

**Minutes of a Meeting of the SBU Board of Trustees
held on 8 October 2024 at 6.00 p.m.**

In the Chair: Alan Goodman

Present:

Ian Patrick
Jean McLaren
Gavin Easton
Robert Ferrari
Ronan Valentine
Sarah Gunn
Mike Hodder
Martyn Halsall (CEO)

Apologies:

1. Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest.

2. Minutes of the last Meeting

The Minutes of the last meeting were approved.

3. Matters arising from July 2024 Board Meeting

None that are not on the agenda or have been delegated to the CEO.

4. Finance

1. The finance committee met on 1/10/24

:

- Procedures need to be confirmed with the Director of Selection and NPCs as to how requests are lodged for funding for individuals competing in home internationals.
Action: CEO, Financial Controller and Director of Selection
- Procedures need to be confirmed with Director of Selection and CEO as to how requests are lodged for funding for juniors competing at international level.
Action: CEO, Financial Controller and Director of Selection
- Final costs to be agreed for Camrose 1, so a decision can be made by finance committee as to the final sum invoiced for all players.
Action: Financial Controller and Finance Committee (December meeting)

2. Trustees report 23/24 (draft)

The Independent Reviewer has completed most of the work on the financial statements 23/24. Currently there are no unexpected issues arising from the independent Review and the figures are broadly in line with the forecast position as stated in the budget process (Jul/Aug 2024)

The draft Trustees' report was tabled for trustees' approval as final text for the 23/24 accounts. All figures will be inserted by the Independent Reviewer for sign-off of the accounts at the December Board meeting. The Finance Committee have agreed the wording in the text.

Action: Trustees to agree text with final numbers coming for approval and signing December 2024.

5 CEO Update

The Operational Plan Update

Some key posts remain vacant due to CEO bandwidth and difficulties attracting appropriately qualified volunteers. The absent posts of Education & Development and Comms/Marketing/Tech are temporarily covered by the CEO and remain a high priority. We have migrated to our new accounting platform – Xero.

SBU virtual clubs have been advised of the introduction of “administrative charges”, the primary purpose of which being to create additional income to meet SBU overheads.

SBU Hub Trial first event and debrief completed. SBU NAS trial commenced as potential more secure replacement for SharePoint and Dropbox. Dialogue with new first line tech support outsourcing commenced.

SBU Hub Briefing Paper

The paper was noted.

7. Risk Register Update

The Board considered a series of recommendations following the review of SBU's risk register by the Board's risk group.

Proposed Additions/Deletions to the Risk Register

The group were of the view that at this stage none of the risks should be removed from the register. Similarly, the group did not propose introducing any new risks at this stage.

Proposed amendments to Existing Risks

The following was agreed by the trustees.

- All references to General Manager have been amended to CEO.
- Risk 4 – The group recognised that the appointment of a CEO had significantly reduced the likelihood of this risk materialising and therefore the group propose that the RL should be reduced to 1. In addition, the Group proposed that the Mitigating factor in relation to the CEO should be ‘Succession planning for CEO.’
- Risk 5 - The Group felt that Membership numbers decreasing did not pose a significant financial risk to the SBU and proposed amending the Cause accordingly. However, they felt that the development. of alternative sources of income should be a mitigating factor. No amendments to the Risk Scores were proposed.
- Risk 6 - The Group felt that ‘Growth of online Bridge’ was not a cause of the decrease in the number of Affiliated Clubs and that there had been no significant or relevant increase in the number of direct members. The group proposed amending the Cause to that effect. The Risk owner did not propose any change to the Risk scores.

