

Welsh Bridge Union

Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 25th March 2007, At the Llanerch Inn, Llandrindod Wells.

Present:		
President	Daphne Patrick	
Immediate Past President	Alan Screen	
Vice Presidents:	Judith Graham-Jones	(WWBA)
	Patrick Jourdain	(EWBA)
Area Delegates:	Betty Brookes	(MWBA)
	Ken Richardson	(EWBA)
	Catherine & David Spalding	(NWBA)
	Chris Davies, Beryl Warner	(WWBA)
Chief Executive:	Linda Greenland	

Item 1: Apologies for absence

1. Apologies were received from Noelle Bond, Jean Hand, Peter Hand, Jo Davies

Item 2: Minutes of Meeting on 5th November 2006

2. The minutes were accepted as a true record.

Item 3: Matters arising from those minutes

3. Para 7. The Chief Executive reported that the WBU voice server was now up & running, enabling internet based conference calls by up to 20 people. A separate sheet was issued to giving details on how to set the service up. The Chief Executive was happy to assist anyone who felt technically challenged.
4. Para 12. Council agreed that direct affiliation to the WBU for a modest fee was a sensible arrangement for some smaller clubs and asked the Chief Executive to draft a suitable modification to the constitution for circulation prior to going to the coming AGM for approval.
5. Para 21. Mr Jourdain reported that the Buffet Cup Committee had reserved the Miskin Manor for the event, paying a holding deposit of £500.

Item 4: Reports - Chief Executive

6. The Chief Executive's report was noted.
7. Reaction to the WBU magazine had mostly been very favourable. Council's preferred option was to produce 2 x 24 page issues of similar quality per year at a maximum cost of £4000 to include production & distribution.
8. The President volunteered to investigate possible advertising in the next issue.
9. The selectors reported that the article on the Pre-trial pairs was confusing members and they did not feel it was helpful.
10. Council agreed that Council minutes could be published on the WBU website, subject to the President having 48 hours to review them first.
11. Council noted that the experiment to put a sixth team in the Camrose had been well received by the players. Council felt that the "current holders" was not an appropriate team for the event, and asked the Chief Executive to investigate the Channel Islands as a possible alternative.
12. Council agreed to rename the existing masterpoint rank of Local master to District Master with immediate effect. Council further agreed that the ranks of Premier Grand Master (1500 national points) and Premier Master (50 master points including 10 national points) and would be introduced on 1st May 2007, but that these ranks should be reflected in the forthcoming journal. Finally Council agreed to introduce the new ranks of Area master (5 master points) and (Local Master (1 master point) at some point in 2008.

13. The Chief Executive expressed concern that entries for the May Holiday Congress were being received at an even slower rate than usual, and she was concerned that the congress would not be viable. Council agreed that the Chief Executive review the event within a week and take any decision necessary to protect the interests of the WBU and players.

Item 5: Reports – Acting Treasurer

14. The Acting Treasurer tabled the accounts to date and answered queries thereon.
15. The Acting Treasurer explained her concerns about the potential consequences of Corporation tax upon the WBU, and undertook to seek expert advice.
16. A comment on the EBU Website about a recent act of parliament enabling mind sports organisations to register for charitable status had been noted. This came as something of a shock and would be followed up.

Item 6: Reports - National Tournament Organiser

17. The Chief Executive apologised to Council and the NTO for leaving his report at home when dashing out of the house. A potted summary of the report was given verbally and the CE undertook to circulate the report to council with the minutes.
18. Mr Jourdain listed several amendments that he felt should be made to the calendar. The Chief Executive noted these and agreed to amend the calendar as appropriate and circulate a copy to council and areas for comment.
19. WWBA noted the undesirable clash of Porthcawl congress with the EBU seniors in 2007, and asked for clarification of the EBU's intentions in 2008.
20. WWBA felt that the Welsh Foursomes would be better served at a venue closer to the English border than Porthcawl. The Chief Executive acting in her capacity as congress organiser advised that the Seabank had been provisionally booked for September 2007. It was agreed that alternative venues would be investigated.

Note: Subsequent to the meeting a suitable venue at Cardiff has been found. It is probable that the Welsh Foursomes will take place in Cardiff on September 1st & 2nd 2007.

21. The Chief Executive outlined the difficulties presently experienced by the NTO in ensuring that tables were available at a central venue when needed. Alan Screen undertook to investigate whether it was possible for some of the more agricultural members from Mid-Wales to collect the tables at the final event of the season, store them through the summer and redeliver at the first event of the new season.

