



## Revised Strategy Proposals --- Executive Summary

### Objectives

To achieve Universal Membership for all duplicate players at an EBU-affiliated club. Significantly enlarging and strengthening the membership:

Makes the EBU more compelling in approaches to government, the media, and potential sponsors. In its turn this would allow the investigation of partnerships and funding to develop the game for people of all ages.

Arrests and reverses the membership decline which has been observed in the past few years. Naturally, this implies that the EBU must make itself relevant to the club player who currently is not an EBU member. It is the Board's intention to do this.

Reduces the effort of administration by the implementation of electronic processes where possible and the removal of outmoded practices, as the collection of annual subscriptions and the recording of Master Points are costly in monetary terms as well as being particularly labour intensive at certain times of the year. However, this workload reduction at Aylesbury must not result in significant additional work elsewhere, particularly in the clubs.

### Clarification

#### EBU Income

The strategy proposal was not, nor intended to be, a revenue generating activity. It was devised to be income neutral, based on today's operating costs making allowance only for inflation and a small contingency, so as to illustrate the cost on a per session basis to the individual for this alternative method of collecting revenue.

#### Pay to Play fee

The Pay to Play fee was calculated on the information available to the EBU based on Master Point returns in the year 2006-2007. During the consultation it became very clear from the information that counties and clubs supplied to us, that there are many more playing sessions taking place in our clubs - possibly three times the original amount. This will result in a substantial decrease of the amount of the Pay to Play figure which was calculated at 43p i.e. the 30p replacement for the annual membership subscription of both the National Organisation and the County Association plus the 13p replacement for the Master Point income.

The consultation we propose to undertake with our clubs in the coming months will allow us to determine a more accurate Pay to Play fee.

The Pay to Play scheme redistributes the overall cost over more people. Accordingly, some will pay more and some will pay less. Those who are currently not EBU members and play in affiliated clubs are affected most, but it is considered appropriate that these individuals should make a contribution, as in other sports and pastimes, to the National Organisation.



## Revisions

### Pay to Play Scheme and fee

We have recognised that there are different styles of club who provide the types of game that their membership requires. There are those who want the more competitive style as exemplified by the collection of Master Points, in addition to those who wish to play solely for the enjoyment of the game and the social interaction. These will be referred to as “competitive” and “social” clubs respectively.

### Eligibility of sessions for the Pay to Play scheme

Christmas parties, celebratory events and charity events will be free of the Pay to Play fee. All other duplicate sessions will qualify for the Pay to Play fee.

Note that ordinary EBU Simultaneous Pairs events will incur the Pay to Play fee, whereas EBU Charity Simultaneous Pairs events will not.

### Social Clubs

If your club does not award Master Points you will pay a reduced Pay to Play fee. The reduction will be based on the data that we collect from our clubs in the coming months, but it is expected to be in the region of 10p less per session.

### Individuals who play many times in a week

It is proposed that those who play more than 150 times per year in clubs will be eligible for a rebate of their Pay to Play fee for further sessions played in that year. (A year runs from 1<sup>st</sup> April to 31<sup>st</sup> March). This is in recognition of the contribution that these players are making to the revitalisation of the game. This rebate will be paid by cheque on an annual basis, but only for amounts of £5 or more. Note that only playing sessions which have attracted a Pay to Play fee count towards the eligibility for a rebate.

### Further reduction of the Pay to Play fee

It has been suggested that we remove English Bridge and the Diary from the services we provide to individual members. However, It would still be necessary to communicate with our members and, with the current demographic profile, using the Internet may not provide a satisfactory coverage. The additional costs of print and postage of some paper communication would mitigate any reduction of the reduced Pay to Play fee. Thus we propose we keep English Bridge but make it more relevant to our members. We believe that our new Editor, Elena Jeronimidis, can help us achieve this for our membership.

### Juniors and Pay to Play

Juniors, i.e. players under 25 years old, will not have to pay the Pay to Play fee. Individual clubs will address their own table money and club annual subscription for junior members.



## Counties

Existing EBU members will retain their County of prime allegiance. Individuals who currently are not EBU members will, by default, become a member of the County to which their prime club is affiliated. Anyone can choose to become a prime member of any County by request to the EBU, just as they can today.

## Counties Pay to Play fee

The Counties will be able to set their own component of the Pay to Play fee for the “player sessions” which occur in their affiliated clubs. This means that the Pay to Play fee will probably vary from County to County. In setting the Pay to Play fee, a fraction of a penny will be permitted.

