



## UPDATE ON UNIVERSAL MEMBERSHIP FOR CLUBS

### **What is Pay to Play?**

*Pay to Play is a mechanism for collecting EBU player-members' subscriptions via affiliated clubs, in the form of a fixed amount each time they play.*

### **Is the Pay to Play amount per playing session going to be 29p?**

*The EBU Board recommended 29p as the Pay to Play amount for April 2010 to March 2011 to the Shareholders at their Meeting on 11<sup>th</sup> March.* We stated that we would be able to keep the fee at the level mentioned in our proposals of April 2008, because the EBU has managed to keep its administrative costs down and, after reviewing this year's income and expenditure and the projected budgets for 2009/10, is satisfied that 29p is adequate. This is the figure that will be in the club affiliation agreement (previously known as club contract) which will be mailed to our clubs. No further action will be taken until the AGM in October when the Pay to Play amount of 29p will be recommended to the Shareholders for ratification. It is a requirement of our constitution that our subscriptions, in whatever form, are set and ratified at the AGM each year. This enables the Shareholders, your county representatives, to ensure that the members' interests are served.

### **Can you now bring forward the mailing of the club Pay to Play documentation?**

*Yes, the mailing will take place at the end of April 2009.* We have been listening to the feedback from our clubs and we have acted on that and brought the mailing of the club affiliation agreement, the Pay to Play guidelines and the club benefits package forward to the end of April 2009. This will give our clubs more time to discuss these matters and will allow them to make their decisions before the holiday period of July and August.

### **Can we collect the Pay to Play amount in any way we wish?**

Yes, clubs are free to determine which way they collect their members' Pay to Play amounts (both national and county elements). We are aware of the following possibilities:

Increasing the table money charged per session.

Increasing their annual subscription rather than their table money

A mixture of increased annual subscription and increased table money

Funding the Pay to Play amount from club reserves

### **What club benefits are available?**

We have announced our club insurance package which is available from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2009. Please consult our website or contact Aylesbury for full details. We continue to develop the full package of benefits, which will be mailed to you at the end of April.

### **How are your development plans coming along?**

We have set up the first ever All Party Parliamentary Group for the development of Bridge and we had our inaugural meeting on 9<sup>th</sup> March 2009. The Chairman is Baroness Henig of Lancaster.



We also have two Vice Chairmen - Lord Harrison of Chester and Michael Mates MP, and our Secretary is The Baroness Howe of Idlicote. All of those involved are great supporters of bridge as demonstrated in the objectives that were agreed as follows:

To develop awareness of the benefits that bridge brings especially for younger people in their education and social interaction, and also for older people in protection against dementia and especially socialisation. But what does this really mean for the development of bridge?

Well, it provides us with the opportunity to highlight these issues through events at the Houses of Parliament that will provide us with a stronger profile for bridge nationally. It will also help us when we contact other like-minded organisations to work together to fulfil mutual objectives.

A special thank you to Baroness Henig for the vast amount of help and enthusiasm she has demonstrated in getting this project off the ground.

### **Are you in breach of Article 11 of the Human Rights Act?**

Many of you may have received information that the EBU could be in breach of Article 11 of the Human Rights Act when it implements universal membership. David Harris, our Honorary Counsel's opinion is that there is no infringement of Article 11, nor is the scheme illegal, and there is scope for people to have anonymity and choice. Anyone visiting a club will be assigned a membership number, receive a magazine and have a masterpoint record. If they do not wish to take up the offer they can play at a non-affiliated club or request that their membership be dealt with anonymously. Other organisations also operate universal membership schemes based on membership of an affiliated club including the Scottish Bridge Union and the English Golf Union. Many thanks to David for the expertise he continues to provide on a voluntary basis.

### **And finally...**

We have been contacted by a group who are considering mailing you a critique of our proposals for universal membership, concentrating on the financial aspects. We were invited to comment but decided not to accept that invitation as we have already consulted widely with counties and clubs, and the Shareholders, your county representatives, voted by a substantial majority to accept universal membership via Pay to Play at the EGM on 4<sup>th</sup> June 2008. We recognise the right of any individual or group to criticise our proposals but we hope that all our clubs and members recognise that the Board will not put the EBU at risk financially.

We will continue with the efforts that Aylesbury, the Universal Membership Project Board and our Club Committee representatives are making to ensure that our clubs needs are met within the implementation of the project – which will enable us to make the game more accessible through our development plans for duplicate bridge in England and will allow us to continue with the provision of a robust infrastructure for all our members.

Duplicate bridge in England is best served if we all engage in the effort to make Universal Membership via Pay to Play work. More members means a greater opportunity for development and a possible lower Pay to Play amount in future!