Item 7: Confirmation of Officers

22. The West had nominated Judith Graham-Jones as the next President. Hon Masterpoint Secretary and the Hon. Auditor have indicated a willingness to continue. Linda Greenland has agreed to take on the role of Hon. Treasurer. There is a vacancy for the post of National Tournament Organiser which council is actively seeking to fill.

Item 8: Correspondence

23. Council acknowledged the letter from WWBA expressing concern over the fall in participation in WBU competitions and the report from the Chief Executive giving reasons for this regrettable trend. Council acknowledged that there were no easy solutions, and that a review was needed. It was felt that it would be premature to carry this out in advance of the appointment of a New National Tournament Organiser and Chief Executive. It was agreed that the new NTO incumbent when appointed in May should call a meeting of

the Tournament & Masterpoint Committee as a matter of urgency to consider the matter and report the outcome to the July Council meeting.

24. The minutes of the meeting of the Laws and Ethics committee on 11th November 2006 were received by Council.

Item 9: Any other Business

The Junior Co-ordinator Elaine Sharp, together with her husband Keith, the NPC of the U20 team, joined the meeting at this point.

25. 11 juniors and 3 adults had formed the Welsh contingent at the Junior Home Internationals in February in Ireland. All the juniors had been inspired by the event and were keen to play next year – the captains had agreed to continue. The teams had performed very creditably given their relative inexperience.
26. It was agreed that in principle the WBU wished to send 2 teams to the Junior Home Internationals every year, and under normal circumstances to send at least one junior team to the junior European championships when they are held – subject to suitable adult supervision being available. The offer of the World Bridge Federation relating of free full board accommodation for Juniors attending in Beijing was discussed. The Chief Executive was asked to investigate forthcoming events, and potential costs and report back to the Junior Co-ordinator and Council.
27. The Junior Coordinator outlined discussions with the EBU aimed at Welsh Juniors joining in EBU junior training events, and an idea to join with other countries to hold a junior international event that was less formal and formidable than the Junior Camrose as a means of breaking players in gently.
28. The Junior Coordinator also outlined plans to make promotional video/DVD at the training camp at Loughborough whose message is “Bridge is Fun”
29. Council agreed that the Junior Coordinator had an annual budget of £1200 to use for training purposes as she saw fit.
30. The Junior Co-ordinator explained that she would like to expand the work being done with juniors, splitting the function into two. One part of the job would be working with those young players already playing bridge who needed training opportunities to improve their skills. The other role, which would better use her skills, would be working with teachers schools and universities trying to recruit new bridge players. Council supported this idea, and was open to suggestions as to who might be brought on board to share the workload.

Council thanked Mrs Sharp for her exemplary work thus far. Mr & Mrs Sharp left the meeting at this point.

31. Seven expressions of interest had been received in the Chief Executive position. Council appointed a panel of the President, Judith Graham-Jones and Patrick Jourdain to review applications and interview potential contractors. The incumbent Chief Executive agreed to offer such advice to this panel as may be required. Council agreed a combined budget to carry out the existing Chief Executive & National Tournament Organiser functions.
32. It was agreed that it was desirable to remove tasks from the Chief Executive role that can reasonably be carried out by others. One such role was the Secretarial Function for Council.
31. Alan Screen thanked the Chief Executive, on behalf of the council, for her work in the past, and for establishing the role of Chief Executive from scratch.
32. The President reported on the NBO's seminar in Rome and current developments at the EBL. Patrick Jourdain was appointed to represent Wales in Antalya.

33. Judith Graham-Jones questioned the Chief Executive on the participation and viability of the Welsh Bridge Union Simultaneous Pairs. It was agreed that in future only one Simultaneous Pairs would be held in the period adjacent to St David's Day.
34. It was agreed that in future trophies would be presented to players at the event at which they are earned not at the AGM, and that the rightful caretaker of such trophies is the National Tournament Organiser.
35. The President expressed concern that it was undesirable for Welsh Squad players to be "picky" about who they are teamed up with. The Chief Executive reported that the selectors were aware of the problem and had the matter in hand.
36. Alan Screen reported upon the possibility of the Club at Rhayader affiliating to Mid Wales.
37. The President reaffirmed the principle that only the WBU should licence bridge events issuing masterpoints in Wales.

Meeting closed at 15:01