magazine they opted to download it. The data that is recorded for those viewing the magazine online shows that there is a constant fall in page visits across the magazine with the articles in the first part of the magazine averaging 1,000-1,500 visits per page, the middle pages average 800-1,000 visits per page, and the later parts of the magazine average 500-700 visits per page. The figures were almost irrespective of whether the articles are educational, or match reports, or stories, etc, and where the different authors are positioned – there is no author which consistently attracts a higher readership than others. The articles which are 'online only' receive about 150-200 more visits per page than the pages which represent the end of the printed copy – i.e. around 600-800 visits.
- Middlesex made an observation about a further one day green pointed event for counties could be permitted. JD replied that as it was a general observation, rather than a specific question, they should first contact the Tournament Panel to express their views.

Additional Item

The draw took place for the prize winners in the Simultaneous Pairs competitions. Every pair who had won a heat of an EBU or EBED Simultaneous Pairs and every club who had run a heat were entered into the draw. The leading prize winners were:

Pairs winners		
1st Prize - £1000 per pair	Cliff Short & Anne Short	Hemel Hempstead BC
2nd Prize - £500 per pair	Frances Moor & Peter Edwards	Deben BC
3rd Prize - £200 per pair	Jim Ramadan & Charles Broughton-Pipkin	Petersfield BC
Club winners		
1st Prize - £1000	York Bridge Club	Yorkshire
2nd Prize - £500	Lines Bridge Club	Cambs & Hunts
3rd Prize - £200	Stamford Bridge Club	Northamptonshire

All prize winners including runners up are listed on the website www.ebu.co.uk/node/2948

Closing the meeting, the Chairman thanked Shareholders for their attendance. The meeting closed at 3.50pm.

**Date of the Next Meeting is 1.00pm Wednesday 16th May 2018
at the Imperial Hotel , London**



ANNUAL REPORT OF THE ENGLISH BRIDGE UNION

1 September 2016 - 31 August 2017

The English Bridge Union is the governing body for duplicate bridge in England, representing communities of bridge players at club, county and national level. It is funded by members for members and provides the infrastructure and development of the game in England. Monies are re-invested into our national game.

This annual report provides an insight in to the work that we do to support our clubs, counties and members and will be of interest to those individuals and organisations that, in turn, provide us with support to develop the game.

I would like to thank all of the volunteers that make up our national team - the Directors of the Board and all the members of its committees and the dedicated team of staff under our recently retired General Manager, Barry Capal, at Aylesbury and the new General Manager, Gordon Rainsford. A special thanks is due to Barry for over a decade of leadership and hard work at Aylesbury. We've made some changes to the governance of the EBU with the standing Tournament committee replaced by a smaller Panel and the Laws & Ethics committee having a new prosecution panel made up of volunteers to help with that small number of disciplinary cases where formal action is required.

In June 2017 the Advocate General in the European Court said he was minded to accept our submission relating to VAT on competition entry fees. This is not binding on the judges who are expected to rule definitively in the latter part of this year. We continue to be grateful to David Ewart, our honorary Counsel, for his great assistance in continuing to representing us on a pro bono basis. We have concluded our legal involvement in Sport England's refusal to recognise us as a sport. We were not successful.

The Board has been reviewing our overall membership figures along with a changing and slowly aging demographic. They decided to take action to tackle the challenge this poses for the EBU along with most traditional sporting and leisure activities.

In partnership with the Yorkshire Contract Bridge Association a pilot Membership Campaign is underway to establish the most effective techniques for encouraging the take up or return to playing Bridge. This is beginning to show results with clubs responding positively to the campaign. Once we have learned from the successes as well as the failures of this consideration will be given to extending the scheme to other parts of the country. The European Bridge League awarded us a grant which has helped with the cost of this pilot.

The statutory annual report and accounts will be able to be viewed on our website www.ebu.co.uk shortly after the EBU's Annual General Meeting on 22nd November 2017.

The Board

The Board is made up of eight directors elected by the shareholders, who are the representatives of our counties, and up to two appointed by the Board, renewable annually. The directors receive no remuneration for the work they undertake. They have legal and financial responsibilities as set out in the Companies Act 2006.

