

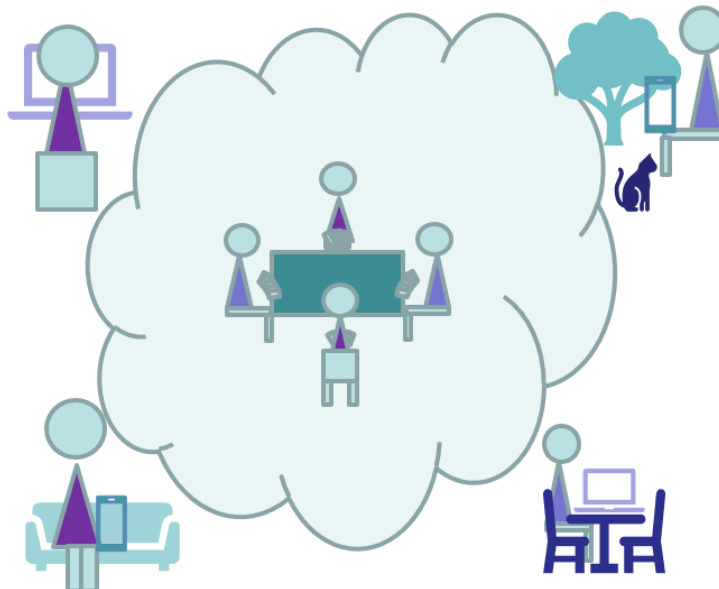
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New Normal News

December 2020



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How wonderful that a very promising vaccine is approved and being given to our most vulnerable and most valued citizens. This really may be the turning point.

However, the quantity of vaccine available, distribution and inevitable hiccups will almost certainly mean that at least some restrictions remain in place quite possibly to the end of next year.

Elite Bridge

Large Elite events are unlikely to be able to resume any time soon as they are dependent on equipment, marshalling, sanitising etc that is expensive and requires considerable will to deliver on a large scale. The epidemic of online cheating will make running events of standing online very difficult.

Club Bridge

Clubs may resume face to face where the level of restrictions permit subject to planning and delivering Covid security. It is great to see that Mid Essex and Northampton are back face to face. Rugby Village will reopen as soon as the area is out of Tier 3 restrictions.

Social Bridge

Social bridge is alive and well in the casual area of BBO, in the Social room of BCL, and now has a place in RealBridge Lounge. In Tier 3 areas it would not be possible for to play unless they were members of the same family.

Teaching

Many teachers are teaching online, including beginners, using the variety of services, many free, that are available.

Platforms and Cheating

Use of RealBridge is clearly growing extremely fast. Club after club, the EBU, and some counties, are offering events on it.

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don't like it all or part of the time. However, it really does bring back a social element to the game. This is a great boon to the majority of bridge clubs that play as much for the enjoyment of other players' company as for the game itself. Teachers are also finding it very useful.

It has other benefits for bridge organisers. You can organise events without having to book the date and time with RealBridge. You can use random hands or preload deals in a widely available file format. It has a wide range of useful movements for teams and pairs, and the director can select the movement when he can see the number of tables. It will manage a half table - so no more nightmare having three people on standby. You can have a single host and guarantee all comers a game.

Although video and sound may force cheaters to be more subtle, players on RealBridge can cheat by exchanging information using instant messaging of any kind. It probably doesn't help the elite world to bring competitions of standing online any sooner.

For clubs, who are the account holders on RealBridge, it is cheaper, more flexible and easy to manage. It is noticeable that unaffiliated clubs have restarted by offering events of RealBridge, as well as clubs, already on BBO, offering new events.

A plus for club bridge is that the directors and the players usually know each other very well. A level of trust has been built up in the face to face days. Often everyone know who is tempted to take undue advantage occasionally and is used to managing it. However, some clubs have felt squeezed between the sheer amount of competition on BBO offered by the EBU and the attractions of online purely social bridge.

Social bridge players have enjoyed the free access to Bridge Base Online casual area and substantial numbers are playing there without any reference to their club or their NBO. It is very hard for BBO to manage the resources to support this unscheduled and uncontrolled growth, so it is not surprising that BBO has experienced service delivery problems. Bridge Club Live members

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tables, suggests that many people meet there for a social game with friends, perhaps as many as play in competitions. RealBridge are launching RealBridge Lounge, a more social environment. It is not yet clear whether this is marketed directly to players, or whether it is something club account holders can offer.

