

President:
Mr Harold Curran

Vice President:
Mr Jim O'Sullivan

The Irish Bridge Union



MINUTES IRISH BRIDGE UNION

A meeting of the Irish Bridge Union Council was held on Monday 16th of August 2021 at 7.00p.m.

Present:

(NIBU) Harold Curran (Incoming President), Anne Fitzpatrick (Joint Hon. Secretary/Treasurer), Heather Hill, Helen Hall, Michael McFaul, Ian Lindsay, John Murchan, Brian Mullin

(CBAI) Jim O'Sullivan (Outgoing President), Martin Brady (Joint Hon. Secretary/Minutes), Rhona Bolger, Peter O'Meara, Pat O'Mahony, Pat Duff, Aileen Timoney, Emer Kee, Gordon Lessells

In attendance: Dermot O'Brien, Paul Porteous

1. Apologies

No apologies were recorded.

2. Minutes of the meetings of 10th August 2020 and 6th November 2019

These were adopted on the proposal of Michael McFaul, seconded by Ann Fitzpatrick.

3. Matters arising

There were no matters arising.

4. Review of Standing Committee meeting, 8th July 2021

The Standing Committee (Jim O'Sullivan (President), Martin Brady (Joint Hon. Secretary), Anne Fitzpatrick (Joint Hon. Secretary/Treasurer), John Murchan (Convenor International Committee)) met to discuss the issue of stipends for teams participating in the Online Qualifier for the World Teams Championships. Harold Curran (Vice President) had been recused on account of a personal interest in the matter under discussion. John Murchan was co-opted to take his place.

Although the NPCs of the Irish teams participating in the WBF qualifier in August had been informed of the IBU's decision not to award grants for teams participating in this tournament, three NPCs had written to the IBU requesting that the decision be reconsidered. The meeting considered these requests, and agreed that there was no reason to overturn the decision already communicated to all players at the time of selection. The Joint Honorary Secretary wrote to these captains reiterating that no grant will be paid.

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The Committee also noted that insurers will not be taking liability for COVID-related incidents. The Joint Honorary Secretary also wrote to all captains informing them of such and formally requesting they follow all COVID-related guidelines at all times, as IBU will not be accepting liability.

5. Secretary's Report

The Joint Honorary Secretary reported on competitions, results, and activities between August 2020 and August 2021. The report was adopted on the proposal of John Murchan, seconded by Emer Kee.

6. Treasurer's Report

Over the 2020-21 financial year the Union had seen an income of €37,254 and expenses of €15,475, for a surplus of €21,779. Despite this, the circumstances of 2020-21 were exceptional, and once COVID-19 restrictions were lifted, significantly higher outgoings were expected. In particular, due to expanding international commitments, and the need to budget for possible qualification for World Championship events, the Union was facing a significant deficit of €68,190 for the next four year cycle, including provision for qualification for the Bermuda Bowl, D'Orsi Bowl or Venice Cup. This would result in a projected closing balance of €46,963 at the end of the 2024-25 financial year, insufficient to sustain another four year cycle.

Discussion focused on the urgent need to address this shortfall, and as a related issue, the importance of emphasising the work of the IBU to grassroots players of both constituent associations. The following points were raised:

- Emer Kee suggested that international teams should be encouraged to seek sponsorship: the onus should be on the players who wish to travel.
- Notwithstanding the above, John Murchan noted that the financial burden on international players was significant and the stipend was small (€90 *per diem*).
- Brian Mullin noted that NIBU clubs were already struggling and it was unfair to ask them for support while the focus was on recovering from COVID restrictions.
- Harold Curran and Peter O'Meara noted that the short-term focus of the IBU should be on fundraising and outreach.
- John Murchan proposed the formation of a fundraising committee.
- Jim O'Sullivan suggested a national draw, and invited Harold and Peter to take the lead on that.

Considering all the above, Council nominated a fundraising committee of Harold Curran, Peter O'Meara, Seamus Costello, Anne Fitzpatrick and Martin Brady, to liaise with Dermot O'Brien and draw up specific proposals.

