

Scottish Bridge Union (SC051361)

2nd Annual General Meeting

Virtual Conference Tuesday 23 May 2023 at 7.00 pm

Agenda

1. Notice of Meeting
2. Apologies
3. Minutes of the 1st Annual General Meeting and Matters Arising
4. Trustees' Report – Report from the Chair
5. Resolutions (see below)
6. Statement of Accounts
7. Election of Independent Examiner – The Trustees propose that Henderson Loggie be re-appointed as SBU's independent examiner
8. Trophy Winners and International Representation
9. Any Other Competent Business

Resolutions

5.1 Member Resolution - Proposed by Bill Ross, Seconded by Emily Garden

This AGM approves that all SBU national events, which were in place prior to the pandemic, be played face to face with effect from 1 September 2023.

See Appendix A [attached] for the response of the Board of Trustees to this proposal.

5.2. Member Resolution - Proposed by Ann Wickens, Seconded by Rosemary Miller

We propose that the people suspended during Covid for online offences be permitted to play in clubs face to face. They would still be banned from national events.

See Appendix B [attached] for further points made by the proposer and the response of the Board of Trustees to this proposal.

5.3. Board Resolution

In accordance with Byelaw 1.1, the Trustees propose that the annual membership subscription be £12 from 1 September 2023.

See Appendix C [attached] for an explanation of this proposal from the Board of Trustees.

Appendix A

The resolution will be valid only if passed by a majority of those voting on the Resolution at the AGM (clause 55 of the Constitution)

Resolution 5.1

5.1 Member Resolution

This AGM approves that all SBU national events, which were in place prior to the pandemic, be played face-to-face with effect from 1 September 2023.

Proposed by Bill Ross, Seconded by Emily Garden

Board Response to Resolution

One of the Board's primary objectives is to promote the Bridge game in Scotland. We recognise that while some members prefer face-to-face Bridge, others want to play in online competitions.

The Board believes that the proposal in the resolution is too restrictive because it requires that all pre-Covid competitions be played face-to-face. The Board considers that a more flexible approach is better. That will be important, particularly should there be further pandemic restrictions.

The Competitions Committee has proposed that most traditional SBU competitions be face-to-face next season.

The Board considers that this flexible approach better meets the needs of our membership for the following reasons.

- Geographically, it makes it possible to run events accessible to all members – particularly shorter events where excessive travel is impractical.
- Online competitions allow players to participate in popular events which are logistically difficult to organise face-to-face. Individuals are an example.
- Online competitions are less time-consuming for players and organisers, reduce CO2 emissions substantially and are less expensive.

The Board, therefore, recommends that members reject the Resolution as stated.

Appendix B

The resolution will be valid only if passed by a majority of those voting on the Resolution at the AGM (clause 55 of the Constitution)

Proposal to SBU AGM by Ann Wickens, Seconded by Rosemary Miller

I propose that the people suspended during Covid for online offences be permitted to play in clubs face to face. They would still be banned from national events.

Reasons

- 1.** While I do not in any way condone cheating in bridge, and supported the stance of the Scottish Ladies, offences here were committed during a very difficult and unusual time for people and relate solely to online play.
- 2.** Clubs currently require all the members they can get both for viability of play and for help in administration.
- 3.** Under the WBF guidelines, the SBU have a duty to rehabilitate. So far, I am not aware of any attempt has been made to rehabilitate. This proposal would be a start.
- 4.** The SBU is now a charity, and it is time to show more consideration to both clubs and members concerned.
- 5.** Some of the penalties were unusually harsh. The penalties do not appear to reflect the introductory words to the SBU's paper on "Reprehensible or Unacceptable behaviour - Suggested Sanctions" (October 2021) which say: "Sanctions will be imposed by members of a Disciplinary Tribunal in line with WBF guidelines but every effort will be made to apply them fairly and with full consideration of any known factors that ought to influence the severity of application."
However, the penalties appear more severe than those set out in that paper, or those that would apply under WBF Guidelines."

EBL Disciplinary code <http://www.eurobridge.org/regulations/other-codes-and-regulations/the-code-of-discipline/>

WBF recommended Sanctions.

(1) Collusive cheating – pre-arranged methods of arranging unauthorised information by a partnership

: 1st Offence: Life ban from playing with that partner and a 10-year suspension from participation in Zonal and/or National events.

2nd Offence: Permanent ban from participation in Zonal and/or National events.

(2) Obtaining information relating to hands – actively seeking information regarding hands not yet played:

1st Offence – 1-year suspension from participation in Zonal and/or National events

2nd Offence – 5-year suspension from participation in Zonal and/or National events

(3) Inadvertent cheating – obtaining information regarding a hand not yet played and then acting on that information when the hand is played:

1st Offence – warning

2nd Offence – Suspension from participation in Zonal and/or National events for up to 2 years

Board of Trustees Response

There are five SBU members currently suspended. The Resolution, if passed, would result in an immediate return to face-to-face bridge for three members, reducing the impact of sanctions levied by the SBU Disciplinary Tribunal, one of which was already reduced by the SBU Appeals Committee.

The other two cases had sanctions levied by the English Bridge Union (EBU). We have no power to change the sanctions levied by the EBU. Indeed, the European Bridge League [EBL] has more recently reminded all National Bridge Organisations (NBO) that the principle of reciprocity should apply where NBOs receive formal notifications of each other's suspensions. This means that members would be defying specific advice from the EBL if the Board is mandated to apply the proposal in all five existing cases.