Each director takes responsibility for one or more aspects of the EBU's business. This responsibility includes budgetary control, delivering strategic objectives and regular reporting on the work of the department and committee associated with it. For the year 2016-17 the responsibilities were as follows:

Chairman: Jeremy Dhondy

Vice-Chairman: Ian Payn

Treasurer: Jerry Cope

Board director responsible for:

Tournaments: Ian Payn

Facilitating the strategic plan: Jerry Cope

Staff development: Jerry Cope

Education: Rob Lawy

County Working Group: Darren Evetts & from May Graham Smith

Legal matters: Anthony Golding

Magazine & Editorial Board: Jeremy Dhondy

Tournament Directors Development: Heather Dhondy

Bridge Great Britain: Heather Dhondy

European and World duplicate bridge affairs: Jeremy Dhondy

Awards: Ron Millet

All Party Parliamentary Group: Ron Millet

VAT Case: Ian Payn

Bridge Warehouse: Graham Smith

Sponsorship & Fundraising: Darren Evetts

English Bridge Education and Development

Our associated charity English Bridge Education and Development (EBED) receives funds from the English Bridge Union to help it operate. It runs all the education services that the EBU used to run including the English Bridge Teaching Association (EBTA). Fast Track Bridge, a new course to teach people to play in a shorter time has been completed and launched. Early signs are encouraging. The Junior Training weekend returned, after an absence of a year and two regional events for young players in Sussex and Gloucestershire have also run, organised by local volunteers. The Teachers' Convention re-appeared after a number of years' absence and was sold out.

Finance

2016/7 saw an out-turn better than budget but nonetheless a loss of some £25k, as Competitions income and margin continued to decline, whilst tight control of other expenditure areas kept the loss down. The Board and Shareholders have agreed that over a four year cycle, reflecting the International calendar, we should aim for a small profit, excluding any exceptional investments, which we should fund from reserves, which remain adequate for this purpose. This is an appropriate and prudent strategy for a non-profit-making members organisation, where the long-term sustainability of the EBU is the key financial objective.

Unfortunately current projections suggest continuing deficits totalling £130k over 4 years which is incompatible with this financial strategy. Hence we are looking at careful cost-efficiencies, whilst continuing to provide a high quality service to members. Particular areas that will need to contribute to the cost reduction target are staffing, support to a few International events, magazine and diary distribution, and some administrative costs. At the same time we will continue to try to boost, or in the case of Competitions stabilise, income in real terms.

The 2017/8 financial year has started reasonably, ahead of budget, albeit still loss-making, and we expect that activities being put in place will continue this trend of improving underlying performance.'

Clubs and Club Services

Ten new and established clubs affiliated during the period September 2016 to August 2017 but the total number of affiliated clubs reduced slightly from 615 to 613. Twelve clubs closed or disaffiliated in the period mainly due to falling numbers/ill-health of the main club organiser. The newly affiliating clubs were mainly starter clubs arising from teaching groups and small clubs hoping to raise their profile and grow as a result of affiliation. Poulton was the only large club that re-affiliated during the period – their committee wanted the club to be affiliated to the national body.

The Club Liaison Officer (CLO), Bev Purvis, has visited many affiliated clubs across the country and has concentrated both on successful clubs (to get examples of best practice) and those with falling membership (to offer assistance in boosting numbers). It has proved difficult to arrange meetings with non-affiliated clubs but the CLO has visited two such clubs in the year and engaged with more by telephone. Another visit to a non-affiliated club is planned for October.

The CLO has found that non-affiliated clubs tend to equate “affiliated” with being “unfriendly” – it is telling that two of the newly affiliated clubs include “friendly” in their name. The CLO has worked on ways of engaging with social bridge players as a way of boosting club membership and is working on a new section of the Club Management Handbook for Café Bridge. One issue that has been raised quite a lot is that of NGS exemption for host players and mentors. The concerns raised by clubs whose success has been much helped by their teaching programme were instrumental in granting a reprieve of the system allowing some NGS exemptions in clearly-defined situations.

The All Party Parliamentary Group for Bridge (APPG)

The group continues to be chaired by Bob Blackman MP, with Baroness Henig acting as the primary point of contact for the EBU and the coordinator of the majority of the group's events. The group holds two meetings each year for which the EBU provides secretarial support; both the EBU and EBED are represented at the meetings.

The group has been interested in, and supportive of, the efforts to have Bridge recognised as a sport by Sport England, and also in the case with HMRC, to allow the EBU to be exempt from charging VAT. In support of this they have spoken privately with some of the relevant people within government. However they have found it difficult to discuss the topic in a more formal context although Bob Blackman MP continues to raise the issue in the House of Commons. Members of the APPG for Chess have taken a similar approach and are slowly gaining the ear of key policy makers.

