



Mr President and fellow members,

I am pleased to offer this report and answer any questions.

I thank our Officers and Volunteers for their work through the year. These members work for the WBU to the best of their ability. It saddens me that they are so often unfairly criticised by those who do nothing other than pursue their own particular agenda. My message to all members who dislike the way that the WBU is managed is that if you think that you can do better, volunteer to help.

Management Committee

Most MC meetings will now use Skype Conference calls. All members will be expected to use Skype through their computer broadband VoIP as this results in better call quality and is of course free. Previous meetings held using Skype have been rather unsatisfactory, leading to the introduction of the last few normal meetings. Face to Face meetings will have a video link for those unable to attend.

An Education & Club Liaison Officer has been recruited and is presently working on a WBU Teaching Pack for Bridge Tutors/Teachers, similar to the EBUTA offering from the English Bridge Union. He will also be involved in the production of a Club Newsletter and as a contributor to the online news and chat using the website <http://news.welshbridgeunion.org>. I hope that this Club Newsletter aimed at our general membership will be enthusiastically received. A dedicated Competitions Journal is currently being drafted and will be printed shortly and also available online. The Master Point database is to be enhanced to allow all registered Users to view the Rank and Master Point holding of all WBU members who register their points in Wales. Master Point records and promotions will be published regularly online with promotions also appearing in the Club Newsletter.

Welsh Bridge Union Publications online

I don't think digital magazines should/will replace their print counterparts or even just mirror them. There is an opportunity to provide an even better experience to our members in a more cost-efficient way by making both media work together. Until digital paper becomes a fact of life – which will happen sooner than we think, it makes sense to facilitate the printing of the Journal/Year Book and Newsletters for members. This can easily be done at home or locally by download. I think we

really need to start designing publications using an integrated approach with print and digital sections. We could then consider enhancing the publications with monthly/quarterly more in-depth features and daily/weekly electronic updates, with great copy, photo spreads and shorter text augmented perhaps by videos or slideshows.

The majority of our clubs have their own websites and thus can link to an online publication. Members access club websites more frequently than the National or Area websites to view the results of their regular sessions. There will be of course be a link on all sites and this will need to be coupled with promotion of the new facility. In addition the link could also be emailed to all those members that we have an email address for. The link is simple <http://issuu.com/welshbridge>

Financial and Administrative Benefits

- Considerable cost saving over conventional printing methods

- No postage, packaging and other distribution costs

- Vast saving of time and labour because we are not required to manually send out newsletters Not only newsletters but almost any type of literature is suitable (viz. the EBU White and Blue Books)

- No costly restraints on publication size and number of pages

- Minimal production costs

- No bulky paper stocks to store, and we do not need to guess copy numbers required

Sales and Marketing Benefits

- Digital newsletters will allow us to readily penetrate a wider market, promoting our Congresses and other events.

- Our material is accessible to anyone with internet access 24/7 (we can also restrict access)

- Ability to track the number of times our literature is accessed

- Enables copy changes without costly reprints

- Helps the WBU promote a more acceptable carbon footprint

- Digital publications are of the highest quality and in flip page format with text magnification if required.

Member Advantages

- Enables existing and potential members to access our information instantly

- Digital publications are accessed simply using a normal web browser

- Easy to operate page turning and zoom viewing option

- Enables members to view our literature whenever they wish

- Removes the need for members to request our literature

- Readers can print a copy themselves or have one printed as a service by their club

WBU Journal

The Competition content is being revised and will be published as a dedicated publication.

Other Publications

The WBU version of the WBF Laws of Duplicate Bridge has been printed in spiral bound A5 format. Copies are available to Clubs and also Directors taking part in our Director Training Courses. The Laws combined with Flow Charts have also been published by the WBU in A4 spiral bound format and are available for purchase.

WBU Scorecards are available to purchase at cost.

Director Training

Fifty eight of our members have attended Director Training Courses and my thanks go to Tony Haworth for all his effort in making these sessions such a continuing success.

WBU Overseas Congress

In October the WBU and the Irish Bridge Union are staging their first joint overseas congress in Portugal organised by First for Bridge. Please promote this venture as much as you can.

Bridge Festival

An inaugural Bridgefest was held at The Commodore Hotel in Llandrindod with Seminars, workshops and relaxed bridge sessions. Considerable effort was put into the organisation of this event and we were disappointed at the level of support from members. Although rather poorly attended the event was deemed a success and similar events will be staged in future at other locations in Wales.

Juniors – European Bridge Championship and Camp.

The WBU are sponsoring two of our juniors, Alice Smart and Stephen Loat, to attend this event to broaden their experience ready for the Junior Camrose next year.

Equality Policy

Following an enquiry from a member relating to equality to following draft was prepared for consideration by Council and is appended.

Neville Richards CEO

DRAFT EQUALITY POLICY

Policy Statement

In accordance with WBU Constitution the Welsh Bridge Union's Equality Policy is mandatory for all Member Area Associations, including their clubs and individual members.

Statement of Intent

The Welsh Bridge Union has a desire and a duty to provide services fairly and without discrimination. The WBU is fully committed to the principles of equality of opportunity and will devote energy and resources to the achievement of this aim. The WBU is responsible for ensuring that no participant, volunteer, or member of an Association receives less favourable treatment on the grounds of age, gender, disability, ethnic origin, race, colour, parental or marital status, social or class background, nationality, religious belief or sexual preference or political belief.

