



Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the English Bridge Union Limited **held at the Imperial Hotel, London,** **on Wednesday 28th November 2018**

Present:

Jeremy Dhondy (JD)	Chairman	Gordon Rainsford (GR)	Company Secretary
Jerry Cope (JC)	Treasurer	Tony Parks (TP)	Auditor
Ian Payn (IP)	Vice Chairman	Peter Stockdale (PS)	Minute Taker & Outgoing Communications Officer
Heather Dhondy (HD)	Board Member, Chair of L&E Committee		Incoming Communications Officer
Anthony Golding (AG)	Board Member	Sam Kelly (SK)	Reception
Rob Lawy (RL)	Board Member	Kay Carter (KC)	Reception
Ron Millet (RM)	Board Member	Karen Durrell (KD)	Incoming Chair of EBED
Graham Smith (GS)	Board Member	Andy Margetts (AM)	Chief Executive of EBED
		Donna Wright (DW)	

Apologies:

Bev Godfrey (BG)	Board Member	Bev Purvis (BP)	Club Liaison Officer
Gillian Fawcett (GF)	Board Member, Chair of Selection Committee		

Shareholders			Proxy			Shareholders			Proxy		
Present		Apologies				Present		Apologies			
Avon		Mrs S O'Hara				Mrs C Duckworth					
Bedfordshire		Mr M Collins	London			Mr D Flint					
Berks & Bucks	Mr D Davey	Dr S Brown	Manchester			Mr J Smith					
Cambs & Hunts	Mr P Grice		Mersey/Cheshire			Mr J Morris		Mr M Newman			
Channel Isles	Mrs P Panter					Mr A Smalley		Dr C Raymond	Mr P Roberts		
Cornwall	Mr JM Booth		Middlesex			Mr P Hasenson		Mr H Patel			
Cumbria	-		Norfolk			Dr M J Dennis					
Derbyshire		Mr J Parker Dr A J McCance	Mrs C Batten			Mr B Drobny					
Devon		Mr T Treeby Dr M Hamon Mr R Andrews	Mr G Clements			Mr A Darnell					
Dorset	-		Northants			Mrs N Bainbridge					
Essex	Mr D Valtisaris	Mrs M Curtis Mrs L Fleet	Nottinghamshire			Mrs C Batten		Miss T Smith	Mrs C Batten		
Gloucs	Mr P Shields		Oxfordshire			Mrs S Nicholson		Mrs S Claridge	Mr A Wilson		
Hants & IoW	Mr K C Bennett Mr R Ray	Mrs M Gale	Mr K C Bennett			Mr A Wilson					
Hereford		Mr C Chowney	Surrey			Mr T Russ					
Hertfordshire	Mr R Livesey Mr R Teesdale	Mr G Conrad	Sussex			Mr M Carey		Mr P Hackett	Mr J Withers		
Isle of Man	Mr P Gibbons Mr P Jones Mr M Lewis	Mr S Baggs	Mr J Dhondy			Mr M Pryor					
Kent	Mr B Brelsford	Mr J Smith	Surrey			Mr J Allerton		Mr R Millard	Mr T Green		
Lancashire	Mr D Pollard	Mr D Benton	Mr D Pollard			Miss S Pritchard		Mr D Wright	Mr T Hobson		
Leicestershire			Warwickshire			Mr P Bates		Mrs J Mayall	Mr P Bates		
Lincolnshire	-		Westmorland			Mrs SJ Galvin		Mr R Wheeler	Mr P Bates		
			Wiltshire			Mr C Lang					
			Worcestershire			Mr L Reece					
			Yorkshire			Mr P Green		Mr M Rothwell	Mr P Green		
						Mr P Hammond		Mrs S Phillips	Mr P Green		
						Mr D Guild		Mr D Thomas	Mr P Hammond		
						Mrs L Millet					
						Ms J Staniforth					
						Mr N Woolven					

Also present: award winners and guests - Monica Aitken, Barry Capal, Colin Dale, Liz Dale, Paul Double, Andrea Galpin, David Galpin, Jenny Harding, Katharine Hodgson, Pam Orme, Silverio Ostrowski, John Prior, Val Sleaford.
 County officials – Colin O'Hara (Bedfordshire); Peter Shelley (Avon)

Jeremy Dhondy, Chairman, opened the meeting by welcoming all those present. He advised of the ill health of Peter Jordan, who had served on the EBU staff for many years. A card had been made available to sign, and those present wished Peter well for his recovery.

1. Apologies for absence

JD gave apologies on behalf of Gillian Fawcett, a Board member and Chair of the Selection Committee. He advised that she had updated him on relevant information and at the appropriate time he would try to answer any questions arising from the minutes of the Selection Committee meetings.

2. Announcement of Awards

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

LIFE MEMBERSHIP AWARD

Life Membership is currently given to members who have given outstanding service to the EBU, often in a 'paid' position.

Barry Capal

Barry gave great service to the EBU as the General Manager from 2006 until 2017.

He gave countless hours to the EBU. Amongst his great successes was assisting in the introduction of Universal Membership in 2010, which changed the whole basis of membership and secured the future of the union and its members for many years to come.

He was also instrumental in introducing and moving forward new ideas such as the NGS and the EBU's own scoring system. He was an enthusiastic promoter of the role of IT in moving the business forward.

DIAMOND AWARDS

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

Heather Dhondy

Heather Dhondy has been an integral part of the England Women's team for over twenty years. During a consistently successful international career she has:

- Made 28 appearances for England and Great Britain in major international events
- Been 5-time European Champion
- Been twice World Olympiad champion
- Been winner of the World Mixed Teams, the European Open Mixed Teams, and numerous silver and bronze medals
- Made 17 Lady Milne trophy appearances, winning on an unchallenged 13 times
- Represented England in the Camrose Trophy

She will be representing England in the forthcoming Venice Cup.

Quite apart from this she is a member of the EBU Board, and is currently Chairman of the Tournament Directors Development Group and the Laws and Ethics Committee, having formerly been Chairman of the Selection Committee.

Andrew Robson *[presented at the luncheon prior to the start of the meeting]*

Andrew Robson has been a key part of the England (and before this Great Britain) Open team for many years.

During a successful international career he:

- Made 12 appearances for England and Great Britain in major international events
- Was a winner of 1991 European Championships
- Made 3 appearances for Great Britain in major junior international events
- Was a winner of 1989 World Youth Team Championships
- Made 5 appearances in the European Champions Cup
- Made 12 appearances in the Camrose Trophy
- Made 3 appearances in the Junior Camrose, winning on all occasions

In addition, he has had:

- 7 Gold Cup victories
- 6 Premier League victories
- 5 Spring Foursomes victories
- 2 Crockfords Cup victories

and was twice joint-winner of the Player of the Year Championship.

He received an OBE for his services to bridge and charity in 2013.

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:

Nigel Thompson – Berks & Bucks *[To be presented locally]*

Nigel joined the BBCBA Competitions Committee in 2004. In 2007 he took over as Chairman and held this position for 5 years.

To celebrate the introduction of Universal Membership Nigel arranged 'Welcome to BBCBA events' held in every club with certificates awarded to the winners in each of two categories 'Existing EBU members' and 'New EBU members', and prizes for the highest scorers in each category across all the clubs. The certificates were given out at the club by a member of BBCBA Committee, so ensuring that every club got a visit in the early days of P2P and had the opportunity to ask questions and air any grievances they had.

Other features he introduced during his County Chairmanship were an "Objectives and Philosophy" statement on the inside front cover of the annual Members' Handbook, enhanced support for the Tollemache team with a non-playing captain and full funding of the team's costs, an annual Green Point Pairs and Teams weekend (instead of every two years) and a reduction in the BBCBA P2P levy down by 2p.

When he retired from the Chairmanship he took over the running of the BBCBA Student League (for students on a 2nd Year course) in 2012. Realising that at that stage they were not ready for the County League of Four he came up with the idea of a 'Graduate League' which students play in for the next two years, following which a good number of them go on to enter the County League of Four.

Throughout this time Nigel has been Chairman of Austenwood BC from 2004 to this present day and plays regularly in county events. In addition, he runs a bridge club at a local secondary school, introducing pupils to the game via Minibridge and going on to full bridge as they progress.

David Man – Cambs & Hunts *[To be presented locally]*

David has been a stalwart member of the Cambs & Hunts County Bridge Association for many years and has served in a number of roles, never hesitating to volunteer when needed. He was County Treasurer from 2003-2016, and County Auditor for five years prior to that. After leaving that post, David became County Tournament Officer, co-ordinating the organization and arranging venues for all county events.

David has been one of the most regular attendees of county management meetings for over twenty years, being a voice of reason and a continuous provider of valuable input, involving himself in organizing bridge at both a club and county level. He ran the county's flagship event, the Newmarket Swiss Teams, every October from 1993-2007; in recent years, he has helped run the County Swiss Pairs each April.

As one of the longest serving committee members, David has been a goldmine of information about the County, providing stability and continuity and helping newer officers settle into their roles. Given the length and continuous nature of his contributions, along with the variety of roles he has filled, the county believes David is an obvious candidate to receive the Dimmie Fleming award.