Both Tim Farron, the leader of the Liberal Democrats at the time, and Michael Fallon, Secretary of State for Defence, have voiced their support for no VAT to be charged on Bridge entry fees. Michael Fallon made this point when speaking during one of the two visits in the last twelve months made by groups of young players to the House of Lords. As MP for Sevenoaks he attended the event when a team of school students from west Kent, some of whom live in his constituency, played a match against a team of Bridge playing Lords. The visit was arranged in part by Anton and Jessica Mauve who were the recipients of the 2017 Tom Bradley Award. The second visit was by a group of children who had learned through, and play with, the Bridge4Schools programme in Berks, Bucks & Oxon. This was organised by Joan Bennett.

Visits have been made to schools by their lordships to promote Bridge including one by Lord Skelmersdale who visited an event in Cheltenham late last year. We hope that these kinds of support will continue so that interest in Bridge continues to develop.

International Performances

England's representation in international duplicate bridge competitions is an important part of the EBU's activities as a national bridge organisation albeit, like all expenditure, we need to keep a close eye on overall costs. Successes at international level help to raise public awareness of English bridge and to attract new players to the game. Our participation in international events provides us with an international profile in the bridge world and it also brings more influence within the European Bridge League (EBL) and the World Bridge Federation (WBF).

The Selection Committee, made up of seven elected and two ex officio members and chaired by Gillian Fawcett, is responsible for selecting the teams to represent us internationally. It has been a good year for England at international level, with two bronze medals at the Junior Europeans and wins in four of the five Home Internationals:

- Open

The England Open team reached the quarter final of the World Bridge Games (previously the Olympiad). Unfortunately, the England Open team failed to retain the Camrose Home Internationals title, coming 2nd to Ireland.

- Women

This was a very successful year for the Women's team. They reached the quarter finals of the World Bridge Games last September, and a good performance in the Home International saw them retake the Lady Milne trophy.

- Seniors

The senior team retained the Senior Camrose (Teltscher Trophy) title.

- Juniors

The Junior team won the Junior Camrose for the fifth time in a row, and our U21 team won the Peggy Bayer Trophy. Excellent performances in the Junior European Championships saw the U26 women's team and the U21 team win bronze medals, and all four teams (U26, U26 women, U21 and U16) qualified for the World Championships in China in 2018. England was the only country to achieve this feat.

- Mixed

For the first time, a mixed team category was introduced to the World Bridge Games. The England team qualified for the Knockout stages but unfortunately did not progress further.

Junior squads

The Selection Committee is also responsible for the junior squads which provide training for young players. Through the hard work of squad leaders that have included Alan Shillitoe, Michael Byrne, Sarah O'Connor, Mike Bell and Sally Brock, supported by a number of top players who provide coaching and mentoring, the junior squad system continues to bring young players into the game and to prepare successive generations of players for national and international competition. We are in the process of appointing new squad leaders for the U26 and U16 squads, and are confident that they will continue to produce international standard young players and we thank the two retiring squad leaders for their efforts.

The squad system has this year produced one of the most successful ever overall performances at the Junior European Championships. All four squads are now well established, and are starting their preparation for the World Championships in China next year.

Regulation

The Laws and Ethics Committee (L&E), made up of seven elected individual members of the EBU under the chairmanship of Tim Rees, is responsible for the regulation of the game in England.

Updated regulations were published in 2013, including a White Book (primarily information and guidance for Tournament Directors) and a Blue Book (primarily information for players). Both publications are available electronically, free, from the website and are updated annually. Only minor amendments have been made each August. The main change this year was to the regulation regarding strong artificial openings, as that regulation had been causing problems to members.

A new set of Laws came into force in August 2017. The changes are of a relatively minor nature, with the main change being a new Law 23 on Comparable Calls, which affects rulings following insufficient bids and calls out of turn. The EBU has provided training to TDs on the effects of the changes to the Laws.

The L&E hears cases of both a technical and disciplinary nature. There have been few technical cases, with no appeals to the National Authority in the past year. The level of appeals at tournaments has also reduced, and there have been no instances of appeals without merit during the year. Appeals from tournaments are reviewed by the L&E so that they can offer advice and ensure the consistency of decisions. An annual booklet of the major decisions is published and is available electronically from the EBU website. The booklet for 2015 is currently being worked on. Appeals are reviewed and comments published in the minutes of the L&E meetings.

Disciplinary cases continue with relatively low frequency. Most of the issues considered by the L&E are concerned with complaints of bad behaviour by players and/or committee members. The L&E encourages these issues to be dealt with at a local level. The L&E provides advice on model disciplinary regulations for clubs, counties and jointly run events. The L&E has also produced a set of model regulations for League Competitions.

One change to the disciplinary process during the last year is the setting up of a separate Prosecution Panel to investigate and prosecute cases, leaving the L&E to focus more on the technical aspects of the game.

