

NORTHERN IRELAND BRIDGE UNION

COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the NIBU Council held at Kelvin-Malone Bridge Club on Wednesday December 3rd 2014 at 6.30pm.

Present: Ian Hamilton (President), John Bergin (Chairperson), Michael McFaul (Hon. Secretary), Anne Fitzpatrick* (Hon. Treasurer), John Murchan (Hon. Competitions Secretary), Robin Burns (Hon. Master Points Secretary), Ciara Burns (Development Officer), Greer Mackenzie, Ian Lindsay, Pat Johnston, Norma Irwin, Colin Jeffries, Anne Hassan.

* From 8.15pm

In attendance as observers: Toni Sproule, David Greenwood, John Lavery, Harold Curran.

1. Apologies
Eric McNicholl.
2. Declarations of Interest.
MMcF stated an interest in item 5b(1) due to his membership of the Selection Committee at the time of the de-selection decision.
3. Minutes of the meeting held on September 17th 2014
The minutes were agreed.
4. Matters Arising.
(Item 11)
RB reported no progress with changes to the regrading process.
AF was not present to report on a new investment to replace the existing bond.

NEW BUSINESS

5. Chairperson's business
 - a) Disciplinary & Appeals Procedures.
Philip Dufton was thanked for completing his work on the now combined document which was agreed unanimously for adoption.
 - b) Selection Committee
 - i. Camrose De-selection appeal.
JB set the situation in context. The Selection Committee had asked partnerships who had competed in the Camrose trials, to represent Ulster in the Inter-Regionals. Certain partnerships had declined to play and were asked to justify their decision. Although two partnerships provided satisfactory reasons, it was felt that one partnership – John Lavery & Michael Coffey – had not provided a satisfactory excuse. It was

decided to de-select them for the first Camrose match in Scotland as they had not met the conditions of entry to the Camrose trials. The partnership had appealed the decision to Council through the Secretary. As a preliminary, it was confirmed that Council had the power to overturn the decision if it wished to do so (this had not been the case under the previous Constitution where the Selection Committee enjoyed full autonomy). It was also confirmed that the de-selection decision was not a disciplinary matter.

The appeal document was discussed in great detail. The extent to which Council had stipulated specifically that intended Camrose partnerships must be available for the Inter-Provincials was a focal point of debate. The decision to single out the Inter-Provincials and one other competition (as opposed to any two of the IBU events) was taken following the June 2014 Council meeting and referred to the Selection Committee for implementation. The significance of this was not reflected in the Selection Committee minutes. As a consequence it could be argued that Camrose trial participants were not fully aware of the significance of their failing to be available for the Inter-Provincials. After lengthy discussion, John Lavery was asked to speak in support of his appeal document after which it was decided to put the matter to a vote.

At this point members of the Selection Committee (excluding Greer Mackenzie who had not been present at the previous de-selection meeting), those who had played in the Inter-Provincials and all observers, left the room.

A vote from those remaining was taken and the Chairperson announced that Council had voted unanimously to re-instate Lavery & Coffey for the first Camrose match.

It was agreed that the Selection Committee had endeavoured to fulfil Council's requirement with regard to contractual availability for the Inter-Provincials. However the options open to the Committee were limited by a lack of clear guidance on the consequences of a player or partnership not satisfying the requirement, for whatever reason.

The Selection Committee was asked to draw up whatever criteria, measures and clear guidelines it felt necessary to ensure the NIBU is fully represented at the Inter-Provincials and other IBU events.

Thanks and appreciation was expressed to the Selection Committee members for their time and effort, particularly in recent weeks.

Action for the Selection Committee:

- *Implement the decision not to de-select Coffey & Lavery.*
- *An apology to be offered to Helen Cole & Tyrone Currie who had been provisionally selected in their place.*
- *Clear guidelines to be drawn up setting out in unambiguous terms the extent to which senior players who compete in trials were obliged to play in certain IBU events. Draft for consultation by the February Council meeting.*

ii. **NPC Guidelines & Approved list.**

Action for the Selection Committee:

- *Guidelines will draw on existing documents e.g. IBU version. These will set out the responsibilities and duties of non-playing captains and team members for all International events.*
- *A list of 'approved' NPC's to be drawn up from which the Selection Committee will make its choice.*
- *Both to be in place and effective in advance of the 2015-16 playing season.*

iii. **Inter-Provincials 2014.**

CJ stated that the event had been extremely well organised at the venue but that NIBU (Ulster) team players, especially the Intermediate representatives, found the experience lacking in many aspects. In particular they were shocked to discover they had to pay an entry fee of 50 euros on the day. They also felt a lack of support and interaction from the senior players and the captain. NM spoke in support, stating that in her experience the lack of interaction from the senior players had been a feature of this event for many years. In mitigation, the Selection Committee was recommending that the 50 euro fee be refunded to all player representatives in the event just passed. AH felt there was a basic contradiction in compelling players to participate and then ask them to pay their own entry fee.

After much discussion the Chairperson put the proposal to a vote.

Members who had played in the Inter-Provincials and all observers left the room while the vote was taken.

