

Bath Bridge Club

Chair's Report

Trying to identify the major aspects of club life and summarise 2023 into my first chairman's report for Bath Bridge Club is a bit of a challenge. Much has changed in the three long years since Covid made its cruel presence felt. We have recovered to a new era with a mixed programme. I believe the club is flourishing in many ways but is still facing some challenges.

The club administration has been revamped, with a major update of our Rules to reflect the online and cashless era. I am grateful for the work of our secretary, Marion, and new treasurer, new Paul, to make this happen - it has been a lot of work. We have also had to sort out our membership records. Many members had been left on our books while we waited to see who returned and who had moved on. The membership database now reflects those who play face-to-face or online club bridge. Thanks to membership secretary Susie for working hard on this.

We have also produced a safeguarding policy to help to protect the more vulnerable in our midst. While we don't have children and young persons, we do have vulnerable adults, through mental or physical frailty or illness. They can be affected by people's actions intentional or otherwise. There will be a link to the policy on the website, with contact details for the safeguarding and welfare officer, Liz Butler. Our directors will receive some guidelines of what to look out for and what action to take. The policy will be reviewed annually. Concerns should be referred to Liz or a committee member.

We now have 368 members, of whom 44 are students in their 1st or 2nd year of training led by Stuart and Tina. 18 have graduated from our teaching programme and many now play regularly at the club. It is good to know that around 20% of our membership are new bridge players forming the future of the club. There is a more detailed statement from our teachers Stuart and Tina further down in this report. As you will see, there is a lot going on. Our Assisted Play sessions, led by Chris, are now reaching six or more tables. Some play only this session while others also play in social or relaxed sessions. It is a very friendly, positive session.

Face-to-face numbers have steadily risen over the year. Daytime bridge is increasingly popular and giving us a headache over exceeding safe number limits (14½ tables). Thank you for observing the protocols in place to manage this limit. We do explore expansion options and have funds in reserve to realise them, but increasing capacity is difficult when we rent the premises.

Evening bridge numbers are improving but haven't returned to anywhere near pre-Covid levels.

While RealBridge is popular with students and for competitions it has not taken off for mainstream members. At present we won't pursue this platform further.

I am happy to be able to report that several members are training to be directors to help ease the burden on our existing team. Many thanks to Richard for organising the training. We have tried to train new scorers to cover for Neil when he takes leave, although this is proving more difficult to achieve.

On the technology front we have concerns about the performance and reliability of our scoring system. A lot of effort has been put into stabilising the system. Lack of technical insight into how the various parts of the software interact is limiting progress, and we are now hoping to use the services of a consultant to help. We could still do with a technical lead and assistants to help manage the system from within our membership – don't be shy!

As tenants of the rugby club, we can use the premises only from Monday lunchtime to Friday lunchtime, and are also constrained by the size of the room. This gives rise to the question of what

direction to we should take moving forward. Are we content with what we currently do or should we seek to improve our offering and if so in what direction?

- I would like to hold a further more advanced session but we have failed to achieve this so far.
- Is there demand for a further social offering?
- What would encourage more players to come in the evening, eg improved carpark lighting?

On your behalf I offer many thanks to the retiring committee, most of whom are standing for re-election, and a huge thanks to the work of our steward Neil for all the work he does to help the club run smoothly.

Our students

In the last 12 months our first group of 20 students completed the two year EBED course. 15 of the graduates now play in Bath Bridge Club Sessions. They have also formed three teams and take part in the Wiltshire Novice Teams league. Three of the graduates have trained to be RealBridge session managers and now self-manage the Gentle Pairs on RealBridge and one has trained to be a Club Scorer. The Graduates also occasionally help out with the Beginners RealBridge Practice sessions.

We have been running an Improvers session on Monday afternoons that has a mixture of revision topics and new topics to help these players continue to improve their game. These sessions are also open to any members of the Club who find the topic of interest.

Of our second cohort of students, 12 have continued with the course for the second year. Six of this group have already started to play in Gentle Pairs between terms and will soon be in the position to attend other club sessions. They have also formed a Novice Team for the Wilts league.

We plan to continue with the Improver sessions and Novice Teams league to give them the same opportunities once they have completed the course. Finally we have a large group of 28 first year students on Thursday afternoons who are halfway through the first year of the Course. Hopefully many of them will continue into Year 2 in September.

Tina and Stuart would like to thank everyone, there is a list of 15 - you know who you are - who have helped us run these lessons and the online Real Bridge sessions with the students.

