

# Bagworth Whistlestop Bridge

## Annual Report 2024-2025



BAGWORTH WHISTLESTOP  
BRIDGE GROUP



### Message from the Chair

I am pleased to report another year of progress – more members, more competitions and more people playing. The club has continued to expand dramatically. Over the last couple of years, the average number of tables has gone up by 30%.

Most bridge clubs are suffering from a reduction in numbers, especially following covid and many have closed. However, Bagworth continues to grow. Perhaps you are having a good time and giving us a good reputation!

Following the AGM in 2024 we agreed to consult with members regarding the effectiveness of the club, and a survey form was given to all to help us gauge how we are doing, how we might improve and what additional activities should be undertaken. The committee has had a brief discussion of the feedback, and this will be followed by a more in-depth discussion at our first committee meeting in 2025/26. Mandy collated the response analysis, and a copy is available on the notice board

Derek Lambourne took over as treasurer at the beginning of the year but has decided to stand down at this year's AGM. I thank him for all his work during the year. With the increase in members the treasurer's job has become much more difficult. We will be moving to a new, more-automated invoicing system shortly. More details will become available towards the end of June. In line with our growth in membership we are looking to expand our committee in 2025-6 to reflect a broader range of views.

Thanks are also due to Shelagh Rumbelow, who organises much of the club's activities; to Roger Horsgood for his work on the dealing machine (he claims that the cards are randomly dealt even though some people do not believe this); to Mandy Bearne for miscellaneous tasks assigned to her during the year and to her thoughts during committee meetings; to Carol Stephens (lead director), Shelagh Rumbelow and Andy Brown for directing; to Neil Stokes, our webmaster; to Mary Weeks, our

membership secretary; and to Sue Allgood, who is in charge of refreshments. A special vote of thanks goes to John and Marilyn Morris in helping us to unlock the club bank account at HSBC

### **Competitions**

There were two competitions that were concluded too late for inclusion in last year's report. The first of these was the Stephens Cup for the most improved player, which was won by Janet Scarratt.

The other was the Swiss Teams event that was won by Andy Woodward, Michael Darling, Don Davis and Steph Woodward. They won on count-back after a tie for first place. The team which finished third was only one point behind.

There were 12 teams of four taking part in the competition, which is the capacity of the room. It is worth pointing out again that the Bagworth Whistlestop Bridge Group is only club in Leicestershire that runs a Swiss teams event. As another indication of our standing in the Leicestershire bridge community it is also worth pointing out again that Shelagh Rumbelow is on the committee of the Leicestershire Contract Bridge Association. Shelagh and Belinda Chantler were selected to play for Leicestershire in the EBU final for the Corwen Cup. All counties have the right to representation in this cup.

We hosted the second teams-of-eight match against Market Bosworth Bridge Club. The match, played over 20 boards, was won by Bagworth.

The club took part in an ecats simultaneous pairs event organised for UNICEF. The top Bagworth pair nationally were Graham Alford and Anthony Calverley who finished second.

Handicapped duplicate events were introduced during the year starting in December 2024. For each Thursday duplicate session, the normal results are adjusted using a handicapping system. The winners on handicap receive a free Thursday session. Mandy keeps a tally on the weekly winners who will be given their funds at the AGM and a list of the handicap system will be placed on the noticeboard.

In view of the success of the bridge away day to Stamford last year the trip was repeated this year. The top Bagworth pair was Lesley Neville and Diana Light.

Special thanks go to Carol who directed many of the club events and Steve Fieldhouse and Simon Learoyd who helped to organize our competitions. All our competitions are now listed on the website and the winners of trophies will be presented at our AGM.

### **Our Members**

We have 68 club members, an increase of 10 over the previous year. We have been pleased to welcome Diane Palmer, Alison and Richard Henwood from the learners group. Other new members during the year have been Marcel and Margaret Butterfield, Jane Chilvers, Michael

Darling, Angela Child, Robert and Mary Grimley, Annie Hobkinson, Alan and Claire Lewis all of whom attend the Ashby club. We have also been joined by Chrissi Grace, Jean Collins and Anthony Calverley. Welcome All! We believe this increase in members has been largely due to you all in giving our club a good reputation as a warm and friendly club, not to mention the hot cross buns, thank you!

We give our new members a welcome pack with a publicity leaflet, business card and health and safety information about the venue as well as some guidance on routes to the centre. We continue to send electronic birthday cards and celebrate the big ones with members. This year we have had a 70, an 80, a 90 and a 95 to celebrate together. As well as fun birthdays we had some very sad news in the sudden passing of Mary Lou Willison. Mary Lou learned her bridge with Carol and Shelagh teaching her at Ashby. She is missed by us all but especially by Ian Grudgings.