John Honey – Channel Islands *[To be presented locally]*

John has worked for the CICBA for many years, firstly for the Jersey District as Treasurer and then in addition he took on the post of County Treasurer in 2007. Both posts are still held by John.

For a number of years John has been running Beginners' and Improvers' Bridge Classes on a voluntary basis under the auspices of the Jersey District. The revenue from these classes is shared between the Jersey District and the Jersey Hospice Care. John's classes are very popular and well attended and has involved him in a great deal of planning and hard work.

For the last few years John has taken over the local organisation of the Jersey Congress. This has involved co-ordinating the event with the hotel, liaising with the EBU and taking all the bookings. In addition, during the Congress he assists the Directors by finding local players to fill in when necessary. John's presence at the Congress is appreciated by the Directors and players alike.

John has also arranged Seminars in Jersey and undertakes all the arrangements for these two-day events which have been well received. In addition, John is the honorary Auditor to the Highfield Bridge Club and helps co-ordinate the annual inter-insular match with Guernsey.

John's contribution to bridge in Jersey and the Channel Islands has been incredible and is still continuing.

Monica Aitken - Kent

For the whole of this century, Monica has been involved in the organisation of Kent events. She started by organising the Tunbridge Wells 3-day Congress from 2001 – 2006, also being a member of the Committee in which capacity she has been Minutes Secretary, Chair of the Premises sub-committee, Chair of the Refurbishment sub-committee and ad hoc membership of other sub-committees. Catering for all Kent County events.

Her success as TWBC Congress Chair, led to her being asked to become the KCBA Congress Secretary. She agreed to this in 2007 and is still fulfilling that role currently. With one year off in 2016, she has been the Kent Green Points Competition Secretary from the same date to the present.

In West Kent she has been keen to help out with the very successful initiatives to bring bridge to the young, being involved with the West Kent Youth Association since its inception in 2014 – activities which include being responsible for the minutes and for liaising with the David Davenport Trust, as well as teaching in two schools.

Kent are fully aware that, without Monica, they could not possibly claim to be a successful County, she has been the backbone of all the happenings in the bridge world in Kent.

Jacqueline Wright – Lancashire *[To be presented locally]*

Jacqueline has been LCBA Tournament Secretary for the past 10 years, only stepping down recently because of ill health.

She was appointed in 2008 and has worked tirelessly, efficiently and in a friendly manner to organize all Lancashire competitions (up to 9 per year) to ensure that they ran smoothly and were enjoyed by all.

In 2008 she was also elected as a Shareholder for the EBU on behalf of LCBA and attended Shareholder Meetings regularly for 10 years. She was a keen supporter of the Northern Bridge League playing every year since its inception in 2006.

She has been Chairman of Lytham Bridge Club on 2 separate occasions. She was a club representative on Council prior to her election to the LCBA Executive Committee in 2004.

Her contribution to Lancashire bridge will be sorely missed.

Glynn Elwick – Lincolnshire *[To be presented locally]*

Glynn has served on the Lincolnshire CBA Committee for many years, originally as Club Representative for Scunthorpe for several years until 1994 and then as Secretary from 2004 to 2006. He was then Vice-Chairman from 2007 to 2010 before serving as Chairman from 2011 to 2014. Since 2014 Glynn has been Competition Secretary.

At club level Glynn has been a member of Scunthorpe Bridge Club since its formation in 1977, serving on the Committee for nearly all that time. He was Club Secretary for many years in the early days, and was Club President from 2001 to 2009.

Glynn directs at Scunthorpe club on a weekly basis and has directed many County events over the years. He has represented Lincolnshire on numerous occasions at the Tollemache and in inter-county leagues in the past. He is keen on promoting Allcomers' Duplicate sessions in the county, aimed at encouraging less experienced players to take part in county events.

Andrea Galpin – Sussex

Andrea has served the Sussex County Contract Bridge Association (SCCBA) for very many years in multiple roles, particularly:

Member of SCCBA Management Committee since 2000 and Member of SCCBA Tournament Committee from 2002 to date. Organiser of one of SCCBA's premier competitions (Invitation Pairs) since 2004 and from 2002 onwards and has organised a number of other SCCBA competitions,

including No Fears at Chichester, Green Point Teams and Pairs. Has acted regularly as scorer at a number of SCCBA competitions.

Working alongside her husband, a previous recipient of the Dimmie Fleming, she provided considerable assistance to him in his capacity of SCCBA Treasurer for a period of approximately 14 years, completing all the data entries before a decent computer program became available and producing draft accounts each year. Also provided assistance to him with the running of the Sussex League in its earlier years.

Andrea was the county's Trophies Officer for a period of 5 years, liaising with organisers and competition winners to ensure a smooth presentation of Trophies at both the County's Spring and Autumn Congresses.

Andrea's services to Sussex bridge extend more widely than this, particularly through her contributions to the management of the Avenue BC, one of the county's premier clubs, and her overall contributions were recognised in 2010 when she became joint recipient of the SCCBA Gladys Hakki Award.

As will be evident from the length and breadth of service indicated above, Andrea has made an enormous contribution to the success of Sussex bridge over a period of time which is now exceeding 18 years.

However, it would be wrong to measure her service simplistically just in terms of time. Rather we should look at the personal input she has provided and reflect on the level of commitment, determination and sheer effort involved, often under testing circumstances.

Katharine Hodgson – Wiltshire

Kathy has recently retired from her role as Secretary of Wiltshire CBA, a post she held for over 15 years and has been the backbone of the Wiltshire Committee for many years. She has a quiet, unassuming personality but showed a tireless dedication to her role as County Secretary providing support to the various chairman she worked with, to the whole committee and to the wider Wiltshire bridge community.

Much of Kathy's strengths were her "behind the scenes roles": collating Wiltshire's annual calendar, booking venues, organising teas, running the AGM, booking hotels, duplimating boards, keeping the computer updated, maintaining membership lists, checking bidding boxes, washing tablecloths – the list is endless. Simultaneously, she maintained her bridge prowess representing Wiltshire at many levels including the Pachabo and Tollemache.

During her time as secretary County events grew in number from a handful to nine thanks to her organisation and encouragement.

Kathy always handles everything quietly and without fuss and it is a testament to her dedication that when she retired earlier this year she attended the next two committee meetings to ensure the bedding in of her successor. She has now fully retired from bridge administration and Wiltshire would like her services recognised.

TOM BRADLEY AWARD

The Tom Bradley Award is assigned each year to a non-school teacher for a significant contribution to Youth Bridge.

Liz Dale – Stamford Bridge Club

Liz Dale has been the figurehead of, and inspiration for, the Stamford Youth Bridge Academy since its beginnings in 2016. Using methods closely linked to the National Curriculum for Maths, and therefore gaining interest from 18 schools including nursery, primary and secondary schools, her team of “Buddies” from Stamford Bridge Club have been carefully trained and have introduced Bridge to over 1,700 children and counting.

Other bridge clubs have followed Stamford’s lead and are using similar methods to attract even more schools and get more young people playing MiniBridge and Bridge. Liz is currently working with EBED to train a small team of “Buddy Trainers” to introduce her methods to other bridge players interested in teaching MiniBridge in schools up and down the country.

SYBA has also recently started a weekly junior bridge club, with the assistance of former England Under 26 Squad Leader Alan Shillitoe, aiming to continue the development of some of the young people who have already benefited from their school sessions.

PREVIOUSLY AWARDED

The following awards had been presented at other events earlier in the year

Young Pair of the Year: Toby Nonnenmacher & Kyle Lam

Young Player of the Year: Kripa Panchagnula

Alec Salisbury Award: Deb Casey (Claremont Fan Court School)

3. Minutes

The minutes of the 2017 AGM were formally accepted at the Shareholders’ Meeting on 16th May 2018

Minutes of the Shareholders Meeting of 16th May 2018

3.1 Accuracy

There were no matters of accuracy. The minutes were proposed as an accurate summary of the meeting, and were approved.

3.2 Matters arising not otherwise on the agenda

There were no matters arising not otherwise on the agenda.

4. Resolutions

4.1 Articles of Association (Special Resolution)

The proposed changes to the Articles related to:

- changes of wording to reflect the change in job title of ‘General Manager’ to ‘Chief Executive’.
- the time in advance of the meeting when nominations for positions on Standing Committees should be made. This was to bring this section of the articles in line with those relating to positions on the Board, thereby reducing the administrative burden on the staff in Aylesbury.

This resolution was passed.

4.2 Bye-Laws (Ordinary Resolution)

The proposed changes to the Bye-Laws related to:

- changes of wording to reflect the change in job title of ‘General Manager’ to ‘Chief Executive’.
- the correction of a grammatical error

This resolution was passed.

5. Proposed change to the number of Shareholder Meetings

JD reminded those present that, at the end of the Shareholders' Meeting in May, it had been discussed whether the Shareholders wished to continue to hold a second meeting each year in addition to the Annual General Meeting. Following the meeting a survey had been circulated so as to not only get the views of those who had attended, but also those who were absent from the Shareholders' Meeting. Whilst a show of hands at the meeting had suggested more were in favour of continuing with meeting, the survey had indicated a preference for the meeting not being held as standard, and only taking place when called by the Board or Shareholders.

