

**Minutes of a Meeting of the SBU Board of Trustees  
held on 11 March 2025 at 6.00 pm.**

In the Chair: Alan Goodman

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

In attendance: Bob McKinnon (Ops Coordinator)

Apologies: Jean McLaren

**1. Declarations of Interest**

None

**2. Minutes of the last Meeting**

The Minutes of the last meeting were approved.

**3. Matters arising from February 2025 meeting**

<b>Issue</b>	<b>Update</b>
To agree Trustees Report text with final numbers coming for approval and signing	Completed
Mapping between the Risks and the Strategic Goals	Completed
Subcommittee be formed to consider the structure and viability of a National Congress.	Work in progress. Members being surveyed to inform decisions
Re-structuring of Performance and Selection structure	Anne Symons will chair the selection committee- Board ratified the appointment
Operational Structure appointments	Other positions being sought as per the OC report
Problem of tying up entry fees with participants in Nat Comps	New software being piloted
Viability of hosting 2026 Comm Games	Insufficient resource available so won't proceed
IT Support Options to be considered	Being managed internally. No contracted external agency required

#### 4. Finance

- a) The Board noted the minutes of the Finance Committee meeting held virtually on 27 February 2025. Nothing exceptional arose in the finances to 31 January
- b) Bob McKinnon has spoken to Gordon Rainsford - CEO of the EBU. Gordon has said the initial implementation of their “pay to play” scheme faced considerable push back at the beginning but has proved a success. On a practical level it is easy to implement but it took considerable effort and time to persuade clubs and members of the benefits. The Chair reported that Marc and Gordon Milne echoed exactly what Gordon Rainsford had said. Although a lot of detail needs to be pinned down regarding implementation, we need to spend a lot of time planning a communication exercise with clubs and members. Implementation will not be in 2025 to allow plenty of time and notice being given. **Action AG/SG**
- c) The Board noted the trend in decreasing numbers of players for National Events, coupled with the increase in some clubs’ venue hire costs. The SBU relies on a surplus made on national competitions and congresses to fund a large part of the activities.

#### 5. Risk Register Report

The following amendments to the Risk Register were agreed

- a) The addition of a column entitled ‘Relevant Strategic Objective’ to the Risk Register and populated the column with relevant strategic objective related to each risk.
- b) It was recognised that there was no strategic goal directly related to the Risk ‘**Young members are subject to abuse or exploitation**’ although the RR group believed this was a risk to the SBU and should be retained on the register.
- c) It was recognised that there was no risk corresponding to Strategic Objective 4. **Scotland develops players, so that the results in international competitions rank highly against comparably sized and funded NBOs.** A new risk relevant to this strategic objective has been added.
- d) It was agreed that the Risk Owner of risks 5,7 and 8 should be amended to be the Operations Coordinator.

#### 6 Data Protection Report.

Following the resignation of the Data Protection Officer, the Data Protection Policy has been reviewed with the help of the Director of Corporate Services at Glasgow Kelvin College, Lisa Clark.

The Board accepted her recommendation to have a Data Privacy Notice rather than a Policy which is consistent with the approach taken by many organisations including that adopted by the EBU. **Action IP**

A couple of issues were discussed:

Date of Birth/Year of Birth- Despite WBF eligibility rules for Youth and Senior competitions being based on Year of Birth rather than Date of Birth, the majority view was that we should capture and store Date of Birth. This was deemed to be more normal, more flexible should there be changes in future eligibility rules and create opportunities for personalised marketing to members (e.g. sending birthday messages). Giving dob will be purely voluntary. Existing members will be able to add dob to their own personal information on Mempad if they so wish.

Consent to share email addresses- The way in which the SBU seeks consent to share the email address of members was discussed. It was agreed that SBU will not give member addresses to external agencies.

Trustee Contact - It was agreed that a trustee (Ronan) would become the contact for any Data Privacy queries from members. His contact details will be included in the notice.

## **7. Operations Coordinator Update**

- a) Ops Plan update was tabled. More metric detail was requested in the Ops Plan, although it was recognised that the OP is being amended with a view to have a more robust document for 25/26.
- b) Concern was expressed about how the Overseas Congress contract was structured regarding free places and profit share. The matter was referred to the FC for consideration.
- c) OMT recommends under 26s pay no membership fee – this will be taken forward to the AGM. They also suggest a resolution is tabled to prevent changes to membership fees midyear. It was agreed that such a resolution was unnecessary since our Byelaws stipulate that membership fee changes require Board approval at an AGM. The recent midyear waiving of junior fees was made as a purely practical measure to reduce admin.
- d) Ronan has been asked to put together a Comms Plan to address our concerns about the efficiency and quality of both internal and external comms. **Action RV**
- e) Education will be separately managed between Youth and Adult to ensure more focus can be given and convenor workloads reduced.
- f) The youth summer camp needs to be more strongly marketed, and Board members were asked to add weight to the efforts being made.
- g) The inaugural Britannia Hotels pairs will take place in September with very generous sponsorship and prizes. Any profits are designated to be used for funding youth teams playing in international competition.
- h) A survey will be conducted amongst those members who play in national competitions to determine what changes are necessary to improve participation. **Action OC**
- i) The considerable amount of work being done by the Youth Advisory Group was noted.
- j) Report for the Trustees was tabled on the Club Liaison Zoom initiative held on 25/2/25. The meeting objective was to get the Bridge club community together and for clubs to better understand what the SBU does and why members should care that

it exists. Additionally, the SBU needs to better understand what matters to clubs so we can improve communication and increase transparency and trust. This is the start of an effort to increase inclusivity on both sides. Whilst smaller clubs appreciate our help, some of the larger more successful clubs appear less interested in working with us. Based on feedback received the meeting was very worthwhile and should be repeated.

## **8. Informal meeting with larger clubs**

Representatives of NMBC, the new Clyde Bridge Centre and Aberdeen BC met with Alan and Sarah to start addressing some of the key issues for SBU and for bridge in Scotland. The first meeting focussed on the trend across Europe, including Scotland, that the numbers playing bridge are falling. It was intended that future meetings will include a wider range of topics.

It was agreed that

- We must try to halt and reverse the decline in numbers of bridge players
- Increase the number of people in Scotland playing bridge and as a result, increase the number of members of SBU and its affiliated clubs
- We not only do we have a responsibility to develop our own clubs, but we also have a ***collective responsibility*** to help grow the game in Scotland.
- This informal forum is very useful and should meet regularly, expanded to include a broader cross section of larger clubs. It would focus on the more strategic issues whilst Marina's forum would concentrate with all clubs on more operational issues.
- Both NMBC and Aberdeen will encourage and be supportive of youths, but their primary focus will remain in attracting those age 45+.
- The new Clyde BC want to be proactive in both attracting youths and targeting the 20-40 age group.
- The Chair will draft a strategic paper relating to the 20-40 age group for Board discussion

## **9. AOCB**

Directors are required to stand for re-election if they wish to continue after three years. This applies to 5 of the current directors. Each director must decide in advance of the next Board meeting whether they wish to continue. This will be discussed at the next Board meeting.

Action All

**Date of next meeting – 15 April 2025 at 6.00 pm**

