

NORTHERN IRELAND BRIDGE UNION

COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the NIBU Council held at BTMM offices on Wednesday September 2nd 2015 at 5.45pm

Present: John Bergin (JB)- Chairman, Anne Hassan (AH)-President-Elect, Michael McFaul (MMcF)- Hon. Secretary, Anne Fitzpatrick (AF)- Hon. Treasurer, Robin Burns (RB)- Hon. Masterpoints Secretary, Liz Scott (LS)-Hon. Competitions Secretary, Pat Johnston (PJ), Eric McNicholl (EMcN), Harold Curran (HC), Sinead McNicholl (SMcN), Pat Coull (PC),

In Attendance: Toni Sproule, Derek Cannell (DC), John Murchan (JM)

Condolences were recorded on the recent deaths of Robert Plunkett and Richard Sutton.

1. Apologies:

Ian Hamilton, Ian Lindsay, Valerie Von Hof.

2. Declarations of Interest

None

3. Minutes of the meeting held on June 24th 2015

Subject to amendments noted under item 4, the minutes were agreed on a proposal by EMcN and seconded by PC.

4. Matters Arising from June 24th.

- a) **Item 12:** AH stated that SMCOPA would not be available on June 5th 2016 for the **next AGM.** New date and/or venue to be arranged.
- b) **Item 14:** It was confirmed that the **Intermediate trial results** had been re-scored and found to be correct.
- c) **Item 19:** EMcN welcomed the decision to fund Alan Hill's attendance at the **TD course in Prague** and that he deliver a seminar on his return.
- d) **Item 5:** Following discussion, it was agreed to take down the draft 2015 AGM minutes pro tem.
- e) **Item 5(d):** HC disagreed that it would be normal practice for questions to be tabled in advance of the AGM. AH said Council must agree what constitutes 'normal practice' on this and other matters before the **next AGM.**
- f) **Item 20:** John Murchan (JM) asked to speak. He informed the meeting that he had not resigned in May but had simply decided not to stand for-re-election. He also insisted that questions on the Selection Committee had not been dealt with in accordance with customary practice at **the AGM.**

5. Minutes of the Special Meeting held on August 5th 2015

Subject to amendments noted under item 6, the minutes were agreed on a proposal by HC and seconded by AF.

6. Matters Arising from August 5th

- a) HC raised a number of concerns about **the minutes**. Following discussion, it was agreed to carry out amendments that would reflect his concerns.
- b) It was agreed to remove the text “having not been circulated at the AGM” in reference to the Competition Secretary’s report, from the **draft AGM minutes**.
- c) MMcF outlined his approach to **recording the minutes**. Most importantly, only those comments directed through the Chair could be recorded. All other statements and conversations were strictly ‘off the record’. LS stated that she felt all discussion was effectively through the Chair. Members were reminded that the minutes were in draft form until agreed at the next meeting when they had the opportunity to have any matters corrected or amended. It was agreed that only the agreed minutes would be posted on the website in future and that the draft minutes would be taken down pro tem. It was agreed that AGM minutes would be posted subject to Council approval – to be discussed at next meeting.
- d) **Item 4**: It was confirmed that Ciara Burns had not re-submitted the **questions on the Selection Committee** she had intended to ask at the AGM.
- e) The Chairman thanked IH and AH for their efforts in resolving difficult matters pertaining to the **AGM and consequential matters**.

7. Minutes of the Selection Committee

PJ requested that Greer Mackenzie record his re-scoring of the Intermediate Trials, in the SC.

8. Minutes of the Tournament Committee

LS expressed concern that investigations revealed that many cups and trophies were missing.

9. Constitution Review

MMcF stated that IL, DC and himself had met twice and had agreed a revised draft subject to reservations expressed by DC over the section on Council being sole authority on ‘Interpretation’. It was agreed that the draft would be circulated to all members for comment prior to being sent to Rex Anderson for ‘legal proof-reading’. JM asked to speak and suggested that Council instead employ external expertise to ‘proof-read’ the text of the Constitution.

