
Bridge in the New Normal July 2021

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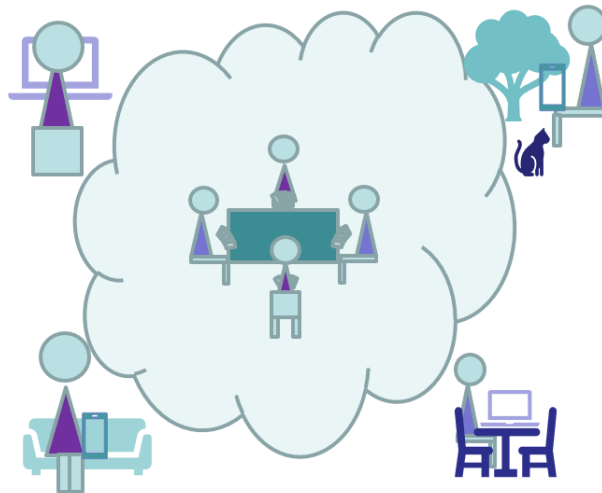
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New Normal News

JULY 2021



www.bridgeforpleasure.co.uk

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Freedom Day (!?)

The government has chosen to lift the legal requirement for social distancing and other Covid security measures. They have reopened night clubs with a recommendation that they check Covid status on entry. Cases of the more transmissible delta variant have been rising very fast, though there are signs that the rate of spread is slowing.

Bridge players are now generally the safest part of the population as the majority have taken up their two vaccinations.

While we may carry the virus and may become ill, we would now be very unlucky to become seriously ill or worse. Clubs will need to consult their members, their insurance policies and their consciences about how to proceed.

Ventilation and space are key.

We are raising the limit on tables to five per room. This is still only half the capacity of ten we used to use. Monday Afternoons are our most popular, so we have booked a second room to bring our limit to 10 tables.

To avoid disappointment, we will continue taking bookings using BridgeWebs. Bookings do put people off, but more of them are slowly getting to grips with it. I have done a YouTube video on how to book.

People have found it useful, you are welcome to use the link.

https://youtu.be/V2lbDfo_AZg

We aren't going to buy more screens, and I can't think of any sensible ways to organise sessions with some tables screened. So the screens are going into the garage this weekend. We will encourage players to wear masks as much as they can, and will try to make a bit of fun out of players wearing coverings for half the boards (N/S on odd numbers and E/W on even).

We are going to have board moving and sharing as there are very few (no?) records of transmission by touching infected surfaces. We will continue to provide a bottle of sanitiser per player and tell players to take their bottle and their bidding box when they move. Players will sanitise when they enter, when they leave and between rounds.

We will open all the windows etc as before.

Rugby Village Club Player Briefing

Most legal restrictions will be lifted on July 19th and we make our own decisions.

Here's how we intend to balance caution with comfort:

We will make sure all bridge rooms are thoroughly ventilated, so you may still need that extra layer.

We will continue to provide space around the tables by raising our limit on tables in the room from four to five.

We will keep availability to members only, and require that all attendees have been fully vaccinated at least three weeks prior to playing.

We will continue the booking system for now.

After the 19th July the Sports Lounge will be used as additional

capacity for Monday, so we can have five tables in each room! We will set up two "events", one for each room, so if the first room is full, book into the second one.

We ask you to keep a space of at least one metre between you and all other players.

We do not have enough cross table screens for the additional tables, so we are mothballing them for now.

We do ask you to bring and use a face mask as much as possible and always when moving around the room. At the table, please agree on at least pair wearing face masks. Perhaps North/South could mask up on odd number boards, and East/West on even number boards.

We will continue to provide individual hand sanitiser at the table, as well as in the room. Please use it when you arrive, when you leave, and each time you move.

We will ask you to take your bidding box and sanitiser when you move from table to table.

Boards will move and be used by more than one player (up to five).

Liability of Bridge Organisers

We are now on the eve of the removal of almost all legal restrictions on July 19th.