Purpose of the policy

The WBU wishes to ensure that all sectors of the community have the opportunity to participate in the sport or game of bridge. This policy has been produced to prevent/tackle any potential/current or other unfair treatment, whether intentional or unintentional, direct or indirect, against its members, employees/officers and volunteers.

Legal responsibilities

The WBU is required by law not to discriminate against employees (present or future), members and volunteers. The Welsh Bridge Union recognises its legal obligation under the Equality Act 2010, and any relevant Home Country specific legislation that the Union needs to abide by.

The WBU will seek, as necessary, legal advice each time the policy is reviewed to ensure it continues to comply with all legislative requirements.

Commitment to equality

The WBU will

Devise and implement an Equality Action Plan to ensure the intent of this policy is delivered. Consultation with Council Members and Association members will occur when reviewing the Equality Policy and Action Plan.

Educate and guide employees, members and volunteers of the WBU on the adoption and implementation of the Equality Plan. The WBU recognises that, in some cases, to achieve the principle of equality, unequal effort is required and, if appropriate, will consider positive action to tackle under-representation.

Monitor and evaluate on a regular basis, the WBU's progress in the achievement of the aims and objectives contained within the Equality Plan.

Monitor and review the policy, practices, procedures and operational system of the WBU and keep the officers, members and volunteers informed of progress. The WBU regards discrimination as gross

misconduct and any member or volunteer who discriminates against any other person will be liable to the appropriate disciplinary action.

Principles

The WBU's Equality Policy is based upon a number of principles:

All individuals have the right to participate in and enjoy playing bridge as a sport or game.

All personnel involved in bridge are responsible for creating an open and friendly environment for anyone wishing to participate in the sport or game.

Discriminatory behaviour will not be tolerated within bridge.

All allegations and incidents of discrimination or other such unfair treatment will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly in accordance with the WBU's policies and procedures.

Discrimination, harassment and victimisation

Discrimination can take the following forms:

Direct Discrimination. This means treating someone less favourably than you would treat others in the same circumstances (e.g. on the grounds of sex or race).

Indirect Discrimination. This means applying a requirement or condition which, whether intentional or not, adversely affects one group rather than the other. When decisions are made about an individual, the only personal characteristics taken into account will be those which, as well as being consistent with relevant legislation, are necessary to the proper performance of the work or activity involved.

Harassment. This is described as inappropriate actions, behaviour, comments or physical contact that is objectionable or causes offence to the recipient. It may be directed towards people because of their gender, appearance, race, colour, ethnic origin, nationality, age, sexual preference, a disability or some other characteristic. The WBU is committed to ensuring that its members, participants and volunteers are able to conduct their activities free from harassment or intimidation.

Victimisation. This is defined as when someone is treated less favourably than others because he or she has taken action against the WBU under one of the relevant Acts/regulations (as previously outlined) or provided information about discrimination, harassment or inappropriate behaviour. The WBU regards discrimination, harassment or victimisation, as described above, as serious misconduct and any employee, Area Association, Officer, volunteer or member who discriminates against, harasses or victimises any other person will be liable to appropriate disciplinary action.

Responsibility, implementation and communication

The Management Committee Members are responsible for ensuring that this Equality Policy is followed and dealing with any actual or potential breaches. The Chief Executive of the WBU has the overall responsibility for the implementation of the Equality Policy. All volunteers and members have responsibilities to respect, act in accordance with and thereby support and promote the spirit and intentions of the policy and, where appropriate, individual work programmes should be amended to include equality related tasks. The policy will be implemented immediately following ratification by Council and the Management Committee.

A copy of this document will be available to all Area Associations, members and volunteers of the WBU. The WBU will take measures to ensure that its roles within the organisation are non-discriminatory. No applicant for any role will be placed at a disadvantage by requirements or conditions which are not necessary to the performance of the role or which constitute unfair discrimination. A planned approach will be adopted to eliminate barriers, which discriminate.

The WBU will also ensure that Tournament Directors and other contractors used by the WBU can demonstrate their commitment to the principles and practice of equality and that they abide by this policy.

The policy will be communicated in the following ways:

It will be deemed to be part of the Constitution.

It will be covered in all staff and volunteer induction training

It will be included in the formal Coaching syllabus and any Selection process.

All Area Associations, Officers and members will be made aware of the policy's existence when they join.

It will be available on the Web site www.wbu.org.uk

At time of review, a mechanism will be put in place to allow all Area Associations, Officers, members and volunteers to be part of the process.

Monitoring and evaluation

Once approved, the policy will apply for three years before a formal review takes place, unless any proposal to the Management Committee, or legislative change, requires an interim review and/or amendment. The Chief Executive and the Management Committee, on a yearly basis, will review the Equality Action Plan, to ensure the intent of the policy is delivered.

Exemptions

The WBU reserves the right to limit competition or participation on health grounds to persons of a specific age, gender and/or ability group, where it is both appropriate and necessary to ensure equitably safe competition and/or practice.

Disciplinary and grievance procedures

To safeguard individual rights under the policy, an Area Association, Officer, volunteer or member who believes he/she has suffered inequitable treatment within the scope of the policy may raise the matter through the appropriate grievance procedure. Appropriate disciplinary action will be taken against any Area Association, Officer, volunteer or member who violates the WBU's Equality Policy. An individual may raise any grievance and no Area Association, Officer, volunteer or member will be penalised for doing so unless it is untrue and not made in good faith. As with all grievance procedures, the final point of appeal relating to this policy is the Welsh Bridge Union Council.