



**THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE MERSEYSIDE AND  
CHESHIRE CONTRACT BRIDGE ASSOCIATION TO BE HELD BY  
VIDEO-CONFERENCE ON FRIDAY 26th JUNE 2026 AT 7:00 p.m.**

**Agenda**

1. Apologies for absence
2. Acceptance of Minutes of the last AGM held on 21st June 2024
3. Matters arising
4. Chair's Report
5. Sub-committee reports
6. Treasurer's Report
7. Motion to Fix the P2P and subscription rates for 2027/28
8. Secretary's Report
9. Election of Officers and Sub-committees
10. Insurance for clubs and officers
11. Plan for next three years
12. Any other Business

Richard Alcock, Secretary: 14th June 2026

## CHAIR'S REPORT FOR M&CBA AGM

26<sup>th</sup> June 2026

### Overview

It has been a year of successes but also one of disappointments. Our small team of volunteers has managed to revive the Liverpool Open competition. A County team was entered for the NGS9 and under national competition and one pair finished second overall. Sadly the prestigious John Armstrong Cup had to be cancelled and, to date, there are few entries for the Jim Davis teams event. A new club, Bebington, has joined the EBU bringing the County to 8 in total. Clubs have reviewed their membership data, removing nonplaying members, and the total membership has dropped below 1000 for the first time.

### Competitions

Thanks mainly to the organisation of Chris Raymond, the county leagues have attracted 15 teams in two divisions this year. The competition continues to grow. The Waterworth Cup attracted an entry of 12 pairs. The Lady Connell Cup only attracted 6 teams and the John Armstrong Cup only eight pairs.

The selection committee have done sterling work in forming teams for the Northern Bridge League [NBL] and the Tollemarche Cup. Our teams acquitted themselves well in both competitions. The NBL 'C' team competed in the final against 5 other counties.

Many clubs play online. The Warrington Club, and Jim Steele, have started two online bridge sessions for the whole county because, for many clubs, numbers of tables for online sessions are dwindling. This is hoped to become an event where County members can play together and get to know people from outside their own club.

Executive committee members have visited all seven of our registered clubs this year and a few non-affiliated ones. During these visits face to face contact was made with club officers and members. The County encouraged players to consider entering County competitions.

The contact details of more than 40 unaffiliated clubs have been entered onto the County website [thank you Richard Alcock and Jim Steele for the research]. It is part of the strategic plan to visit as many of these clubs as is practical.

The executive committee organised and subsidised some basic TD courses, which were run successfully by Paul Mathews [Hartford]. Both courses were full [12 in each]. Later in the year the executive committee intends to organise a pre-season 'get

together' for club TDs to discuss matters of common interest, if there is demand.

Many of our affiliated clubs have well established and successful teaching programmes. The executive committee is supportive of them and encourages other clubs to establish their own teaching programmes. Ideas have been shared via zoom meetings. If demand allows, the County intends to organise an EBED teachers' course.

The chair and vice chair have attended many national and Midland County meetings. Information from these meetings which is of interest to clubs and members has been circulated.

As a small committee we have considered the way forward for the County based on our stated objectives, feedback for the clubs and our very limited resources. A 3-year strategic plan has been drawn up, reviewed and revised. It will be presented to the AGM for approval.

I would like to express my appreciation for their tireless work in promoting duplicate bridge in the County to all committee members. Finally, a very special thank you to Julian Merrill, our treasurer, for his support, knowledge and ideas over many years of service to the County.

Mark Madeley

Chair

## SELECTION COMMITTEE REPORT FOR M&CBA AGM

26<sup>th</sup> June 2026

The Presidents Cup is scheduled for 4/5<sup>th</sup> July on Realbridge & once again is being managed and directed by David Stevenson on behalf of M&CBA as the nominal county event organiser. At present we have a full team roster utilising 6 pairs & also have a couple of individuals available as reserves.

Our NBL C team as division winners for 2025 are eligible to enter the national inter-county finals which are to be held via Realbridge on Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> June. In the 2025 NBL our A team finished joint 2<sup>nd</sup> with Yorkshire 10 VPs behind the joint winners Lancashire & Scotland. We were unable to enter a B team in 2025 due to insufficient numbers agreeing to take part.

