



MINUTES

1. Registration of proxies and apologies for absence:

The following members' proxies were registered.

Roger Morton, Tom Townsend, Charles Moore, Alan Webster, Roger Fellows, Hugh Nobes, John Hitchman, Andrew Clery, Justin Wickens, Carol Regulski, Roland Gronau, Matthew Hendrickson, Jim O'Donoghue, Ken Barnett, Robert Balchin, Ian Casselton and David Burn.

Present: Mike Hill (MH chairman), Ian Payn (IP), Brian Callaghan (BC), Susi Behrmann (SB), Chris Duckworth (CD), James Smith (JS), Sati McKenzie (SM), Ned Paul (NP), Dave Muller (DM).

Apologies: Roger Morton (RM), Nigel Freake (NF), James Smith (JS), Steve Eginton (SE), Ronald Ling.

2. Minutes of the AGM of 15th July 2010

No points of accuracy were raised.

3. Matters arising from these minutes

None

4. Chairman's Report

2010 was the first year in which most EBU and county subscriptions were paid via Pay-to-Play. The Association envisaged a significant fall in county subscription income as a result, given that only about half of London's clubs remained affiliated from April 2010, and took steps to reduce costs, particularly of printing and postage. These were successful, with the result that the accounts for the year show a small surplus.

Other successful innovations were the Association's first Café Bridge event and the expansion of the London Trophy to allow bridge clubs to participate, albeit whilst maintaining the limits on ranked players. It is to be hoped that both will continue to develop.

For the third year running, our performance in the Tollemache Cup and Metropolitan Cup gave us nothing to celebrate. However, our team in the Pachabo Cup restored a little of our confidence by finishing a very creditable third.

People

Christine Duckworth has continued to shoulder the bulk of work for the Association as county secretary, editor of the newsletter and youth officer. And as if that were not enough, she is taking over the organisation and administration of the London Trophy for the forthcoming season.

Sati McKenzie has, however, run her a close second. Whilst continuing to run the leagues, the Champions Cup and the London Championship Teams of Four for the Ian Gardiner trophy and act as the committee's minutes secretary, she also took on the role of treasurer. As a result, we now have accounts for 2008, 2009 and 2010.

Roger Morton managed the county aspects of the transition to Universal Membership. He collected all the relevant membership data and ensured that all players registered with London allegiance were identified and, where necessary, reminded of the need to pay a direct subscription. He also continued to maintain the Association's website.

Sadly, we lost two hard-working and long-serving committee members. Simon Cocheme and Cecil Leighton both stood down from the committee at the AGM. Our thanks go to both of them for their work over a number of years.

Finance

The underlying financial position remains stable. The difficulties with successive treasurers over the last five years have been overcome and, as reported above, we now have accounts for the last three years, showing that we have continued to generate a small surplus in each. The committee has therefore agreed that it is neither practical nor necessary to attempt to create accounts for the two years still missing (2006 and 2007).

As already mentioned, a number of actions were taken to reduce costs in order to maintain financial stability in the era of Universal Membership. Our 2010 subscription income was, as expected, barely half of our 2009 subscription income but the cost savings balanced this shortfall.

Sponsorship remains a critical part of the Association's finances. The Lederer could not take place without generous sponsorship from our President, Bernard Teltscher, and the Young Chelsea Bridge Club. Similarly, the Fox Shammon Trophy, the finals of the London Trophy and the Della-Porta Plate and the London Trophy Pairs continue to benefit from venues being provided by Queen's Club and the Royal Automobile Club. Our thanks are due to them all.

The Future

We are still in the "settling down" period following the implementation of Universal Membership, some developments in bridge education and the closer direct relationship between the EBU and its affiliated clubs. Meanwhile the EBU continues to pursue the possibility of adopting charitable status and to analyse the potential costs and benefits. All of this means a period of continuing uncertainty. In the interests of its members, the Association remains committed to helping the EBU through this period

and in the process of developing the game but will need the continuing support of its members to do so. It is well placed to make this contribution as it now has two members on the Board of the EBU, Ian Payn having been co-opted to fill a vacancy earlier this year.

Following the success of the first ever Café Bridge event in England (and a follow-up one this year), we have scope for expanding that type of event. The involvement of local charities is a very positive aspect – bridge raises funds for them and they bring new participants into our events. In such ways, the Association intends to continue to attempt to develop the game and broaden participation in tandem with its support for the EBU's development activities.

5. Treasurer's Report

After several months of piecing together bank statements, event organisers' reports, invoices and receipts, I am now in a position to present accounts for the three years 2008-2010. They have been inspected and verified by our honorary auditor. Apart from the implementation of P2P, there are no big changes from previous years. Our membership income is certainly down as a consequence of P2P, but savings made in other areas have meant that we managed to break even and even make a small profit each year. The main thing to report is that we have now resolved the problems of the past and collected all the relevant information together. Complete and accurate accounts should be available at future AGMs. Our current bank balance stands at about £11000 - a healthy state.

6. Adoption of accounts for 2008-10: Proposed by Brian Callaghan, seconded by David Muller and agreed *nem con*.

7. Subscriptions (inc. P2P) for 2012-2013:

The chairman proposed that the committee be given the mandate to raise the direct subscription (county share) by up to £1 and the P2P levy by up to 2p if it should prove necessary. This was seconded by IP and agreed *nem con*.

8. Elections to the Executive Committee

Three members (SE, JS and NF) resigned and stood for re-election. In the absence of any new candidates, all three were declared elected. There is still a vacancy on the committee which we will attempt to fill.

9. Appointment of honorary auditor

Mike Scoltock was proposed by SM, seconded by BC and reappointed *nem con*.

10. Member's resolution:

'The LMBA shareholders should press the EBU to ensure that all members are treated equally and that all who wish to become members are allowed to.'

In the absence of the proposer, the motion was discussed by those present.

NP and SB regretted the fact that few members showed any interest in EBU matters and therefore a lot of misunderstanding and wrong information seemed widespread.

Players can either join the EBU directly by paying an annual subscription or by playing in an affiliated club. In order to qualify to receive the magazine and diary, members via an affiliated club must play at least once a month on average. To allow for seasonal variations, illness, etc., existing members continue to receive the magazine and diary for a period even if they do not play the required number of sessions. This seems reasonable and fair.

Members without Internet access can contact the EBU to have all information sent to them in printed form. They are not deliberately excluded.

The restriction that clubs must meet at least 26 a year to be eligible to affiliate was introduced to rule out bogus clubs. The matter is under continuous review and the rule was relaxed to allow the affiliation of university clubs that meet only during term time. Also, players can join directly without playing in an affiliated club.

It was agreed that CD and JS would raise the issue from the floor at the EBU AGM in October, pointing out these issues. That is all that LMBA can do.

11. EBU Shareholders' Report

CD reported that this year had been one of consolidation rather than new developments. Some activities have been ongoing:

- A parliamentary group has been set up to promote bridge for all.
- Charitable status for bridge: this should benefit clubs and organisations as there will be more scope for seeking donations and potential tax benefits. Approval from the Charity Commission is awaited. There still remains the question of whether administrative overheads will make it worthwhile, especially for organisations with a mix of charitable and non-charitable activities.
There was some discussion of why bridge (and EBU) should qualify as a charity and whether a charity should engage in money making activities.
- EBU is seeking closer contacts with clubs and has set up national and regional club committees.
- Blue points have been introduced as a halfway house between black and green points, for the benefit of club members who do not or cannot play in green pointed events.

Any other business:

We need a new venue for the LMBA Green pointed weekend in March. NP offered to help find one.

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 8.00 pm.