There is a panel of referees appointed by the L&E who hear appeals at tournaments and act as telephone referees in knock out events, on a voluntary basis. They are also called upon from time to time to give rulings from club and county events.

Tournaments and Competitions

Having introduced a number of changes to the competitions calendar in the last few years, things have remained more constant this year, though overall numbers do continue to decline, not only in England but in many other countries too. Such changes as do take place are largely driven by the availability of venues, since hotels are increasingly reluctant to contract ahead for events, with the effect that we often have to move venues against our wishes. Our overseas congresses continue to be very popular and successful, and are still run primarily by Peter Jordan in his retirement.

One unforeseen change approaching is that the Winter Garden in Eastbourne, to where we had fairly successfully re-located the Summer Meeting in 2016, is going to be closed for about eighteen months, so this year we announced a one-off Festival of Bridge for 2018,

with the main weekend events being held in London and some midweek events at various locations around the country. We expect to return to a transformed venue in Eastbourne in 2019.

We have also announced another change for 2018 when we introduce a Seniors Championship Pairs to our popular Scarborough Congress, along with a seniors prize for the existing multiple teams event. We hope this will redress the southern bias of seniors' events to some extent.

In September this year we entered into an arrangement with Funbridge, a French company, for them to run "robot" games on our behalf each Saturday and Sunday, issuing modest amounts of master points. At this early stage they appear to be popular and successful, with the games in the first month each averaging more than 80 players. A monthly ladder is also planned based on these results.

Tournament Directors Development Group

This subcommittee of the Board deals with the development and management of the EBU's active tournament directors. It is chaired by Board Director, Heather Dhondy. During the period Mike Amos decided to retire from the TD panel. Mike has been one of the most senior of our directors for many years, providing the tournament world with high quality TD work and we were sorry to see him go. We wish him well in the future. We welcomed new members Christine Duckworth and Robin Barker to the group to replace Pat Davies and Gordon Rainsford who decided to step down. We are grateful to them both for their hard work over the years. Congratulations go to Jonathan Lillycrop for his promotion to Senior Congress Director.

The County Working Group

A bit like the curate's egg, the County Working Groups (CWG) has been good in parts. The good parts being the two most active CWG's in the North and Midlands.

Leading up to the Chairman's Meeting on 5th July 2017, the EBU sent out a survey to all counties for their views on issues and challenges facing clubs and counties. On the day itself, informal discussion groups debated these issues in more depth and then prioritised them.

At the end of the meeting, a Task Team consisting predominantly of the Midlands and North County Working Groups (RCWG) was empowered to address the challenges and to submit recommendations to the EBU Board for action. For continuity, the CWG Task Team was to be headed by EBU Board member, Graham Smith, who had also devised and facilitated the Chairman's Meeting.

Essentially, five major themes emerged:

- ② 'Them and Us' mentality
- ② Management and Control
- ② Recruitment and Development Priorities for Clubs/Counties
- ② Benefits of Affiliation- Clubs
- ② Benefits of EBU-Members

At the time of this report, the CWG Task Team has met and drafted a report with recommendations and they will be discussing their recommendations with both the Northern and Midlands CWG for their input.

A final report addressing all five major themes is scheduled for submission to the EBU Board before the end of the 2017 calendar year. With a combination of practical experience and a new perspective, we aim to broaden and deepen the success of the CWG initiative across all of the English counties.

English Bridge

The Editorial Board for English Bridge is a subcommittee of the Board chaired by EBU Board Chairman Jeremy Dhondy. We undertook a survey to find out the opinions of readers. One result was a strong desire for the printed magazine to continue. As a result of the survey the magazine has undergone some minor changes. The recent move of County News online marks the fact that more readers consult their own county websites for news and also look online at the EBU site.

Library and Archive

The EBU Library has been updated during the year. We are grateful for donations, one of which was from Bradford Bridge Club with some copies of books from the libraries of Harold Franklin, an ex-Chief Tournament director and also Eric Milnes, a former editor of Bridge Magazine. We also received magazines and press cuttings from the estate of the late Patrick Jourdain. The archive of past results and other aspects of the EBU's history presented electronically has been further developed in the last year. One of our members, Richard Fleet, has written a book on the early years of the History of Bridge in England and it is available both from the EBU Warehouse and also as a pdf file on the website.

EBU Headquarters at Aylesbury

We have a full time staff equivalent of around sixteen, serving over 54000 members through the provision of tournaments, regulation, international support, club and membership support services including the Bridge Warehouse providing bridge books and supplies, and communications including Club Management Focus to affiliated clubs, and Events Focus to 'tournament players'. All of these services are supported by technology including our new membership software.

