



MINUTES

Meeting	EBED Trustee Meeting	
Date & Time	25th March 2020 from 12.00 to 14.00	
Location	Telephonic	
Attendees	Andy Margetts – Chair (AM) Terry Hewett – Trustee (TH) Mary Sharp – Trustee (MS) Douglas Wright – Trustee (DBBW)	Gillian Fawcett – Trustee (GF) Mike Hill – Trustee & Treasurer (MH) Dom Wilson – Trustee (DoW)
	Apologies – Donna Wright – CEO (on leave)	
Agenda	1 – EBU Update 2 – Finances 3 – Operations 4 – Staffing	

INTRODUCTION

- AM opened the meeting
- It was resolved that the meeting be classified as a board meeting under Article 15 (4) (a) of the constitution and that, until further notice, future telephonic board meetings could be called on an ad-hoc basis and at short notice given the current Covid-19 situation
- Normal scheduled board meetings (the next being Thursday 4, June) will proceed as usual but will be held as a video conference if possible and telephonically if not

1 – EBU UPDATE

- AM reported on conversations with our major donor (the EBU). It was noted that:
 - EBU finances are under severe strain as P2P and tournament income has all but ceased
 - Staff working practices were under review and cost savings were already being implemented even before the government’s furlough scheme was announced and, as a result, EBED’s grant for Q1 would not now be made
 - Following the introduction of the furlough scheme, they now intend placing about 1/3rd of their staff into that plan and that has already been announced to staff
 - Given many of our staff share the EBU office, DMW has written a holding statement to our staff, pending the outcome of this meeting
- Notwithstanding our independence, AM suggested that it was difficult for EBED to continue as normal in light of the reduced funding commitment and the restrictions that the C-19 pandemic has placed on our ability to run our services and it was agreed that future funding from the EBU could come under threat if we did not act in sympathy at a time when our major donor was under such pressure



2 - FINANCES

- MH presented an analysis of our financial position on the assumption that the crisis continued for the next 12 months during which time EBU donations ceased and trading activities were severely impacted, albeit there would be some savings in direct costs.
- It was noted that, on this basis and without cutting staff costs, reserves could fall from current levels (c.£300k) to just above £100k and that, once they reached that level, the basis on which the charity operated would have to be questioned and actions taken to ensure it remained solvent.
- The question of current solvency was discussed and it was noted that, if ever our solvency were to become in doubt, then the primary duty of the trustees would change from pursuing our charitable purpose to the protection of creditors. It was noted that assets currently far exceeded liabilities and, as the principal asset was cash, it was agreed that the charity could continue to meet liabilities for at least the next 12 months and that it was currently solvent.
- It was recognised that the C-19 situation is fast moving and that the financial position should be kept under close review as things developed.
- The board also considered its charitable reporting obligations and in particular the duties to report “serious incidents” to the Charity Commission. It was noted that the relevant CC guidance affecting EBED at present was to report the sudden loss of donor income (e.g. by the termination of a major donor contract) where this amounts to in excess of 20 per cent. on the charity’s income and it was concluded that no such reporting was currently required but that this should be kept under review; urgently if the EBU were to cancel the Q2 payment.

3 – OPERATIONS

- DBBW reported on operations and, in particular, on assistance being given to EBTA teachers. To help teachers preserve their livelihoods and encourage bridge teaching to continue to take place at a time when physical teaching is not permitted, the team has compiled and publicised advice to bridge teachers to move to on-line teaching using a combination of video conferencing and on-line bridge playing platforms.
- Physical TD and CTT courses have been cancelled up to the end of April and later courses will be reviewed on a rolling basis so that one-month’s notice of an intention to cancel will be given to try to be fair to teachers, participants and venue providers.
- The practicalities and merits of delivering an on-line version of the CTT were considered with MS voicing concerns as to whether the real-world techniques being taught could be conveyed on-line. It was agreed that DBBW would trial the delivery of an on-line course to replace the cancelled Horsham course (mid-April) if at least eight participants can be secured after which a further evaluation would decide whether to try to roll this out as a program. Course fees would be reviewed if a roll out is deemed desirable – it was noted that delivery costs would be less without a venue but that participants would benefit from not incurring travel or accommodation costs and that EBED staff time would be greater in setting up the course.
- It was also agreed that “how to deliver a bridge lesson online” training should be made available for EBTA members but not on a paid-for basis at this stage.
- It was agreed that our TD training courses may also be a candidate for on line teaching but that demand for this was not likely to be strong in the short term. Exceptionally, training TDs to act in on-line tournaments might be valuable but it was also noted that several TDs were already marketing their services to clubs directly and that many would have self-taught before we could devise such a course. DBBW will review this and revert to the trustees separately if he concludes otherwise.



- TH raised the possibility of organising on-line activities for children if schools remain closed for a significant period of time although this might present considerable safeguarding issues.

4 – STAFFING

- It was agreed that we should follow the EBU's approach of making financial savings generally where we could.
- It was agreed that, whilst it was desirable not to have to reduce staff numbers, the C-19 restrictions were causing lasting damage to EBED and that the current policy of re-tasking staff whose workload has fallen could not continue and further that swift action to reduce staff costs was necessary.
- It was agreed, that the availability of the government furlough scheme might help defer the need to reduce staff numbers but that it might not necessarily eliminate the need to do so and that the charities operations may have to be run differently going forwards
- AM outlined the furlough scheme (available to the end of May) and the current uncertainties over the exact meaning of 80 per cent. of pay being covered, whether all staff were eligible and the practicalities of reporting and payment timing. It was noted that staff could not simply work reduced hours under the scheme. It was agreed to proceed under the assumption that the scheme would cover part time employees (the majority of our staff).
- It was agreed to offer the scheme to staff but that the charity must still maintain a core operational ability and that the work on the e-learning project was so strategic that it should continue to enable MS to bring a fully-costed and timed proposal to the June Board meeting. At that point, the board would consider whether the funding required to commence the project itself could still be authorised depending on the financial outlook and the state of the C-19 crisis.
- It was agreed to offer a 90 per cent scheme to affected staff with EBED bearing the excess over the government scheme as an added incentive for staff to volunteer
- Current staff workload and whether their activities were core in the context of the C-19 restrictions were then considered.
- It was agreed to authorise DMW to commence a furlough programme with the aim of a furlough starting as soon as possible after 1 April and that, if furloughing a CEO is even possible, to make arrangements for herself to be furloughed by the end of April, having identified any matters other members of staff or the trustees themselves must deal with in her absence (e.g. cancelling JTI reservation, charity reporting, communications with MPCC, ongoing safeguarding etc).
- It was noted that the staff costs and the whole operational structure of the charity would require continual assessment and that significant changes to personnel and roles may be required to reduce costs whilst trying to minimise disruption to our charitable purposes irrespective of the duration of the C-19 crisis.

MEETING CLOSED 14.00