AG outlined the Board's proposal that the Shareholders' Meeting in May not be held as a matter of course, although the Chairmen's Meeting would be held in 2019, thereby ensuring two meetings between the Board and key county officials in the year. He explained that, instead of the Shareholders' Meeting, a 'half-year report' would be circulated, to disseminate to the Shareholders the financial details, and other relevant information. He explained that a second formal meeting of the Shareholders could be called by the Board, or by a group of twelve or more Shareholders'. It was clarified that, when calling the meeting, the Board or Shareholders would be expected to state the purpose of the meeting, or the specific subject which they believed need to be discussed. In response to a question, AG advised that the meeting could be called at any time of the year and, if called, the meeting should be held within a month. He added that any decision made by those present would not necessitate a change in the Bye Laws or Articles as neither mandated that a second meeting be held.

A representative from London queried whether the proposal was in part motivated by the fact that not holding a second meeting would save money, noting that the absence of a scheduled second meeting may actually result in greater costs if the ad hoc meetings were held with greatly frequency. JD responded that the possibility of saving money was an advantage, though the primary reason was to address some Shareholders' concerns that there was not sufficient business to justify the time and effort spent in attending the second meeting. He added that should additional meetings be required then the expenditure relating to them would be justifiable as it would ensure the organisation was being run to best effect.

A number of Shareholders agreed with JD's comments regarding the limited content on previous agendas, but also cited the meaningful discussions held during other meetings, such as the County Working Groups luncheon held prior to the AGM. They expressed the opinion that a meeting which addressed broader topics, and focussed on consultation and discussion, would be more beneficial than the more formal content of the Shareholders meeting. It was recognised that the Chairmen's Meeting follows a looser structure, but it is limited to only Chairs, or their nominated substitutes. There was support for the idea of broadening who was invited to any such meeting, making it open to anyone who the county considered suitable representatives, whether Chairs, Shareholders, Secretaries, or other key people within their structure.

It was noted that only Shareholders held voting rights, and therefore it would not be possible to vote on formal business at any meeting at the midpoint in the year which was not a formal Shareholders' Meeting. It would therefore be the case that all formal business would need to be conducted at the AGM.

JD was asked whether consideration could be given to using an online conferencing service, thereby allowing people who were unable to travel to London to 'attend', and saving money on travel expenses. Some members were in agreement that suitable technology was available at an affordable price, and it could be used not only for the AGM, but for meetings of the Board and Standing Committees, thereby generating further savings. JD replied that Skype was already used by small

sub-committees, such as the Editorial Board and Tournament Directors Development Group, and his experience of that led him to believe that tele-conferencing may not work for a larger group. He acknowledged, however, that specialist technology was much improved in recent years, and he agreed that possible options would be considered.

Prior to a vote on the Board's proposal, JD agreed to requests that the Board would always hold an additional meeting in the middle of year in some form, most likely a 'chairmen's meeting', where the list of those invited was broad (not just Chairmen), and there was an open agenda to which the counties could contribute.

On this basis, the Shareholders approved the proposal, and agreed that a second Shareholders' Meeting would only be held when one was specifically called by the Board, or the necessary number of Shareholders.

6. Chairman's Annual Report

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

A representative from Merseyside & Cheshire asked JD in what areas the EBU liaises with other National Bridge Organisations in the British Isles, and whether in any instances there were differences in policy or approach. JD replied that there is cooperation in the organisation of British Sim Pairs competitions, some collaboration relating to competition calendars, and that Wales used the EBU's White and Blue Books, with Scotland adopting parts of these. He added that the Board was represented on the committee of Bridge Great Britain, along with the other home nations, and this was responsible for organising the Camrose series of competitions and the Gold Cup. In regard to conflicts of policy, JD believed the only matter to have arisen in recent years related to the number of Master Points issued at some Scottish competitions, and the concern that the large number of points which could be won may attract EBU members to those events rather than playing in competitions closer to home. This matter had been addressed, with the SBU changing their awards. In conclusion, JD confirmed that the Shareholders would be notified if there were any significant matters which arose between the EBU and the other NBOs.

7. Membership Report

RM had circulated to the Shareholders a report which outlined the need for action to recruit new members to the organisation. He cited a plateauing in membership levels in recent years – and indeed a small decline most recently – and the concern that the age of the current membership would likely mean many would stop playing in the next decade, exacerbating any downward trends. Not only would this mean fewer people playing in clubs, but also fewer people to run the clubs, leaving some clubs struggling to operate. He added that this situation was not unique to the EBU – he spends some of his time in Australia, and was aware that the game there was facing similar issues.

He explained that the Board's response had been to start a Membership Campaign. This has begun with a pilot scheme in Yorkshire, and now the Board had provided funding for all counties to be invited to be involved. He introduced Tim Anderson, who had recently been employed to the role of Membership Development Officer, and who would be working to provide the resources and support for those participating in the campaign. RM reported that half a dozen counties were currently engaged with the campaign, albeit at various stages, and asked the Shareholders to encourage their counties to consider whether they needed to undertake such a campaign. If they were already active in this area then support may not be needed, but if it was then the EBU was available to help with resources, ideas, and funding. He added that it was hoped that the counties would be involved, to help drive forward the campaign in the county in a collective and coordinated fashion, rather than it being done by individual clubs on an ad hoc basis.

RM concluded his report with the observation that whilst encouraging people to attend lessons was important, as it got people in to bridge clubs, it was not the end target. The goal was to get them playing in club sessions, and a strategy to help them transition from lessons to club games required support from the members and the key volunteers within the club.

RM was asked whether this campaign was a key strand in the EBU's strategic objectives for 2013-18. He replied that it was and, to date, the Board had been pleased by its success.

A representative from Sussex reported that the county had managed to significantly increase the number of young players in the county. He believed getting bridge in to schools could be an important part of membership growth. RM replied that growth in the number of young people playing would be excellent, but engaging with schools was normally quite difficult, and the route to attracting young people to the game may be through also recruiting their parents, grandparents or other family members. The Regional Development Officer for Yorkshire commented that although attracting young players was good for the game, it was unlikely that many would play for a significant period of time, with past experience suggesting most stop after school or university. He reported that Yorkshire had been successful in recruiting the recently-retired, and those taking early-retirement, and this would likely prove to be a key group as it was hoped, and expected, that they would likely play for 20 years or more.

The representative from Sussex also commented that the motivation for playing for those who had played for many decades was changing, giving as an example the observation that fewer people were interested in trying to rise through the Master Point rankings. A representative from Nottinghamshire agreed with this, citing difficulties the county was having in encouraging people to progress to more competitive events. There was broad agreement that all involved needed to keep in mind that what is now attracting people to bridge, and keeping them playing, is different than it was in previous decades. It was recognised, however, that the higher levels of competitions, and these competitors, were an important part of the structure of bridge in the country. Efforts should therefore also be made to ensure these competitions are sustainable.

A representative from Essex reiterated RM's concerns that declining membership levels would also affect club and county administration. He reported that his club had tried to address concerns about succession to the committee by recruiting people to act in a 'deputy role' and carry out small tasks usually undertaken by a club official. This meant they were familiar with some of the work done by the officials, and the transition to fill one of these roles when needed would therefore be less daunting. He recommended that others think of doing likewise.

A representative from London asked JD to comment on some individual members' continued reluctance to affiliate their bridge clubs, despite them receiving support from the EBU to play internationally. JD replied that the recognition the players receive for playing at a high level was dependent on performance at the table as EBU members, and should not be affected by how they administer their clubs. There had been a number of conversations about their potential affiliation, however, and there would continue to be approaches made to them. JD remained hopeful that they could be attracted to affiliate, though recognised that in some instances some "goal posts may have to be moved" for that to happen.

8. Directors' Report and Accounts for the year ending 31st March 2018

The published list of members by county as at 31st March 2018 is attached to these minutes - **Appendix B.**

JC reported that the accounts for the year ending 31st March 2018 had finished around £30K ahead of budget. This was almost equivalent to sales of the new Law books, on which, for the first time, royalties to the Portland Club had not been paid. He highlighted improvements against budget which had been made through: lower computing costs; higher than expected revenue for advertising in

English Bridge magazine; the inclusion of a third division in the Premier League; and the ongoing programme of cost containment. These improvements were offset by unexpected major electrical improvement work being required at the Aylesbury offices; some additional, unbudgeted legal costs for the cases with Sport England and HMRC; and a small decrease in receipts from Universal Membership payments.

JC was asked to explain the competition costs which were not attributed to a specific event, as it was noted that they made up a quarter of all expenses. GR confirmed that these were non-divisible running costs for the competitions department, and included staff salaries and equipment.

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

9. Treasurer's Report, year to date

JC reported that, based on the accounts to date, he was projecting that the year would end very close to budget. He thanked those involved for their contribution to the fundraising effort to support the junior teams' participation in the World Youth Team Championships in China. All costs had been covered by the donations, which was much better than budgeted. There had, however, been losses against budget, in particular a disappointing return from the Summer Festival, and poorer than expected sales through the Bridge Warehouse.

