

LYTHAM BRIDGE CLUB

MIDSUMMER 2021 NEWSLETTER

Foreword by the Chairman - Jack Henderson

Welcome to our late June newsletter.

It has certainly seemed a very long 16 months without regular face to face bridge. We have missed socialising and chatting with friends over the bridge table. However, this pandemic has made us keep in touch and strengthened us as a community. We are hoping that the end is now in sight and we can move forward to some sort of new normality.

Be assured that your committee will make every effort to open the Club doors as soon as possible. A sub-committee, formed to guide and advise on the issues which affect re-opening, has met. Action on all issues raised, will be taken as soon as it is practical and safe.

Many of our members will already know that your committee received two approaches for consideration from Clifton Bridge Club. The first was a request to hire any spare capacity in our club to have a session. This was refused on the grounds that LBC committee could not foresee how bridge would evolve after lockdown and wanted to retain complete flexibility.

The second request was to join Lytham Bridge Club as a block membership with all assets and to close Clifton Bridge Club. Our committee was unable to accede to the request to absorb Clifton Bridge Club without a rewriting of our constitution. Nevertheless we were, and still are, very happy to have Clifton members playing as visitors at Lytham Bridge Club and we welcome any applications to become members. In fact, quite a number have already applied and been accepted as members and we hope they will enjoy playing at our club in a spirit of mutual friendship and cooperation in furtherance of the game we all love.

Apparently, Clifton now has another venue in its sights. We trust this will resolve its problems and wish the Clifton Bridge Club well.

As members of LBC we continue to be indebted to all who contribute to the Club's administration, welfare, online games, communication and mundane day to day business. We thank you. Let us hope we can all meet again soon. Keep well.

Comments from our Chief Tournament Director - John Dearing

Thanks to all who have recently taken part in the recent club survey. The feedback will be useful in the coming weeks to help shape how the club will be reopened, which we all hope will be very soon. We will be letting people know before the opening what face to face and online sessions we are intending to run. It's good that so many members responded to the questions. I am part of the sub committee formed to prepare for the re opening of the Club and Kate gives a full report below on our achievements and conclusions so far.

Survey results

90% of respondents will continue to play at least as often as they did pre lockdown.

A new Monday afternoon session might prove to be popular.

70% of the respondents who play in the evening would prefer a 7.00 or 7.15pm start time.

On line bridge will remain popular after we re open.

When will we see you again? by Kate May

The answer has to be - when the government lifts all social distancing restrictions - and I expect many of you, like me, are very disappointed that this was not on 21st June. Jeremy, John and I have been looking into what needs to be done to safely reopen the club and we have also been considering what sessions we should be

holding, whether there will still be a place for online sessions, (which many members have been enjoying) and whether we should make any changes to the way sessions are run.

Thinking of safety, there is really no way of getting around the 1 metre social distancing rule and so opening does depend on this being dropped. If all restrictions are lifted then there will be no legal covid specific requirements we need to follow, but of course basic health and safety rules will apply, as always, and it is important members feel it is safe to return. Fortunately it is mid summer and we can play with as much natural ventilation as possible. If you feel the cold more than most then perhaps you will need to think “an extra layer” at least at first. The cleaners will give the whole building a ‘covid safe deep clean’ before we open and there will be hand sanitiser available on every table, and other places. All the table cloths were washed while we have been closed and boards and bidding boxes can be sanitised between sessions.

Providing a separate set of boards for each table is really not practical (just imagine dealing about 8-10 sets of boards for every day of the week.) and it does not seem necessary. The consensus among scientists does seem to be that transmission through touching surfaces is minimal compared to inhaling airborne droplets. Bidding boxes will be put out as usual and many will be happy with the old way of doing things but there will be freshly sanitised bidding boxes available for anyone who would prefer to keep their own for a session. Things like serving refreshments have still to be considered. Your Committee wish to move in future to a cashless way of paying for sessions, so no money handling. We do not envisage any requirement for masks to be worn, but if wearing one made anyone more comfortable then of course that would be fine.