Some of our members are unable to attend regularly due to health reasons, work and other commitment but do keep in touch with us and keep themselves updated with the club's activities through the website and newsletter.

If you have other suggestions for improving matters for members, just let us know although the member survey showed you were very happy with things. There is one small favour to ask you all and that is to visit your membership details on the website and update them if you have moved, changed your phone numbers or email address etc.

## **Teaching and Learning.**

As a beginner's programme was not planned for 2024/5 it was decided to consolidate the previous year's beginners into an improvers programme starting in September 2024, This attracted a larger group of members to the coaching session run by Carol, Neil and Shelagh which ran until March 2005. This was supplemented by a BBO coaching session on Saturdays with verbal feedback given using Whats App now known as the Whizbag Casuals!

In order to attract more players and provide an effective route into a duplicate session the Monday morning was replaced by a relaxed duplicate session on Tuesday afternoons. However, as numbers rarely stretched to three tables, it was decided to stop the session in May although the Whizbag Casuals continues. It can be re-started as a relaxed supported duplicate session if there is sufficient interest.

Classes are not the only source of learning and information. During the year, George worked on a series of articles on basic acol bidding and developed a list of online learning resources and opportunities. These are a very useful reference point for both learners and improvers. They are now available on the left column of the website under the heading 'Bridge Learning online'.

We will run a beginners programme this September. If you can help with publicity or want to join the team, please inform Shelagh.

## **Marketing and Publicity**

Bagworth Whistlestop bridge club has featured in 3 local magazines. The article gave a brief description of the club and the recent successes of some of its members. We hope to continue profiling the club in this way.

Building on the grant funding for the development of marketing resources promotional leaflets and posters have been printed and distributed locally. Posters have been displayed on village noticeboards and community centres and sporting club notice boards in the local area.

We continue to take photographs at our bridge club events to display on the website and in the newsletter and in particular thanks go to Janet Kirkland who also helps with this. She always manages to get people to look their best.

Members were invited to contribute their own bridge books and resources to a Club Resource Database. The database would be made available to members who wish to borrow items of interest to them. As few people came forward to share their resources, it was decided that sample list of resources should be displayed on the noticeboard for reference.

A survey of Bridge groups around the UK was carried out. The number of bridge clubs with an active Facebook following was limited. We have a face book group which you are all able to join to circulate your news. Currently, Shelagh maintains this and it was decided to continue with Shelagh updating the Facebook page as appropriate content arose.

## **Finance : Treasurers Comments**

The financial Statement is attached as a separate file for your information. The excess of income over expenditure during the year was £1,364 bringing the club's bank balance to £4,277. The club assets, other than cash, increased by £230 to £8,965

The invoicing system works effectively, and members commented positively on this aspect in the member survey. It is of course quite time-consuming as it involves rather more than the collection of table money. The greatest difficulty are the exceptions, for example, the 70% and the handicap awards, additional fees for special events. However, this is likely to be resolved with the automatic invoicing system and hopefully a reduced workload for the treasurer.

All in all, we are in a strong financial position and well able to meet our normal expenditure and replacement costs. We now have sufficient reserves to meet the cost of a new dealing machine, which is our most expensive item. In view of this I am not recommending any increase in table fees or subscription.

I would like to take the opportunity to thank Richard Chantler, our auditor for his help and the speedy and efficient way he has conducted the audit.

**Assets for Insurance Purposes B/F 2023-4**

12	GoPak card tables	1,722.98
14	Lenovo Tablets	1,444.00
14	Lenovo Tablet cases	126.66
1	Acer Swift laptop	429.00
1	HP laptop donated RH for dealing machine	
1	Duplimate dealing machine	2,673.08
55	bidding boxes ( incl 1left hand)	650.00
1	coat rail and hangers	54.48
6	board bags	216.00
1	board hard case, donated SR	
6	sets of boards	371.40
1	orange 16 board set, donated RH	
12	bridge table cloths	96.00
12	screen pens	12.00
200	packs of cards	292.66
1	digital projector	468.00
1	mobile flip chart stand	115.00
1	noticeboard	50.00
13	tablecloths (refreshments)	66.00
1	long tablecloth	12.00
<b>Total Value for insurance</b>		<b>8,799.26</b>

### 2024-5 Assets Purchased

2	sets duplicate machine boards 32 set	108.00
1	board carry bag	20.40.
1	board carry bag	18.00
5	table coverings	20.00
<b>Total Assets</b>		<b>8964.66</b>

## Bagworth Whistlestop Bridge Group Mission

*Our mission is to share and spread the game of bridge to local people for their enjoyment, health and well-being in a friendly, safe and comfortable environment.*

### Principles / Aims

- To establish a local bridge group playing duplicate bridge for members' health and well-being and their enjoyment.
- To create a setting for social but challenging bridge and with a friendly and convivial atmosphere.
- To work alongside and with other clubs for their enhancement and not to their detriment to broaden the range of bridge playing opportunities available.
- To build resources to enable an excellent as well as a self-sufficient playing environment
- To promote the group to other clubs and the wider bridge playing and non-bridge playing community.
- To draw in grants to build resources for the club.