In his written report to the Shareholders, JC had stated that Gift Aid had been accrued on the donations towards the junior teams. He was asked to explain how this had come about. He explained that the donations had been collected by EBED which, as a registered charity, was permitted to claim the Gift Aid. Both the donations and the resulting Gift Aid were then donated to the EBU by EBED. JC confirmed that this approach had been approved by the auditors. After the meeting JC was able to confirm the amount of Gift Aid received was around £6K.

JC was asked to comment on the trajectory of sales of bridge equipment in general, and whether the struggles of the Bridge Warehouse were likely replicated amongst other retailers. He and GS replied that the exact position was unknown, however it was believed that more people were shopping through Amazon and eBay, and using those sites like they would have traditionally used a search engine, rather than looking for a specialist retailer. The Bridge Warehouse had started to sell through Amazon, and it would be seen whether this made a difference to sales. A representative from Manchester offered his assistance in helping the Bridge Warehouse achieve a better position on the results generated by search engines. More significant to the Bridge Warehouse's performance, JC and GS added, was the fact that only a third of all affiliated clubs and counties bought their supplies through the EBU's shop. It was hoped that this position could be rectified as there was no reason for them to shop elsewhere when all prices, where possible, were matched with those of competitors.

A representative from Oxfordshire noted the declining entries to Sim Pairs competitions, and reported that in the clubs where she was involved there was less interest in taking part. JC replied that the Board was aware of their declining popularity, and was continually considering how they might be revitalised and made more popular. In the short-term, a measure which had been taken was to freeze the prices for 2019 at 2018 rates.

A representative from Cambs & Hunts asked whether the venue for the 2019 Summer Meeting was known. GR replied that he had visited the Devonshire Park complex in Eastbourne to see the renovations and believed the new buildings would be suitable. The site needed to be ready for a tennis competition in June, so he was confident it would be ready for the EBU's event in August, and things were progressing based on that assumption. The attendance at the Summer Festival in London in 2018 had suggested the members would be keen to return to a 'holiday venue' in 2019.

10. Appointment of Auditors

It was agreed to re-appoint the current auditors.

11. Election of Directors

Five nominations had been received for four positions. The votes received were as follows:-

Elected for a three year term of office expiring in 2021: Jerry Cope - 59 votes; Ron Millet - 56;
Anthony Golding - 47

Elected for a two year term of office expiring in 2020: Graham Smith - 45

Not elected: Barry Capal – 26

11.1 Election of Treasurer

Jerry Cope was re-elected uncontested.

12. Election of members to the Laws & Ethics Committee

There were two nominees for two positions, therefore no election was required. Both of the nominated members – Sarah Bell and Alan Wilson – will join the committee for a three year term, expiring in 2021.

13. Election of members to the Selection Committee

There were three nominees for two positions. The votes received were as follows:-

Elected for a three year term, expiring in 2021: Mike Bell - 51 votes; David Burn - 45

Not elected: Peter Hasenson – 23

14. Appointment of Company Secretary

JD was asked to explain how the role of Company Secretary differed from GR's role as Chief Executive. JD explained that filling the role of Company Secretary was a legal requirement of being a limited company, and the position was charged with ensuring the EBU adhered to company law and that the Bye Laws and Articles of Association of the organisation were upheld. The role of Chief Executive was to help to develop, and then operate and implement, the Board's plans and strategies, acting as a conduit between the Board and Staff, and ensuring that the staff operate effectively to provide services and activities for the membership.

Gordon Rainsford was re-appointed as Company Secretary.

15. EBU Fees

JC explained that there had been some changes to the structure of the fees for 2018/19, but for 2019/20 he was not proposing any similar changes, and would merely be adjusting the fees themselves. He recommended an increase of 2.5%, which was a little below inflation. He added that a 'tightening of belts' would therefore be necessary. He noted that it would unlikely be practical to continue increasing prices below inflation and making savings elsewhere, so this policy may need to be reconsidered next year.

He added that it had been noticed that there had been an increase in the number of sessions being submitted at the 50% Universal Membership rate. He expressed an intention to look at the reasons for this, and consider whether it was appropriate that all categories of session which receive the current discount continued to do so. A representative from Northamptonshire commented that it may be appropriate to review the definition of what constituted a 'novice session' and warned

against being too 'heavy-handed' in any review of instances when reduced rate sessions were being submitted. JC made assurances that the matter would be handled carefully.

16. EBED Report

The report to the Shareholders was made by Donna Wright (DW), the Chief Executive, and Andy Margetts (AM), who would be taking over as Chair of the charity in the spring.

DW reported that she had been in the role for over a year, and she believed that the charity had progressed well in that time. She explained that EBED is primarily concerned with teaching, research in to the benefits of playing bridge, and the promotion of bridge, particularly to young people. She emphasised that it is separate from the EBU, with nine trustees, and the equivalent of four full-time staff.

Her work in the last year had been focused on ensuring that the charity's governance and policies satisfied the requirements set out by the Charity Commission. She had also sought to refine the procedures to ensure cost-efficiency, and so that users of EBED's services received value for money. She went on to outline the various services which EBED had offered in the previous year, and the projects which it was undertaking. She highlighted plans to expand the range of teaching materials with the introduction of Book Three in the Bridge for All series. During his report AM added that consideration was being given to using other media alongside the printed versions, including digital versions of the teaching materials. DW also reported that funding had been received from the Worshipful Company of Makers of Playing Cards charity, to support employing someone who can recruit, train, and support County Youth Officers.

AM gave an overview of the finances of the charity. EBED generates an income of £267K, resulting in a small ("single figure of thousands") profit. A third of the revenue comes from the sale of books; 20% comes from attendance on training courses; 25% was from an EBU grant – a donation of around £72k; the remainder was from various sources, including profits from the EBED Sim Pairs, memberships of the English Bridge Teachers Association (EBTA), and donations from individuals and other organisations.

He advised that it was EBED's goal to expand and diversify their sources of funding, particularly for its research projects, which in turn may help to allow access to other sources of funding.

It was EBED's intention, AM explained, to try to carve out its own distinct identity, and to make EBED's role, and position within the bridge landscape, clearer to the EBU's membership and the wider bridge community.

With regard to specific projects, AM referenced: more club teacher training courses, and a wider spread of the courses around the country (he added that the EBU had arranged for affiliated clubs to receive a free place on the course every two years); improvements to what EBED offers online, with consideration to online learning and playing; working to establish more areas where youth bridge is thriving, drawing on existing areas of "excellence"; supporting bridge in universities – a pilot Fast Track scheme at Warwick University which took place this autumn would be more widely rolled out next year; a consultation with EBTA members to better support bridge teachers; greater use of the teaching materials currently archived in the Aylesbury offices.

AM explained that it had been recognised that there was a shortage of bridge knowledge within the charity, and EBED would therefore be seeking to employ additional people, either to the staff or on a project-by-project basis. He encouraged the Shareholders to pass on the names of anyone who could be approached to undertake some work. He also highlighted the need for a new Trustee with responsibility for overseeing education, and asked that possible candidates be put forward.

He concluded his report by asking the Shareholders for their help in encouraging clubs and counties to support EBEDs work: that they should purchase and use Bridge for All materials; that they should use EBED's teacher and TD training courses; that they should play in the EBED Sim Pairs. On this final point he was asked about unaffiliated clubs taking part. He emphasised that EBED works with, and supports, all bridge players, not just affiliated clubs and EBU members, so encouraged the Shareholders to promote the Sims to unaffiliated clubs.

AM was asked to comment on the donation to the EBU of Gift Aid receipts from the 'China fundraising'. He explained that aiding the development and promotion of junior bridge was within EBED's remit, and as supporting the teams participating in China would assist in this then donating the Gift Aid was permitted.

RM asked whether AM saw EBED having a role in the EBU's Membership Development Campaign. AM replied that EBED would certainly be working to ensure that the materials and teachers were in place to support the lessons which were needed in participating clubs – though it would then be for the EBU to ensure these new players became EBU members.

17. Minutes of the meetings of the Board of Directors

17.1 13th June 2018

The meeting considered the minutes. GR was asked to comment on the reference to problems with Sage and Workbooks. He advised that a change may have been needed to ensure compatibility with the systems used for submission to HMRC, but this was no longer the case. It had, however, prompted a review of the systems used, and the possibility of switching to a different system was being considered.

17.2 19th September 2018

The meeting considered the minutes. There were no questions.

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

18.1 23rd May 2018

18.2 24th October 2018

The meeting considered the minutes of these meetings. JD was asked to report on the responses he had received during his consultation of the membership in relation to the possibility of discontinuing the use of the 'stop card'. He advised that he had received 20-30 replies, with differing opinions. The majority of those who played 'tournament bridge' would prefer it to be removed. 'Club players' had a preference for it remaining, saying that the 'stop procedure' was often not followed, and the removal of the card would likely make this worse. JD had reported this to the L&E Committee, who would discuss the matter further, but he believed that as there was a not a clear majority in favour of its removal it was likely to remain. Any change would be made in time for implementation from the start of August, and the May meeting of the L&E Committee would therefore be the time at which any final decision would likely be made.

