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New Normal News August 2020

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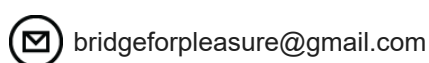
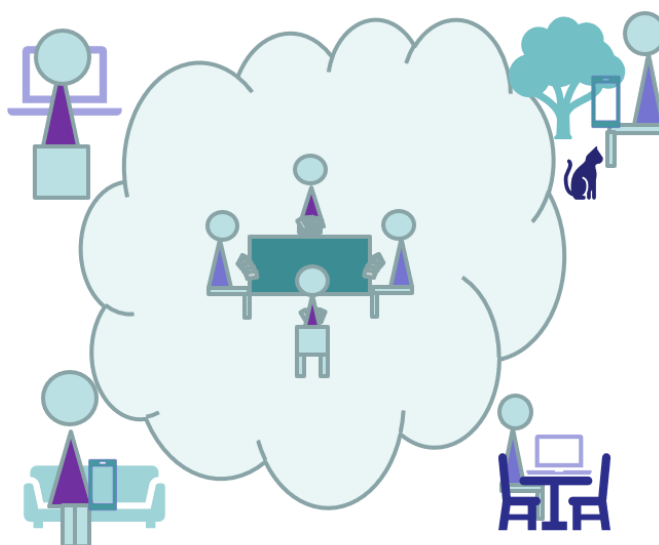
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**New
Normal
News**

www.bridgeforpleasure.co.uk



Returning to Face to Face Bridge

The New Normal

On Monday 13th July at 2pm, twelve members of Rugby Village Bridge Club sat at three tables in the same room and played eighteen boards in a three round two-winner Mitchell movement.

The players were highly co-operative, relaxed, and pleased to be playing again. All but one immediately booked for the following week.

The one had a previous engagement. A new player has booked in.

The organisers were tired partly by additional effort and partly because of stepping into the unknown.

Weeks of research, planning, procurement, documentation, preparation, and communication preceded that day.

Regulations

At the end of June, I subscribed to the governments daily emails listing the new and amended "guidance and support". A huge collection of documents, going into every aspect of normal life, and many abnormal corners, sometimes ambiguous and contradictory, is issued every day.

The most important areas have been:

- Prohibitions and permissions unlocked the potential for bridge on July 4th.
- Guidance for use of community halls issued 6th July and amended on July 15th
- General guidance for individuals and mitigation across transport, retail and bars and restaurants.

Our venue is a community hall run by a private charitable trust. They had support from their trade body, ACRE. The ACRE Information sheet supported a safe reopening.

The venue had already hosted a church group, band practice and the cricket club.

Planning the Practicalities

We produced a Risk Assessment document using the Health and Safety Executive form. The two main risks of spreading the virus are touching contaminated surfaces and breathing in contaminated droplets. Detailed breakdown of those risks and of their reduction and mitigation followed and then the policies, processes and actions that implemented the risk reduction and mitigation measures identified in the controls.

This told us what to buy, how to inform and manage players, how to prepare for the day and what to do on the day.

The venue had been deep cleaned. Signage had been installed throughout. Hand sanitiser and cleaning materials were available in the room and in the toilets.

Doors were propped open. The room was well ventilated, and in some places, a bit cold. Entry to, exit from, and movement inside the room were all arranged and marshalled to avoid bunching and pinch points.

The tables were well spaced out (1m+). Each table was crossed by Perspex screens. Each table had its own set of boards. Each set of cards was used only once. Players touched their side of the board.

East / West took their bidding box with them when they moved.

Scoring tablets were handled only by North. Furniture and equipment had been quarantined or cleaned and laid out using disposable gloves.

Players wore face coverings when moving in the room. Coat hooks

were distanced, and boxes provided for handbags and hats. No catering; no cash.



Motivation

This is not just about meeting regulations; it is about keeping people as safe as possible.

Bridge is a force for social good. The intellectual stimulation and the social contact give a lot of pleasure and support the mental health of participants.

I have worked to keep the identity of the club with weekly newsletters, online teaching, an informal club competition online and playing regularly with many pairs online. Even so, the active membership has dropped. I cannot see many online only clubs surviving. To carry on, the problems of face to face bridge needed to be tackled.