Regarding the three native SBU members, due process was followed in all cases. The SBU Disciplinary Code (DC) dictates that the decisions which follow our internal procedures, including any apposite appeal, are final; the only scope left to those sanctioned is to go to arbitration, following procedurally, the 27 November 2020 revision of the World Bridge Federation [WBF], Code. Those receiving sanctions from the SBU did not choose to seek arbitration. Our current practice is that those found guilty of online cheating should have any sanctions applied to both online and face-to-face bridge. This is in line with the practice of other NBOs.

The SBU, on a number of occasions, has stressed that it is a condition of membership of the SBU that members agree to the Disciplinary procedures and processes referred to in the DC. At the same time, the Board recognises that in the ever-changing platforms and opportunities to play bridge, we must continually seek advice from members, our fellow NBOs, the EBL and the WBF to do our best to ensure that all aspects of our DC are proportionate, fair, and importantly, most likely to prevent the occurrence and recurrence of cheating.

The Board has already set up a Working Group to review all aspects of the Disciplinary Process and the associated sanctions, mindful of our responsibilities as a member NBO of the EBL and the WBF.

Having considered the matter fully, the Board strongly recommends rejection of this Resolution.

Appendix C

The Resolution will be valid only if passed by a majority of those voting on the Resolution at the AGM (clause 55 of the Constitution)

In accordance with Byelaw 1.1, the Trustees propose that the annual membership subscription be £12 from 1 September 2023.

Proposed by the Board of Trustees

Background

Byelaw 1.1 states that the amount of the subscription will be determined by the Trustees by way of a Resolution at each AGM. In 2020 the subscription was reduced from £10 to £8 when Covid-19 restricted players from playing in clubs and mixing with other players. The increase to the membership fee for next year will put it back in line with what it was in 2019; it puts the SBU on a par with similar size organisations; at a rate that will support our plans for both the sustainability and growth of bridge in Scotland. This subscription will be the same for members of clubs affiliated with the SBU as well as members joining directly.

The SBU has had a productive year supporting members and clubs transition out of Covid and back into a mixture of online and face-to-face bridge. As a volunteer-led organisation that wants to work collectively with members and affiliated clubs, we have striven to sustain and stabilise our new organisation by

- Continuing an agreement with BBO, with an increased share of the revenue, which has brought in considerable income to clubs throughout Scotland.
- Providing more dedicated support to members and affiliated clubs.
- Continuing to supply a range of opportunities to play competitive bridge.
- Resourcing an overdue MEMPAD maintenance and upgrading Programme

Now, as we additionally focus on growth and development, we have

- Commissioned a MEMPAD upgrade with enhanced features which will improve the service we can provide to members and make it easier for the many volunteers who regularly use the system.
- Finalised our Strategic and Operational Plans, which seek to ensure that the SBU is fit for purpose going forward; able to both react more rapidly to members' needs but also to increasingly be prepared to be proactive in order to see a growth in the absolute numbers playing, increased participation, increased facilities for learning at all stages, and to further raise the profile of the game of bridge in Scotland. This relatively small increase should go some way to help us to begin to achieve these aims.

2023 SBU AGM PROXY DOCUMENT

Date of Annual General Meeting: 23rd May 2023. Start time 7.00 pm on the Zoom platform.

Name of individual applying to appoint a proxy: _____

Home club: SBU membership number: _____

Email address _____

I hereby request that

a) the Chairman of the meeting: **Place a cross (X) in the box to select the chairman.**

or

b) an SBU member named here: _____

be registered to act as a proxy on my behalf at the above meeting. (Complete the section on the reverse side if option b) is chosen)

I direct my proxy to vote on the following resolution as I have indicated by marking the appropriate box with an 'X'. If no indication is given, my proxy will vote or abstain from voting at his or her discretion and I authorise my proxy to vote (or abstain from voting) as he or she thinks fit in relation to any other matter which is properly put before the meeting.

Date of application: _____

Prior to casting a vote on a resolution, members should read the appropriate appendix which may contain further points made by the proposer. Any response from the Board of Trustees will also be found in this appendix.

Resolution 1(a) Proposed by Bill Ross	For	Against	Abstain
This AGM approves that all SBU national events which were in place prior to the pandemic, be played face to face with effect from 1 st September 2023. (See Appendix A)			

Resolution 2 Proposed by Ann Wickens	For	Against	Abstain
We propose that the people suspended during Covid for online offences be permitted to play in clubs face to face. They would still be banned from national events. (See Appendix B).			

Turn Over]

Resolution 3 Proposed by the Board of Trustees	For	Against	Abstain
In accordance with the Byelaw 1.1, the Trustees propose that the annual membership subscription be £12.00 from 1 st September 2023			

This section should only be completed if you wish to appoint someone other than the Chairman.

Name of individual proposed as proxy _____

Home club: SBU membership number: _____

Email address: _____

This form will be sent to the named putative proxy by the Proxy Officer. The named proxy must then confirm his/her willingness to carry out this role.

Completed application forms shall be sent to the Proxy Voting Officer. Alan Kennedy, Sanday, Panmure, Carnoustie DD7 6LW. Electronic submissions can be emailed to proxyofficer@sbu.org.uk.

Applications shall be valid only

- a) if they are received by the Proxy Voting Officer at least 48 hours prior to the meeting and
- b) if the requested information is provided. A postal address may be used in place of email.

Approved proxies will receive a letter of confirmation from the Proxy Voting Officer, which they must bring to the meeting to validate their right to cast proxy votes.

MS Word or hard copies of the form can be obtained from the Proxy Voting Officer on request.