19. Minutes of the meetings of the Selection Committee

19.1 17th July 2018

19.2 13th November 2018

The meeting considered the minutes. There were no questions relating specifically to their content, however a member from Surrey had submitted a question in advance of the meeting pertaining to the activities of the Selection Committee. He sought comment from the Committee, and the Board, on the number of trial events taking place in the forthcoming year, noting that this not only required interested members to spend a lot of time and money playing bridge, but it also impacted on the

competitions calendar in general, with direct clashes with some events, and the lack of 'bridge-free' weekends meaning some players opted not to enter county congresses in favour of 'a weekend off'.

JD responded that the Selection Committee had been mindful of this when seeking to arrange the trials, however the current policy was to hold trial events for all teams, and therefore this number of events was necessary. He added that this would be an exceptional year, as it would include the 'Olympiad' which only occurred every four years, and the new Mixed Teams competitions which the WBF and EBL had introduced. Efforts had been made, however, to hold trials over two longer days rather than three, and to exempt some players from some stages of the trials. He also believed that most players would be making a choice which trials to enter, and even if they were eligible for all they would likely not be playing in all of them.

A representative from Kent asked whether the dates of trial events could be set further in advance, allowing greater opportunity for counties to plan their congresses. He cited a clash with a weekend of the Premier League as a reason for a fall in entries to the county's congress. He added that the Tournament Panel's involvement in the organisation of the trials may assist in how they fit in to the calendar. JD replied that arranging the dates a long time in advance is often difficult, as the details of some WBF and EBL competitions are not finalised until less than a year in advance – he cited the 2019 World Championships as an example, explaining the dates were only agreed this month. The Premier League, as an example, must therefore be arranged, as best as possible, in to what spaces in the calendar remain at that point.

IP reiterated that this forthcoming competition year was exceptionally busy, but added that GF, as Chair of the Selection Committee, had expressed the committee's intention to review their policies and practices for the future. They would do this once this cycle of trials had concluded. The comments of the Shareholders would be given due consideration during this process. The possibility of the Tournament Panel being involved in aspects of the trials may be considered at an appropriate time following this review.

20. Dates for 2019 AGM

JD advised that the details of the 2019 were to be finalised, however due to renovation work in the Imperial Hotel, it was known that the meeting would instead take place in the nearby Royal National Hotel.

21. Any Other Business

- A representative from Gloucestershire asked how the Board intended engaging with the counties in order to take forward the Strategic Aims outlined in its strategy document, "Raising Our Game: 2018 - 2023". JD replied that it would be on the agenda for the next meeting of the Board, to be held in January, and a plan of action would be more apparent after those discussions.
- GS thanked everyone who had attended the get-together of the three County Working Groups who were yet to formally meet – the East, South-East and South-West. It was hoped that the time spent talking had been productive, and that it would lead to further activities amongst those counties.
- JD advised that PS would be leaving the EBU after five years, and the Shareholders joined him in thanking PS for his work.

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	Roger Poulter & Mark Denny	Eastbourne Bridge Club
2nd Prize - £500 per pair	Sue Cretch & Phil Cretch	Alton Bridge Club
3rd Prize - £200 per pair	Sandra Nicholson & Krys Kazmierczak	Summertown Bridge Club

Club winners

1st Prize - £1000	Maidstone Bridge Club	Kent
2nd Prize - £500	British Airways Bridge Club	Middlesex
3rd Prize - £200	Bletchingley Bridge Club	Surrey

All prize winners, including runners up, are listed on the website www.ebu.co.uk/node/3298

Closing the meeting, the Chairman thanked Shareholders for their attendance. The meeting closed at 3.45pm.



ANNUAL REPORT OF THE ENGLISH BRIDGE UNION

1 September 2017 - 31 August 2018

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. It is non-profit making and any surplus is invested in 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 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 the Chief Executive, Gordon Rainsford.

The Board has been reviewing our overall membership figures along with a changing and aging demographic. They decided to act 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. We have appointed a part time Membership Development Officer to support the spread of this project to further Counties.

We have planned and published a new five year strategic aims document entitled "Raising our Game 2018-2023" It's available on the EBU website at www.ebu.co.uk/documents/official-documents/strategic-aims-2018-2023.pdf.

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 27th November 2018.

Attached to this report is a review of our 2013-2018 strategy document (Appendix B).

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 2017-18 the responsibilities were as follows:

Chairman: Jeremy Dhondy

Vice-Chairman: Ian Payn

Treasurer: Jerry Cope

Board Director responsibilities

Tournaments: Ian Payn	European and World duplicate bridge affairs: Jeremy Dhondy
Facilitating the strategic plan: Jerry Cope	Awards: Ron Millet
Staff development: Jerry Cope	All Party Parliamentary Group: Ron Millet
Education: Rob Lawy	Bridge Warehouse: Graham Smith
County Working Group: Graham Smith (Ian Payn Midland Group) (Ron Millet Northern Group)	Sponsorship & Fundraising: Ian Payn & Gillian Fawcett
Legal matters: Anthony Golding	Archive: Jeremy Dhondy
Magazine & Editorial Board: Jeremy Dhondy	Club Affairs: Bev Godfrey
Tournament Directors Development: Heather Dhondy	Membership Project: Ron Millet
Bridge Great Britain: Jeremy Dhondy	

English Bridge Education & Development

Our associated charity English Bridge Education & Development (EBED) receives funds from the English Bridge Union to help it operate. It runs all education services that the EBU used to run including the English Bridge Teaching Association (EBTA). New Teacher Trainers have qualified to help in the next job which is to increase the number and spread of teachers. An up-to-date database of teachers has been produced with an improved way of accessing it on the website. Collaborative Research with the University of Stirling has been moving forward and a PhD project called "Bridging the gap" is due to start. A medical research project called "Bridge for Brains" has also moved ahead. This is based at Imperial College, London. Detail of both these projects is available at EBED's website at www.ebedcio.org.uk. The Junior Teach-In returned this year held in Kings Langley.

Finance

2017/8 was a better year financially, nearly £30k better than budget, and resulting in a small profit. This was however almost entirely due to excellent sales of the new law books, coupled with not having to pay any royalties on those sales. Other cost and income changes largely balanced each other out. Attached is a chart (Appendix A) showing our sources and application of funds, which we have used on the website to be clear about what we do with our Members' money.

Although the law book benefit will largely not repeat in the coming years, we have also now, following the careful review of our finances and costs in particular, managed to put together a 4-year plan that meets our financial objective of making a small profit over the 4-year cycle whilst keeping price increases below or at RPI. The biggest risk to this projection is probably in UM receipts, which although currently showing only a very small downward trend, are under pressure from the demographic of our players. We need to attract more new players, and we are therefore, within the budget, investing in both teaching but also critically in helping our Clubs convert and welcome taught students to Members.

The 2018/19 financial year has started reasonably, but we do and will need to keep a control on our costs, whilst also ensuring, and investing to ensure, that our Members get a good and modern service.

Clubs and Club Services

For the period from September 2017 - August 2018, six clubs have re-affiliated to the EBU and two new clubs have joined. Nine clubs closed/disaffiliated/or merged in the period leaving the total number of affiliated clubs down one at 612. The reasons for disaffiliation (where known) included a reduction in numbers, lack of volunteers and increased rent, some of which can be put down to an ageing demographic. The trend appears to be those clubs that offer a "full" service including teaching, supervised play and a variety of sessions (including afternoon play) are doing well but some of the one session evening clubs are at risk. The reasons clubs give for joining the EBU are various - hoping to attract new members, raising the profile of the club, ability to enter County leagues, membership benefits including Master Points and belief in supporting the national governing body.

The Club Liaison Officer (CLO), Bev Purvis, has visited many affiliated clubs across the country and again has concentrated both on successful clubs (to get examples of best practice) and those with falling membership (to help in boosting numbers). The CLO has visited four non-affiliated clubs during the year, but none have decided to affiliate yet although some of the votes were very close.

The CLO has been involved in some aspects of the GDPR work, the revitalisation of the County Working Groups and has attended both the MCWG and NCWG meetings as well as presenting on "What does a Successful Bridge Club look like?" at the Somerset Bridge Fair, and on "From Classroom to Clubroom" at the Teachers' Conference. Queries and requests for assistance from clubs continue to be wide ranging but assistance with applications for CIO status, Constitutional matters and other aspects of Club Management are the most frequent. Whilst clubs have welcomed the changes for new players to the number of boards played before counting for NGS, several teaching clubs would like to see wider teacher exemptions so that they are able to offer more mentoring for other players to help them play at club/tournament level.

The CLO continues to advise on ways of engaging with social bridge players as a way of boosting club membership including the use of Chicago events at open evenings and Cafe bridge. Several articles on how to boost member numbers have been included in the Club

Management Focus newsletters and new promotional literature for clubs has been developed in conjunction with Peter Stockdale, the Communications Officer. The new EBU membership booklet has been well received by clubs with some asking for copies for all their members, not just the new ones. The CLO hopes the appointment of the new Membership Development Officer will prove a welcome additional member benefit for clubs keen to boost their numbers.

Parliamentary Activity

The All Party Parliamentary Group for Bridge (APPG) 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. In the year 2017-18 the group has held two meetings for which the EBU provides secretarial support, and to which the EBU and EBED are invited – only one meeting will be held in 2018-19.

