

# NORTHERN IRELAND BRIDGE UNION

## Annual General Meeting 2016

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held at La Mon House on Sunday June 5<sup>th</sup> at 7pm.

Present: (48)	President	Ian Hamilton
	Chairperson	John Bergin
	Chairperson-elect	Anne Hassan
	Hon. Secretary	Michael McFaul
	Hon. Treasurer	Anne Fitzpatrick
	Hon. Competitions Secretary	Liz Scott
	Hon. Masterpoints Secretary	Robin Burns
	Councillor	Pat Johnston
	Councillor	Eric McNicholl
	Councillor	Ian Lindsay
	Councillor	Valerie Von Hof
	Councillor	Pat Coull

Also: Alan Hill, Heather Hill, Colin Jeffries, David Leeman, Derek Cannell, Rosemary Kilpatrick, Stephanie Irwin, Barbara Ewart, Bill Perceval-Price, Norma Perceval-Price, Orla Quigley, Kathleen McCay, Andrina Kelleher, Anne Bergin, Sandie Millership, Helen Cole, Florence Boyd, Shelagh McCaughan, Alan Anderson, Michael McIlroy, Paul Tranmer, Robert Coull, Toni Sproule, Ken Hammond, June Spiers, Neill Cauwood, Nuala Mooney, Moyna Mackenzie, Greer Mackenzie, Rex Anderson, Colin Moorhead, Caroline Moorhead, Liz Johnston, Anna McDowell, Jacky Marks, Robert Sweetman.

Apologies: Alan Sharp, James McAllister, Christine Byrne, Harold Curran, Ciara Burns, John Murchan, Anne Fitzpatrick, Elbha Walmsley, Brian McDowell.

### **1. Chairman's address**

John Bergin welcomed everyone to the meeting and was pleased to see such a good turnout. He congratulated Harold Curran, Anne Fitzpatrick, Ciara Burns and John Murchan on winning the IBU Mixed Teams trial in Dublin in order to represent Ireland next September in Poland.

### **2. Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on June 21<sup>st</sup> 2015**

The Minutes were agreed on a proposal by Anne Bergin and seconded by Eric McNicholl

### **3. Matters Arising**

Alan Hill read from a statement in which he referred to the events that took place at the 2015 AGM and subsequent meetings of Council. The statement is appended to these minutes as is the Chairman's response.

### **4. President's Address**

Ian Hamilton said how much he had enjoyed his period of tenure. He spoke in support of the proposal to retain the office of President in addition to the Chair and said that events in the past year had shown just how vital it was to have an individual who could act impartially and above the internal politics of the organisation.

## 5. **Annual Reports**

John Bergin referred to the last two years in which he had occupied the NIBU Chair. He thanked the dedicated volunteers who devote so much time and energy to our sport. In reference to the Constitution, with a third draft in four years, he quoted Thomas Jefferson as providing pragmatic guidance. He mentioned the success of the re-inaugurated Provincial Mixed Pairs in Enniskillen and Northern Pairs in Derry, thanking Liz Scott and the Tournament Committee for extending the reach of NIBU competitions. He believed that by asking clubs/members to take responsibility for the organisation of NIBU competitions the Tournament Committee had introduced a better connection with the NIBU and consequently there had been an increase in entries. The Chairman thanked the NIBU Committees for their sterling work and his colleagues on Council for their guidance.

Michael McFaul reminded members that all email correspondence to the Secretary would be considered as 'open' unless it was clearly marked 'In confidence' by the sender. He also asked members to delete items 12 and 13 from their agenda as these referred to business normally transacted by the incoming Council.

Andrina Kelleher asked that Foyle Bridge Club be included in the list of new affiliates.

As Anne Fitzpatrick was unable to attend the meeting, Ian Lindsay dealt with any issues arising from the Hon. Treasurer's report and accounts. Rex Anderson referred to the additional funds granted to the Irish team in Chennai and stated that the NIBU was not entitled to use its funds to bolster its contribution to the IBU without prior agreement. Michael McFaul said that Council had noted this point following a request to provide additional support for the Irish Ladies team.

