



Scottish Bridge Union (SC051361)

4th Annual General Meeting Virtual Conference Tuesday 20th May 2025 at 7pm

Draft Minutes

1. In Attendance (31)

Alan Goodman (Chair), Mike Ash, Hasan Choudhury, Julie Choudhury, Marina Evans, Robert Ferrari, Joan Forsyth, Andrew Forrest, John Gunn, Sarah Gunn, Fiona Greenwood, Steven Henderson, Margaret Hodder, Mike Hodder, Joan Lees, Carole Lovie, Angus Macdonald, Eddie McGeough, Jean McLaren, Bob McKinnon, Gordon Milne, Stewart Morris, Ian Patrick, Anne Perkins, Sue Pollard, Andrew Symons, Anne Symons, Ronan Valentine, Juliet Vivers (Minute Secretary), David Wiseman, Sandra Wiseman

2. Apologies (7)

Damien Byron, Doris Campbell, Lesley Cochrane (with thanks to the Committee for their work throughout the year), Alan Kennedy, Julia Palmer, Bill Ross, Marc Shearer, Harry Smith.

3. Minutes of the 3rd AGM (published on SBU website) and Matters Arising

Adoption proposed by Gordon Milne, seconded by Anne Symons.

4. Trustees' Report – Report from the Chair

What we have achieved over the last financial year is covered in the Trustees Report in the Annual Accounts, but I would like to say a few words about the current year and also look forward to the future.

Since Covid I have said each year that our biggest challenge is to ensure that our bridge clubs can survive and flourish. It is great credit to those running our clubs that, unlike many countries in Europe, the number of SBU members has decreased only slightly and relatively few clubs have had to close. Club members really value the social interaction of playing face to face.

Having reestablished face to face bridge supplemented by access to various online platforms, I believe that current members are well served. The future challenge is not only to meet the needs of our members but also to ensure that more new people are introduced to the game of bridge.

Although the Festival of Bridge last September was great fun and attracted interest in the 45-65 age group, the most successful means of attracting new members is by



providing teaching and playing opportunities for potential new members. This is particularly challenging for the smaller clubs but has worked well for many clubs. Attracting youths to the game is a far bigger challenge but we are starting to make progress in an increasing number of Scottish schools, and a summer camp scheduled for July has already more than 30 children signed up.

Last year I commented on our financial position, which some members interpreted as suggesting SBU was in financial difficulty. That was never the case and continues not to be the case. What has changed over the last decade is income from congresses, traditional tournaments, masterpoints and subscriptions has fallen significantly, whilst expenses have risen. Like all businesses and organisations our aim each year is to balance our income and expenditure. Although we have healthy reserves, we can only use these reserves to fund capital projects and meet small, short-term annual funding deficits for a limited period.

The SBU has no access to lottery or government funding, so the only realistic source of income is from the members. We are seeing our traditional sources of income reducing, and we must change the income model to meet the changing needs of the organisation. So how do we propose to do that?

A significant increase in the annual subscription would be unfair on members who do not play very often and would be disproportionate to the subscription charged by most of our clubs. The most equitable means of raising income to cover costs, is to maintain an annual subscription but also create an income every time a member plays bridge face to face at their club, online or in national competitions. It is effectively a slight increase in table money for members which will be forwarded to SBU by the clubs. This “pay to play” concept is common across Europe and is generally regarded as the most equitable and practical means of funding the governing body. Those that play the most, contribute the most, as is the case in all our clubs.

We shall consult widely with clubs with the aim of introducing the new income model at the beginning of 2026. The intention is that the “pay to play” charge would replace the masterpoint charges and current BBO levy paid by the clubs.

With regards to the current year, it is our intention to withdraw the current BBO levy with effect from 1 June 2025. This retention of part of the BBO revenue share was introduced in September to meet our budgeted costs. Throughout the last 9 months we have managed to keep expenses well under budget, with salaries a small fraction of SBU’s costs and over 100 volunteers continuing to give over 8,000 hours of their time to support the running of the organisation. Consequently, the trustees have agreed to revert to passing on the revenue share in total to the clubs for their BBO tournaments. In budgeting for future costs, the SBU is mindful that despite the



considerable time given by our volunteers free of charge there is a need to outsource at a cost some of our activities necessary to deliver the objectives of the organisation.

