

Dear Member

This email is about how the Club intends to face the future in the coming months and I ask please that you read it carefully as it contains some important information.

Firstly, I hope that you have been safe and well during the Covid crisis and that you remain so. I haven't heard of any member having suffered the illness but I and the Committee send our very best wishes to you all during this crisis and extend our deepest sympathies to those who have suffered loss or illness of loved ones and friends.

It seems that for the foreseeable future bridge clubs will not be able to function safely, especially those like PDBC that meet in hired premises. We cannot guarantee the Hall itself or any of its equipment will be free of infection; the boards and cards circulate to every player and we would find it difficult to ensure safe distancing. We are also a very vulnerable community that needs to take extra precautions to ensure our continued well-being. Even if a 100% reliable vaccine was developed tomorrow it will many months before all of us will be able to be immunised and so the Committee is working on the assumption that we will not be meeting again as a Club until 2021, but will review the situation periodically in the light of any significant developments.

As you know, we have always prided ourselves on being a friendly and inclusive Club and the Committee really want to continue this, even in the current climate and despite its attendant difficulties. When the crisis forced the closure of our weekly meetings we made all our 2019 and 2020 students and supervised players Associate Members which was only fair as part of their entrance fee for their course(s) etc included an element of Club Membership which unfortunately has been curtailed by Covid. This has enabled them to continue Supervised Play, on line, for several weeks and to also obtain BBO information including the Usernames and contact details of friends and other newcomers so they can play and practice.

In fact BBO has been a great success. We have 48 Full or Associate Club members registered with BBO and every day there are many matches, and the feedback I have had is that these have given everyone much enjoyment. If you are one of the few not yet registered on BBO I urge you to try - you may enjoy on line bridge more than you think! Going forward, the Committee has considered whether PDBC should form its own virtual club on BBO so that we can once again participate in duplicate bridge, replicating our own club evenings. The attractions are obvious but there are unfortunately some downsides. Firstly, it is not cost free. BBO itself makes a charge, and as we are an EBU club we are obliged to pay UMS (pay to play) charge per person per event. The EBU also insist on a director being available for all matches. On line bridge is best, in our view, if it remains friendly and non-competitive; once it strays into prize money, masterpoints, legal rulings, whatever, it changes and – sadly – not for the better. Also abuse in its many forms, which is difficult to the point of being almost impossible to control, can be an issue. So, the Committee has decided against registering as a virtual club.

We are really pleased though that so many of you are booking up your own friendly matches, usually pairs but a few team events too. To build on this the Committee have decided to instigate a TEAMS OF FOUR ladder which is open to all Members; Associate or Full. Its aim is simple: to get as many of you as possible, including newcomers, to participate in Teams events. There will be no prizes and no

masterpoints! Just have fun playing against other club members whom you would not normally play against. On line teams events have a lot of advantages over pairs events. Firstly, the two teams of four play against each other (NS of team A -v- EW of team B in one room, and vice versa) in separate rooms and play the same number of dedicated boards, so your score is not influenced by what others (strangers) have done: it is simply your team versus your opponents. We are also implementing a rule whereby each team may only have a maximum of two persons who have a high handicap rating in order to encourage teams of mixed ability and experience to enter. It would be really good if “newbies” and experienced players paired up as part of a team. So, can full club members please approach some of the newbies to see if they can form a team - the more mixed ability teams the better – and we can hardly expect newbies to approach team members whom they may have never met! Full details are attached but PLEASE, whatever your standard or experience, do try and form a team of four and enter; it should be great fun if we all enter into the spirit of it!! Anyone who is without a partner and needs one to form a pair can use the FIND A PARTNER feature on the our web site. Go into Members Only area and click on FIND A PARTNER for the “dummy” CALENDAR entry for the 1st July. Tick PR and save.

The Committee discussed whether fortnightly / monthly quizzes would be popular with members and, frankly, we don't know! So, if you want to compile a quiz then please do so and send it to me as two documents (preferably .pdf) one for the quiz and one for the answers and I will put both on the web site. Anyone that cannot access the Members Only section of the PDBC web site should let me know as in future a lot of information will be obtainable only in this area. The MEMBERS LIST provides the information on all members and can be sorted into various groups, including BBO. In similar vein, most future communications will be via Bridgewebs bulk mail system so please check Junk or Spam folders as sometimes bulk email can be directed there and also ensure that you register in your email contacts and safe senders “members@bridgewebsemail.com” and if you feel you are not receiving bulk emails let me know please. Life partners who share the same email address will only receive one Bridgewebs email.

At its recent “meeting” the Committee decided on a few other points:

- The AGM, normally held in November, will be postponed to 2021
- All Officers and the Committee will remain in situ for a further 12 months
- ALL current members, Associate and Full, will receive free membership renewal of the Club for the 12 months commencing 1st January 2021.

Thank you for your continued support. If you have ideas or suggestions as to how we can continue to enhance our Club during this crisis then please contact a member of the Committee.

Meanwhile stay safe. Best wishes to you all.

Alan

ps - don't forget to enter a team!!