Ian Hamilton pointed out an inconsistency in the accounts with reference to the Celtic Pairs. He pointed out that the previous year's gross revenue figure of £7.5k was misleading as it did not allow for expenses of £4k and distribution of profit to the SBU and WBU which left the Union with £750. He felt it would be more appropriate to quote a figure for net income for the event.

Rex Anderson asked why the accounts had not been signed by the Examining Accountant. Sandie Millership assumed that the original copy had been signed. Ian Lindsay agreed to confirm with Anne Fitzpatrick that the required procedure had been followed correctly. He proposed that the accounts be accepted and this was seconded by Alan Hill.

Liz Scott spoke of her disappointment that entries to most NIBU events had fallen away so badly, many being cancelled. She urged members to come out and support NIBU competitions in the new season. She also congratulated all the winners of the past year's events.

Greer Mackenzie highlighted the success of the Ulster Intermediate teams at the 2015 Inter-Provincial Championships. He was disappointed that insufficient teams had come forward to make a trial feasible in April this year, despite the efforts of Nuala Mooney to drum up support. Alan Anderson was concerned that a team had withdrawn from the Egan at the last minute while Sandie Millership praised the tireless efforts of Harold Curran in trying to find a reserve team at the last moment. It was agreed that the incoming Selection Committee would be asked to ensure reserves were selected for all forthcoming events.

Rex Anderson expressed concern that the report from the Chair of the Laws & Ethics Committee was neither detailed nor transparent. Ian Hamilton responded by stating that

detail could not be made explicit at this stage as a report on the main item of business transacted had not yet been concluded and passed to Council.

Sandie Millership spoke on behalf of the Youth Committee and said that although results at the Junior Camrose and Peggy Bayer had been disappointing, she was encouraged that young players were now playing at club level.

## **6. Constitution**

The Chairman praised the Constitution Review Group, Michael McFaul, Ian Lindsay & Derek Cannell with assistance from Rex Anderson, for their tireless efforts in preparing the amended draft for consideration by members. He also thanked those members who attended a meeting dedicated to proposed constitution amendments on Bank Holiday Easter Monday. The Chairman asked that members address the issue of voting rights at the AGM by considering the two options available. Sandie Millership and Rex Anderson spoke in favour of retaining the 'one man one vote' option while Derek Cannell and Greer Mackenzie spoke in support of the 'Delegates' option. This was followed by a general discussion before the matter was put to a vote. The meeting voted 22 in favour of 'delegates' and 13 in favour of 'One man one vote'. As a simple majority only was required the 'Delegates' option was accepted as integral to the amended Constitution.

Norma Perceval-Price asked why it was being proposed that Council be increased to 18. Michael McFaul said that the meeting of consultees had shown clear support for such an increase.

Rex Anderson spoke in support of adopting the new Constitution.

Anne Hassan exhorted members to vote in favour of adoption.

Following a discussion on technical aspects of the Constitutional changes, it was decided that the section on voting rights would be extracted and dealt with separately. On this basis it was proposed by Eric McNicholl, Seconded by Florence Boyd that the remaining 2016 Constitution be adopted with immediate effect. This was put to the members with 39 voting in favour, none against and 7 abstentions.

It was subsequently agreed that an EGM would be called in the autumn to confirm the decision to adopt the 'Delegates' option for voting rights.

## **7. Incoming Chair**

John Bergin paid warm tribute to Anne Hassan and referred to all the many years' tireless work and effort she had put into organising congresses and events over many years. He could think of no-one better to take on the reins of the NIBU and was delighted to hand over the Chair to her.

Anne Hassan took over the Chair and began by reminding those present to do all they could to urge support for the forthcoming autumn Congress.

