



26/07/21

President's Newsletter

Many of you took the time to comment, mainly positively, after receiving the summary AGM report, and the separately circulated President's AGM report.

Since the AGM, SBU Council have met on the 13th June and 23rd July, continuing the necessary practice since March 2020, of meeting every 4-6 weeks.

There are a number of key personnel changes to report but I shall kick off with some important updates.

Planning Bridge for the Future

Following the June issue of the Covid Risk Assessment template and update of where, in the Scottish Government's Guidance Documents, indoor bridge playing lay, it was noted at the July Council meeting that from July 19th, there had been further lessening of restrictions for "events" on the Government Web site.

However, the Government had themselves now issued a related Events guidance template which still suggested considerable precautions to be exercised on site. Allowing for the fact it covers all types of "events", you may wish to consider this additional information found on the relevant Government site, under, Covid-19, events sector guidance, July update.

The Working Group will continue to monitor the situation and issue further guidance when it would be useful.

Towards Corporate Status

Council was updated by Alan Goodman at the June and July Council meetings.

Your District Chairs have had presentations on an outline of the proposed new structure with a timeline for implementation. This may have already been fed back to constituent Clubs.

The intention is to ensure that the SBU becomes Incorporated hopefully, by the year end.

This will obviously result in a Board, with elections at General meetings, and therefore the persons in overall charge will not, de facto, be your District Chairs, although of course as individuals, they can stand for Election.

Such a structure should strengthen Governance throughout the SBU and better protect its officers.

This is clearly an important step for us all and one which you should be best prepared for before an EGM to be held on 30th August.

Various dates will be shortly issued for an audience with SBU officers led by Alan Goodman to which all club secretaries will be invited so that they can hear first- hand about the proposed new operational structure. If you would also like to be invited, please let me know.

Your interest and input are essential to the process. It is your SBU and your future and we are asking for your help to decide it.

Prior to the post AGM meeting where Convenorships are ratified, it was explained to all those present that these posts may change in the new structure, both with regard to their scope and also whether or not they remain stand alone.

It is envisaged too that the future Convenorships will have much closer working relationships with Districts, and during the next few months some of the realigning will start.

Changes within Convenorships & other key posts.

The SBU Home page should be shortly updated with Council Membership, Convenors and their Committees, but here is some background detail of any changes.

L & E – At the post AGM Council meeting, Russell Frame was approved as the new Chair of L&E, Liz McGowan stepping down after many years' service. Liz's considerable contribution to the formation and compilation of all the earlier Disciplinary Procedures & Protocols and her wise counsel on TD disputes was acknowledged.

The July Council meeting noted with regret Brian Short's resignation as Chair of the Investigation Panel. Russell Frame, as chair of L&E, and myself as President, paid tribute to Brian's service. He had, over a fairly short timescale, built up and trained, a formidable workforce. He had spent many hours drafting the SBU Disciplinary Code, working with Mike Ash under the stewardship of the Chair of L&E, to best ensure good practice Disciplinary Procedures.

Council acknowledged that the work undertaken by an Investigation Committee in any Disciplinary Investigation takes a considerable toll of the Investigators' stamina. Their essential painstaking contributions must continue to be acknowledged and supported.

Iain Taylor has been appointed as the Chair of the Investigation Panel.

He should therefore be your contact from now on, in suspected cheating cases:-

idtkauf@gmail.com mobile number 07821 722195.

Following the first case to reach a Disciplinary Panel and a conviction, in April 2021, Council had commissioned a review of the revised Disciplinary Procedures. The July Council meeting agreed that a small Working Group should be convened under the Chairmanship of Alan Goodman as a matter of urgency to complete this task.

Tournament Committee

The Online Tournament Committee and existent Tournament Committee have merged. Fiona Greenwood took over as Convenor at the post AGM meeting, following Anne Coles' resignation.

The considerable debt that the SBU and members owed to Anne Coles was acknowledged. She set up, with support from Anne Brodie-Allan and the Online Tournament Committee, the various SBU virtual Clubs on BBO, ensured that a trained and "finished" BBO TD workforce was available to nurture bridge playing at all levels, and started populating the SBU on line Calendar.

Again, mention was made of the sacrifice these SBU volunteers make as they dedicate so many hours to keep us playing in as safe an environment as possible.

Education Committee

Sam Punch, Convenor, helped reinvigorate bridge Education within Scotland. Her post was seen as a partnership between BAMSAs- "Bridge, a MindSport for All", her academic, research-led project that explores the social world of bridge and the benefits of mindsport, and the SBU. Sam had announced at the post AGM meeting that she wished to stand down when a worthy successor was found.

Sam's convenorship has encouraged many new initiatives, highlighted in the AGM President's report, and more continue to develop. Two further new teaching Hubs have emerged, and exciting partnerships are being developed in the world of teaching of Bridge in Schools between various SBU initiatives and Sue Johnson of the New Tricks Bridge Club.

The future of bridge in Scotland in relationship to bringing in and nurturing young talent looks very promising. Alisdair McLeod, Junior Coordinator, is fully involved in these initiatives which are increasingly co-ordinated.

Council was delighted to welcome Marina Evans to the post from the 5th July.

Finance Committee

Sarah Gunn has been approved as the new Finance Convenor, subject to a transitional "handover period" with Fiona Greenwood.

Fiona has been an extremely productive and hard-working Finance Convenor. Working closely with the Tournament Convenor and Master Point Policy Convenor she has streamlined and rationalised charges, prizes, MPs etc across the spectrum of District and SBU events. She has continued the work of her predecessors to best ensure Financial Governance, a task which she readily admits is a "work in progress".

Sarah will work closely with Scott Macdonald, SBU Treasurer, as she eases into the job hopefully to start the transition into our new operating Structure.

BGB

Mike Ash has announced that he is stepping down as the SBU rep on Bridge Great Britain, which convenes all the various Home Internationals.

Mike has served us well in the post helping successfully promote our interests, in particular this year with regard to additional substituting during on-line matches.

July Council were delighted to approve Liz McGowan's appointment to the post.

SBU News

In recognition that the new Structure will likely promote Marketing and Promotion as an entity, it is understood that the SBU News as we know it, will likely be subsumed within an emerging more proactive communication policy. I know that this is an area dear to many of your hearts.

If any members have an interest or expertise in these areas and would like to help the SBU please get in touch with me at president@sbu.org.uk or 07768989397 for an informal chat.

Your ideas and comments, as ever, are welcomed.

Best Wishes,