Back to me ...

And we must of course reciprocate by thanking Tina and Stuart for all they do for the club.

Sriram has been a stalwart of the club for many years and a director, scorer and committee member. He was a key part of the team that got us going on online bridge and the return to face-to-face bridge during Covid. He has decided to relocate to Ireland. We wish him and his family well. Thank you, Sriram.

Trevor

February 2024

Treasurer's Report 2023

When Paul Hatvany retired as treasurer in late March 2023, I did not appreciate just how much work he did for the club, and how his automated systems require a huge amount of manual inputs. I do now! Thankyou Paul you have been a hard act to follow.

First some key indicators:

- **Membership:** 368 including 62 students
- **Players:** F2F 7,219 up from 5,289 in 2022 and online 2,127 down from 2,958 in 2022, and a further 848 players came to Assisted Play. We still have not managed to achieve our pre covid levels of 12,000. We continue to see a steady growth in daytime attendance at the expense of online and evening sessions.
- Teaching continues to go from strength to strength with the offer now including formal teaching sessions, seminars and weekly Assisted Play. These activities are not only bringing new people to bridge but also making a significant contribution to the club's coffers.

The £50,000 one year bond investment made in 2022 produced a healthy £1,000 of interest in 2023. The original £50,000 has been reinvested in two bonds: a £30,000 one year bond with Cambridge and Counties Bank paying 5% and £25,000 in a 3 year bond with United Trust Bank paying 5.01%.

For 2024 annual subscriptions we introduced a new payment system and thank you all for embracing the change so willingly. Hopefully it will make life simpler for us in future years. In terms of these accounts the balance of players' floats (£10,605) includes approximately £4,500 of 2024 subs paid in advance.

Paul Hatvany warned me that claiming Gift Aid is, for some reason, inexplicably difficult. It certainly is and to date I have failed. I shall continue in my efforts to claim for 2023 and 2024 and HMRC willing these will be forthcoming before next year's AGM.

Our overheads have risen sharply, and will need to be monitored carefully:

- Rent up 28%
- Wages up 15%, which reflects the additional hours done by Neil and inflation!
- Refreshments up 20%, reflecting the increase in table numbers!
- Miscellaneous expenses (including leaving gifts, xmas parties and licences for bridgetabs and bridgewebs) up 38%.

In terms of future planning, it cannot be long before we need to consider some serious capital expenditure, but we have sufficient funds to meet these demands

Indeed, to end on a positive note, I am happy to report that the club finances are in a very healthy position with a £6,000.00 operating surplus for 2023.

Treasurer Signature.....(Paul Cooper) 10/3/24.....(date)

Auditors Signature.....(Chris Chatfield) 5/3/24.....(date)

Bath Bridge Club Accounts

Year Ended 31st December 2023

Income		2023
Table Money		£
F2F		29,406.50
BBO		5,653.50
Real Bridge		774.00
Assisted Play		1,123.00
		<u>36,957.00</u>
Teaching		
Monday, Wed & Thurs (net		7,473.83
Seminars		425.00
		<u>7,898.83</u>
Subscriptions		4,325.00
Adjustments		- 39.53
		<u>4,285.47</u>
Total Income		49,141.30

Expenditure		2023
Playing Fees		£
EBU UMS		3,899.04
BBO		1,741.20
Real Bridge		442.40
Directors Fees		1,086.00
		<u>7,168.64</u>
Costs		
EBU Insurance		221.99
EBU Fees		28.00
Rent		12,600.00
Wages (Inc Pension & NIC)		17,726.61
Equipment		622.29
Refreshments		2,351.44
NICKO fees		86.00
Misc		955.62
		<u>34,591.95</u>
Charity Donations		
Ecats		1,137.00
Retiring Members		164.50
		<u>1,301.50</u>
Total Costs		43,062.09
Total Revenue		49,141.30
Net Surplus		<u>6,079.21</u>

Movement of Funds		2023
Opening Bank Balance		£
less opening player floats		- 5,390.00
RedWood Bank 1year Bond		
Repaid		50,000.00
Interest		1,000.00
		<u>71,862.80</u>
Closing Bank Balance		33,547.80
Cambridge & Counties		30,000.00
United Trust Bank		25,000.00
Closing Payer Floats		- 10,605.79
		<u>77,942.01</u>
Cash Movement (Net Surplus)		6,079.21

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