We also provide assistance to the charity English Bridge Education and Development, with whom we share offices and some administrative systems. EBED has a new Chief Executive in the person of Donna Wright, as well as three other staff.

Some further highlights

New Laws

The WBF issued their regular ten-yearly update of the Laws of Duplicate Bridge, which involved us in quite a lot of preparation for their introduction here in England, both in terms of arranging printing and planning training for our EBU panel TDs so that they could further disseminate the information via regional courses, some of which were organised by EBED, to club and county directors across the country.

Their introduction has been relatively smooth, being introduced at the Summer Meeting, timed to coincide with our annual update of the White Book and Blue Book, and their publication has provided the Bridge Warehouse with some welcome additional income.

Media coverage

The main focus of press attention this year has concerned the preliminary ruling in our European Court VAT case, when a non-binding recommendation was issued that Bridge should be considered a sport for VAT purposes. If confirmed this will have important consequences for the EBU.

A press release was sent to the national media's 'press desks', as well as directly to journalists who had covered various aspects of our case in the past. Aspects of this release were used by the majority of the national media, though some smaller outlets used a release from the Associated Press written by one of their correspondents before we had received the court documents. The coverage was mostly neutral to positive.

Peter Stockdale gave an additional interview to the Daily Telegraph, who used some of the information, produced something for the weekend edition of "The i", and spoke to eight local radio stations – all of which were generally positive. There were additional pieces on BBC radio stations, including Radio 4s 'Law in Action', and The World at One.

The response from the membership has been overwhelmingly positive. Our media monitoring service estimates the value of the coverage in the printed media to be £7.3m – though we may choose to take that with a pinch of salt. They monitored printed coverage in 364 outlets in the UK, and in just over 300 worldwide. This does not include online reporting.

IT and Data matters

The replacement for our membership database software took very much longer to introduce than expected and there were a number of unforeseen problems.

However most of those were behind the scenes, affecting our staff more than our members, and are now all close to being resolved.

Planning is also underway for a replacement to the existing online shop, which we hope will help efficiency and improve the shopping experience for our members.

Planning is under way for the introduction of the new General Data Protection Regulation in May 2018, and as well as tightening up our own procedures, we aim to provide clubs and counties with support and information to help them deal with it themselves.

Staff

Barry Capal retired in July after more than 11 years as General Manager. His place has been taken by Gordon Rainsford, whose former roles as Competitions Manager and Chief Tournament Director have been taken by Robin Barker, working from home 2.5 days a week as Deputy Chief Tournament Director, with some additional re-allocation of responsibilities within the competitions department.

Peter Jordan retired as Competitions Administrator, which he had been for more than 10 years, although he will still be involved in the running of our overseas congresses and Really Easy weekends. His place has been taken by Nick Doe, who had earlier worked at the EBU from 1998 to 2006.

Julia Thomas, our Competitions Assistant, left us when she moved from the area at the start of 2017 and her place has been taken by Leszek Lubaszewski.

John Pain, who had been Laws & Ethics Secretary retired in mid-September 2016.

Megan Kirk's one year apprenticeship ended in October 2016.

General Meetings and Shareholdings

The EBU is a company limited by shares. Our shareholders do not get any financial remuneration, their shareholdings and voting rights are based on the number of members their county has. There are two shareholder meetings a year, one of which is an annual general meeting. This report will be presented to the shareholders for discussion at the Annual General Meeting on 22nd November 2017.

For full details of our constitution and structure please see the EBU's Articles and Bye Laws available on the EBU's website www.ebu.co.uk.

Jeremy Dhondy

Chairman

For and on behalf of the Board of the English Bridge Union

Staff members and national volunteers 1 September 2016 – 31 August 2017

Details of the directors, committee members and staff can be found at <http://www.ebu.co.uk/biographies/ebu>. We are also grateful for the assistance of:

Honorary Counsel

David Ewart QC

Pro Bono Advisor

Stephen Barnfield

Disciplinary Panel (this group hears and decides on cases that are prosecuted by the Laws & Ethics Committee)

Norman Inniss, Joy Mayall, Kath Nelson, William Nicolle, Alan Oddie, Jackie Pye, Paul Roberts, Ed Scerri, Paddy Seligman, Geoff Smith, Jeff Smith, John Williams.

