WOKING BRIDGE CLUB
CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2016

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I am delighted to present my end of year report as Chairman of the club. As you know, this will be my last such report as Michelle and I will soon be moving across the border into darkest Berkshire, far enough away for it not to make sense for me to continue as your Chairman but not so far, I hope, that we will not be able to come back and play at the club once in a while.

Given I could not commit to another full year in office, I felt that members should have clarity concerning our succession plans before voting at the AGM. As you know, subject to your approval, the Committee's unanimous choice is that David Burch should take on the mantle. Given we have time on our side and, additionally, as David knew in advance that he would be unable to attend the AGM tonight, David and I have agreed that it would make sense for the two of us to work in parallel for a while so we can ensure a smooth handover before he takes on the role formally and hence the resolution to appoint him as Chairman Designate is twinned with my proposed re-election.

2015 has been another good year for the club with both sessions remaining very well attended and I am pleased to report our membership has increased once again; we had 175 members at the last count. As a result, as our Treasurer, has set out in the draft accounts before you, our financial position is very strong. In addition, we also saw success at County Level with our Champion Team (Liz Taylor, Margaret Mansell, Beryl Mullins & Marilyn Frame) winning the Wanborough Cup.

On the playing front, I will shortly be presenting the trophies for the year. As well as the usual favourites, this year, we have introduced some additional competitions, including a Championship Pairs Cup, where rounds are played on the first Tuesday of each month and your best six results determine your score. For fun, we have also introduced a Grand Slam competition, with the prize being something alcoholic, where you score points every time you bid and make a grand slam at the club with the number of points won depending on how many other players achieve the same result on the board. There is now also a bottle of champagne available for the pair recording the highest score during the year for members shown on the 70% Club page of our website. In 2016, we will also be introducing an Improver's Cup for Wednesday players.

Speaking of the website, we have just completed the first full year using the new Bridgewebs site. It has proved popular and scored almost 60,000 hits during the year. We are always on the lookout for News items to include such as members' successes in County events or any other items of interest, so please let us know if you spot things we could use.

I would like to highlight a couple of things coming up shortly: first, our Charity Week is in the first week of March. We wanted to do something for a local charity with a direct connection to a club member. Therefore, this year it will be in aid of the local Dementia Carers Support. As usual, we will have an extra £1 table money and the club will match any additional voluntary donations people make, £1 for £1, up to a maximum of £500. So I hope we can raise a tidy sum.

2015 also saw our inaugural weekend Blue-Pointed Swiss Pairs competition. It was a great success, attracting a full-house of 20 tables and made a small profit for the club. The event attracted a good number of players from surrounding clubs in the area which has helped raise the profile of Woking Bridge Club. We will be repeating the event in 2016 but it will be played in November, when fewer of you are away on holiday.

One of my roles as Chairman is to make sure the club has enough volunteers to help run things. In the year, over 20 of you helped out in some way. Many thanks to all who did, whether they are front of house (such as directors, scorers and host organisers) or working behind the scenes (committee members, dealers and caterers for example). This year, joining the ranks, were Pat Amer (dealing), Eleonore Ebeling (table money), Sue Waters (biscuits) and Marian Wilson-Smith (auditor). Thanks to some leavers too: to Valia Hedley, for keeping us well fed; Cliff Alison for organising Tuesday hosts; and to Brian Barrow, who has not only been a great help to me as a first-rate Treasurer but has also helped us in sorting out some better, fairer movements for when we get more than 13 tables at a session. Turning to the future, you will see several new faces as Directors in 2016 and thanks as well to Ian Robertson for stepping up to the plate to act as our new Treasurer.

It is always a pleasant surprise when people approach me asking if they can help; for example, Peter Turvey has just offered to join our Directors roster. When I depart, David will be looking for extra people to help with some of the things I do so, if you are able to and interested in helping out with Scoring and Dealing, please let him know.

Thank you and I hope you all enjoy your bridge at the club in the year ahead.

Andy Margetts (Chairman)