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The report was adopted on the proposal of Helen Hall, seconded by John Murchan.

7. International Committee

John Murchan reported on International Committee's activities, particularly the organisation of trials for the European Championships and the nominated teams to play in the upcoming Online World Teams Qualifiers. The report highlighted the onerous financial burden currently placed on players and the consequent need to develop a robust publicity and fundraising strategy.

The question of how a team of four might select its third pair was raised, and will be discussed at the next meeting.

8. Irish Youth Bridge Committee Report

Dermot O'Brien reported on IYBC activities. There was very little expenditure during the year and some fundraising activity, including private donations and a screening of *Aces and Knaves* organised by Thomas MacCormac. The report was adopted on the proposal of Emer Kee, seconded by Martin Brady.

9. Competitions Report

The Joint Honorary Secretary circulated a list of winners and placings for the 2020-21 season. Online competitions were not as well attended as live competitions, but saw better profits because of much lower overheads. In particular, it was noted that the Club Pairs was much better attended in its online format.

John Murchan asked about the costs of holding our online heat for the World Teams Qualifier. We had paid entry fees of €2600, and would pay a *per diem* allowance to the official Observer. We would also recompense the EBL for the cost of an observer for Hugh McGann, who was permitted to play from New Zealand.

10. Outgoing President's Report

Jim O'Sullivan remarked that he had been honoured to be voted in as President in 2019. The IBU was still an unknown quantity to most CBAI and NIBU members, and urged Council to remedy that. The IBU represented a great opportunity in promoting bridge across Ireland, and was particularly fortunate in its current officers, not least Paul Porteous, whose institutional memory of Irish bridge was a great asset to the organisation. He wished the new president well.

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Harold Curran was then elected president (on the proposal of Jim O'Sullivan, seconded by Michael MacFaul) and received the chain of office. At this point Harold took the chair. He thanked Jim for his efforts and service on the IBU's behalf.

11. Election of officers and committee

- Vice-President: Peter O'Meara (proposed Emer Kee, seconded Anne Fitzpatrick)
- Joint Hon Secs: Martin Brady (proposed Gordon Lessells, seconded Heather Hill)
Anne Fitzpatrick (proposed Gordon Lessells, seconded Heather Hill)
- Treasurer: Anne Fitzpatrick (proposed Helen Hall, seconded Jim O'Sullivan)
- Emergency Cttee: The President, the Vice-President, and both Joint Hon Secs.
- Finance Cttee: Both Joint Hon Secs (one in her role as Treasurer), Ian Lindsay, Harold Curran, Peter O'Meara, Joe Moran. CEO to be in attendance. (Proposed Aileen Timoney, seconded Emer Kee)
- International Cttee: John Murchan (convenor), Sam Hall, Elva Gannon, Diarmuid Reddan. (Proposed Martin Brady, seconded Brian Mullin.) A fifth member will be co-opted, bearing in mind the specifications of the Terms of Reference.
- IYBC: Karel De Raeymaeker, Hugh Gormally, Mairead Haugh, Pat Johnston, Sandie Millership, Margaret Murphy, John Phelan, Wayne Somerville. Luca Crone is player representative. (Proposed Gordon Lessells, seconded Peter O'Meara).

12. Correspondence

49 suspensions were noted, the vast majority for unfair play online.

13. AOB

Aileen Timoney reported that the Cavan Crystal Hotel was keen to accommodate us when we returned to online play. Their support, and her work in liaising with the hotel, was noted and appreciated.

Gordon Lessells asked if a report had come in from the 2019 D'Orsi Bowl team, and John Murchan promised to bring physical copies to the next meeting.

Harold Curran thanked all delegates for their time, work and expertise, and above all highlighted the many contributions of Paul Porteous, of whom he could not speak highly

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enough of all his contributions to Irish bridge. Harold thanked Paul for his worked and wished him all the best for the future.

Peter O' Neasa

28/2/22

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