Action: MMcF to circulate Draft to all members.

10. Correspondence

- a) JM left the room as AH tabled a paper which she felt would short-circuit the need to discuss related correspondence from Ciara Burns (CB). She asked that Council now accept that it had been an error to reject CB’s nomination at the AGM; also to remove the Competition Secretary’s report from the agenda and disallow its presentation to the AGM. AH also asked that apologies be sent to the two former officers of the Union. After some discussion it was agreed that a letter be composed by MMcF and sent to CB. HC further proposed that flowers be sent to CB. This was agreed

Action: MMcF to write to CB. HC to arrange delivery of flowers.

- b) Two items from **CB** were noted. It was agreed to remove the AGM minutes from the website pending approval at the 2016 AGM.

- c) **Derek Cannell** (DC) objected to the minutes of the August 5th meeting having given undue prominence to the statements by Rex Anderson. The opposing views expressed by AF and AH had been omitted. It was proposed that a more generalised summary replace the existing detail. DC also asked that the members whose legitimacy was disputed should be recorded as being 'In attendance'.
- d) Two items from **Rex Anderson** were considered. Contrary to belief, CB was not in fact the NIBU solicitor. RA asked if the Development Officer had submitted a report. He also queried the choice of BTMM as 'independent auditors' but AF stated that Joanne Small examined the accounts in her capacity as an individual rather than a partner in BTMM. It was conceded that the appointment of official solicitor and auditors was a procedural omission at the AGM but would be corrected at the 2016 event.
- e) **Dress Code for International Matches**
The Selection Committee had referred this item for re-consideration. JB stated that the matter had been addressed by Council and its decision was as outlined in item 11 of the May 13th Council minutes. PC offered to investigate the sourcing of ties and badges for players representing the NIBU in an official capacity.
- f) **Newsletter**
DC reported in detail on his past experience with the NIBU publication. He was anxious to hear from the wider membership as to what they expected from the Newsletter. Should it be simply factual or adopt a more critical policy while always allowing a right to reply? Much more feedback was needed. It was agreed to re-vitalise the editorial committee and that Council would consider membership at the next meeting.

Action: Council agenda item for next meeting.

11. Entry Fees for Inter-Provincials.

The SC had asked that Council agree to pay the entry fee for all NIBU participants. On a proposal by HC, seconded by LS, all were in favour.

12. Selection Committee autonomy

There was still confusion over the extent to which the SC had autonomy in its dealings. It was agreed that the SC Manual, containing its Terms of Reference, be considered at the next Council meeting so that the matter be clarified.

Action: Council agenda item for next meeting.

13. Youth Committee Budget

PJ asked why the YC budget had been reduced to £4585 from its ring-fenced £7000. AF explained the difference as expenses to fund the IBU delegation to the event in Burghausen 2014. HC confirmed that the SC was concerned about the cost of the Peggy Bayer and Junior Camrose and stated that he was meeting with Diane Greenwood to discuss the matter.

14. Diaries

500 diaries had been printed at a cost of £1049. PC agreed to handle the sale of diaries at the Autumn Congress for £2 each.

15. D'Orsi Senior Trophy

HC expressed delight at the Irish team being selected for Chennai. Council asked that its congratulations and best wishes be conveyed to the team. It was agreed to contribute £1500 to the IBU in support of the Irish team.

16. Sonya Britton Trophy

Council expressed its congratulations to the NIBU teams on their performance on winning the North-South match.

17. Website

In response to queries from members asking why certain matters were not posted on the website, RB pointed out that the Webmaster did not select items for posting but responded to request from members to do so. LS asked if it would be possible to have a separate 'Bridgewebs' website for competitions.

18. Congress Prize money

HC said that prize money was very low in comparison to CBAI and other similar events. AH pointed out that higher awards would not be possible unless more sponsorship was obtained as costs were so high.

19. Date of next meeting

Wednesday October 28th at 6.30pm. Venue BTMM.

The meeting ended at 11pm

Michael McFaul

Hon. Sec.