When it comes to what sessions will be held, you will know that we have tried, via a survey, to discover what members want, and we were delighted that so many of you responded. We realise that life has changed for many over the long time we have been closed, and we also have quite a lot of new members. I can say with reasonable certainty that our most popular sessions, Tuesday and Friday afternoons, and Wednesday evening, will be brought back, together with, most likely, one other afternoon session and one or two evenings, but the survey results did not always lead to definite conclusions and it may be a case of experimenting a little to start with. Monday seems popular, but some want afternoons and just as many want evenings. One or other will surely happen. We also aim to keep at least one online session, but the time for this is not yet clear. We need to fit in our popular teaching sessions and team matches. It all has to be considered and discussed by the whole committee. Watch this space! Our aim will, obviously, be sessions when the most members want them. We can but try things out and hope people are patient.

There has also been a long list of many little things to sort out. The outside space needs a bit of attention, new stocks of drinks and biscuits and cleaning stuff have to be bought, the internet needs reconnecting, the dealing machine needs servicing, (even the defibrillator has run out of power and needs a new battery!) The list is almost endless, but, even if it has to be a little later than we hoped, we are delighted that the time has come to think about reopening. We really do hope we can see you soon(ish).

Report from Steve Ellis, Membership Secretary and Trustee

We have 8 new members since the last newsletter. A further 3 offers have been made and there are 4 more applications in the pipeline. I continue to check the premises 2/3 times a week.

Improvers' Support at Lytham Bridge Club by Pam French

I started playing bridge relatively recently after signing up to the beginners course at Lytham Bridge Club. We were offered lessons on a regular basis, run by Anne Burgess and Bill Bowden, and appeared to be improving slowly. Other club members also helped mentor us, including Jeremy Stanforth, Mary Irving, John Dearing and Ian Carter.

Then came lockdown.

I think many of us might have fallen by the wayside if it had not been for Anne and Bill.

First they introduced us all to BBO (Bridge Base Online), and then started regular lessons online. They have been great fun, allowing us to learn bridge and get to know each other better, and I look forward to hearing the latest pithy story from Anne about her week, while Bill continues working for Trinity Hospice in between sorting us out.

The next stage was being persuaded to play in Lytham tournaments online, mostly Friday afternoons, but sometimes Wednesday evening too. We had mixed results and mixed reactions, so when we went through a particularly dispiriting phase, Anne and Bill produced another support strategy.

They introduced a mentor ship programme where the improver players could play with a very good player from Lytham Bridge Club, for support and help. This is particularly helpful as you can learn from events as they happen and understand the effects. They also introduced another tournament on a Tuesday afternoon, with more time and specifically to give learners less pressure. Bill has just introduced a zoom meeting after the Tuesday tournament to discuss the bidding and pitfalls, while it is all fresh in your mind.

I personally feel this amazing support from Lytham Bridge Club has enabled me to learn an enormous amount (and forget it as well!) and try to put it into practice in a way that would not have been possible in the club situation.

From all the improvers that I play with, a massive thank you to everyone that has helped us on our bridge travels, particularly to Anne Burgess and Bill Bowden and their incredible patience.

Also to Jeremy, Mary, John, Ian and all other mentors who continue to support us.

We look forward to meeting in the flesh soon.

Anne Burgess adds

When lock down came both Bill and I were keen to keep our new bridge players on side and for the past year have held several on line sessions on BBO every week and along with other helpers given all our learners opportunities to play with more experienced players. For me the motivation was to do my bit to ensure the future of the game I love, but also to encourage the loveliest group of people who I am happy to call friends.

Bill Bowden adds

Tuesday afternoon sessions are a restricted duplicate aimed at people who want to be mentored and those who are less experienced. After the session is finished and scores are correlated, I run a zoom presentation to discuss the hands which have been played. This is available to anyone who played in the session. Half way through the session, Pippa contacts players by email to give them the reference number to access the presentation.

Thanks also to Hazel and Bill Winter who have given generously of their time to support improvers.

Finally, special thanks to our Secretary Jeremy for setting up the survey and the analysis of the results. - The Ed.