- Risk 7 - The Group felt that BBO is no longer a cause of decreasing membership and proposed amending the Cause to that effect.
- Risk 8 - The Group proposed that the CEO becomes the Risk Owner of this Risk. The Group recognised that there was often a lack of clarity in what the SBU needs from volunteers. Many retired members with the appropriate skill sets do not wish to undertake the same task that they did in their working lives. The Group proposed amending the Cause to that effect. While a long-term solution may be the recruitment of salaried staff this is not viewed as a realistic mitigating factor at present.
- Risk 9 – The Risk Owner proposed some changes to the cause of this risk as he felt that he had been successful in recruiting volunteers and had the resources needed at present. The Group concurred with the Risk Owners view that the Risk Scores did not need to change.
- Risk 10 – The Group were of the view that the appointment of a CEO was a significant factor in mitigating this risk and therefore proposed that the RL is reduced to 1 thereby reducing the Residual Risk to Medium.

Mapping

At present there is no mapping between the Risks and the Strategic Goals.

The Risk Group feel it may now be a suitable time for the Board, rather than just the Risk Group, to review the Risk Register and to consider the relationship between the Strategic Goals and the Risk Register. As an example, there is no Strategic Goal or Strategic Objective related to Finance, whereas three of the Risks relate to Finance.

The Board agreed this would be a suitable topic for the forthcoming away day. **Action AG**

8. Away Day Agenda

A discussion took place suggesting important topics for inclusion on the agenda. **Action AG**

9. Youth Project Update

Michael (Youth Education Coordinator) needs board authorisation for permission from the FFB (France) to translate their resources into English - their textbooks are an excellent resource for teaching bridge as a school lesson.

The FFB requested the following:

"Before doing so, we would need a letter of your President with SBU letterhead stating that you agree to use "Le Petit Bridge"/other documents with the kind permission of the "Fédération Française de Bridge", and that you acknowledge that the manuals and related documents, as well as the trademark, are the property of the FFB. We want the name to remain "Le Petit Bridge" (or similar names). All printed material must bear the words "by kind permission of the FFB".

The Board agreed that such a letter should be sent to the FFB's General Manager, Valérie Besse, after which they will send us all the documents accessing their 4-year teaching aids.

Action AG

Michael put forward to the board that membership for U31s becomes free and to collect their personal information (including DOB). We currently have 73 such 'members' of whom 34 are active and 39 are lapsed. Of the 34 who are active, 20 have joined through a club and 14 have joined as direct members. Michael proposes that we create a youth form to fill in, which would bypass the requirement for bank details and would allow us to check their DOB to confirm they are under 31. The membership fee is £6 per player, which would cost us £204 *per annum*.

This would deal with the issue of U31 members lapsing, as it is nearly always because they haven't paid, rather than they've formally left.

The Board rejected the proposal to remove any charge on the basis that although it was only a nominal amount, giving anything for free often meant it would not be valued. This was evidenced at the recent National League weekend when some U31s failed to turn up or were late for an event that had no entry fee for them.

The EBL is making a funding application under Erasmus+ which is the EU's programme to support education, training, youth and sport in Europe, and that I've volunteered SBU's support to the project. The application is being drafted and will be submitted before the mid-October deadline. The application is looking for the funding of school camps for young primary school kids learning to play bridge using Le Petit Bridge. If the application is successful, we will be given the opportunity to utilise some of the funding for the benefit of Scottish kids. This should tie in nicely with our general plans and our keenness to use Le Petit Bridge.

Michael asked for clear and measurable success criteria to help him achieve success in his role. This has been provided to him, in the form of short- and long-term goals, based on his planning. The advisory group will review this document and note progress as appropriate. This will allow for transparency and accountability. **Action AG**

10. L&E Committee Update

The Chief Tournament Director is an ex officio member of the committee and with Chris Miller having taken over this role from Angus MacDonald, Chris has also replaced Angus as a member of the Laws and Ethics Committee.

The Committee thanked Angus for his contributions to the Committee.

The Board noted that the Committee also agreed a reduction in a sanction levied under the Disciplinary Code in 2022.

11. Any Other Business

None

Date of next meeting 10 December at 6.00 pm

Future dates: Away Day 8 November – New Melville BC (10.30 for 11.00)