Going Public

I shared the work I was doing. The resulting publicity, correspondence, assistance, and challenges has been fascinating. Talking and exchanging ideas, is the way to a positive future.

The Future

No one knows what the new normal will look like.

I think we will be living in the presence of the current, and of other viruses indefinitely. Getting together in the same room for any activity will be something we think about carefully. The capacity of publicly shared indoor space will be greatly reduced. Use of equipment and premises will always be managed with transmission in mind.

We can't wait for the return of the old. We have to go to meet the new normal.

Let's be optimistic, let's try new things, and let's solve the problems.

We have now played on five Monday Afternoons. The interest has grown steadily. Next week we are adding a Thursday Afternoon session,

I am happy to share our experience.

Stay safe and stay well.

The whole story of making sure we are compliant with Government guidance, and as safe as possible, including purchase of screens, gloves, face coverings and sanitising gel is available at:

[Bridge for Pleasure - Information Web Site](#)

[Click to check out our risk assessment](#)

Should we talk about this?

Would you be interested in a Zoom conference to discuss returning to Face to Face bridge?

How about the afternoon of Wednesday 16th September?

Let me know.....

[Click to show interest in a Face to Face Bridge Zoom Conference](#)

Teaching in the New Normal

Bridge is taught by a large community of teachers across the country in a wide variety of settings.

With students possibly reluctant to take up face to face learning, many teachers are looking at online tools. These range from the simple and general purpose to dedicated bridge learning web sites.

Talking to and seeing learners online

Several services can be used to talk to learners, and see them, and show them notes and diagrams and demonstrate play. Skype, Facetime and others, for video calls between two locations are familiar to many with family overseas. In recent times Skype has added "Meet Now" connecting several locations. Google has added "Meet". You can stream a live video on a Facebook page, and watchers can communicate using a chat or comment field. Zoom is probably the favourite. It was available and used widely before lock down but has really come into its own since March. It is easy to use, and the quality and reliability is generally very good. It is free to meeting invitees, and there is a useful level of service for meeting hosts to try out for free.

Showing teachers own notes, diagrams, quizzes etc

Zoom, Skype, Facebook and others all offer the facility to "share screen". The teacher opts to let the learners see what is currently displayed on their computer screen. They can then open Powerpoint presentations, Word or PDF documents and take the class through them, encouraging questions and discussion as they go.

Bidding, card play, animated quizzes, teaching hands etc

You could use a bridge teaching web site such as No Fear Bridge which is rich with presentations, hand outs, quizzes, bidding and card play exercise to show and illustrate points.

Showing the game in action

The online playing platforms Bridge Base Online and Bridge Club Live allow teachers to set up teaching tables, use their own chosen deals, or random deals and encourage learners to join them in practice.

Before and After

Online marketing through newsletters and social media fits naturally with this approach.

Teachers can use email to send copies of the notes, homework quizzes, or the details of exercises.

Fees can be charged and paid by bank transfer. Access can be limited to invited learners to protect revenue.

Changes at Mr Bridge

All holidays and travel have been hit hard by the virus, especially in the bridge community. However, many players, social or competitive have found their way online for learning and for competition.

Mr Bridge's cruises, overseas holidays and domestic weekends have ceased for the present. The high quality Bridge magazine, always such a pleasure to hold, is to end publication.

But of course the Magee family is still active. Bernard began a generous programme of three free seminars a week as soon as we were locked down.

He's now launched a highly professional online subscription web site. You can learn and play several times a week.

Typically, he's still doing a free seminar on Mondays. Look for it on YouTube.

We wish Mr Bridge a peaceful rest to enjoy the family and reflect on a great contribution to the world of enjoyable bridge.

This newsletter

is planned to be issued once a month, mid month.

It is written and distributed on an entirely non profit basis, takes no advertising or commission.

Future topics

Topics under consideration include...

Using cross table screens for face to face bridge
Other social distancing measures
Quarantining and cleaning
Online teaching tools and techniques
Experience of clubs holding club competitions online
Social games in the new normal

Please suggest anything you would like to see. Please pass on your news, or submit items, especially on progress on Face to Face and online teaching.

[Click to suggest a topic \(contributions welcome\)](#)

Please forward the letter to anyone in the bridge world who might be interested. Anyone can subscribe using the link below,

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