Prosecution Panel (this new group will conduct prosecutions on behalf of the EBU)

David Bakhshi, Heather Bakhshi, Simon Cocheme, Dick Davey, Ron Davis, Tony Forrester, Mike Huggins, Jane Jensen, Fiona Littlewood, Clive Owen, Martin Pool (Chairman), Shirley Pritchard, Bryan Willis

Awards Panel (this group scrutinises applications from counties for the Dimmie Fleming Award and makes recommendations to the EBU Board)

Margaret Curtis, Philip Mason, Jeff Morris

NUMBER OF MEMBERS BY COUNTY AS AT 31ST MARCH 2017

NB The numbers below include anyone designated as a member on the EBU database as at 31st March 2017.

	31 March 2017									31 March 2016								
County	UM0	UM1	UM2	Direct	Juniors	Bridge for All	Total	Clubs		UM0	UM1	UM2	Direct	Juniors	Bridge for All	Total	Clubs	
Avon	103	85	602	13	3	3	809	5		141	127	586	16	3	0	873	5	
Bedfordshire	19	46	251	19	0	0	335	5		32	43	282	19	1	0	377	5	
Berks & Bucks	829	530	1884	51	42	26	3362	35		758	521	1894	54	44	57	3328	35	
Cambs & Hunts	121	127	497	8	69	2	824	13		126	126	510	11	56	12	841	15	
Channel Islands	115	70	181	4	4	1	375	7		113	58	187	5	1	5	369	7	
Cornwall	93	67	417	5	1	2	585	13		84	82	414	5	3	20	608	13	
Cumbria	75	59	330	10	11	9	494	5		80	57	372	10	0	5	524	5	
Derbyshire	120	138	613	5	5	8	889	14		118	133	572	5	4	10	842	14	
Devon	176	227	984	20	2	25	1434	23		155	205	1027	23	3	14	1427	23	
Dorset	71	91	363	20	0	8	553	6		81	95	387	21	0	11	595	6	
Essex	466	254	1276	30	2	55	2083	27		373	278	1293	33	1	83	2061	27	
Gloucestershire	147	148	592	17	5	10	919	13		165	129	599	19	4	16	932	13	
Hants & Isle of Wight	168	282	1083	44	1	24	1602	22		170	246	1058	48	2	83	1607	25	
Herefordshire	84	55	327	7	0	0	473	9		102	59	338	6	0	0	505	10	
Hertfordshire	253	305	1327	49	8	143	2085	22		249	321	1361	54	9	124	2118	22	
Isle of Man	4	14	72	5	0	0	95	2		3	21	71	6	0	0	101	2	
Kent	413	394	1760	39	21	76	2703	32		396	378	1773	39	6	58	2650	32	
Lancashire	410	204	1325	49	1	31	2020	10		165	234	1352	50	1	43	1845	10	
Leicestershire	133	108	608	26	3	33	911	12		138	111	610	26	4	11	900	12	
Lincolnshire	167	103	512	10	4	1	797	12		153	87	528	9	4	1	782	12	
London	440	360	668	124	38	26	1656	13		450	359	679	139	44	18	1689	13	
Manchester	221	249	812	53	32	32	1399	9		224	267	807	66	39	60	1463	9	
Merseyside & Cheshire	178	142	711	24	1	9	1065	8		168	147	692	24	7	29	1067	8	
Middlesex	284	207	522	105	19	52	1189	10		265	233	762	109	20	36	1425	12	
Norfolk	88	127	735	12	3	30	995	22		74	138	749	12	1	75	1049	22	
Northants	215	182	802	6	1	0	1206	11		184	197	785	4	1	0	1171	11	
North East	250	176	1052	10	5	26	1519	21		248	214	1042	10	5	36	1555	22	
Nottinghamshire	89	96	520	13	5	4	727	10		80	100	521	18	3	5	727	10	
Oxfordshire	277	259	1003	23	137	71	1770	19		201	201	987	18	125	66	1598	20	
Somerset	75	117	601	24	0	17	834	15		57	94	586	24	1	19	781	15	
Staffordshire/Shropshire	44	136	695	33	2	1	911	13		52	180	683	35	1	1	952	13	
Suffolk	104	209	695	13	1	56	1078	20		117	173	711	12	3	47	1063	20	
Surrey	903	834	3223	98	4	115	5177	48		906	912	3163	108	3	105	5197	48	
Sussex	435	447	2003	23	27	59	2994	30		352	409	2048	23	17	74	2923	30	
Warwickshire	466	334	1710	16	7	29	2562	13		404	320	1700	17	5	38	2484	13	
Westmorland	19	27	142	3	0	2	193	2		21	24	143	3	0	7	198	2	
Wiltshire	101	141	669	16	5	95	1027	15		156	106	630	17	3	59	971	15	
Worcestershire	45	99	482	18	8	30	682	13		46	89	515	18	0	60	728	14	
Yorkshire	519	534	2541	23	16	91	3724	34		469	494	2598	25	26	83	3695	34	
Non County Members*	19	21	44	399	40	0	523	1		56	19	33	418	32	0	558	1	
	8739	8004	34634	1467	533	1202	54579	614		8132	7987	35048	1559	482	1371	54579	625	
Affiliated Clubs							614									625		

UM0 denotes members who have not played any club sessions in the financial year.

