

# **Bradgate Bridge Club AGM, November 10th 2021**

## Chairman's Report

Good evening everyone and welcome to this year's AGM.

To say this has been an extraordinary year for the committee is something of an understatement. We have all been thrown into a situation which to use that well-worn word, can only be described as unprecedented. Members who have not been involved in resolving some of the issues which have arisen during the pandemic may not appreciate just how much work the committee has put in, but I am sure you would all join me in thanking the committee members for volunteering their time and effort to keep our bridge club running successfully.

After transitioning during the summer of 2020 from no bridge at all during lockdown 1, to online sessions on Mondays and Wednesdays, we were faced in the Spring of 2021 with calls for a return to Face to Face bridge. This was to prove an even bigger challenge than going online in the first place.

By July there was a definite feeling that the worst of the pandemic was over. Vaccination had given people confidence, and many clubs were gearing up for a return to proper bridge at a table rather than on the internet. Unfortunately for us, it was at this time that the Rothley Centre decided it was going ahead with a much-needed refurbishment, which would take it out of action for three months. We were faced with a decision either to find alternative local premises or accept an offer to play at County Bridge Club's brand new facility at St Oswald's. We decided on the latter, and I would like to say how grateful we are to Ian Walkerdine and his committee who have made it possible for us to re-start Face to Face bridge at their club.

We have now been told that the Rothley Centre refurbishment work will start later this month. If this proves correct, and if it is completed within the expected time scale of 3 months, this means we should be able to get back to playing at the Rothley Centre sometime in March or April 2022. However there are a lot of hurdles to be crossed before this happens so nobody is holding his breath.

The pandemic has not completely gone away, and opinion is divided on whether to play online or Face to Face. For the moment the club will continue to offer both versions on a Monday night, and is one of the few clubs to offer hybrid results where the two are merged together. Monday nights have proved very successful, on occasion exceeding in total the number of tables we used to get on a Monday at the Rothley Centre.

Wednesday afternoons F2F has proved less popular, and after a slow start with very little support from Bradgate members, County decided to suspend this session. We hope to reinstate the Wednesday afternoon session once we are back at the Rothley Centre.

Whatever type of bridge you prefer, we want Bradgate to continue to be regarded as a club which offers a high level of bridge but which welcomes in newcomers of all standards, and treats everyone with friendship, courtesy and respect. We always need new members, and although some have arrived via Charnwood Bridge Teachers (jointly founded by members from Bradgate BC and Loughborough BC) we must put in extra effort next year to recruit even more.

Without doubt the year ahead will offer further challenges. We know that there is a demand for online bridge, and this is likely to continue, but we really hope that most members will feel confident enough to return eventually to Face to Face at the Rothley Centre.

Ray Newman  
Chairman, Bradgate BC  
November 9th 2021

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