

AEO report for the KCBA Committee meeting on 27th March 2022

Since the last full Committee meeting I have been involved with the Working Group which was set up by Norman to look at a number of different topics including recruitment of teachers and new members in the County.

Work done to date

I have undertaken the following on behalf of the Working Group and the KCBA committee:-

Compiled a full list of all the Kent Teachers who are on the KCBA website and the EBED list and produced a contact email list.

Compiled a full list of all Kent Clubs and produced a contact email list

Designed the questions for Teachers Survey which Paul has kindly put together for me and sent this out to all EBTA teachers and collated the results which are as follows:-

KCBA Survey results

31 Emails were sent out to teachers and then two days later the Survey was sent.

A further email was sent to 12 teachers who had not responded two weeks later.

22 responses on the survey were received plus another 2 by emails a total of 24 responses

6 surveys were started but unfinished and the names were not given on those results

This gives a 77.4% positive response rate which I believe is a good rate of response.

(According to a survey company online - For external surveys, you expect between 10% to 15%. For internal surveys, your target should be around 30-40%. For a well-distributed, optimized survey campaign the highest response rate would be as high as 85%. And the lowest could be 2%).

Of those 24 who replied 14 are currently teaching using a mixture of F2F and online at present.

Of the 10 who are not currently teaching 6 of them may teach again in the future giving us a total of 20 teachers in the whole of Kent

There may be potential capacity for some teachers being able to take on more students as 8 current teachers are teaching 0-5 students per week

We have definite gaps in Whitstable, Canterbury and Broadstairs for teachers and it should be noted that the current map on the KCBA website requires updating but it will be necessary to contact all of the teachers to confirm that their names are to be removed if they are no longer teaching.

Smartbridge

I have reviewed the request from Tony Russ for Kent to take part in the second trial for this initiative and forwarded my full report on Smartbridge to the working group and also to the EBU and EBED and this is currently under consideration by them. As a direct result, I have been invited along to the EBED Education working group run by Adrian Darnell so that I may share some of my ideas with them and I am hoping

that I shall also pick up a few ideas which I shall be able to bring to the Committee to help in our plans for Kent.

I have had a Zoom meeting two days ago with Giorgio Provenza the CEO of EBED this week regarding Smartbridge and have prepared a separate report for KCBA Committee giving details of our conversation and my recommendations for this initiative.

I have also been in contact with Tony Russ several times regarding the potential for the second SmartBridge programme being trialled using Kent Clubs.

EBU Marketing Group

I was invited to join the EBU Marketing group headed by Gordon Rainsford and facilitated by Kay Preddy – I have attended three of their sessions so far and will report on future topics as they arise.

This group are currently engaged in producing Marketing materials for the recruitment campaign which the EBU are going to starting shortly to enable Clubs to identify and attract new members. This will include social bridge players who are not yet EBU Club members and also new to bridge players who will need to be taught how to play the game.

They are also looking at trying to find new ways of increasing the attendance levels at National congress and other games in the future.

TTC

The TTC course which was due to be held at West Faversham Community Centre in May has been cancelled by the venue and Chris Lohan is currently investigating other potential venues for the next TTC to be held and she will keep me informed.

Moving forward

New Bridge teachers

It is clear from the Survey that we shall need to recruit more Bridge teachers to enable us to be able to recruit new members and I propose that we aim for a further 8-12 teachers in the short term by contacting all the local Clubs and asking them to contact all their members to look for volunteers who would like to attend a TTC. There may also be a need for Mentors, members of bridge clubs who perhaps are not willing to undertake teacher training but who may be able to provide assistance in Supervised play sessions or perhaps give occasional lectures on specific bridge topics to members or give help to newcomers joining clubs to settle in if they have not been to a Bridge club before etc.

This is an ideal time for us to approach clubs about this because

1. the EBU Marketing campaign is being launched and existing and new teachers will be required to teach the new players that the campaign is likely to generate.

2. EBED have confirmed to me that they have no plans to withdraw the funding for Clubs to sponsor a teacher every two years (because of Covid this means that most clubs in Kent could take advantage of this in the short term as it is unlikely they have asked for a teacher to be given a free place as there have been very few (if any) TTC's run during this period). Perhaps we could use this to persuade as many clubs as possible to recruit at least one teacher this year in Kent?
3. F2F clubs are coming back many with reduced table numbers – this may persuade Clubs that they should be getting involved in a recruitment campaign throughout the County
4. If the Committee is agreeable to us taking part in this trial there may be an opportunity for us to use Smartbridge to encourage Clubs to find new players to join in this initiative.

Existing teachers

I should also like to write to all of our existing teachers to firstly thank them for all the work they have done and are still doing for the future of bridge. I should like to explain to them how KCBA want to help and also how their clubs can bring in new players and increase their membership and ask for their help if they have any spare capacity for teaching. However, we also need to reassure them that their position within their local bridge community is valued and will not change if new teachers are recruited – this is simply to aid all our existing teachers NOT to replace them.

Teaching Clubs

As already stated, I believe this is a good time for us to start contacting our Kent Clubs. My suggestion is that we should be offering help for as many of our local Bridge Clubs as possible to become Teaching Clubs as this will help them to safeguard the future of their clubs by having at least one dedicated teacher working with them who can provide new members on an ongoing basis. If we can show the Clubs the benefits of this we may be able to enlisting their help in promoting the importance of this initiative to their members which may persuade some of them to become Bridge teachers.

Teaching Club - attributes and benefits

Have at least one dedicated teacher attached to the Club

Promote their dedicated Teacher(s) prominently on their Club Website and ensure that all members know who is their Club's teacher(s) and also know how potential students can contact them

Use the new EBU Marketing materials to promote their Club and their teacher(s) in their own local area (these are now available to Counties and Clubs and will be rolled out to teachers this week; they are in the form of cards and leaflets which will have their own Club details on them

Ensure that their Club teacher is an EBTA teacher who has attended a TTC and teaches the Bridge for All system which will provide uniformity of teaching throughout our County. (NB. All clubs can have one free teacher training space provided every

two years if they sponsor a member who becomes a Club teacher – I shall tell them how to claim this)

Wherever possible Clubs should try to provide an access route for new players to come into the Club at the first opportunity. Perhaps providing Supervised play sessions, leading to Gentle Duplicate and then entry into the Main room once the students are ready.

Consider whether Smartbridge could be introduced in Kent as a way of fast tracking new students learning to play bridge by utilising Mentors and teachers to provide the supervised play sessions in the new trial (Please see my other full report on Smartbridge)

Pat Welsh

25th March 2022