UM1 denotes members who have played at least 1 but fewer than 12 club sessions in the financial year.

UM2 denotes members who have played 12 or more club sessions in the financial year.

* these include direct overseas members and members who have expressed a desire not to be affiliated to a county. The club is Bridge Club Live.



1

EBED – some Q&A's

2

Why was EBED established?

- To provide focus and priority for bridge education and development in England.
- To grow/increase
 - Educational material available
 - Teachers and teaching
 - Number of people being taught bridge
 - Support to teachers working with Young People
 - TD training
- To promote the health and social benefits of playing bridge
- To identify other means of developing bridge
- To take advantage of the financial and reputational benefits of charity status

How was EBED formed?

- By taking the activities and funding from the EBU's Education Dept at the end of FY 13/14 and putting them into a charitable incorporated organisation – EBED.
- The EBU, YET and BBB provided some start-up funding
- By then developing all the policies, procedures and processes necessary to operate as an independent charity – a significant investment of time and money

4 - What is EBED's relationship to the EBU?

- EBED is a CIO. An independent charity completely separate legally and financially from the EBU
- EBED has no members it provides services to the general public, irrespective of EBU membership
- EBU supports EBED financially through an annual donation.
- EBU relies on EBED to deliver the baseline education service
- The two organisations are close working and mutually supporting partners
- EBED generates 75% of its income from trading and re-invests all surplus back into the charity

Has EBED 'grown' Education?

- In summary YES:
 - Turnover (excluding Donations & Sims) up from £106K in 2013/14 to £160K in 2017/18 – an increase of 50%
 - Major re-write and update of BfA Books 1 & 2
 - Invested over £40K in developing an accelerated learning programme – Fast Track Bridge
 - Helped fund research programmes at Imperial College and Stirling University into the health & social benefits of playing bridge
 - Established a Youth Advisory Group (YAG) to help volunteers around the country and allocated £10K annually to the YAG for that purpose

What does EBU donate to EBED?

- EBU makes an annual donation to EBED
- EBED pays EBU for the services it receives from the EBU
- The 2016/17 Cash Flows were

2016-17 EBU/EBED CASH FLOWS	<u>£K</u>
Donation from EBU	75.6
EBED payment to EBU for Office Services	(21.9)
EBED payment to EBU for Shared Staff	(18.0)
Net Cash Flow - EBU to EBED	35.7

Has it been plain sailing?

- In summary NO:
 - Setting up an independent CIO was difficult
 - People still think EBED is part of the EBU
 - Having no charity “head” has caused problems
 - Sorting out arm’s length trading with EBU has taken time
 - We have struggled to maintain stable staffing
 - We have struggled with data about teachers & teaching
 - We have suffered quality problems with some of our courses and events
 - The bridge public had, and still has, unrealistic expectations of what EBED is required to deliver (see Appendix)
 - We need to improve communications

Why appoint a CEO?

- There was nobody managing the charity day-to-day and that resulted in:
 - Poor governance
 - Serious operational problems
 - Lack of accountability
 - Trustees too involved with operational issues
- The trustees judged this to be unsustainable and to be holding back the charity
- CEO sounds a bit grandiose but it is the standard title for the head of a charity, however small.

What does the future hold?

- Improved quality of services
- Better communications
- An improved Teacher's Association
- More direct teaching of students
- Investment in online education
- Helping recruit more volunteers and providing more help to volunteers around the country
- New trustees

In summary - EBED

- Is a small charity (currently about 3.5 FTE) and has to carefully prioritise where it focusses its resources
- Has in only 3 years achieved a lot but has experienced problems and is still very much a work in progress
- Will over the next 3 or 4 years aim to
 - Improve its Communications
 - Improve its services – particularly EBTA
 - Build a training business based on Bridge for All



Appendix EBED Service Definition at September 2017

At September 2017, EBED is able to offer the following services to organisations and individuals whether or not they are members of the EBU.

