

WBU Management Committee

Minutes of Meeting 1st February 2011

Meeting held by telephone conference, 2pm to 4:30pm

Present

AT: Adrian Thomas (President), Chairman
MB: Mike Best (East Wales nominee)
CD: Chris Davies (West Wales nominee)
LG: Linda Greenland (Treasurer)
JK: Jill Knight (North Wales nominee)
NR: Neville Richards (Chief Executive)
SS: Sheila Shea (National Tournament Organiser)
MT: Mike Tedd (Mid Wales nominee), Minutes Secretary

1 Review of Actions from Previous Meetings

Oct.6.2 TD training

NR has arranged for Ted Hill to give a one-day course on April 9th aimed at people with some idea of directing, who might then be able to act as club directors.

Oct.10.6 Lady Milne 2012

The Metropole has been booked. North Wales venues were looked at and found unsuitable.

Nov.2 Honoraria

MT is consulting with other disinterested members and will bring recommendations for appropriate honoraria to the MC.

Action ongoing: MT

Dec.3 L&E & Level 5 Systems Permissions

LG has liaised with Anne Jones, Chair of L&E, and agreed that while L&E decide what conventions are allowed at each level, and provide advice, it is up to 'sponsoring organisations' responsible for each event to decide at what level each event should be run.

The MC is very concerned that less-experienced participants might be put off by the use of the more esoteric conventions allowed at level 5. It was decided that, as sponsoring organisation, the WBU should allow level 5 conventions only for the following events:

- Welsh Cup: only for Semi-Final and Final
- Perry Shield (but not the Spickett Bowl)
- Invitation Pairs
- All trials

Other WBU events will normally be level 4. Areas should decide at what level their congresses should be run, but it was felt that level 4 would be the appropriate level for nearly all of these.

Dec.4 Bad Behaviour at WBU Events

AT's visits are already showing that this is a big issue for many people whose enjoyment is compromised by the poor behaviour of a minority of players towards their opponents and their partners. We also know from past experience that poor behaviour by some attendees has soured our relationship with some hotel venues, with unfortunate consequences.

LG will feed this useful discussion into the paper she is preparing.

Action ongoing: LG

2 Feedback

The WBU relies on volunteers for most of its functions, and some recent criticisms have been quite demotivating. While feedback is, of course, vital to improving our services and operations, members are implored to ensure that criticism is careful and constructive. And a few more compliments when things go well would be appreciated!

3 Bridge Great Britain

The EBU has been seeking to renegotiate the terms of the agreement with the WBU and SBU, notably with respect to the distribution of the proceeds of the BGB Sims. This income is used to meet the extra responsibilities of being a National Bridge Organisation, which the three countries took on in 2000. It has meant in particular that we have been able to field teams in European and World events without any call on other members' funds. Preserving our income from this source is thus very important.

A meeting was held on January 18th where the WBU was represented by AT, NR and LG. The EBU tabled some new proposals that were much more acceptable than previous ones. It now looks very likely that the WBU income from this source will be maintained.

The committee endorsed the general approach being taken by the WBU officers, noting the importance of presenting a common face with the SBU. Some preferences were identified for aspects of the agreement still to be negotiated.

4 Funding of International Teams

Although the BGB position now looks more promising, entry fees and other costs continue to rise, and the WBU certainly cannot afford to support three teams regularly in European and World events.

The expectation remains that we should normally only support teams in these events when there is an expectation that the team will represent the WBU 'with credit'. The selectors are asked to ensure this.

With the BGB situation developing, Council had decided that the World Fund, used to support teams in European and World events, should be maintained roughly at its present level until the uncertainty was resolved. The committee now feels that this caution can be lifted to some extent.

This means that, while funding just one team per year would be the normal situation, if the selectors feel strongly that there is other team of a high standard, it could be possible to support them. The one team would not necessarily be the open team.

The Commonwealth Nations event was discussed. There has been some confusion about the nature of this, particularly with respect to the presence of sponsored teams and the pairs that followed the teams. It was clarified that the sponsored teams were an important part of the funding of the event and only the national teams can win medals. The pairs in Delhi was a separate event for which the players paid their own entry fees. The main event was clearly a prestigious international although not of the same standing as WBF and EBL internationals. Looking ahead to 2014 when the event will presumably be in Scotland, it was envisaged that some part of the entry fee might be met by the WBU, but it is too early to be firm about this.

An invitation has been received for a Welsh team to participate in the Chairman's Cup in Sweden, the organisers offering free entry and accommodation. It was agreed to place an invitation for applications for this team, which the selectors would then pick. The WBU would not offer any support beyond the organisers' offer of free entry and accommodation.

Action: MT

It was noted that if a team were supported in an event and won substantial prize money, they would be expected to reimburse the WBU accordingly for the support that they had received.

Funding of teams in the home internationals was left for future discussion.

5 Competitions

The Graded Masters event was difficult this year. The hotel venue was denied us, and perhaps in consequence entries were sharply down. Although we know that there is a demand for tiered events where players can expect to meet others of a similar standard, 2-3 sections in the Graded Masters is not enough to achieve this. Ideas on how to improve this event or on an attractive event to replace it would be welcomed!

The importance of using high quality hotel venues was noted. It is also desirable that food be provided by the hotel as part of the entry fee; this is appreciated by most players and avoids difficulties with hotels when players bring food.

The suggestion has been made that the winners of a national event (such as the Open Pairs or Mixed Pairs) should earn automatic entry into the national final in the following year; this is common practice in many sports. In the Graded Masters pairs winning a section would automatically be placed in that section (if not higher) in the following year. This was all agreed.

It was also noted that for some events were now run with just area qualifiers in some areas, but still club heats and area finals in other areas, which leads to difficulties with apportioning places in the finals. Areas are asked to consider just holding area qualifiers, although it was noted that overall master point awards might be reduced in consequence.

A suggestion had been made that first prize money should always be at least the value of the entry fee to events. Such a constraint could cause difficulties, and was not approved.

6 Camrose in March

It is believed that volunteers for BBO operation are being found.

The need for a Vu-graph room with commentary has been questioned, but we expect it to go ahead. Jim Luck is organising the commentators.

7 Adrian's Visits to Clubs

We are getting appreciation for the many visits that AT has made to clubs all over Wales. It has clearly boosted the image of the WBU with ordinary players. More visits are still planned.

We have quite a collection of completed questionnaires from his visits to clubs, and analysing them will be an important challenge. {Subsequent to the meeting, Gwynn Davis offered to tackle this and his offer was gratefully accepted.}

8 Council Meeting in March

Council meets on March 20th. There are various topics like appointing committees to be undertaken, but the main business will be to review the work of the Management Committee. MT was asked to prepare a paper to inform this review.

Action: MT

9 Other Topics for Future Discussion

- Funding of teams in the home internationals
- Sponsored teams in the Senior Camrose

10 Next Meeting

This will be on March 1st, between 2 and 4pm, by telephone conference.

MDT 2/2/11, revised 7/2/11