

NIBU COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the NIBU Council held at 1, Lenamore Drive, Jordanstown on March 20th 2014 at 6.30pm.

In attendance: I. Hamilton (President), C. Burns (Chair), J. Bergin (Vice-Chair), M.McFaul (Hon. Secretary), N. Cauwood (Hon. Treasurer), R. Burns (Hon. Master Points Secretary), R. Connolly, A. Hassan, P. Johnston, E. McNicholl, I. Lindsay

1. Apologies

N. Irwin.

2. Preliminaries

Members expressed their sadness at the recent passing of NIBU members Anne Shannon, Shirlie Brown and former NIBU and Irish International player Des Deery.

Sympathy was also expressed to the Vice-Chairman on the recent death of his father.

Members expressed congratulations to the Camrose team and NPC on their recent achievement in finishing 2nd overall.

Congratulations were also extended to both Diane Greenwood and Rex Anderson on their selection for the Irish International Ladies and Open teams respectively.

The principal organisers of the Junior Camrose & Peggy Bayer competitions, Anne Hassan and Brian McDowell, were thanked for their efforts in making both events run so smoothly.

3. Minutes of the meeting held on January 29th 2014.

The minutes were agreed.

4. Matters Arising

29/01/14 5(d) Affiliated clubs.

MMcF reported that, following a meeting with RB and NC it was confirmed that 34 clubs were fully affiliated; a further 5 clubs had paid their fees but had not submitted members' lists and 4 clubs had made no return. All outstanding clubs had been contacted.

29/01/14 10 Bridge Tables

CB confirmed that tables could now be collected by those clubs which had decided to purchase them.

Action: MMcF to ask clubs to contact CB re collection point.

29/01/14 11 Youth Development Plan

It was agreed that Harold Curran would be asked to convene the 'Youth Sub-Committee' with a remit to produce a business plan centred on spending the proceeds from the ETBB distribution.

Action: MMcF to contact HC

5. Reports from Office-Bearers

The President and Master Points Secretary had no business to report. The Chairperson expressed regret that this would probably be her last Council meeting in her present role. The Hon. Secretary reported on the steadily increasing size of the members email database (now over 500) and asked clubs to ensure total accuracy in submitting e-address details. He also indicated that the arranged date and venue for the forthcoming Mid-Ulster Pairs was likely to be changed.

The Hon. Treasurer reported on a cash balance of £12228 as of February 5th. The Inter-Club events had produced a surplus of £5100 and he congratulated IH on his continuing work in organising these increasingly popular competitions along with a detailed booklet of hands. Sandie Millership had been asked to lodge the c. £5k ETBB cheque.

It was agreed to order 18 more Bridgemates following a price comparison

Action: CB and EMcN to liaise and order Bridgemates from most economic source.

6. Draft Revised Constitution

CB was disappointed that a barrister's opinion – sought to ensure the revised text covered all contingencies – had not been forthcoming yet. JB stated that club members would be anxious to know why the Constitution was being revised after only 2 years but MMcF reminded the meeting that Council had asked for the review and that such a process was quite normal after a certain time. IL spoke strongly in favour of the proposed changes. A detailed discussion took place particularly around the proposal to delete the need for club delegates in favour of a full 'one member-one vote' approach at the AGM. A number of minor textual changes to the draft were agreed prior to a final draft being circulated to clubs for consultation.

Action: CB to pursue the barrister's opinion following which MMcF will circulate a final version to the Review Group for agreement prior to embarking on the consultation process.

7. Senior Camrose

IL spoke first in support of his paper outlining the reasons why he had resigned from the Selection Committee. Following the abandonment of the trial in controversial circumstances, the Chairman had arranged a meeting of the interested parties and subsequently emailed all stating that **'the matter was at a close and that the Selection Committee should meet and select a team'**. IH stated that his subsequent email to all those involved in which he pointed out how the debacle could've been avoided, had angered the Chair of Selectors. He felt strongly that it was clear from subsequent events that the Selection Committee had ignored

the Chairman's advice and was seeking to 'punish' certain players by not selecting them for the forthcoming event. He was strongly supported by RB and IL in his contention that the Committee was not fulfilling its obligation to select 'the best team'. IH asked why there had been no response to the 'six-signature' email requesting the Committee to review its choice of selection. CB stated that, since the email had only been received 3 days previously, the Committee had not had time to meet and consider its response.

CB, while contending that IH's earlier email had angered all interested parties, responded by reminding members that the Selection Committee had complete autonomy in all its dealings and did not have to account for, or outline the reasons behind its decisions. This position was clearly stated in the current Constitution.

A full and frank discussion ensued with all members expressing strongly held views. JB insisted that it was most important to follow approved procedure. PJ and AH both felt that these type of disputes were poisoning the atmosphere within the NIBU and general concern was expressed over the apparently low degree to which the Selection Committee was answerable for its decisions. AH felt it should be more accountable for its actions.

Doubt was expressed by some members over the wisdom of not selecting the strongest possible team. CB urged the meeting to accept in principle that the best team was the one in which all members played and interacted together in a friendly and supportive manner. It was agreed to ask the Selection Committee to review its decision and report back to Council while bearing in mind that under the present Constitution the Committee retains the right to full autonomy in its decision-making.

Action: MMcF to refer Council's request to John Murchan, Chair of Selectors.

8. Commonwealth Games Trophy

No team had yet been selected. Favourable terms at the hotel were only available until the end of March but there was general unease at the prospect of reserving expensive accommodation in advance of knowing whether or not a full team could be assembled to play for almost a full week. Decision deferred awaiting Selection Committee deliberations.

Action: CB to contact Liz McGowan in order to clarify the exact terms of entry and other details prior to NIBU commitment.

9. Red Points

A member had requested information regarding the changes to methodology in awarding red points. RB confirmed that the changes had been made by the Master Points sub-committee and details were available on the website.

10. Systems & Conventions

There had been little response to Alan Hill's paper on authorised systems and conventions as tabled originally at the Laws & Ethics Committee. The two options were to take either the WBF route or the EBU 'Blue Book' route. IL outlined the two approaches and it was agreed to accept the more simplistic WBF route.

Action: MMcF to notify Alan Hill of Council's decision.

11. Junior Bridge

RC stated that, despite being outperformed in the recent Junior Camrose and Peggy Bayer tournaments, our young players were extremely enthusiastic and keen to develop. She was optimistic about the future and urged Council to maintain and increase its support to young people wishing to play bridge.

12. Spring Congress

AH queried whether she should begin making plans for Armagh 2015 or seek an alternative venue for the Spring Congress. After some discussion CB proposed that the 2015 Spring Congress be held at La Mon.

13. Correspondence

MMcF reported on a number of items received via email from the Competitions Secretary / Chair of Selectors. These included:

- a) A request to resolve a matter involving an outstanding Kelvin Cup match.
- b) A request to include in the rules governing leagues, provision for matches being called off due to weather conditions.
- c) Similarly the need to make provision for sudden emergencies or bereavement.
- d) A request for action following the submission of the report of the NPC following the recent Camrose event.
- e) A request for action regarding the alleged behaviour of an NIBU member over an extended period.

It was agreed to refer all these items to the Laws & Ethics Committee and that a meeting should be held as soon as possible.

14. Date of next meeting

In the light of pressing business matters, it was agreed to meet again before the AGM. The next meeting will be held at the same venue, same time on Thursday April 24th 2014.

The Chair thanked AH for her hospitality.

Michael McFaul
Hon. Secretary