

## **EBU Strategy Proposals: Feedback from Busbridge Duplicate Bridge Club (BDBC)**

The potential impact of the EBU Proposals (dated June 2007) on BDBC have been carefully analysed by the club Chairman and Treasurer, and discussed at an Extraordinary General Meeting of club members.

Whilst accepting the need for change and revitalisation of the EBU, and recognising the work that has gone into these proposals, the strategy document has not been well-received by club members. Feedback from the club is as follows:

### **1. The financial model presented is weak and needs much more work**

The income of the EBU will be almost totally dependent on the number of EBU members and P2P sessions. The proposal is designed to significantly increase membership, but carries the risk that it will achieve the opposite. Yet there is no sensitivity or risk analysis provided.

Although the proposal is designed to increase membership, the costings presented assume flat membership. Furthermore the proposed P2P charge includes a significant contingency suggesting that the EBU has little confidence that increased membership will be achieved.

FAQ 4 states that the P2P charge will include an element "to cover the additional costs of servicing the anticipated increase in membership." However, increased membership should lead to increased P2P income and an overall reduction in costs per member. If costs really will rise disproportionately with increased membership then the strategy of increasing membership is flawed.

Implementation will undoubtedly be expensive, but appears not to have been costed other than through a statement that the costs to other countries to introduce schemes that might or might not be comparable were of the order of £170,000. Implementation is simply too big and important an item to leave uncoded even at this early stage.

The concept of using the P2P fee as a "Volume Control" is alarming and must not become an alternative to sound planning, budgeting and financial management.

### **2. If implemented, these proposal would significantly impact BDBC, probably leading to loss of members, possibly leading to disaffiliation from the EBU and potentially affecting the viability of the club**

BDBC is made up of a mix of EBU members (55%) and non-EBU members (45%). The financial impact of these changes falls most heavily on non-EBU members. Most of these have consciously elected not to join the EBU or to leave the EBU because they do not see the value they get from membership. Other than coercion, there is nothing in these proposals to make our non-EBU members want to join the EBU.

If the plans go ahead, the club would have no option but to consider the possibility of disaffiliation. In a straw poll conducted at the EGM, attendees were split more or less equally between those who would vote for the club staying in the EBU and those who would vote to

leave if the changes come into effect. Whichever way the decision went, the club is likely to lose some members as a result. Loss of a significant number of members could affect the viability of the club and its very existence.

### **3. The club services offer little of value to BDBC**

The club has already invested in scoring software and its own web-site, and doubts that the EBU will offer any advantages in this area. Rather than providing leadership in these areas, the EBU is arriving late. The proposed rating system is a significant innovation but was not seen as a big attraction by our members. The other club services are insubstantial.

### **4. No consideration seems to have been given to clubs that charge a flat rate membership fee rather than Table Money**

BDBC currently charges a flat annual fee. This contributes to the relaxed, accessible ethos of the club as well as removing a significant administrative burden. The proposals would probably force an unwelcome move to Table Money.

### **5. An important focus for the EBU should be introducing new and in particular younger players to the game, yet there is little in the strategy designed to achieve this**

Members of BDBC recognise the importance of bringing new players into the game and believe that this should be a key objective of the EBU. However there seems to be little new thinking in this regard.

**Gerald Searle, Chairman**

**John Spiers, Treasurer**

On behalf of Busbridge Duplicate Bridge Club

17 July 2007