## **8. Election of Officers**

The following were duly elected on a show of hands:

President: Ian Lindsay - proposed by Shelagh McCaughan, seconded by June Spiers

Hon. Secretary: Michael McFaul -proposed by John Bergin, seconded by Norma Perceval-Price

Hon. Treasurer: Anne Fitzpatrick-proposed by Heather Hill, seconded by Toni Sproule

Hon. Competitions Secretary: Liz Scott proposed by Sandie Millership, seconded by Toni Sproule

Hon. Masterpoints Secretary: Robin Burns- proposed by Ian Lindsay, seconded by Liz Scott

International Match Manager: Brian McDowell- proposed by Ian Hamilton seconded by Alan Hill

**9. Elections to Council**

There were 15 nominations for 11 places on Council. All present were entitled to vote for up to 11 nominees. Following the counting of votes it was confirmed that the following had been duly elected:

Pat Coull, Harold Curran, Ken Hammond, Heather Hill, Pat Johnston, Rosemary Kilpatrick, Michael McIlroy, Eric McNicholl, Sandie Millership, Toni Sproule, Valerie Von Hof.

**10 Presentation of Trophies**

The Chairperson presented the Premier 1 League trophy to Ian Hamilton and the Inter 'A' trophy to Barbara Ewart. She also announced the winners of Premier 2 were Derek Hanna's team, Senior was Tom Young's team and the Killyleagh team had won the Inter 'B' league.

**11. Any Other Business**

Rex Anderson spoke in support of the outgoing Chairman. He paid tribute to his work over the past two years and in wishing him well in his role as Chairman of the IBU, he hoped that John Bergin would bring the same standards of openness and transparency to that organisation as he had to the NIBU.

There being no other business the meeting ended at 9.30pm.

Michael McFaul  
Hon. Secretary

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Appendix:

**Statement by Alan Hill (See next page)**

Several matters were carried out incorrectly at the last AGM as described in the minutes. These have been addressed by Council but reference needs to be made in matters arising for completion and to prevent the errors being quoted as a precedent in the future.

I would like to emphasise that this is not an attempt or opportunity to reopen these matters and that all have been addressed by Council as evidenced by published minutes and an email to me from the President on behalf of Council.

Firstly not all candidates were correctly proposed according to the requirements of the Constitution. This matter was dealt with by Council at its meeting on Wed 5<sup>th</sup> August. The vacant positions were filled by co-option after a secret ballot of those properly elected.

The Hon. Competition Secretary's report should have been allowed to be given at the meeting. There is no requirement for it to be available in advance and no power to prevent it being given. Council agreed at its meeting of 5<sup>th</sup> August that the report should be obtained and made available to Council.

Questions put to the Selection Committee were not allowed to be answered. The AGM is the only place where the Selection Committee is answerable for its actions to the members. At its meeting of 5<sup>th</sup> August Council agreed that the questions should be obtained and submitted to the Selection Committee.

Finally two motions were put to the AGM neither of which had been submitted in advance according to the required procedures.

The first prevented the acceptance of a nomination for Council for a reason not covered by the Constitution. Council at its meeting of 5<sup>th</sup> August agreed that this name should be considered in the co-option process for Council.

As it was not properly presented the second could only be advisory to Council. The matter concerned preventing questions being asked at an AGM unless made in advance. This was criticized by a Council member at the meeting of 2<sup>nd</sup> September and no further action has been taken by Council.

All these matters need to be noted specifically in the minutes of this meeting.

#### **Response from Chairman John Bergin**

The Chairman thanked Alan Hill for his comments. He said that much time and effort was given by Council in consideration of process for the AGM 2015 and that moving forward in areas of disagreement required much compromise.

He informed members that the substantive matter of disputed nominations was considered by Council in August 2015. There were different and opposing views, with some agreeing that all members had been validly elected others who didn't. In recognition of the different views, Council agreed to hold two votes: a vote by all members of Council, including the four disputed members; and a vote by the undisputed members of Council. The dual vote recognised the differing opinions and provided a way forward and resolution.

The Chair also informed members that prior to the AGM 2015, Council agreed that office-bearers reports be submitted in advance of the AGM. At the AGM 2015, the Chairman asked that issues regarding the Selection Committee report be passed to the Selection Committee for a response. Members at the AGM 2015 decided not to accept late nominations for Council and that questions for an AGM should be submitted in advance.