

NEBA Council Meeting on Wednesday, 15<sup>th</sup> October 2025 at Chester-le-Street Cricket Club at 10.30 – 11.30a.m.

Present:

Marion Curran (Chair)

Graham Cox (Vice Chair and Wearside Rep.)

Catherine Farrell (Secretary)

John Portwood (Chief Tournament Director and Bishop Auckland Rep)

Nigel Durie (Darlington Rep)

Andy Clarke (Whitley Bay Rep.)

Colin Mitchell (Stannington Rep.)

Ken Reed (Castle Morpeth Rep.)

Johnathan Lilycrop (Durham Rep.)

Peter Avery (Brunton Rep.)

Andy Pryor (Hexham Rep.)

1. Apologies for absence: Jill Armstrong (Webmaster), Bill March (Treasurer), Helen Wildsmith (Chief Tournament Secretary and Congress Secretary) Audrey Bainbridge, Bev. Godfrey and Paul Ingoe.
2. The Minutes of the last Council Meeting in March were accepted as a true record.
3. Matters Arising: Are covered under the Agenda.
4. An item deferred from the Executive Meeting on 3<sup>rd</sup> July (Item 11) was considered by the Council. The paper had been circulated in advance. Council unanimously confirmed that it was satisfied with the current shareholder arrangements. Council did not support the other points raised, with the exception of a wish to see the Blue Book simplified/clearer, it was noted that the EBU reviews the Blue Book annually and is currently working to improve readability, and that the Laws (Yellow Book) are revised periodically. Council also noted that future proposals for Council consideration should be submitted via club representatives in the usual way.
5. The 2025 Congress Secretary, Helen Wildsmith has health issues at the moment, and the numbers for the upcoming congress are lower than expected but if we cancel we would be liable to pay about £5,500 . It was unanimously agreed that we go

ahead with the Congress and have a last minute push from the clubs to try and increase the numbers.

6. Teaching update : Durham reported that they have twice as many students this year than last year. The prices are pitched around £4 for lessons. Hexham has 27 new students and they pay around £8. Wearside charge upfront for the course and the students pay per term. For the intermediate level Durham reported that they have about 20 students and charge £30 for 10 lessons. Brunton has 30 students in year 3 and their afternoon session has 4-5 tables . Darlington has about 12 students. Brunton has 20 in the first year and 12 in the second year.
7. Student progression – the difficulty is getting students to progress to the clubs Castle Morpeth pointed out that their biggest problem is the number of non EBU clubs in the area where they now play. Stannington has a gentle bridge session on a Thursday morning with about 3 tables but recently has risen to 4/5 tables.. We have had some success in moving some of them into the club having had about 4 of them move up and enjoying it.
8. The Online League – is ready to go and runs itself (it is now up and running)
9. Chronicle Cup – Heats are run in the clubs with the dates published on the NEBA website. If a non-member wishes to compete in another club they should notify the club in advance of their intention.
10. Volunteers for sub committee to look at future events. Bev. Godfrey who is on this sub-committee wants more people from clubs to look into promoting more friendly and sociable events.
11. Anniversary Simultaneous pairs a number of clubs have signed up for this event (which has now run and was very successful)
12. The Charity selected for the Sim. Pairs was Dementia UK.
13. A.O.B. The recent death of Dave Thompson from Durham Bridge Club was mentioned as he had been the Congress Secretary a few years prior.
14. The next meeting will be around the middle of March 2026 – date and items to be discussed will be circulated about 4-6 weeks in advance.

15. The meeting closed at 11.30a.m. The Executive meeting which was scheduled to take place afterwards was cancelled due to being inquorate.