### Planning Proposals Agreed 2024-5 in line with our mission with comment

1. To maintain our current membership cohort by providing good bridge playing opportunities, a convivial atmosphere and support where needed.

**We have exceeded our membership numbers considerable from 58 to 68 over the year. The member survey showed that this was mainly through word of mouth, through the club's reputation and by networking with other providers. The survey indicated that members were happy with the way the club was run and commented upon the friendliness of the club.**

2. To improve standards in bridge by providing a regular improvers programme and developing a self-managed resource base and by developing a hand of the week analysis.

**The plan was to consolidate learning through the improvers programme which ran for 6 months followed by a relaxed duplicate session which ran for 8 weeks but closed after lack**

of support. The hand analysis continued for much of the year and was followed by a new initiative for a reference guide to basic acol bidding which is now on the website.

3. To maintain our inter-club bridge connections through further social bridge events, club visits and expand our online bridge.

Other clubs have been involved in our swiss teams, an interclub match and the visit to Stamford. Technically this hasn't expanded but has been consolidated. However, the appointment of one of the committee to the Leicestershire Contract Bridge Association, the first for a non-affiliated club, has enhanced our inter-club reputation. We have also had club players entering EBU, LCBA and other club competitions which again profiles the club.

4. To secure additional equipment as need arises.

Regular checks have been made on our equipment but only two sets of boards and carry bags were purchased. Essentially these were to make the dealing easier for the multiple sets of boards required for the swiss teams.

5. To support club members who take on specific roles in the running of the club.

Roles and responsibilities were developed for committee and non-committee members with specific club task roles and a key member assigned to the support role. The seems to be working well and provides some clarity and boundaries for the role.

6. To maintain our current competitions and encourage full membership participation.

We have maintained our current competitions and not introduced any further ones this year and there has been good participation in all especially in the 'knockout' but less so for the 'random pairs'. May be some people only like playing with their regular partner and do not turn up! May be we should have a random date!!

7. To profile the club with an expanded publicity, promotional material and press releases.

We have researched a number of promotional opportunities and maintained current levels. Additionally, we have used photographs on the website and on face book to profile our members and activity.

8. To maintain a healthy financial profile and to support the new treasurer in this work.

Our bank balance has improved significantly because of increased membership and subsequent attendance. The club is well equipped in terms of resources to cope with more members and so there has not been the need to buy further equipment.

9. To engage more players into our provision on RealBridge by organising a Swiss pairs competition.

The swiss pairs competition was held and enjoyed by some 6 tables. The event was easy to set up on RealBridge and subsequently we have had 5/6 tables regularly attending rather

that 3-4 previously. Realistically this has been more to do with networking and communicating with players on a regular basis sending links for the game.

10. To maintain our contribution to charitable causes at competitions and events.

**This has traditionally has been through the swiss teams and the sims pairs. Whilst this has been maintained the swiss teams has had to be deferred to the new financial year because of date clashes**

11. To participate in training opportunities provided by the LCBA or EBU and to encourage members to take these up at adjacent clubs.

**This has been achieved with the teaching team attending the Paul Bowyer workshop offered by the LCBA at the County Club.**

### **Plans proposed for 2025-2026**

1. To introduce an automatic simplified system for the circulation of invoices based on the bridge webs attendance module.
2. To research and test an automatic card payment system for members.
3. To expand the committee in line with the growth in membership and to bring in wider views.
4. To recruit a team of teachers to deliver a beginners' programme, starting in September.
5. To maintain our current membership numbers and financial position
6. To ensure that we retain our reputation as a warm and welcoming club by celebrating members achievement, welcoming new members when they come to play, ensuring courteous behaviour at the table and maintaining our social events.
7. To encourage more members and non-members to participate in RealBridge with another swiss pairs event.
8. To encourage more members to participate in LCBA and EBU competitions.
9. To encourage teachers and others with specific roles to participate in training opportunities where these are offered.