1. The provision of books and publications for beginners and improvers based on the Bridge for All syllabus.
2. An annual schedule of teacher training courses and tournament director training courses.
3. Advice on bridge education matters
4. Advice and material for teachers going into schools to teach bridge and mini-bridge
5. Attendance at regional events and club visits in connection with Youth matters where the YAG consider the public benefit justifies the cost
6. A programme of annual events for juniors
7. A structured award scheme for juniors learning bridge
8. Small grants for individuals and organisations who cannot take part in bridge education, because of financial hardship
9. A national association for bridge teachers (EBTA) which offers members:
 - A significant discount on educational bridge books
 - Access to extensive material to assist with teaching
 - Advice on teaching matters
 - Free liability insurance for teachers
 - A formal structure of qualifications supported by individual assessment
10. Representation, on a limited basis, at national events and meetings organised by the EBU

As well as providing these services to the public, EBED personnel have a significant involvement in a number of other areas. Particularly:

11. Running the charity efficiently and effectively and in line with charity law and the good governance code – particularly governance, finance, policies, processes and procedures.
12. Working on three major projects – (1) improvements to the EBTA service, (2) growing the business to generate an increased surplus to enable more investment in loss making services and (3) growing the income from grants and sponsors
13. Working in partnership with Stirling University and Imperial College, researching the social and medical benefits of playing bridge
14. Running the teaching programme at South Bucks Bridge Centre

EBED is a small charity with limited financial resources and only 4 staff, all based at Aylesbury. This unfortunately means the charity struggles, at this stage in its development, to provide some services that are often requested. These include:

- (a) An immediate response to telephone and email queries;
- (b) Bespoke training events;
- (c) Ad-hoc attendance at regional meetings;
- (d) Ad-hoc visits to clubs

FEES PROPOSAL 2018/9

The 2016 AGM agreed that the EBU should aim to generate a small surplus over a 4-year cycle on its business-as-usual income and expenditure to enable it to invest in one-off activity (eg new IT, improved equipment, etc). We noted that our costs (mainly wages) will over time rise in line with wages in the economy, which tend to rise at RPI+1% over the longer term (but less at the moment), so over the same period, taking account of efficiencies and economies, we should expect fees to rise at around or just below RPI.

We are currently looking at a loss of over £100k over the next 4 years, and, as included in the Annual Report, we have put together a financial recovery plan aimed at tackling that deficit. Inflation is currently forecast to be around 3.3% by April 2018.

In addition we currently give a £2 per rebate for each UM-related direct debit, but over 85% of Clubs now do this and we should require everyone (unless for very good reason) to follow suit or, as a second choice, pay by what has now become a business standard regular variable payment method, which cuts down administration for both parties. We made a commitment at the last AGM to consider rebalancing the affiliation fee and the UM charge and so it is proposed to use a removal of the DD rebate to facilitate a cut in the affiliation fee. The effect on Clubs will be different as smaller Clubs tend to pay less frequently, whilst the larger Clubs might pay monthly.

There is also an issue of rebates to those individuals who play more than 150 sessions each year, which is complex to administer. The direct cost of this scheme last year was c£7500, with about 650 people receiving rebates, the majority less than £10 but there were 10 amounts over £50. The Board's intent is to give notice that the scheme will cease from April 2018, as a contribution to the recovery plan, but would welcome views first at this AGM.

Excluding the issue of rebates, the proposed fees from 1 April 2018 are set out below. The basic increase in UM works out at 2.7% and the net overall increase around 2.9%. We are still currently constrained on the proposals that we can put forward to round penny increases, but even once the new software has bedded down it seems more difficult than was anticipated to price in fractions of a penny (rounding final total invoices), so we may not be able to rely on this going forward.

Membership Subscription: 38p (Last year: 37p)

Direct Membership UK: £30 (£29)

Direct Membership O/S: £37 (£34)

Club affiliation fee, via County: £25 (£36); £50 (£72) for clubs who play less than 26 UM sessions per year

Licensed Club and County Events: £2.12 (£2.08)

Licensed Charity Events (including multi-venue): £1.88 (£1.84)

Non-charity multi-venue simultaneous events: £5.96 (£5.84) per venue

Blue Point events: £2.68 (£2.60)

County green-pointed events; £7.84 (£7.64)

Beginner/improver events: £0.72 (£0.72)

Events run by non-affiliated organisations (eg holidays): £2.52 (£2.44)

NOTE 1: Existing prices are in brackets.

NOTE 2: The particular extra increase in direct overseas membership continues to reflect the increased cost of mailing English Bridge to those members.

NOTE 3: University Affiliation fees would remain unchanged at £5; there is no charge for affiliation fee for schools.

NOTE 4: The rebate for payment by direct debit will be removed, and direct debit will become the standard method of payment, with online transfer a back-up for those Clubs unable to set up a direct debit.

Jerry Cope

Treasurer