The APPG was supportive of the EBU's efforts in its case with HMRC, and the referral to the EU courts, however as each member is restricted on the number of questions which they can raise in parliament – and other matters have been seen to be more pressing, given the current political climate – no formal action on the EBU's behalf has been taken in this area.

A formal letter from the EBU was passed by an APPG member - a member of House of Lords – to the new Minister for Loneliness, asking for an opportunity to meet with her to discuss the benefits of playing bridge in addressing loneliness, creating social connections, and providing mental stimulation. To date no response has been received.

The APPG has again hosted games at the Palace of Westminster in which schools' groups play with, and against, the Peers. In November 2017 pupils from Uppingham School and Bourne Academy, who had been learning as part of Stamford Youth Bridge Academy, were the visitors; in July 2018, it was a mixed group from schools in Horncastle and Alford in Lincolnshire, and Hitchin in Hertfordshire. At each of these visits the children received a tour of the building and were able to meet with their local MP. The MP for Stamford was also present at SYBA's 2nd inter-schools event which was attended by Gordon Rainsford, and members of the Junior Squad. Further school visits to the House of Lords are being arranged for 2019.

The EBU continues to organise the annual Lords v Commons match on behalf of the APPG.

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 three teams qualifying for the World Championships next year:

- Open

The England Open team regained the Camrose trophy with good performances from our teams over the two home international weekends. For the first time in many years, trials were held for the European Open team (with one pair pre-selected), and the team subsequently went on to qualify for the World Championships by finishing a creditable 7th in the European Championships.

- Women

The England women's team unfortunately failed to retain the Lady Milne Trophy in the home internationals, coming second to a strong Scottish team. Trials were also held for the Women's European, and the selected team, after a poor start, finished in 5th place and qualified for the World Championships in 2019.

- Seniors

The senior team came second to Scotland in the Teltscher Trophy. The England senior team for the Europeans exceeded expectations and, by finishing 8th, grabbed the last qualifying spot for the World Championships.

- Juniors

For the home internationals, as hosts, we entered two U26 teams – one of which played as the EBU team. The Junior team won the Junior Camrose for the sixth time in a row, with the EBU team finishing second. Our U21 team retained the Peggy Bayer Trophy.

Our U16 team played in the new WBF Youth Teams Online Championships and earned a silver medal. We also achieved two bronze medals in the European Youth Pairs, in the U26 and U16 categories.

All four age categories had qualified for the World Championships in China and were generously supported by several sponsors and donors. Unfortunately, we didn't manage to progress from the round robin stages, although our U16 team came close.

- Mixed

There were no international mixed team events in the period, although the EBL announced that this category would be added to the European Team Championships (and to the subsequent World Championships). We are therefore holding trials to select the (self-funded) England team.

Junior squads

The Selection Committee is also responsible for the junior squads which provide training for young players. We appointed two new squad leaders (Giorgio Provenza for the U16s, Harry

Anoyrkatis for the U26), and an U26 team manager (Paul Barden). The focus of the squads in this cycle was on preparing the teams for the upcoming world championships. Giorgio has also spent a great deal of time scouting for future talent, which is likely to be a focus for all the squad leaders as they prepare for the European Championships next year. The challenge is to continue to build on the success we have recently seen at European level.

Regulation

The Laws and Ethics Committee (L&E) is made up of seven elected individual members of the EBU and two appointed Board members under the chairmanship of Heather Dhondy. It is responsible for the regulation of the game in England.

It produces two annual publications, the White Book (primarily information and guidance for Tournament Directors) and the Blue Book (primarily information for players). Both publications are available from the website for free. There is also a series of videos relating to The Laws of Duplicate Bridge updated by the World Bridge Federation in 2017 produced by the Tournament Directors Development Group in conjunction with the WBF and European Bridge League, and a group of forums for various English Bridge Union interests.

The L&E hears cases of both a technical and disciplinary nature. 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. Appeals are reviewed and comments published in the minutes of the L&E meetings.

There have been several disciplinary cases during the period which have been considered by the L&E concerning complaints of bad behaviour. If warranted, these are passed to a prosecution panel for further investigation, however the L&E encourages these issues to be dealt with at a local level where possible. It provides advice on model disciplinary procedures for clubs and counties and has also produced a set of model regulations for League Competitions.

The EBU Board has made updates to Best Behaviour at Bridge (BB@B). The link is available on the website and clubs are encouraged to put this on their websites.

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

The main innovation we had this year was forced on us: our Eastbourne venue was undergoing extensive refurbishment and so we had to find a different home for the Summer Meeting. What we did was run the two large weekend events in London, changing their format and timings to help those who wished to commute, and run the mid-week evening events at a range of venues around the country.

This mid-week format was generally popular and we intend to repeat it after we have gone back to Eastbourne. We are also intending to do something similar for the Masters Pairs next year, in the hope that it allows a significant drop in the entry fees and so encourages

more to enter. The main weekend events were a little disappointing in numbers but generally enjoyed by those who played in them, so we are looking forward to getting back to Eastbourne to have a proper holiday congress.

One new introduction we had this year was the addition of a Seniors Championship Pairs to the popular Scarborough Congress, as well as an extra Seniors prize for the teams' competition. These will be regular features, making the congress a five-day seaside event for those who are eligible and wish to take part in all of it.

Our Overseas Congresses continue to be popular and perform well financially. Recently we have held some of them in city venues such as Lisbon and Budapest, which has been a popular innovation, with the February 2019 one to be held in Athens.

We continue to hold our standalone *Really Easy Congresses and Weekends* a few times a year, but at some of our main congresses we are trying a new format to encourage less experienced players instead of *Really Easy Afternoons*. These new games are *Jack High Swiss Pairs* events, the next one of which will be at the Year End Congress in London. They are aimed at club players who are interested in taking the first steps into congress bridge but who may have found it daunting to jump straight into a major competition. To qualify, players must have an NGS of no higher than 'Jack', with extra Master Points and prizes for those ranked '9' or lower. The format is six 6-board matches and the competitions are priced at a discounted rate to encourage new participants to congress bridge.

Our Funbridge robot games issuing Master Points continue to be popular and successful. We have expanded the schedule and now have four a week, with extras on bank holidays. We also have a monthly ladder and an annual ladder with cash prizes, which has stimulated interest in the games.

We continue to be pro-active, seeking out the best formats and venues. Feedback forms are an invaluable part of this, and we would encourage all participants to submit them.

Tournament Directors Development Group

The Tournament Directors Development Group (TDDG) is a subcommittee of the Board and deals with the development and management of the EBU's active Tournament Directors. It is chaired by Board Director, Heather Dhondy. During the period the group have produced a series of videos updating the original "How Can I Help You?" series to reflect the new Laws which were updated in 2017 by the World Bridge Federation. The major promotions in the period were Phil Godfrey to National level and James Vickers to Senior.

The County Working Group

The CWG Task Team submitted their report and recommendations to the EBU Board in January. The report was welcomed and there was broad agreement on the way forward. One or two minor amendments were suggested and the recommendations were resubmitted and approved by the Board at their March meeting. This included a model set of Terms of Reference for the CWG's for guidance. They are not mandatory but they do encompass good practice from practical experience gained to date.

The Northern and Midlands CWG's continue to go from strength to strength and both have a Board sponsor and regular attendance at their meetings by EBU senior management at Aylesbury. EBED senior management are also part of the CWG process and swifter and more direct involvement has led to a better level of cooperation and understanding.

The County Working Groups (CWG) in Eastern region, South West and the South East have yet to emerge but there has been some progress in the South West. The actual geography of the South West presents communication and cooperation issues that make intense and close working together very difficult. Therefore, it is likely that two or three counties might start things going via email or Skype, and hopefully other counties would join in future.

Both the Midlands and Northern CWG's have provided proof of the value of working together and they have also offered to help the South West get things going. Once the South West is up and running we could convene the National County Working Group to coordinate and support each other on a much broader and bigger scale. Hopefully, that in turn would encourage the South East and Eastern counties to take part.

The benefit and value of the CWG's is now well understood. As always, it needs people to commit the time to it to make it work. Thankfully, the CWG's have proven that the initial investment in time has led to lasting improvements and increases in county membership.

Membership

For some time the Board has been concerned about our levels of membership. These have been stagnant for several years. The situation has been made worse year on year by the increasing number who never play in one of our affiliated clubs, at least not in a formal session. That number is slowly growing both as a figure but also as a proportion of the total. This problem is made worse by the steady ageing of our membership where the average age now is probably just short of 70 years old. For the smaller clubs, which form most of our affiliates, that puts an increasing strain on the few stalwarts who run them.

In Autumn 2016 the Board acted and decided there should be a pilot Membership Campaign. The Yorkshire Contract Bridge Association was chosen to partner the EBU and lead in this venture. They in turn set up a small management team and appointed a part time Regional Development Officer, who became the first point of contact with active clubs. The approach has been one of joint development with the EBU providing financial support for the marketing development and materials. This was helped by a €3000 grant from the European Bridge League.

The YCBA style has been one of mentoring and gentle support with individual clubs being encouraged and helped to take the lead in running a membership drive in their own catchment area. To date 25 clubs have been approached and 13 are running their local campaigns. With the occasional exception the Campaign has been a great success. About 200 new members have been generated with one club increasing their number by a third.

