

Castle Morpeth Bridge Club

Chairman's Report

Castle Morpeth Bridge Club is an affiliated club of the North East Bridge Association and the English Bridge Union. Its' purpose is 'the advancement of amateur sport by promoting the game of bridge for the benefit of the residents of Morpeth and the surrounding area'.

It has only recently received Charitable Status and this is the clubs first submission.

The club meet on a Tuesday evening at St James Community Hall, Morpeth, to play Face to Face (F2F) bridge. On the same evening, an online tournament takes place (Bridge Base Online) for those not wishing to play F2F and for a small number of remote living members. Table money for F2F is £2.50 for members and \$3 for the online platform.

Trustees' meetings are arranged three times each year in addition to the AGM. Minutes of these meeting are published on the clubs' website. Trophies are awarded at the AGM.

Table numbers from F2F averaged 8-9 for the year. Slightly more than the 6-7 from the previous year. This is largely due to members leaving the Bridge Base Online platform and returning to F2F. However, table money from these numbers do not cover the costs of the hall hire, NEBA and EBU charges. The Trustees' will continue to monitor the situation and make changes where necessary.

As a consequence of the increase in F2F numbers, our online table numbers have dropped from 10 in 2022-23 to 6-7 in 2023-24. Canvassing for new members from local non-affiliated clubs has produced limited success. It appears that support from our more remote area members has evaporated as they return to their local F2F bridge clubs.

Given that the increasing average age of the club is quite high, it is a matter of increasing concern that very few new members from the local teaching classes want to progress to the club.

In the North East Bridge Association teams of 4 competition, we again fielded two teams. The A team was unlucky not to promote just missing out on the final match day. Thank you to Freda Simpkin for all her efforts as team captain.

In the annual 4 team Swan Trophy, Castle Morpeth managed to wrest the trophy from the previous winner Morpeth bridge club and win for only the second time in the trophies 37 years history. Well done to all concerned.

Despite revenue falling by 23% on the previous year, actions by the Trustees' minimised losses to £66.57. As the club is now a registered Charity, it will in future claim back Tax on membership donations.

Cash in hand stands at £11,508.

I'd like to thank the Trustees for all their help, support and hard work over my first year as Chaiman. To the directors and scorers who make the evenings run smoothly. All the un-named tea, coffee and biscuit volunteers and everyone who help to set up the room on arrival and tidy up when finished.

Lastly, I'd also like to thank the members for their offers of help. Their general demeanour and good humour are hugely appreciated by the Trustees' and go to make Castle Morpeth Bridge Club the friendly club it is today.

Paul Ingoe