

Time for Change

Bridge is enjoyed by millions around the world. However, it is struggling to retain its place as a leisure activity, or even as a competitive mind sport in the face of intense competition from screen-based entertainment.

The pandemic stopped face to face bridge for a while. Online bridge in both social, and competitive form increased in numbers, accessibility, and popularity. The balance between online and in person bridge has changed for ever.

It is now time to increase the appreciation and knowledge of bridge in England and grow the numbers playing the game. New players need to be attracted otherwise the relentless rise in the typical age of bridge players can only result in a slow and inevitable decline.

The future of the game in England can be turned around. With your support we will make it happen.

- We will raise the profile of the game to attract greater interest and more players.
- We will work actively with all teachers to enthuse a wave of beginners.
- We will engage with every club, no matter how big or small, whether EBU affiliated or not, and we will support beginners moving to play in club sessions.
- We will work to introduce bridge to younger players. We will support every teacher who teaches bridge in schools. We will launch a university student teaching initiative. We will promote bridge to young professionals.
- We will breathe new life into the competitive game by developing a new and inspiring national tournament structure. We will give counties and regions the autonomy to run a broader range of green-pointed tournaments. We will reduce the national schedule and expand the regional program, providing enhanced flexibility and increased opportunities nationwide.

- We will delete “control bridge” from the EBU’s Memorandum of Association and replace it by “promote and support bridge”.
- We will recognise the increasingly professional nature of the game at elite level. We will respect the needs of professional players so that England may always be represented by the best possible team in all major international championships.
- We will streamline operations and focus on core activities. We will cut out waste. We will be pragmatic. We will downsize from the current headquarters to much smaller, less expensive premises.

David Parry (London) and Nicky Bainbridge (Midlands)

Plan of Action

With your support we will:

- Freeze UMS for three years.
- Move to much smaller offices. Annual saving - £100,000.
- Upgrade English Bridge to a monthly online magazine – Annual saving - £120,000 pa.
- Discontinue the EBU diary. Annual saving - £40,000.
- Streamline staffing. Annual saving - TBC.
- Carefully review every expense to ensure it remains relevant and best value.
- Campaign to raise the profile of bridge.

We will use these savings to:

- Roll out a nationwide university bridge-teaching drive.
- Launch a nationwide relaxed and leisurely program for bridge students and social bridge players.
- Massively expand bridge-teaching in schools.

Notes

These savings are calculated using the limited publicly available EBU data. We believe further savings can be achieved.

For those who want a paper copy of *English Bridge* we will offer one at cost.

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A few months ago PhD student Soozy Nesom enrolled 20 university students on her bridge course simply by attending the Cardiff University freshers' fair. We will harness the immense potential of English bridge-playing university students to expand this brilliant initiative nationwide.