On return, the Chairperson announced that the vote to refund the 50 euro entry fee for the 2014 Inter-Provincials had been rejected.

It was agreed that coaching should be provided for Intermediate teams in preparation for the Inter-Provincials.

It was further agreed that accommodation in future would be block-booked for participating teams.

iv. **Selection for the Moylan Cup (IBU All Ireland Pairs) 2015.**

Members discussed a recommendation from the Selection Committee that the IBU be asked to restore representation from the NIBU to 12 pairs. IL and JM argued strongly that this was premature and that indeed at present there were difficulties even finding the 8 pairs allowed.

The Chairperson expressed the view, supported by others, that more NIBU members should be given the opportunity to participate. It was agreed to re-consider the matter after the closing date for entries in January 2015.

The Selection Committee were asked to include in their guidelines for representation at IBU events, proposals to meet the current quota of pairs for the Moylan.

v. **Election of new member to the Committee**

A vacancy existed following the resignation of Robert Plunkett. It was agreed to retain a quota of 7 members.

The following names had been proposed:

Paul Tranmer, Sam Jones, Bill Scott, David Leeman, Harold Curran, Philip Dufton, Paul McAllister.

A secret ballot was held and Harold Curran was elected on a 'First past the post' basis.

CB suggested that Paul McAllister be co-opted in an advisory capacity on matters regarding selection of Intermediate players. Thanks were expressed to all others and their willingness to participate was noted.

- c) The Chairperson offered his thanks to the organisers of the recent Swiss Pairs event, namely John Murchan, Alan Hill and Liz Scott. It was felt that Alan Hill deserved special gratitude as this was the first event of its type and fairly complex in its management. Despite this the event had run very smoothly, had been well supported and had been swiftly followed by the publication of all the result details.

Ian Hamilton was also thanked for his continuing work with the Celtic Pairs and the Inter-Club events which drew huge support from the clubs.

6. **Correspondence**

a) **EBL TD Workshop**

In the light of a continuing and pressing need for more Tournament Directors, it was agreed that Alan Hill and Colin Jeffries would attend this event in Alicante, Spain in January on an all-expenses paid basis. They would be required to use the training to foster TD expertise in affiliated clubs as required.

b) **Bridgemates**

MMcF highlighted the number of enquiries from club secretaries wanting information on purchasing and employing Bridgemates. It was confirmed that these were not available from the CBAI shop at a discounted rate but that Eric McNicholl and Sandie Millership were happy to advise on this matter.

c) **Knockout Cups**

MMcF stated that a number of members had asked why the draw for the Knockout Cups had not been published. JM confirmed that the details could not be accessed because his computer was broken but he hoped to rectify the matter as soon as possible.

7. League & Cup Rules.

JM stated that the revision was almost complete but that the documentation could not be accessed as his computer was broken.

Action: Revised rules to be posted on the website as soon as the documentation is retrieved.

8. Committees – Terms of Reference

Revised versions for the Management, Laws & Ethics and Selection Committees were now agreed.

9. Reports from Officers

MMcF reported that currently 22 clubs had re-affiliated.

10. Reports from Committees (Selection / Youth / Management).

JB reported on key items of business:

Management Committee

- a) 5000 packs of NIBU playing cards had been delivered, significantly more than had been agreed, at a cost of 5,562 euros to the NIBU. Packs of 10 would be offered to clubs at £10 each to recoup money.
- b) New laptops had been purchased for the upcoming Camrose 2015. These will be made available to the CBAI as and when required.
- c) Electronic copies of an updated NIBU Manual would be distributed to affiliated clubs. JB to liaise with Shelagh McCaughan in order to produce a Child Protection Policy and devise training for NIBU members working on youth programmes.
- d) 6 tables and screens to be purchased for international matches.
- e) Promotional material for Seniors Congress to be distributed to clubs.

Youth Committee

- f) JB reported that the Youth Committee had been asked to provide detailed costings for some of the proposals outlined in the draft Business Plan. He asked that any comments re: the Business Plan be communicated through MMcF for referral to the Youth Committee.
- g) AF reported on a request from Diane Greenwood to reimburse her £380 for coaching. This had been agreed by the Youth Committee, was recorded in the draft Business Plan and also in the Youth Committee Minutes of 17th September. Payment was approved by a majority vote. It was agreed in principle that coaching selected NIBU junior teams could be considered for

payment while coaching in schools at the discretion of individual members would not be eligible.

JB reminded those present that approval was necessary for all expenditure as follows:

£0 - £100 by the Treasurer
£101 - £1000 by the Management Committee
£1001 + by the NIBU Council.

11 Any Other Business.

JB, reflecting others experience, spoke of the time it was taking to transact business. He proposed that Council should meet bi-monthly outside the summer period. This was agreed.

CB expressed the need for Council to focus on NIBU affiliated clubs and members and not to allow the development and implementation of policies to detract from that.

The Chairperson reminded Council that the new role of Development Officer was created specifically to promote links with clubs and members.

CJ asked that the Agenda be posted on the website at least 72 hours before Council meetings.

12 Date and Venue for next meeting.
February 18th 2015. Venue to be announced.

Michael McFaul

Hon. Secretary.