The Chief Executive, Martyn Halsall resigned in December 2024, and we are delighted to have acquired the services of Bob McKinnon to co-ordinate the operational side of the organisation. It is critical that our volunteers get the necessary support, and the coordination to allow us to meet the needs of our members and the aspirations of the organisation.

Thanks to all our volunteers who have worked tirelessly over the last year, and a special thanks to Gavin Easton who is stepping down as a trustee today. On a personal note, I will be giving up my role as SBU Chair at the next Board meeting after 4 years setting up and running the SCIO.

It has been a challenging but enjoyable few years made possible because of the enthusiasm and hard work of our army of volunteers and the support of my Board members. If re-elected at this AGM, the Board intends to appoint Sarah Gunn as its chair. I am confident that SBU will be in very safe hands and will continue to grow the bridge playing community in Scotland.

5. Election of Trustees on the retirement of Alan Goodman, Sarah Gunn, Ian Patrick, Mike Hodder and Gavin Easton

There are up to five vacancies on the Board of Trustees. The following members applied for re- election:

Alan Goodman, Sarah Gunn, Ian Patrick, Mike Hodder. All four were re-elected.

6. Resolutions

a) In accordance with the Byelaw 1.1, the Trustees propose that the annual membership subscription remains at £12.00 from 1st September 2025 for those who are members of affiliated clubs.

Resolution passed with 35 votes, including 5 proxy votes; 1 attendee abstained.

b) In accordance with the Byelaw 1.1, the Trustees propose that the annual membership subscription for direct members is £15.00 from 1st September 2025.

Resolution passed with 35 votes, including 5 proxy votes: 1 attendee abstaining.

c) In accordance with the Byelaw 1.1, the Trustees propose that the annual membership subscription for those under age 26 is reduced to zero from 1st September 2025.



A question was asked whether the age had changed from age 31. The chair explained that age 31 is used by the EBL and WBF for its youth tournaments, which was not considered to be relevant for determining SBU subscriptions. Full time education and other age definitions were considered but age 26 was chosen for the sake of expediency and administrative ease. The chair also confirmed that clubs can determine their own age definitions and are not bound by what SBU does.

Resolution passed with 34 votes to 2 against: one proxy and one attendee vote.

7. Statement of Accounts (published on SBU website)

A question was asked about the advertising budget. Sarah Gunn explained that the spend related to the Festival of Bridge where money was spent on social media and local advertising opportunities prior to the events in September.

It is difficult to measure the effects and value of The Festival of Bridge events (appx 80). Nearly £18k was raised for Cancer Research. The intention is, once we have adequate communication leads within the organisation, to consider organising a similar event, perhaps to raise funds for youth bridge. If we do this again, we will try to have more specific criteria in place to measure success.

A plea was expressed about the need for marketing expertise from the membership to support the Trustees. This is a high priority.

A question was raised about the sharp rise in development costs. In 2023 we did a fact-finding exercise about the best way of updating our database. Sarah Gunn will reply to Stewart Morris separately.

The adoption of the accounts was proposed by Sue Pollard and seconded by Angus Macdonald.

8. Election of Independent Examiner

The Trustees propose that Henderson Loggie be re-appointed as SBU's independent examiner.

Approval was agreed, proposed by Anne Perkins and seconded by Fiona Greenwood.



8. Trophy Winners and International Representation

The chair congratulated all the winners and international representatives. Full lists have been published on the website.

10. Any Other Competent Business

There is no nomination for the 5th vacancy on the Board.

Gratitude was warmly expressed to Alan G for the considerable amount of work he has put in, establishing the SCIO and driving us forward. He stated he had enjoyed his 4 years and appreciated the enormous difficulties for clubs, members and SBU coming through Covid. The social interaction of face-to-face bridge is vital for the future of bridge. Bridge should be fun! He will remain as a trustee for a few months to help with transition and support Sarah. We have 110 volunteers, and their efforts are greatly valued.

A question was asked about lack of numbers for competitions which Angus Macdonald answered. We replicated what we did last year. There is a challenge; the numbers have dropped quite significantly. What is happening in Scotland is no different to other countries. A plea was made by the chair not to lose F2F national tournaments; we should always try to run events on a national basis, and to fit the format to meet attendance numbers. Any suggestions to Angus Macdonald would be welcome.

A minute's silence was held, to mark our respects for those members who have died in this last year.

The meeting closed 1950hrs.