In the 2025 Tollemache Cup qualifier we failed to get through to the final but finished a very creditable joint 6<sup>th</sup> only 8 VP's behind Kent in 3<sup>rd</sup> position.

I would like to thank all members of the selection committee for their contributions during the year.

Chris Raymond

Chair of Selection Committee

## TOURNAMENT COMMITTEE REPORT FOR M&CBA AGM

26<sup>th</sup> June 2026

The **Waterworth Cup** was held on BBO on Friday 16/01/26. There were 12 entries, the same number as entered in 2025. Bob Pitts and Barry Jones narrowly edged out Matt Foster and John Hampson. The format will be retained for next season.

Deva BC, the only club to express an interest, represented the county in the **Garden Cities Trophy**, finishing in fifth out of seven in the regional heat and thus failing to qualify for the final. The scores, however, were very close and Deva only missed qualification by a handful of Victory Points.

The Green Pointed **John Armstrong Pairs** was planned for Saturday 16/05/25 at Deva Bridge Club, with Ken Johnson directing. Disappointingly, the event only attracted 9 entries as compared to 24 in 2024 and 21 in 2023 when the face-to-face event was revived. The number of entries were not sufficient to run a Swiss Pairs competition so regrettably the event was cancelled.

The **Lady Connell** was won by team Stevenson who defeated Merrill in the final. The **Cheshire Salver** was not staged this season.

The **County League** First Division was won by Sutton Invincibles and the Second Division by We Need a Name. There were fifteen teams in the two divisions, stable from last season.

The **Jim Davis** was held as a face-to-face event at Deva BC in July. There were 7 entries with Team Murphy winners. The event will be held on Thursday 2 July this season with David Smith directing.

Efforts to engage players of NGS 10 and below, a large fraction of the membership, have been more successful this year. On March 29 the **Liverpool Open Pairs** was held at the new premises of Liverpool Bridge Club, with the 3 best placed pairs with an NGS score of 9 or under invited to play in the EBU 9 High Corwen. Ted Hulme and Nigel Smith qualified in second place and went on to finish second in the National competition, a terrific achievement for the County.

Stephen Downes

Chair of Tournament Committee

## TREASURER'S REPORT FOR M&CBA AGM

26<sup>th</sup> June 2026

I have prepared the accounts for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2026 and they, together with supporting documents, have been examined by our independent examiner, Bob Pitts.

Our surplus for the year was £1324.53. Our year end bank balance was £11655.76.

Compared with last year's surplus of £394.55, this is an exceptional result which is unlikely to be repeated in the current year.

- 1) UMS subscriptions are up by 12% with no increase in our UMS rate. Our members are playing more bridge
- 2) The President's Cup made a significant profit compared to last year's small loss. The organiser, David Stevenson is to be thanked for his hard work in returning this event to profit.
- 3) The county did not submit entries for either the Corwen or the Pachabo, meaning outgoings were reduced by £252. We have already submitted entries for both of these events this year.
- 4) The EBU have increased their entry fees to Inter-County events very significantly.

Over the last 3 years we have made a surplus of almost £2600. This will enable us to invest our surpluses in the future of bridge. A recent initiative has been for the county to provide basic club TD training courses.

I recommend that we keep our UM and subscription rates at the same level as previously.

