

YCBA Board Minutes – 11.30am to 1pm Thursday 18 Dec 2025

Present : David Guild (Chair), Nick Woolven, Lesley Millet, Ron Millet, Robin Jepson, Mark Dunkley, Ruth Kerr, Pauline Stout. (Part meeting – Graham Jepson)

Apologies: Vanessa Jervis, Katie Thorpe, Mark Ballantine, Stephen Conningley

Quick recap

The YCBA Management Board discussed various operational matters including a pilot program for smaller clubs, liability insurance, and volunteer policies, while also reviewing the organization's structure and constitutional amendments. The board addressed several administrative topics including board roles and responsibilities, financial support for county bridge teams, and security measures for the Pianola database. They concluded by discussing club engagement initiatives, diversity efforts, and upcoming events, while also planning the next strategy meeting and confirming a fee increase to retain financial position.

Next steps

- [Ron: Draft and consult with Robin on proposed constitutional amendment wording to ensure all named persons on the website, in minutes, or appointed via email/text are considered insured persons under EBU insurance, including temporary/ad hoc roles.](#)
- [Pauline: Write to clubs to encourage them to update and provide comprehensive information about all their bridge classes/courses on both the EBU New Map and Learn Bridge Yorkshire website.](#)
- [Nick: Continue consulting with remaining committees regarding leadership rotation and report back to the Board/bring to the January strategy day for decision.](#)
- [Ruth: Finalize and circulate the collated board/committee roles and responsibilities summary immediately after Christmas, and prompt board/committee members to review before the January meeting.](#)
- [Ruth: Develop job descriptions/role briefs for board/committee positions based on the collated information for Board agreement](#)
- [Lesley and Nick: Review and update the list of Pianola/Scorebridge administrators and , confirm who should be removed/added, and if required contact James Ward to implement necessary changes.](#)
- [David: Write to James Ward to confirm YCBA will implement two-factor authentication for Pianola from 1st January, and clarify with James/Pauline which functions require 2FA and which do not.](#)
- [Ruth: Contact June \(Hull Bridge Club\) to offer support and discuss what further help YCBA can provide; consider a face-to-face visit if needed.](#)
- [David: Visit Settle Bridge Club in New Year to discuss their current situation and support needs.](#)
- [Nick: Send communication \(via Pianola/website/newsletter\) to club chairs and secretaries explaining the increase in Universal Membership fee from 5p to 7p, effective 1st April, and provide justification.](#)

- [Pauline: Confirm and communicate final timings and attendee list for the January strategy meeting at Weetwood Hall, including lunch arrangements.](#)
- [Ruth: Prompt board/committee members who have not yet completed formal diversity/equality training to do so, and coordinate with First Yorkshire/Community First Yorkshire for upcoming training dates.](#)
- [Lesley: Upload Development Committee minutes to the YCBA website \(or send to Robin for upload\).](#)
- [David: Upload Grants Committee minutes to the YCBA website.](#)
- [David: Contact EBU re Behavioural issues involving Discrimination](#)
- [Ron: Consult with Mark \(York\) about how York Bridge Club handles liability/structure issues for potential application to YCBA, and report back.](#)
- [Ruth: Continue work on complaints procedures and supported self-assessment with the Selection Committee, and bring proposals to the January Diversity Committee meeting.](#)
- [Ruth: Prepare and distribute learning materials and outreach information to clubs, aligned with the end-of-January podcast launch.](#)
- [David: Set agenda for January strategy meeting](#)
- [All Board: Review the EBU Volunteers Handbook for possible adoption of included EBU policies. To be discussed at next regular Board Meeting.](#)

Summary

Pilot Program for Small Clubs

Lesley and Mark discussed a proposal for a pilot program to help smaller clubs that currently use paper-based scoring, with Mark planning to put the proposal in writing. They agreed that the issue is often not financial but human resources, as clubs struggle to find people to prepare and run sessions each week. Ron suggested that the real goldmine for membership might be the retirement generation, while Mark emphasized the importance of the Youth Academy for long-term growth.

Volunteer Insurance and Policy Updates

The YCA Management Board discussed liability insurance issues and volunteer policies. They agreed to review the EBU's safeguarding policies for possible adoption but decided against requiring every volunteer to fill out the registration document at the back of the Volunteer Handbook.

Ron proposed adding a constitutional amendment to ensure volunteers are covered by the EBU insurance, even if not listed individually.

The Board also discussed standby pairs for competitions, with Pauline raising concerns about how they are arranged.

Ron noted that, whilst current insurance likely covers volunteers, the YCBA's structure as an association rather than a limited company could leave members personally liable in certain

scenarios. The group agreed to review the organization's structure in the medium term, with Ron planning to consult with Mark about York's approach

Outreach Board Member Appointment

The Board also discussed ethnic minority outreach, with Ruth suggesting it might be more effective to reframe our unfulfilled Board position as an outreach title that includes disability representation as it is a wider brief than only improving ethnicity coverage.

