



English Bridge Union

A strategy to achieve the objective
stated in paragraph 3E of the EBU's
Memorandum of Association...

....to elevate and maintain the status
and procure the advancement of the
game of Bridge in England



The following recommendations from the Board of the EBU outline a scheme intended to revitalise our clubs and their membership, which will result in a vibrant bridge playing community at all levels in England and achieve our aim of universal membership

The aims of this initial phase are to strengthen the membership base and to restructure the financing of the EBU. This will form the basis for a strategy which will enable the development of Bridge in England. This phase of the complete strategy can only be fully developed when the results of this consultation with our shareholders and members are known.

The proposals are based on research and analysis of EBU clubs and members, and also include investigations of best practice as demonstrated by the most successful national bridge organisations in Europe, namely, France, Holland and Sweden. Continued examination of these organisations is in hand. Each of these national bridge organisations has embraced universal membership, as have many others across the world.



Key features of the proposal

- ♦ The annual membership subscription and Master Point charges will be abolished.
- ♦ A Pay to Play (P2P) scheme will be introduced, in which a small table charge is levied for every player at every duplicate session in an affiliated club.
- ♦ A one-time only Registration Fee of £5 for new or lapsed EBU members.
- ♦ An extensive range of free services will be provided to affiliated Clubs, including a National Rating scheme.
- ♦ The annual Club Affiliation fee will be based on the number of duplicate sessions played per week.



Club services

The following services will be provided to affiliated clubs:

- ◆ Free rating system software
- ◆ Free scoring program
- ◆ Free web site hosting on an annual basis
- ◆ Free monthly electronic newsletter - also available to individual members
- ◆ Free access to online club committee forum
- ◆ Free exclusive online club night once a week
- ◆ Free club directors' handbook
- ◆ Free club managers' handbook
- ◆ Free service of club liaison officer
- ◆ Free computer deals and hand records
- ◆ Free club constitution
- ◆ Club insurance discounts
- ◆ Bridge Shop discount which exceeds that given to individual members
- ◆ Discounts on club director training

Charges for Master Points will be abolished as will the issue of paper MPs.

Clubs will be charged an annual Affiliation Fee based on the number of duplicate sessions per week. The minimum annual fee will be £50, with a further cost of £25 per duplicate session for the second and any additional sessions per week, up to a maximum of £150 per annum per club.



Rating System Software

- ♦ The rating system software will allow all club players to be part of a new rating scheme, which will provide a current evaluation of a bridge player's skills, running alongside the life time achievements offered by the existing Master Point Scheme. This rating scheme will also allow clubs to stratify and handicap their own events through their own local rating data.



To benefit from these services, members of affiliated clubs will be members of the EBU as follows:

Individual membership

- ◆ The current annual membership subscription will be abolished.
- ◆ A one-off registration payment for new members of £5 will be collected via clubs.
- ◆ Individuals who are members in the year of implementation will not be charged a registration fee; any lapsed members will have to pay it.
- ◆ There will be an annual mailing to all individual members to maintain contact, update details, issue a free diary and membership card. As long as an individual's affiliated club membership is current that individual will continue to be a member of the EBU with no extra subscription charged.
- ◆ Individual members will continue to receive English Bridge.
- ◆ Overseas membership will still exist by subscription, as will direct membership for those members in England who are not members of affiliated clubs.



Pay to Play - P2P

- ♦ The P2P method provides flexibility relative to the number of people playing in affiliated clubs. It is also fairer in that those who play more will benefit more from the new services available to our clubs.
- ♦ Each EBU/club member will be charged a discounted table fee payable to the EBU for every session they play in a club. This is likely to result in an increase in table money in the region of 30p per session.
- ♦ A visitor's fee for non-EBU members will be set in consultation with the clubs.
- ♦ Special arrangements will be made for juniors.
- ♦ Electronic registration of MPs through the provision of free scoring software will provide records of players per session.
- ♦ Clubs will send in the table money on invoice in arrears.
- ♦ The P2P process will apply to all games played under the auspices of the EBU, other than national tournaments and licensed events. All other county events will be liable to a P2P charge.



Counties and universal membership

- ♦ A standard proportion of the table fees from a specific county's affiliated clubs will go to that county. The intention is that there should be no adverse effect on a county's financial position.
- ♦ The advantages for counties will be that, unless requested otherwise, each affiliated club member will become a member of the county in which the club is situated. This will provide a substantially larger pool of players for county competitions and other activities.



Partner Teachers, Learn and Play Clubs and Partner Clubs

- ◆ The free and discounted services available to Partner Teachers will be provided up to the point of the formation of the Partner Club, when the full affiliation fee will be gathered for the amount of sessions played and table money charged per player per session.
- ◆ Free membership will still be given to those students who are part of this scheme.
- ◆ This will cover the period of their first academic year's teaching and their Learn and Play Club period - a total of 18 months.
- ◆ When the Learn and Play Club becomes a Partner Club they will pay their one-off fee to register as a member of the EBU.



Benefits

- ♦ By providing an extensive range of free services to clubs, the affiliation fee has much more value.
- ♦ Those who play more pay more, and thus contribution to the provision of services from the EBU is fairer as they benefit more.
- ♦ The low level of the one off £5 registration fee, together with the discounted P2P charge for EBU members, will encourage more members to join the EBU.
- ♦ Members will be able to subscribe to the electronic club bulletin for free; this will provide another communications opportunity for us to specifically reach the club playing membership.
- ♦ The circulation of English Bridge will increase and thus advertisers may find the magazine a more attractive proposition thus increasing advertising revenue.

We will be able to truly fulfil our role as a National Bridge Organisation researching and implementing the development of our game at all levels from schools to tournament venues, and sitting rooms to the international arena. To undertake this task properly requires time, consideration and proper investment, which should be provided by a stabilized and increasing membership.



Next Steps

These proposals will appear on our website today.

- ◆ We ask all our shareholders to take these proposals back to their counties and discuss them fully with their county committees, their clubs and their members.
- ◆ We will provide a forum for county officials alongside our shareholders' forum to discuss and exchange views.
- ◆ We know that you will have many questions, and we will answer them via these forums or through email communication via the EBU website to Peter Stocken, the EBU Chairman.
- ◆ We can also provide, on request, more detailed information on the research and background to the plans including our data analysis and risk assessment.
- ◆ A programme of meetings with counties has been set up to review consultation arrangements and to discuss feedback.
- ◆ We will then be able to have a full and considered discussion about this scheme at the AGM in October 2007.
- ◆ These changes can only be successfully realised with the wholehearted support of shareholders, counties and clubs. If this is forthcoming, the intention would be to implement the proposals by April 2010.

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