Julian Merrill

Treasurer

**MERSEYSIDE AND CHESHIRE BRIDGE ASSOCIATION**  
Income and Expenditure Account for the Year ended 31st March 2026

	31/03/2026		31/03/2025	
	£	£	£	£
<b>INCOME:</b>				
Subscriptions		1223.24		1,094.04
Bank Interest		108.1		93.61
Donations		0		0.00
		<u>1,331.34</u>		<u>1,188</u>
<b>COMPETITIONS:</b>				
Figures in brackets denote a deficit				
John Armstrong	79.80		33.89	
Eric Howarth	0.00		0.00	
County Trials	0.00		0.00	
Jim Davies	54.12		0.00	
Lady Connell	(4.80)		50.24	
President's Cup	454.40		(43.13)	
M&C County League	69.84		17.12	
Merseyside Cup	0.00		0.00	
Waterworth	36.48		97.08	
Liverpool Open Pairs	47.45		0.00	
Jack High Sw Prs	0.00		0.00	
	<u>0.00</u>	<u>737.29</u>	<u>0.00</u>	<u>155</u>
		<u>2,068.63</u>		<u>1,343</u>
<b>EXPENDITURE:</b>				
<b>COUNTY MATCHES</b>				
Corwen	0.00		168.00	
Pachabo	0.00		107.00	
Tollemache	210.00		202.00	
Garden Cities	254.00		239.00	
Presidents Cup	0.00		0.00	
Northern Bridge League	40.00		40.00	
Nat Intercounties Lge Final	0.00		0.00	
Derby Match	0.00		0.00	
	<u>504.00</u>		<u>756</u>	
<b>SUNDRY COSTS</b>				
Travel	0.00		0.00	
PPS				
WebSite	64.80		64.80	
Engraving	0.00		0.00	
Club TD course	175.30		0.00	
TD Training	0.00		127.50	
Teacher Training				
	<u>240.10</u>	<u>744.10</u>	<u>192</u>	<u>948</u>
<b>SURPLUS/(DEFICIT) FOR THE YEAR TO DATE</b>		<u><b>1,324.53</b></u>		<u><b>395</b></u>

**MERSEYSIDE AND CHESHIRE BRIDGE ASSOCIATION**  
**Balance Sheet as at 31st March 2026**

		31/03/2026	31/03/2025	
	£	£	£	£
<b>FIXED ASSETS</b>				
Trophies		165.00		165
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>				
Bank	11,655.76		10,471.23	
Cash				
Debtors	<u>0.00</u>	11,655.76	<u>0.00</u>	10,471
<b>CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>				
Creditors	120.00		100.00	
Income in advance	0.00	120.00	160.00	260
<b>NET ASSETS</b>		<u><u>11,700.76</u></u>		<u><u>10,376.23</u></u>
<b>RESERVES</b>				
Brought Forward		10,376.23		9,981.68
Current Surplus (Deficit)		<u>1,324.53</u>		<u>394.55</u>
		<u><u>11,700.76</u></u>		<u><u>10,376.23</u></u>

8<sup>th</sup> May 2026

Re : Independent audit of M&CBA accounts

I have examined the financial statements of Merseyside & Cheshire Bridge Association for the financial year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2026 and in my opinion they are in accordance with the accounting records of the Association and the information and explanations supplied to me by the Treasurer.



David Robert Pitts

# SECRETARY'S REPORT FOR M&CBA AGM

26<sup>th</sup> June 2026

## Articles of Association

It seems likely that we will need to modify our Articles of Association (which contain the Byelaws as an Annexe), but as yet, there has not yet been any formal guidance from the EBU about any changes that are required. At the last AGM, it was decided to wait for the new model constitution before deciding on any changes to our own.

## County subscriptions

The EBU AGM was held on 26th November 2025, at which county shareholders voted to increase EBU fees for the forthcoming year (2026/27) as follows:

- Universal Membership Fee: 48p
- Direct Members Annual Fee: £39
- Club Annual Affiliation Fee: £32

Apart from the EBU increases, our fees for 2026/27 have not changed.

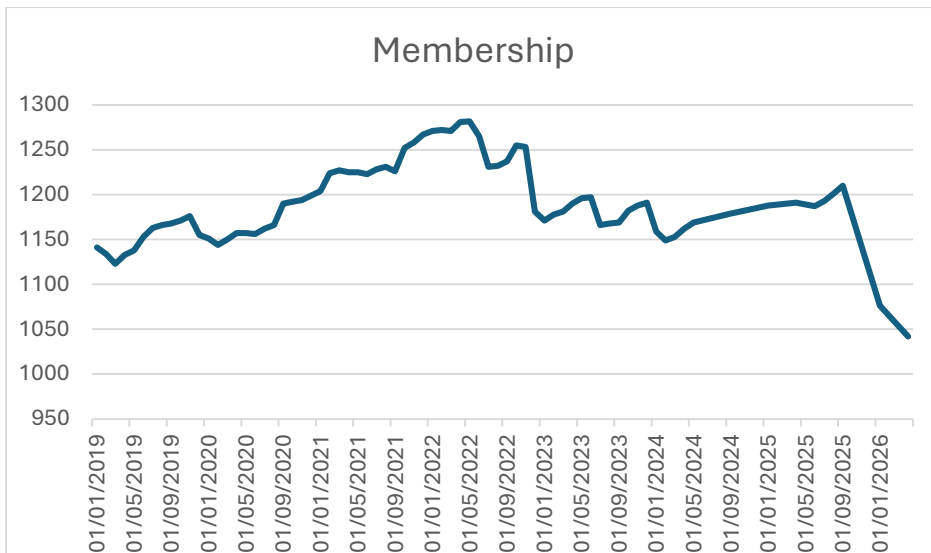
## Membership.

