

NORTHERN IRELAND BRIDGE UNION

COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the NIBU Council held at BTMM offices on Wednesday June 24th 2015 at 5.30pm.

Present: Ian Hamilton (IH)- President, 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, Ian Lindsay (IL, Pat Johnston (PJ), Eric McNicholl (EMcN), Harold Curran (HC), Sinead McNicholl (SMcN), Pat Coull (PC), Valerie Von Hof (VVH).

In Attendance: Elbha Walmsley

Apologies: None

1. Declarations of Interest

MMcF stated that he, HC and AF would leave the meeting during election of Selection Committee members.

2. Minutes of the meeting held on May 13th 2015

MMcF clarified that the nomination of Seamus Sloan to Council had been due to a misunderstanding and that St. Joseph's had actually nominated Toni Sproule. The Minutes were agreed on a proposal by Eric McNicholl and seconded by Anne Hassan.

3. Matters Arising

a) It was agreed that the Tournament Committee would address the issue of Intermediate Trials and the related costs of coaching.

Action: LS to include on Tournament Committee agenda.

b) HC and AF confirmed that the outgoing Selection Committee had decided to make no exceptions for players participating in trials, on the grounds of stamina.

4. Correspondence

A late email from Alan Hill had expressed concern as to whether proceedings at the recent AGM had been conducted in accordance with the Constitution. Members noted that, at the May Council meeting, they had agreed to amend the Constitution in order to make its intended meaning explicit. Subsequently, those attending the AGM had agreed that a more comprehensive review of the Constitution was needed and should be presented at next year's AGM. JB proposed that Council, having been legitimately elected, continue the meeting. This was agreed on a show of hands with 12 in favour and 1 abstention. AH stated that, while the legitimacy of four members present was in question, there were sufficient 'bona fide' members present to form a quorum and consequently the meeting could continue.

Members asked that post-AGM correspondence from Ciara Burns to MMcF be circulated to all present. This was done. MMcF said that he felt any response from him would not help the

situation and after discussion it was agreed that Anne Fitzpatrick and Robin Burns would endeavour to meet with CB.

5. AGM review

- a) It was agreed that in future, all office-bearers and committee chairs would be requested to furnish a report in advance of the AGM. It was intended that the revised Constitution would 'require' such reports to be furnished in advance.
- b) It was confirmed that the selection of delegates to the IBU and BGB was a Council matter and not part of business at the AGM
- c) The approach to presenting trophies would be determined by the Tournament Committee with several members favouring a return to presenting at events rather than the AGM

Action: LS to include on Tournament Committee agenda

- d) VVH stated that normal practice would be for questions to be submitted in advance of the AGM. AH stated that it had always been standard practice in the NIBU to accept questions from the floor at the AGM.
- e) IH read out correspondence from an NIBU member in relation to the recent AGM. PJ and EMcN suggested that comments from the wider membership be noted by Council at this stage. Members agreed.
- f) JB agreed to write to U3A thanking them for the use of their premises and he proposed to send a small donation of £50. This was agreed by all present.

Action: JB to write to U3A and include donation.

- g) Draft Council and Draft AGM minutes would be agreed between the Chair and Secretary initially, and then agreed by Council prior to posting on the website.

6. Committee Membership

a) Laws & Ethics Committee

At his own request, it was agreed to replace Alan Hill so that he could be co-opted in a consultative capacity as and when needed. Membership to be Alan Sharp (convenor), Toni Sproule, Shelagh McCaughan, Ian Lindsay, Philip Duffton, Norma Irwin, Bill Scott, Ian Hamilton and Michael McFaul (ex officio)

b) Youth Committee

The existing membership to continue with Diane Greenwood (Chair), Pat Johnston, Sandie Millership, Barbara Lomas and Norma Irwin.

c) Selection Committee

The Chairman gave members some background information on 12 nominees for 7 places. A discussion ensued on the merits of having an Intermediate representative on the committee by default. RB proposed that any such representative must be a regular participant in events and who would have some knowledge of the related playing strengths of players.

MMcF, HC and AF left the room while voting papers were circulated.