Reports to the Board containing more detailed information on the statistics and the early results of the Campaign can be seen here -

www.ebu.co.uk/documents/miscellaneous/MEMBERSHIP-CAMPAIGN-THIRD-REPORT-Sept-17-combined.pdf

Several key conclusions have arisen from this work.

The experience has been that once convinced, clubs are remarkably enthusiastic in pursuing a membership campaign. It is almost as though they had been waiting for someone to

crystallise their concern and encourage them to deal with it. The gentle approach sometimes threw up novel ways of campaigning. Word of mouth and the use of targeted Facebook advertising seem to be the most effective. Finally, the direct costs for a club to run an effective campaign can be as little as £200.

Recently your Board agreed to start a roll out of the Campaign to other areas. At the time of writing we are in discussions with 3 Counties whilst Manchester working with Merseyside & Cheshire have started their campaign with their own Project Officer in post.

Nationally we have appointed a Membership Development Officer, Tim Anderson, who initially will be working in this area for two days per week. Among his duties will be the development of a Resource Centre to assist all Counties and clubs that wish run a campaign and the offer of support where ever it is needed.

It is worth pointing out that we lose about 3500 members through natural wastage every year. Given the average age of our membership that is to be expected. However, it means that all the effort put into teaching throughout the country merely enables us to stand still.

This Campaign aims to take us beyond that situation, ensuring a successful future for our organisation at all levels

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'.

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

Some further highlights

- **Media coverage**

The verdict in the VAT case at the European Court prompted a significant amount of media interest, though several planned pieces and interviews were cancelled once the (less controversial, and therefore less interesting) result was known.

Nonetheless, some pieces, including interviews with Board Members or staff, were included on news programmes on both ITV and the BBC, and some national and local radio stations. The result, and some of the issues surrounding the case, were reported in all national newspapers, in many regional and local publications, and in many publications around the world. In most instances the reporting was neutral in tone, though often not factually accurate. Our media monitoring service estimates the value of the coverage in the printed media to be around £15m – though as 2/3 of

the coverage was in outlets outside the UK, this figure should be treated with caution.

Despite efforts to engage with the national press regarding the junior teams' participation in the World Youth Team Championships, disappointingly the only coverage of the event was in their bridge columns, and nothing was reported in the 'main part' of the papers.

- **IT and Data matters**

We are still not entirely over the problems associated with the replacement of our membership database software and some members are inconvenienced by not being able to see a complete current record of their accounts. We are aiming to provide a solution to this, but it is proving to be less simple than one might imagine.

We have introduced a new online shop, which uses the Shopify software and provides a much improved shopping experience for members. We have also made our first steps in to selling products via Amazon, which we hope will attract custom from those who are unaware of the Bridge Warehouse.

The introduction of the General Data Protection Regulation in May led to us having to tighten up some of our procedures, but in the process allowed us to provide clubs and counties with new information and reports that we expect them to find useful.

A combined EBU and EBED directory of bridge clubs and teachers, with a geographical finder feature, has just been launched and we hope it will be expanded in due course to include tournament directors.

- **Staff**

Julie Murray, our receptionist for over six years, has left and her place has been taken by Liz Goodchild, moving across from the Bridge Warehouse. Liz's place in turn was taken by Emma Gardiner, but she too is now moving on and will be replaced by Steve Walker.

Clare Burnage, our accounts assistant, has just had twins so is on maternity leave, but we look forward to welcoming her back to work in due course.

Peter Stockdale is leaving us after more than five years as Communications Officer.

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 currently two shareholder meetings a year, one of which is an annual general meeting held in November and the other a Shareholders' Meeting held in May. This report will be presented to the shareholders for discussion at the Annual General Meeting on 28th November 2018.

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 2017 – 31 August 2018

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

Honorary Counsel

David Ewart QC

Pro Bono Advisor (*The Pro Bono Adviser advises any Defendant charged with an Offence on the procedure set out in the Disciplinary Rules if requested to give such advice by the Defendant*)

Stephen Barnfield

Disciplinary Panel (*a panel drawn from this group hears and decides on cases that are prosecuted by the panel named below*)

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

Prosecution Panel (*a panel drawn from this group conducts prosecutions on behalf of the EBU*)

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

EBU Pie Charts of income and expenditure 2017-18

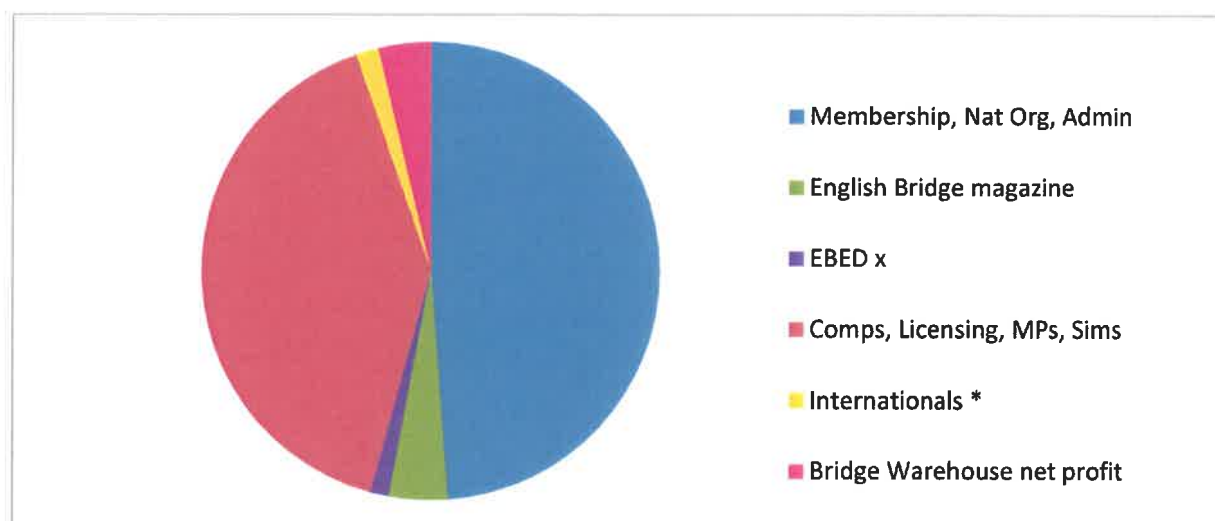
	INCOME	EXPENDITURE(£,000s)
Membership, Nat Org, Admin	706.8	-546.0
English Bridge magazine	59.3	-167.6
EBED ^x	18.8	-95.8
Comps, Licensing, MPs, Sims	586.3	-493.3
Internationals [*]	22.6	-143.10
Bridge Warehouse net profit	54.2	
	1,448.0	-1,445.8

^x English Bridge Education and Development charity

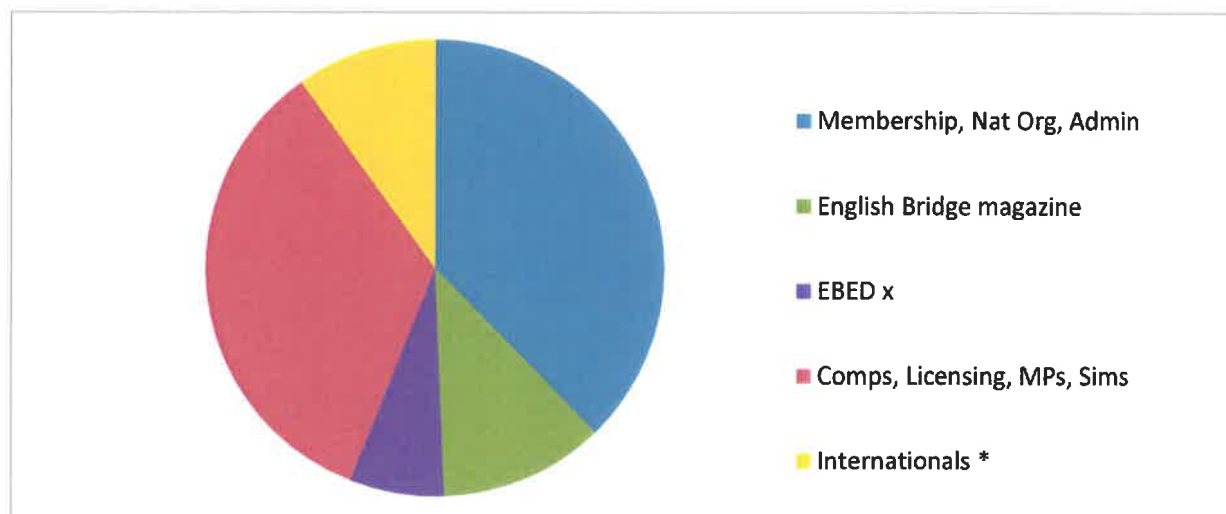
^{*} Ave of last four years as Internationals finances vary according to a four-year cycle

2017-18 Internationals: 28.3 -134.0

INCOME



EXPENDITURE



Appendix B

REVIEW OF 2013-2018 STRATEGY: BIDDING FOR THE FUTURE

Introduction

1. This is a review progress against our 2013-2018 strategic objectives, under each of the original 10 sub-strategies.

Governance and Charitable Status

2. We have made progress in a number of key strands in this area. EBED is established, we are simplifying our governance, eg removal of the Tournament Committee, and generally apply the principles of the Charity Good Governance Code. We are more involved worldwide, and our communications are improved, albeit some of our stakeholders would still like more. We haven't found the resource to do much on volunteering, although this was the subject of some preliminary work by one of the County sub-groups.