Following email conversations with some affiliated clubs, it became apparent that their own data did not match the EBU membership database.

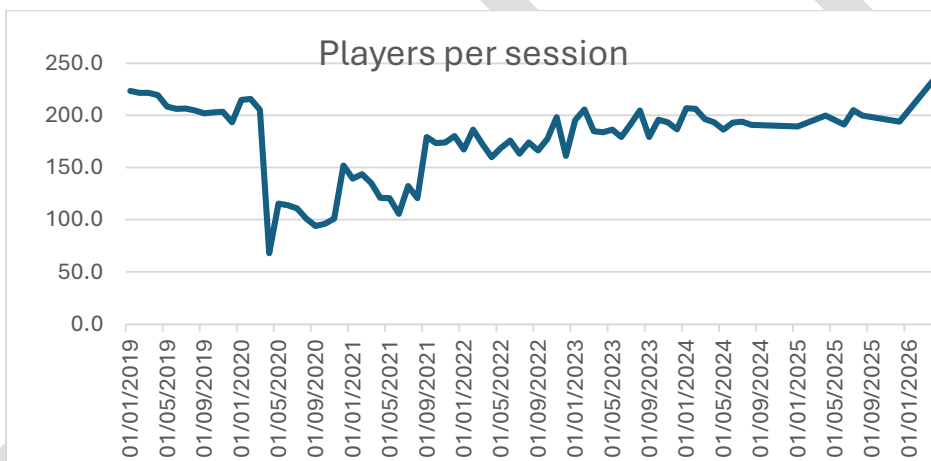
Consequently, some “pruning” has taken place, as a result of which, the membership of our affiliated clubs has apparently decreased from 1187 to 1049 in the past twelve months: this includes people who are members of more than one club. The average number of players per month has increased by 5 over the same period.

As can be seen from the diagram below, most of our affiliated clubs have maintained their position fairly well over the last year.

Two further graphs show the number of club members and the number of people playing in affiliated clubs since before Covid. These figures do not take account of county members who play in EBU on-line events.



On a more positive note, the average number of players per session has increased.



Using the EBU's statistics, I have calculated for the month of May 2026, the ratio between the average number of members per session and the total number of club members. This gives the following table:

	<b>Members</b>	<b>Ave/Sess</b>	<b>% players</b>
<b>Hartford</b>	58	24.5	42.2%
<b>Liverpool</b>	141	29.3	20.8%
<b>Wirral</b>	105	34.9	33.2%
<b>Warrington</b>	132	23.6	17.8%
<b>MBC</b>	144	24.5	17.0%
<b>Deva</b>	338	36.0	10.7%
<b>B/Sands</b>	131	22.8	17.4%

Obviously, there are many reasons for the discrepancies.

I have also looked at the number of new members who have joined the County in the last 12 months. It has been calculated that clubs, counties, and the EBU as a whole, need to generate 8% of new members per year to keep their membership stable. Using the EBU's statistics of unique players, I have ranked the counties in the order of the change in their membership over the last 12 months. M&BC is in 5<sup>th</sup> place (out of 39), beaten only by London, Bedfordshire, Norfolk and Oxfordshire.

Richard Alcock

Secretary

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## MCBA 3 YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN

(v3, June26)

The MCBA bases its strategy around the declaration in the Constitution that it is here “to promote Duplicate Contract Bridge in the two counties.” Those who do play bridge fall into a long continuum from at one end those who are vastly experienced players with a strong competitive instinct and a desire to play bridge in new places, to those who are newcomers to the game and play it socially and locally, with little interest in expanding their skill base or the variety of bridge which they experience. Every individual will have a different combination of the attributes mentioned, and for any one person these can change over time. It is the MCBA’s remit to support all of these bridge players.