No county events, other than the leagues will be subject to the Pay to Play fee. This includes any extra charge levied by the County for heats held in clubs.

## Clubs

We have listened to the worries expressed during the county consultation and have amended our proposals so that the club affiliation fee will be a flat fee of £30 per affiliated club. It will be paid at the beginning of each year preferably by Direct Debit.

Clubs will affiliate to the EBU through their counties. The county element of club affiliation fees will be determined, as now, by each county.

Each club will be asked to sign a simple annual contract of affiliation, setting out terms and conditions which amongst other things will specify the regulations for offering Pay to Play playing sessions.

## Clubs and VAT

The current VAT registration threshold for 2007/2008 is £64,000. If a club finds it is liable for VAT the EBU will assist, where possible, with the practicalities of registration. It may well be advantageous for a club to be registered for VAT even if it is below the threshold, as it will be able to claim the VAT back on the Pay to Play fee and other costs.

## Services to affiliated clubs

We recognise the important contribution that clubs make to the development of the game and we want to encourage them to continue with this important role.

Clubs can benefit from the support, advice and communication services that we are offering to help clubs develop and attract new members. Free scoring software (not CASS) and Website hosting is available to those clubs who wish to benefit from these products but this is not a requirement of affiliation.

Any electronic scoring programs that can upload Master Point results will be effective in the new administration, although they may need some adaptation in order to provide the more extensive information required in the Pay to Play scheme and the National Rating mechanism.



## **Pay to Play Fees and County, District and Club Leagues**

The following Pay to Play fees will apply to all leagues - County, District and Club and will be paid as part of the entry fee to the National Organisation.

Teams of 4 (allowing up to 6 players) will attract a charge of £5.

Teams of 8 (allowing up to 12 players) will attract a charge of £10.

Note that, as today, players in the lowest division of any league need not be members of the EBU.

## **Individual membership**

The £5 one off registration fee has been removed. Members of an affiliated club will automatically become members of the EBU. Members will nominate a primary club of allegiance. As long as an individual's affiliated club membership is current that individual will continue to be a member of the EBU.

Anonymity will be available to all members. Those members who opt for anonymity will not receive any mailings from the EBU so they will not receive the magazine or diary. They will not be eligible for Pay to Play rebates.

All membership information held by the EBU is governed by the Data Protection Act and the EBU's Privacy Policy. This information is available on the EBU's website or by request via post from Aylesbury.

## **Rating System**

The rating system will allow each member to have a current rating alongside their lifetime Master Point ranking. The rating system has many applications including the creation of a new competition to find a Club Player of the Year in the various strata of the rating system. Extensive information on the rating system software is available in the detailed discussion document.

## **Education**

No supervised playing session will attract the Pay to Play fee. However we ask all teachers who will be running this type of session in our affiliated clubs to register as an associate teacher with EBUTA. This costs just £13.50 per annum and all members receive many benefits including insurance cover. Please note all methods of teaching bridge are welcome at EBUTA. If you wish to you can progress through the EBUTA qualified and professional teacher programmes. However, this will not be a requirement. For more information access our website here:

<http://www.ebu.co.uk/education/ebuta/benefits.htm> or telephone John Pain on 01296 317200

## **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 and the Pay to Play fee charged per player per session.



## Alternative options

The Board of the EBU through its Membership Development Action Group considered many options for universal membership. They include the following ideas which have been suggested during the consultation since 6 June. They are mentioned briefly here with the key features and effects.

### **Universal membership based on an annual subscription**

Same price for all members collected annually.

Higher levels of administration at both club and Aylesbury thus keeping the level of the subscription high.

Master Points dealt with in the same way as they are today with the attendant costs and administration.

### **Two tier membership based on annual subscription - higher for tournament players, lower for non-tournament players**

Low take up on higher membership subscription so the lower subscription is not significantly less.

Master Points dealt with in the same way as they are today with the attendant costs and administration.

Same high administrative levels for Aylesbury and clubs.

Investigated in the last 15 years, piloted and failed.

### **Hybrid membership - a mixture of annual subscription and Pay to Play for tournament players and those who wish to collect Master Points, and Pay to Play only for those who do not.**

Same basic issues as two tier membership but effectively needing two separate types of administration for both clubs and Aylesbury.

Pay to Play fee high due to low annual membership fee take up, and paid by all including those with annual subscription.

## Next Steps

The Board looks forward to further discussions about the proposals. We will continue to listen and accommodate to achieve our aim of strengthening the EBU's membership which will allow the future development of the game in England.