The Chairman subsequently announced that Nuala Mooney, Philip Duffton, Greer Mackenzie, Anne Fitzpatrick, Harold Curran, Lorraine Byrne and Michael McFaul had been duly elected. MMcF to convene the first meeting.

Action: MMcF to convene a meeting of the Selection Committee

d) Tournament Committee

It was agreed that the Committee would be chaired by LS and that MMcF would be an ex officio member in accordance with the constitution. Other members would be June Spiers, Anne Hassan, David Leeman, Ian Hamilton, Brian McDowell and Stephen Cairns.

Action: LS to convene meeting of the Tournament Committee

7. Delegates to the Irish Bridge Union

Noted as Ciara Burns (Outgoing President), Harold Curran (Joint-Secretary, Ian Lindsay, John Murchan, Michael McFaul, Colin Jeffries, John Bergin (incoming vice-president) and Anne Fitzpatrick.

8. Delegate to Bridge Great Britain

Brian McDowell was agreed.

9. Title of Figurehead

After some discussion it was proposed that the most senior figure in the NIBU would be the President from June 2016 and that AH would now officially be recorded as President/Chair-Elect pending ratification at the 2016 AGM. It was agreed that the chain of office would be adapted accordingly. The text of the revised Constitution would reflect the decision.

10. Office-Bearers' Duties

It was agreed that revised versions would be available for the September Council meeting.

Action: MMcF to circulate existing versions for comment and updating.

11. Diary 2015-16

Members were divided over the question of whether the diary should be hard or soft cover or whether it should even be printed. MMcF suggested the diary should be given free to members who attend NIBU events. Following discussion it was agreed to charge £2 and that orders would be available for collection at the autumn congress.

Action: LS to complete fixture list and then MMcF to finalise diary for printing.

12. AGM 2016

JB proposed that, with the agreement of AH, the next AGM be held at SMCOPA on the afternoon of Sunday June 5th 2016. This was agreed.

13. Gala Pairs

AH announced there were now 38 pairs entered and that the event would go ahead. LS confirmed that this event was on the Tournament Committee agenda.

14. Intermediate Trials

PJ clarified the position in relation to a matter raised at the AGM by John Murchan. She admitted there had been a small irregularity in the scoring but that the matter had been rectified and all participants were informed of the outcome.

15. Constitution Review

It was agreed that IL and MMcF carry out the necessary review along with Derek Cannell. The review would consider identified ambiguities and inconsistencies and would seek to ensure that effective procedures were in place. It was noted that Rex Anderson had offered to be of assistance.

Action: MMcF to convene

16. Newsletter

JB issued a forceful request for members to submit articles and items of interest to Derek Cannell.

17. Irish Bridge Journal

MMcF reminded members that he submitted a column on NIBU news to the IBJ each month but that the journal had very few subscribers in the North. It was felt this was largely down to the need to subscribe in Euros rather than sterling. He was endeavouring to seek a means by which Northern players could subscribe in Sterling and thus hopefully increase circulation.

18. Results

LS suggested posting NIBU results on Bridgewebs but RB urged caution, stating that we do not have control of our own data on Bridgewebs. However with all members agreeing that the fast publication of results was very important, RB agreed to talk to Greer Mackenzie over the question of Tournament Director's being able to upload results on to the NIBU website.

Action: RB to liaise with Greer Mackenzie.

19. European TD Course

Alan Hill requested support for attendance at an EBL TD course in Prague. It was agreed that detailed costings were required and to be submitted for consideration at the next Council meeting.

20. AOB

AH was concerned that the former Competition Secretary had not been thanked for his years of service. JB pointed out that John Murchan had actually resigned the post in May and that members had expressed their gratitude and thanks at Council in May. (*See also item, '4(f)' in the Minutes of September 2nd 2015*)

Elbha Walmsley asked to speak and said she had found the meeting to be a very pleasant surprise and altogether a rewarding experience. JB thanked EW for her attendance and expressed the wish that more observers attend Council meetings.

21. Date and Venue of next meeting

Wednesday September 2nd 2015 at BTMM offices from 5.30pm.

With business concluded, the meeting ended at 9.30pm.

Michael McFaul
Hon. Secretary