We are a small County compared to many and, as such, have limited resources. Currently there are 7 affiliated clubs and around 900 playing members. Thus, our strategy is limited to that which can be achieved by our small volunteer workforce.

The MCBA’s stated objectives are:

- To promote Duplicate Contract Bridge in the areas of Merseyside and Cheshire and to encourage inter-club, inter-county and national competitions.
- To employ the funds of the Association in the best interests of the game of Duplicate Contract Bridge having regard to the fact that the Association is a non-profit making body.

Within each 3-year planning cycle, together with our clubs, the executive committee will identify a set of bounded and achievable objectives which support these long-term goals.

- To promote Duplicate Contract Bridge in the areas of Merseyside and Cheshire

To visit each affiliated club at least once per year and, whilst there,

- To talk to the membership about their bridge experiences and aspirations.
- To encourage entry into the County league and other competitions

To visit each bridge teaching program [whether at an affiliated club or not] on an annual basis [if practical], and, whilst there,

- To offer support
- To encourage the teacher and his/her pupils
- To share best practice in learning the game
- To direct players towards further playing opportunities.

To link with EBED to offer a teaching course once every 3 years, should there be sufficient interest.

To bring bridge teachers together twice each year to discuss and share methodology, materials and other matters of interest.

To display on the County website a clear pathway for a non-bridge player to find a teacher/course in their locality.

To use the EBU to advertise teaching courses within the County.

To initiate an annual round-table discussion for Tournament Directors across the county, to ensure that they are fully aware of best practice and are up to date with new developments.

To organise, and subsidise, a very basic course for club directors, open to EBU members and other players, annually, if there is sufficient interest.

To update, on an annual basis, the club directory information on the County website.

To facilitate and subsidise access to advanced TD training courses for those interested in further developing their skills, as requested by the membership.

To make contact with unaffiliated clubs and make them aware of what the County can offer their membership.

➤ To encourage inter-club, inter-county and national competitions.

To promote the County league and other competitions via circulars to clubs and counties and by face-to-face discussion during visits to clubs.

To initiate discussion with clubs concerning inter-club matches, either F2F or online.

To promote awareness of the County online games hosted by Warrington Bridge Club.

## MOTIONS FOR AGM 2026

### Fixing the P2P and subscription rates for 2027/28

**Motion: to leave the subscription rates unchanged for 2027/28 viz:**

Direct membership	£4
Club Subscription	£0
P2P Fees	4p per player per session

### Election of Officers of the Association

**Motion: To elect Mark Madeley as Chairman of the Executive Committee**

**Motion: To elect as officers of the Association, the members listed below, all of whom have confirmed their willingness to serve:**

**The Executive Committee:**

- Vice-Chair – . Chris Raymond
  - Secretary – Richard Alcock
  - Treasurer –
  - Tournament Secretary/Chair – Steve Downes
  - Membership Secretary – Richard Alcock
  - Selection Committee Chairman – Chris Raymond.
  - County Youth Officer. No candidate
  - Other Executive Committee Members – Paul Roberts, John Hampson, Julian Merrill
- 
- **Other Officers:** The following other officers have all been contacted and have indicated their willingness to serve for another year.
    - Hon Auditor/independent examiner – Bob Pitts
    - Chief Tournament Director - David Stevenson
    - President – Ted Reveley
    - EBU Shareholders – In line with county policy, the two EBU shareholders are, ex-officio, the Chair and vice-Chair, namely Mark Madeley and Chris Raymond.
    - EBU Bridge County News Editor - Bob Pitts
    - Webmaster – Simon Anderson

(As decided at the 2024 AGM, the Vice-Presidents have been elected for life. They are: Chris Wentworth, Liz Stevenson, Jean Keen, Dave Keen and Julia Dearing).

- **Sub Committees.**

**A : Selection Committee** – Chair: Chris Raymond, John Hampson, Alan Stephenson, Paul Roberts, Stuart Scholes, David Smith.

**B : Tournament Committee** – Chair: Steve Downes, Chris Raymond, Julian Merrill, Simon Anderson, Avril Thompson, Angie Pinnington, Mark Madeley

**C : Conduct Committee** – Chair and Secretary: David Stevenson, Ted Reveley, John Hampson

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