



Nicky Bainbridge <rugbyvillagebridge@gmail.com>

New Normal News March 2021

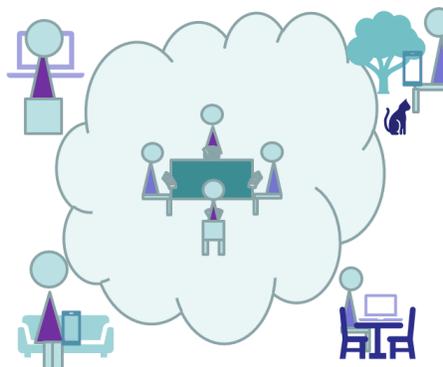
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Nicky <bridgeforpleasure@gmail.com>
Reply-To: bridgeforpleasure@gmail.com
To: Rugby Village <rugbyvillagebridge@gmail.com>

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In this edition...

- The Road Map
- How Was it for You?
- Zoom Conferences (Including Link for Next Meeting)

While the audience for this newsletter is still fast growing, the numbers coming to the Zoom conferences are falling. It may be time to drop them. Please give your views on Wednesday.

The Road Map

The Road Map gives a step by step model for a post Covid world with some provisional, "no earlier than", dates attached.

There's a 60 page document with a thorough and readable description of the background and thinking behind the plan at:

<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/>

[uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/963491/COVID-19_Response_-_Spring_2021.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/reopening-businesses-and-venues-in-england/reopening-businesses-and-venues)

A document with a little more detail of interest to our community was published a day or two later:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/reopening-businesses-and-venues-in-england/reopening-businesses-and-venues>

Step Changes

Step 1A, the reopening of schools, took place on Monday 8th March. Immediate effect: a student on my beginners course was late joining the Zoom meeting "held up by school traffic"! The road map says that it will take four weeks for the effect of this to show up in statistics and fifth week to decide whether or not to postpone Step 2.

Step 1B opens up the possibility of socially distanced outdoor activities. Several of my learners and players are visibly longing to get back on the golf course. There wont be time to measure the effect before 12th April, but outdoor activity is generally thought to be pretty safe.

Step 2, no earlier than 12th April, always subject to social distancing, non essential shops, hairdressers, many indoor leisure businesses, e.g. commercial gyms, can open. Community Halls can reopen but only for limited activities, apparently NOT including bridge clubs. The road map says that it will take four weeks for the effect of this to show up in statistics and fifth week to decide whether or not to postpone Step 3.

Step 3, no earlier than 17th May, subject to social distancing, more activities, probably including bridge clubs are permitted in community halls. My assessment is that we could reopen our Bridge Club and play as we were from July to October last year with strict Covid security measures.

Step 4, no earlier than 21st June, government "hopes" to reopen other settings such as night clubs. Also government plans to review Covid related restrictions on businesses, possibly allowing bridge to operate more as it did in pre-covid days.

Please always check the latest documents, and maybe take advice, before you make any decisions. In the past this sort of rules/guidance has changed rapidly and probably will again. It has often not been clear enough for everyone to be sure, and agreed, on what it means.

Changes to Covid Security management

Vaccination

The good news is the rate of vaccination, and the growing evidence that it reduces, but not eliminates, the chance of the virus making the recipient seriously ill or worse. Rugby Village has updated its risk assessment to stipulate that players must have had at least one vaccine dose at least 21 days before coming to a face to face session.

Ventilation

There is new emphasis on transmission through airborne droplets. Venues have always needed to be well ventilated. We have been able

to open doors and get a good draft through one arm of our L shaped room. However, we have requested an extractor fan in the ceiling of the other arm. Don't let those droplets hang about. Rugby Village Risk Assessment Version 4 is available on:

<http://www.bridgeforpleasure.co.uk>

Local Numbers

You can keep an eye on your local numbers in several different ways. My first choice is the Zoe app. I am one of 4.6m people who report every day. One of the benefits is I can do a quickly daily check on the number of cases in my local area. The report has remained almost exactly the same in format since I signed up. I have confidence that it is not politically influenced. Second choice is the BBC. However they do regularly change what they update, how they present it and how regularly it's updated. Thirdly there is the government web site area. Full of data, but not so much emphasis on consistent presentation. My local council is posting case numbers everyday on Facebook, but there have been one or two strange "lurches" in the numbers, apparently due to changing how/where students are counted. Anyway, our local numbers are plateauing at the level they were when we locked down in November. I hope to see them reducing substantially by May 17th, but so much will depend on the effect of cases by schools reopening.

How was it for you?

I wrote the following for my club newsletter last week. It really sums up the last year. Would anyone like to contribute something similar about their bridge experience in the last year. I would like to publish such in the newsletter and a set of reflections on the Bridge for Pleasure web site to make a record of how its been.

Rugby Village Bridge 2021/22

What a year it has been!

We held our last face to face bridge at Dunchurch on March 19th 2020, reopened mid July, and closed again at the end of October.

Many of us have joined Bridge Club Live. Players meet regularly in the Social Room for friendly games. Some have ventured into the DIDO competition in the Daily MPs Room. See Maxine and Terry's win below. In mid September we were one of the first clubs to book a regular private room on Tuesday Afternoons. This has grown steadily to seven or eight tables.

We entered teams into county and national leagues and did quite well.

I have been giving a seminar every Tuesday morning for many weeks. The settled format is a Zoom meeting, simultaneously broadcast on Facebook and left open to all on Facebook. I just checked and discovered there are nearly seventy videos on our Facebook page!

In January I started a practice session on RealBridge using set boards on the Tuesday morning topic. Players

have told me they find it helps to remember the topic coming back to play the boards a couple of days later.

I started teaching beginners on Skype and then moved to the much better Zoom! I have taught three beginners courses and two improvers courses. I am about to embark on another of each. The audience for online teaching has expanded all over the country.

Throughout I have written so many newsletters! I like to think they kept us going as a community.

I have been networking with other teachers and clubs supporting each other through this period of drastic change. A fellow teacher is working with the USA to get their members learning and playing bridge. I do the beginners lessons and he gets them started, and provides coaching on Bridge Club Live.

What would an Association of Bridge Providers do?

We need to promote bridge in clubs right now. We need to be ready for the resumption of face to face. We need to get the money flowing again. We need a restart plan. We need to bring back our pre lock down players to face to face. We need to welcome players who have learned online.

The Association would set its own agenda but early priorities would be:

- * Understanding and working with the government and local authorities to organise face to face safely and in compliance with regulations and guidance.
- * Creating, sharing and operating a marketing plan for face to face bridge.
- * Creating and operating training and support network for directors, teachers and club organisers.

Draft Rules for a Bridge Providers Association

I took on this task, and to do a quick and hopefully quality job I laid a little money to draw up a draft using a law firm template. The draft is available at the following link.

Please send comments or suggestions.

I am hoping that five founder members will come forward to get this going.

Draft Association Rules

[Click here to comment on the draft by email](#)

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.

Zoom conferences took place on:

16th September

21st October

18th November

16th December 2020

20th January 2021

17th February 2021.

A link for the **March 17th 2pm** Zoom conference is below:

Nicky Bainbridge is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: New Normal March 2021

Time: Mar 17, 2021 02:00 PM London

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84536938114?pwd=Mm9makgzZGxBQWVsc0ErQUhIU1BIZz09>

Meeting ID: 845 3693 8114

Passcode: 789113

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

[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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