Face to Face Update

At the time of writing:
Northampton Bridge Club and
Mid Essex Bridge Club
are open.

Rugby is in Tier 3, but we are very hopeful of reopening in the New Year.

The government regulations generally fall into two types:

1 Regulations on domestic activity, the definitions of households, and their extensions to bubbles, and advice and guidance generally on risk reducing behaviour: hands, space, face etc.

2 Regulations for other environments, especially food shops, non-essential shops, hospitality venues, transport, schools, universities, religious establishments, community halls etc.

These are now varied universally in "Lockdowns" or geographically in "Tiers".

The number of people or households or bubbles that may meet and mingle (i.e not socially distanced from each other) socially in a house, or in hospitality venues has been varied regularly. Hospitality venues may be able to service more than one household/bubble but must keep them socially distanced from each

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The rules for community halls have been relatively stable. Depending on Lockdown/Tier these have either had to be closed, or to be limited to 30 people managed in a Covid-secure way.

At present, if your community hall is in a Tier 3 area, it must be closed. In Tiers 1 & 2. It can open for activities limited to 30 people managed in a Covid-secure way. (i.e. socially distanced from each or by household/bubble)

EBU offers Affiliated Clubs a chance to nominate an EBU board director

All clubs will have received an email from Jonathan Lillicrop about this.

There is a thread on the EBU Club Forum with responses, and there's a link to them below.

This is an obvious topic for discussion at our next meeting. A link is below.

[EBU Club Forum Thread](#)

Segmentation

The world of bridge is huge and highly varied. Any conversation about it frequently needs to focus on a particular element to be useful. Estimates vary widely, but perhaps 200,000 people used to play some form of bridge regularly.

Here's a suggestion on a way to segment playing of the game in order to discuss it more effectively. There are many overlaps and inconsistencies of course and many players will find themselves in more than one group.

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Elite bridge in England is organised by the EBU. The total individual membership of the EBU is around 55,000, although more like 36,000 have taken part in affiliated events recently.

At the elite level, there are competitions between nations at World and European level. National competitions are competed amongst the quirkily constituted EBU counties, the major clubs, and teams and pairs organised individually.

Perhaps around a thousand players take part. The management of the EBU of the counties and of some of the larger clubs are generally drawn from the same population.

Affiliated Club Bridge

There are around 1,000 duplicate bridge clubs in England. Around half of them are affiliated to the EBU. The biggest of these have buildings, employ managers and are large businesses.

EBU affiliated clubs are in turn each affiliated to one of the forty EBU "counties".

The majority of clubs are smaller and typically meet on a weekly basis in community facilities, are run by volunteers and use a members club constitution. There are some substantial duplicate clubs who choose not to be EBU affiliated.

The majority of the EBU's active membership belong to one or more clubs, possibly a mixture of affiliated and unaffiliated. There are probably around 35,000 members of affiliated clubs.

Social

Players of social bridge are often highly competent but seek environments more aimed at enjoyment than competition. Huge amounts of bridge is played in private homes, on cruises during holidays and in non affiliated clubs. There are many groups who play bridge together, but it may be rubber or chicago.

Novice

Bridge teachers are everywhere. They range from fully professional to occasional volunteer. There are some large teaching businesses,

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New Normal Zoom Conferences

The meetings are informal gatherings. They are intended to bring together a wide range of perspectives. They should allow constructive debate. The proceedings are not secret and will be recorded and published widely.

The first Zoom conference took place on 16th September. The second on 21st October. The third at 2pm on 18th November.

A link for the **December 16th 2pm** Zoom conference is below:

[Zoom link for the next New Normal Bridge Zoom Conference](#)

New Normal Newsletter

This is issued once a month generally on the third weekend. It is written and distributed on an entirely non profit basis, takes no advertising or commission.

Previous New Normal newsletters and a subscription form are available on the Bridge for Pleasure web site.

There is also information on playing Covid-secure bridge.

A freely available bridge teaching scheme with lesson plans, notes, deals, homework quizzes and answers is there for all.

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

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