

**Minutes of a Meeting of the SBU Board of Trustees
held on 4 February 2025 at 6.00 pm.**

In the Chair: Alan Goodman

Present: Ian Patrick
Gavin Easton
Robert Ferrari
Ronan Valentine
Sarah Gunn
Mike Hodder
Jean McLaren

In attendance: Bob McKinnon (Ops Coordinator)

1. Declarations of Interest

None

2. Minutes of the last Meeting

The Minutes of the last meeting were approved.

3. Matters arising from December 2024 meeting

Issue	Update
Mapping between the Risks and the Strategic Goals	Referred to Risk Group meeting 24 Feb
Youth Project – letter to FFB	Completed
Communication with the EBU to find out what they do with regards to the allocation of their contingency funds for international subsidies (both youths and adults)	After 2 follow up emails no response from the Board at EBU. SG with the co-operation of Joan Forsyth and Ian Patrick devised a simple form to accompany applications for funding.
Operational Structure appointments	OC recruited. Other positions being sought as per the OC report
Implementation of Safeguarding recommendations	MH confirmed all recommendations are completed or are in hand.
IT Support Options to be considered	Being actively considered by the OMT
L&E Committee Change to be implemented	Completed
Data Protection control being reviewed	IP investigating our options in February

4. Finance

- a) The Board noted the minutes of the Finance Committee meeting held virtually on 23 January 2025. It was noted that the FC is investigating possible alternative membership income models to create greater equity. More detail will come to the Board at a future meeting.
- b) The Board approved for signature the Financial Statements and Trustee's Report for the year ended 31 August 2024. Updated amendments to the current organisational structure with the Operations Co-Ordinator in post were noted and agreed. Otherwise figures and text were as agreed in the draft tabled at the October 2024 board meeting.
Action SG

5. Ops Plan Draft and Data Reporting

MH presented an updated draft of the revised Ops Plan template. The trustees agreed that this was a significant improvement in format, and we should now accurately update the content including more detail on progress and metrics.

It was suggested that the Plan activities need to align more closely with our published strategic plan. Each of the Goals has stated Strategic Objectives which should align with the Ops Plan activities. There should also be alignment of activities with risks identified in the Risk Register.

Comments to be given to MH within a week. A more complete Ops Plan will be presented at the March Board meeting. **Action MH/OC**

6 Ops Coordinator Update.

- In consultation with the Team Leaders, it has been agreed that OMT meetings should take place every two months, the first being beginning of March. Juliet Vivers has agreed to continue as Secretary/Minute taker to the OMT.
- Anne P has acted as Match Manager for the Home Internationals for some time. She has re-iterated her intention to retire from this role. She is willing to do the Junior event in Feb 2026 on condition that her successor(s) are in place to shadow her. Allan and Clare Whiteford have agreed to shadow Anne at the 2026 Junior Camrose weekend with a view of assuming the role.
- The Overseas Congress in conjunction with GEBOS runs at a profit and is enjoyed by the participants. It should continue provided numbers hold up.
- Peebles Congress is enjoyed by those attending but the number of SBU members attending is less than 1% of the membership. Without entries from England, it would

struggle to be viable. The hotel contract is up for renewal in March. Serious consideration should be given to its future. The Board agreed that a sub committee be formed to consider the structure and viability of a National Congress. **Action OC**

