



REVIEW OF 2013-2018 STRATEGY: BIDDING FOR THE FUTURE

Introduction

1. This is a review progress against our 2013-2018 strategic objectives, under each of the original 10 sub-strategies.

Governance and Charitable Status

2. We have made progress in a number of key strands in this area. EBED is established, we are simplifying our governance, eg removal of the Tournament Committee, and generally apply the principles of the Charity Good Governance Code. We are more involved worldwide, and our communications are improved, albeit some of our stakeholders would still like more. We haven't found the resource to do much on volunteering, although this was the subject of some preliminary work by one of the County sub-groups.

Supporting Bridge and Securing the Future

3. In terms of the 2 main strands identified for action, promoting the game and supporting our international players, we have made good progress, including setting up and running an U16 international squad for both boys and girls, but we or more precisely EBED has made only a little headway with attracting charitable donations. Further progress, particularly in supporting our international teams, has to some extent been constrained by financial pressures.

Relationships with our Counties and Clubs

4. We established new County Working Groups, but they have had mixed success geographically. Following a review with County Chairs in the summer, they are being re-launched. We have provided additional popular support to Clubs (eg Insurance and equipment grants) and in teaching, often but not only through EBED, including the Telegraph advertisement and other initiatives set out in the Education heading below.

5. In the remaining two areas of this strategic strand, both related to attracting non-affiliated players, our efforts are still progressing but membership has remained more or less constant. It continues to be problematic to balance making the EBU a value-added benefit to Members, whilst gaining some relationship with non-affiliated clubs, which largely, but not entirely, we have delegated to EBED. The action around low-cost ways for people to learn bridge was devised to make our potential charitable status clearer, and perhaps, given we went down the EBED route, has proved not to be a priority for the EBU.

Education

6. We set EBED clear priorities, and provided funding, in improving teaching both generally and in schools particularly and were set and remain as their priority areas, for which the EBU provides the funding. The new Fast Track Bridge teaching programme has been launched after careful trials, and looks like being a success. Progress in schools is, maybe not surprisingly, slower than hoped with huge competition for time and resource in schools. But activity continues and a number of areas are running strong programmes for younger players eg the Regional Junior Camps and a successful programme in Stamford BC.

7. Separately the EBU has attracted EBL part-funding to set up a pilot of attracting new players to our Clubs through teaching. Yorkshire has led this trial with a selection of Clubs, and with help from Aylesbury, and following an evaluation of the results, this is now being rolled out with dedicated resource.

Tournaments and Regulations

8. On tournaments, we have regularly reviewed our tournaments and have introduced new ideas, eg point-a-board, as well as rationalising others. We are not alone in world bridge in looking at decline in attendances, but there are some signs of stability or even improvement in selected events.

9. On online, we are not the leading provider, but we have introduced successful competitions, including with robot partners and opponents and an increasingly popular online knock-out tournament. We have partnered Funbridge in extending our online reach, and participation has been excellent and above expectation.

10. On regulation we have improved presentation of the rules, as well as simplifying some aspects. It is fair to say that many members will always find the rules complex, but we can be satisfied with progress here. And an online forum has been set to facilitate discussion.

International Teams

11. Our international teams have had a good record, and we have increased our support for junior teams, within the constraints of financial pressures and other priorities.

12. We successfully hosted the Champions Trophy.

13. We are more engaged with the EBL, and are pushing them towards greater transparency, albeit change is slow.

Technology

14. We have made good progress across all the elements of this strand. We use a blended form of communications, including making an enhanced magazine available online; We continue to push forward and trial the use of new technology at our congresses; We have online tournaments clearly established; and the website was improved, albeit a further refresh may well be appropriate over the next couple of years.

Our Employees

15. Overall there has been progress in this area, albeit continued effort remains appropriate. We have introduced more systematic communication between the Board and Aylesbury, and our employees are very supportive of, and committed to, what the EBU is trying to do. We have managed to ensure our employment packages are competitive both on a general and particular basis, and we have successfully reformed our sick leave provision. We have a Succession Plan. Finally, we analysed alternative premises, but decided instead to stay where we are and made some investments in improving our current building.

Archives

16. The EBU's archives have been reorganised, and are now more accessible, and generally our attention to this area has improved. A history of bridge, volume 1, was also commissioned and published.

Communication and Reporting

17. We have reported on our progress, through the Annual Report, through more Newsletters to particular audiences, and through as open as possible publication of our own Board and Sub-Committee minutes.

Conclusion

18. We have generally made good progress in taking forward our 2013-2018 Plan, but a few areas were deprioritised or found more difficult than we hoped (eg converting non-affiliated clubs) and the economic climate has been tighter than was being forecast for the 5-year cycle. The strategic areas identified 5 years ago remain valid and are being built upon for the next 5-year Plan. In particular, we need to create the financial headroom to invest in retaining and if possible improving, our membership numbers to safeguard the future of duplicate bridge.