Supporting Bridge and Securing the Future

3. In terms of the 2 main strands identified for action, promoting the game and supporting our international players, we have made good progress, including setting up and running an U16 international squad for both boys and girls, but we or more precisely EBED has made only a little headway with attracting charitable donations. Further progress, particularly in supporting our international teams, has to some extent been constrained by financial pressures.

Relationships with our Counties and Clubs

4. We established new County Working Groups, but they have had mixed success geographically. Following a review with County Chairs in the summer, they are being re-launched. We have provided additional popular support to Clubs (eg Insurance and equipment grants) and in teaching, often but not only through EBED, including the Telegraph advertisement and other initiatives set out in the Education heading below.

5. In the remaining two areas of this strategic strand, both related to attracting non-affiliated players, our efforts are still progressing but membership has remained more or less constant. It continues to be problematic to balance making the EBU a value-added benefit to Members, whilst gaining some relationship with non-affiliated clubs, which largely, but not entirely, we have delegated to EBED. The action around low-cost ways for people to learn bridge was devised to make our potential charitable status clearer, and perhaps, given we went down the EBED route, has proved not to be a priority for the EBU.

Education

6. We set EBED clear priorities, and provided funding, in improving teaching both generally and in schools particularly and were set and remain as their priority areas, for which the EBU provides the funding. The new Fast Track Bridge teaching programme has been launched after careful trials, and looks like being a success. Progress in schools is, maybe not surprisingly, slower than hoped with huge competition for time and resource in schools. But activity continues and a number of areas are running strong programmes for younger players eg the Regional Junior Camps and a successful programme in Stamford BC.

7. Separately the EBU has attracted EBL part-funding to set up a pilot of attracting new players to our Clubs through teaching. Yorkshire has led this trial with a selection of Clubs, and with help from Aylesbury, and following an evaluation of the results, this is now being rolled out with dedicated resource.

Tournaments and Regulations

8. On tournaments, we have regularly reviewed our tournaments and have introduced new ideas, eg point-a-board, as well as rationalising others. We are not alone in world bridge in looking at decline in attendances, but there are some signs of stability or even improvement in selected events.

9. On online, we are not the leading provider, but we have introduced successful competitions, including with robot partners and opponents and an increasingly popular online knock-out tournament. We have partnered Funbridge in extending our online reach, and participation has been excellent and above expectation.

10. On regulation we have improved presentation of the rules, as well as simplifying some aspects. It is fair to say that many members will always find the rules complex, but we can be satisfied with progress here. And an online forum has been set to facilitate discussion.

International Teams

11. Our international teams have had a good record, and we have increased our support for junior teams, within the constraints of financial pressures and other priorities.

12. We successfully hosted the Champions Trophy.

13. We are more engaged with the EBL, and are pushing them towards greater transparency, albeit change is slow.

Technology

14. We have made good progress across all the elements of this strand. We use a blended form of communications, including making an enhanced magazine available online; We continue to push forward and trial the use of new technology at our congresses; We have

online tournaments clearly established; and the website was improved, albeit a further refresh may well be appropriate over the next couple of years.

Our Employees

15. Overall there has been progress in this area, albeit continued effort remains appropriate. We have introduced more systematic communication between the Board and Aylesbury, and our employees are very supportive of, and committed to, what the EBU is trying to do. We have managed to ensure our employment packages are competitive both on a general and particular basis, and we have successfully reformed our sick leave provision. We have a Succession Plan. Finally, we analysed alternative premises, but decided instead to stay where we are and made some investments in improving our current building.

Archives

16. The EBU's archives have been reorganised, and are now more accessible, and generally our attention to this area has improved. A history of bridge, volume 1, was also commissioned and published.

Communication and Reporting

17. We have reported on our progress, through the Annual Report, through more Newsletters to particular audiences, and through as open as possible publication of our own Board and Sub-Committee minutes.

Conclusion

18. We have generally made good progress in taking forward our 2013-2018 Plan, but a few areas were deprioritised or found more difficult than we hoped (eg converting non-affiliated clubs) and the economic climate has been tighter than was being forecast for the 5-year cycle. The strategic areas identified 5 years ago remain valid and are being built upon for the next 5-year Plan. In particular, we need to create the financial headroom to invest in retaining and if possible improving, our membership numbers to safeguard the future of duplicate bridge.

NUMBER OF MEMBERS BY COUNTY AS AT 31ST MARCH 2018

NB The numbers below include anyone designated as a member on the EBU database as at 31st March 2018.

County	31 March 2018								31 March 2017							
	UM0	UM1	UM2	Direct	Juniors	Bridge for All	Total	Clubs	UM0	UM1	UM2	Direct	Juniors	Bridge for All	Total	Clubs
Avon	49	76	576	14	2	13	730	5	103	85	602	13	3	3	809	5
Bedfordshire	23	39	290	17	0	1	370	5	19	46	251	19	0	0	335	5
Berks & Bucks	842	503	1872	40	44	107	3408	34	829	530	1884	51	42	26	3362	35
Cambs & Hunts	135	140	513	8	69	1	866	14	121	127	497	8	69	2	824	13
Channel Islands	111	54	197	4	6	1	373	7	115	70	181	4	4	1	375	7
Cornwall	77	112	389	3	1	14	596	13	93	67	417	5	1	2	585	13
Cumbria	93	50	333	11	10	2	499	5	75	59	330	10	11	9	494	5
Derbyshire	187	154	605	2	7	7	962	14	120	138	613	5	5	8	889	14
Devon	161	191	937	18	4	20	1331	22	176	227	984	20	2	25	1434	23
Dorset	58	93	352	17	1	5	526	6	71	91	363	20	0	8	553	6
Essex	416	258	1231	28	5	24	1962	26	466	254	1276	30	2	55	2083	27
Gloucestershire	122	120	603	15	5	4	869	12	147	148	592	17	5	10	919	13
Hants & Isle of Wight	144	233	1097	43	5	49	1571	22	168	282	1083	44	1	24	1602	22
Herefordshire	107	50	305	5	0	0	467	9	84	55	327	7	0	0	473	9
Hertfordshire	202	308	1282	37	15	124	1968	22	253	305	1327	49	8	143	2085	22
Isle of Man	3	18	60	5	0	14	100	2	4	14	72	5	0	0	95	2
Kent	403	356	1676	32	23	83	2573	32	413	394	1760	39	21	76	2703	32
Lancashire	177	231	1522	22	1	44	1997	11	410	204	1325	49	1	31	2020	10
Leicestershire	140	119	648	25	4	5	941	13	133	108	608	26	3	33	911	12
Lincolnshire	139	114	521	8	3	0	785	12	167	103	512	10	4	1	797	12
London	458	348	645	124	48	12	1635	12	440	360	668	124	38	26	1656	13
Manchester	245	226	804	58	30	6	1369	11	221	249	812	53	32	32	1399	9
Merseyside & Cheshire	172	178	662	17	6	4	1039	8	178	142	711	24	1	9	1065	8
Middlesex	183	248	528	95	20	33	1107	12	284	207	522	105	19	52	1189	10
Norfolk	103	134	740	11	2	13	1003	22	88	127	735	12	3	30	995	22
Northants	211	204	811	3	10	0	1239	11	215	182	802	6	1	0	1206	11
North East	226	202	1035	10	3	33	1509	21	250	176	1052	10	5	26	1519	21
Nottinghamshire	82	96	485	11	4	6	684	10	89	96	520	13	5	4	727	10
Oxfordshire	245	272	1032	17	157	74	1797	22	277	259	1003	23	137	71	1770	19
Somerset	72	132	606	23	0	37	870	16	75	117	601	24	0	17	834	15
Staffordshire/Shropshire	38	136	638	26	2	0	840	12	44	136	695	33	2	1	911	13
Suffolk	89	148	720	8	2	21	988	21	104	209	695	13	1	56	1078	20
Surrey	1057	752	3201	92	5	83	5190	47	903	834	3223	98	4	115	5177	48
Sussex	271	355	2016	25	27	65	2759	28	435	447	2003	23	27	59	2994	30
Warwickshire	489	311	1686	17	21	50	2574	14	466	334	1710	16	7	29	2562	13
Westmorland	6	36	155	2	0	0	199	2	19	27	142	3	0	2	193	2
Wiltshire	112	143	674	15	6	59	1009	15	101	141	669	16	5	95	1027	15
Worcestershire	68	80	473	15	9	22	667	12	45	99	482	18	8	30	682	13
Yorkshire	513	488	2615	21	25	89	3751	35	519	534	2541	23	16	91	3724	34
Non County Members*	42	25	54	365	43	18	547	1	19	21	44	399	40	0	523	1
	8271	7733	34589	1309	625	1143	53670	618	8739	8004	34634	1467	533	1202	54579	614
Affiliated Clubs								618								614

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.