Ruth provided an excellent research paper on this topic and will consider her research and search for a suitable club to run a pilot focused on ethnicity outreach.

Marketing/Tournaments Calendar

Mark reported on Facebook advertising, which is handled through the Development Committee rather than the Board. The group reviewed the third podcast release on competitions and tournaments, with Robin indicating the Yorkshire League Committee would be interested in contributing to future podcasts.

Nick updated on the Yorkshire League, online matches, and upcoming events like the New Year Bonanza, Yorkshire Pairs, and Harrogate Spring Congress, noting the current entries and the expected participation in the new year

Board Roles and Strategy Planning

The meeting discussed several key topics, including the need for consultation with more committees about chair roles, with a suggestion to implement a deputy chair system. The group agreed to make decisions about these changes at the upcoming strategy day.

They also approved the immediate co-opting of Mark Ballantine to the Management Board as YCBA Secretary.

Ruth reported on her review of current board roles and responsibilities, which she is collating and will share a summary within a week.

Bridgemate Upgrade and Grant Decisions

The board discussed the potential upgrade of Bridgemate systems, deciding not to proceed with the more expensive Bridgemate 3 for the time being due to concerns about costs and practical issues. The Board to keep this under continual review

They agreed to support clubs converting to updated Bridgemate versions or tablets, but with a revised grant limit of £500, reduced from £1,250.

Representative Teams' Expenses

The Board also considered a request from the selection committee chair for an increase in the contribution towards accommodation and travel expenses for Yorkshire County team

players participating in the Tollemache Cup but decided this should be handled by the Tournament Committee with full Board authority.

Website and Emails Security

The Board approved implementing additional security measures for the Pianola database and emails requiring dual password authentication through an app, with David to confirm with James Ward that this would not affect members' ability to view only results.

Finally, they noted the need to update the list of Pianola and Scorebridge administrators, supplied via Stephen Cordingley, with Ron suggesting this should be reviewed every three months and potentially assigned as a new role for Secretary? Lesley agreed to review and update the provided Pianola system list with Nick's help, removing former Board members and updating roles.

Hull Bridge Club Support Initiative

David noted concerns about declining membership at some clubs, particularly Easingwold and Hull.

The group discussed efforts to support Hull Bridge Club, which has been struggling with low membership and limited teaching resources. Ruth offered to contact Rose Spilberg, the club chair, to explore ways to provide assistance, while Mark suggested using Facebook to promote any open days or events. Lesley noted that Hull's location is a challenge, similar to Bradford. Also, decline may deter some higher-level players who prefer to travel for better games. The group agreed to show their willingness to help, though they acknowledged that a full merger with other clubs may not result in an EBU registered club.

Equality Initiatives and Club Communications

Ruth provided an update on the Diversity, Inclusion, and Equality Committee's progress, including the distribution of a model club diversity policy, work on training materials, and plans for outreach aligned with a podcast in late January. They also touched on ongoing work related to complaints procedures and equality monitoring, with Ruth noting that clubs may need to consider implementing equality monitoring, though there is currently limited interest from the EBU.

The group discussed challenges with engaging some clubs.

Discrimination Complaints and training

Lesley reported that Yorkshire was leading the way on diversity initiatives and development of procedures to handle complaints.

David mentioned a potential new process for handling discrimination complaints directly by the EBU's Conduct Committee, though this was not fully detailed. The group discussed concerns about discrimination and whether cases should bypass local resolution for national intervention, with Ron and Mark expressing concerns that going national could remove opportunities for local reconciliation.

The Board concluded that bypassing local opportunity for reconciliation where skills are local is not desirable. Also, that central EBU should be timely notified of any behaviour including discrimination in Yorkshire.

David to take this up with the EBU.

David requested that all board members who haven't completed formal training with Community First Yorkshire be scheduled for the two-hour sessions, with Ruth to follow up on this.

York Academy and EBED Collaboration

Lesley expressed concerns about the York Academy and the lack of collaboration with EBED, emphasizing the need for joint efforts. David and Lesley discussed the involvement of EBED in teaching clubs.

Board Strategy Away Meeting – January 2026

The board discussed arrangements for the strategy meeting on January 22, 2026, at Weetwood Hall, confirming a 10:30 AM start time and a 3:15 PM finish time with lunch at 12:30 PM. Pauline confirmed that 15 people have been booked in.

Lesley agreed to upload the development minutes to the website, and David mentioned the need for minutes from the Grants Committee.

AOB:

Yorkshire County Fee Change (UMS)

The Board agreed to increase the universal membership fee from 5p to 7p, effective April 1, to address financial losses including reduced congress revenue and banking fees, with Nick tasked to communicate this change to the EBU and Club Chairs and secretaries.

The next regular board meeting after is scheduled for February 26 at 10 AM.