- There is the ongoing problem of tying up entry fees with participants. Efforts are ongoing to resolve this problem. **Action OC**
 - Comms coordination and website editor have been previously identified as crucial roles. To date no one suitable has been identified.
 - Marina E is keen to have regular meetings with the smaller clubs. The Chair and Vice Chair will meet with the larger clubs.
 - We should start to target non affiliated clubs, such as those in St Andrews, to persuade them to affiliate. JM detailed the success in Kelso where efforts have been successful in building bridges and some integration of members.
 - The Education committee meets every six weeks but urgently requires communications support. Lack of experience makes tasks simple to an expert extremely time consuming.
 - A draft calendar for 2025/2026 has been prepared. Once published, events will not be changed. It is important that members can plan bridge activities in advance knowing that dates will not be changed.
 - Britannia Hotels have offered to sponsor an online bridge event run by the SBU with substantial prize money. Mike Ash has been asked to co-ordinate the event. Preliminary discussions have taken place between the Chair, Mike and the Ops Co.
 - A recent human error highlighted how complicated, manual and error-prone is the MP allocation process. A review of the process is underway, and any system changes required will be prioritised to avoid a re-occurrence.
 - Some small bugs and potential minor enhancements to the MemPad system have been identified. The only major enhancement in the pipeline is the change to allow clubs to process their own files.
 - Processing of membership for the 2024/25 season is now complete. The team are working on the process to migrate members across from Buchanan, GBC and St Andrew clubs to the new Clyde club.
- Post meeting: The total SBU membership as advised to WBF is 4,465 including 16 under age 26.**
- The team are about to clarify the process of notifying deceased members by club secretaries. This will be combined with a reminder on the updated Good Practice Guide for Clubs on Safeguarding in an imminent mailing to club secretaries.
 - Tentative talks have taken place with a member of the Implementation Group of the Clyde BC and the West District regarding the 2026 Commonwealth Games. It has been agreed to hold an exploration meeting in Glasgow in the coming weeks to decide whether it would be viable. Any event would require to be self-funding with no financial commitment from the SBU. **Action OC**

7. Re-structuring of SBU's Youth Bridge

A restructuring of the Youth Education area is currently being considered; Joan F and Laura M are in discussions with the Chair on allocation of responsibilities. A residential Youth Camp aimed at 11-18 year olds has been arranged for July.

8. EBL Workshop Feedback

- The IOC has decided to hold an Olympic e-sports Games, with 3 different categories which includes bridge in its Simulated Sports Games category. Further details will follow.
- Membership numbers are falling across Europe. For example, Dutch membership numbers have reduced from 95,000 pre Covid to the current level of 65,000. Average age of their membership is 74.3.
- Overall, Holland has a total of 450,000 who play bridge, with 60% of that total group being younger than 60. They are currently trying to market to this large non club membership. The EBL Development Group has initiated a marketing subgroup to create ideas that will help NBOs to acquire new members.
- The French Bridge Federation (on behalf of EBL) has secured 60,000 Euros funding from the Erasmus + project for the development of youth bridge. It must be used for educational benefit. Scotland can't get direct benefit (because we are non-EU) but will indirectly benefit from the learning that accrues. The project will be overseen by University of Vienna. Development of youth bridge is a priority across Europe.
- AG is chairing the youth bridge group that plans to organise a pan European summer camp for financially disadvantaged children in the summer of 2026.
- A programme exists in major French cities to create a community of younger bridge players (broadly 18-40). It targets students and young professionals meeting weekly in an accessible central location. They must be run by dynamic local hosts and the teachers must be under 40. It is free to participants with entry anytime of the year. Funded by FFB for 2 years, expected to be self-financing thereafter.
- France has developed a platform on their website that accesses existing apps such as Zoom, BBO, Funbridge etc, creating an "all in one" teaching tool, with supporting tutorials, avoiding the need to keep switching between Zoom and BBO for example.
- Collaboration and information sharing is universally seen as essential if the game is to survive. The bigger countries like France and Holland have a real wish to share with smaller NBOs
- Teaching programmes, teaching material, and marketing initiatives that have been developed by other NBOs, and access to expert advice and repositories of information are freely available.
- EBL isn't resourced to drive the growth of the game so must rely on NBOs. Similarly, NBOs need to rely heavily on their districts and clubs. **The whole bridge community of governing bodies and clubs must work together with the aim of growing membership numbers.** This is universally accepted. This is a key message we must get over to our clubs.

9. AOCB

None

Date of next meeting – 11 March 2025