Clubs must consider what is really safe for their members. If challenged a club may have to show that it was not negligent to qualify for support from their insurance and to provide a defence in court.

The principle is no different for Covid transmission than for trip hazards, food poisoning and other possible negligence. During the

pandemic some clubs had the impression that they more legally (and possibly personally) at risk because of the pandemic. However legal steps have been taken against clubs on other grounds.

The vast majority of bridge clubs are unincorporated associations whose constitutions do not limit liability for action over accidents etc.

One useful thing the EBU or other organisation could do is look into this area, find examples where things have gone wrong, and make the lessons learned and the position clear to all clubs.

Face to Face Activity

During the Period of Legal Restrictions

Ten clubs offered face to face sessions during the period 17th May to 18th July when such activity is subject to Covid related legal requirements.

Two clubs are in the Channel Islands.

Many of the rest have chosen to keep players seated at the same tables throughout the sessions, managing each table as a social mingling group of four, socially distanced from all the other tables. Rugby Village and Kenilworth have obtained screens, reduced their capacity to less than half the previous capacity and managed each player as a single socially distanced unit. Please check out this player briefing for more detail.

<https://www.bridgewebs.com/bridgeforpleasure/2021%2005%20Anon%20Face%20to%20Face%20Player%20Briefing.pdf>

Rugby Village ran 45 sessions during periods of non total lockdown in this way.

Kenilworth has had an unannounced visit from local Health and Safety who observed this approach in action and were HAPPY.

This has demonstrated once and for all that this approach was Covid precaution compliant and legal.

Spotting the Trends - Return to Face to Face

Bridge web site activity has been very much higher in the last week or two. The majority of the website updates have referred to reopening.

More than fifty clubs have given updates on their reopening intentions. Most of these have given dates for restart over the next month, most of them next week. Others have made statements of intent, are conducting surveys, have a committee considering it, or are waiting for their venue to announce its reopening.

It is very likely that many other clubs are considering or have made decisions but not updated their web sites yet. We will be looking next week (from Monday 19th July) for signs of actual opening and will update our figures on face to face sessions accordingly.

Locally, out of our two closest traditional weekly bridge clubs using shared community facilities: one is likely to continue as an online club essentially replacing their weekly face to face session with a RealBridge session; the other has announced its intention to reopen face to face, but puts the chance that they will survive in the medium or long term as 50/50.

The shape of bridge in the future is going to be carved by the survival rate of face to face clubs. Practical support for them could make a big difference.

The total number of bridge club web sites being monitored has now reached 339. Clubs are added most weeks. All 40 EBU Counties and many other bridge sites are checked for updates once a week.

Bumper B A M S A !

More than 500 delegates from 62 countries attended the 4th international bridge conference.

The University of Stirling and Bridge: A MindSport for All (BAMSA) hosted the online event over four days at the end of June. The success of the conference was due to a concerted effort on the part of many people. The programme involved 70 presenters and panelists from 20 countries. Collaboration among members of the global BAMSA network was the driving force behind the event.

The conference aimed to create a dialogue between academics and bridge players. Representatives of local, regional, national and international bridge organisations were all present. Practitioners included policymakers, bridge teachers, organisers and players. The academics came from a variety of disciplines. Sociology, psychology, sports studies, health sciences, global studies, social work and leisure studies were all represented.

The conference sessions inspired wide-ranging discussions. In his insightful keynote address, Professor Martin Seligman applied his wellbeing theory to the game of bridge. Other sessions focused on the role of bridge in society, and the ways in which bridge benefits people of different generations.

A session on education and digital learning provoked discussion on how best to teach bridge in schools. The conference also demonstrated the importance of addressing inequalities and creating a safe and welcoming environment. Training in equality and unconscious bias for tournament directors, selectors and youth trainers, was proposed at a session on gender.

Covid 19 has changed the way bridge clubs operate. A discussion about opportunities and challenges post-Covid was relevant to bridge clubs planning a return to face-to-face play. Online bridge has been a lifeline for many players but not for all. Some half of all club players stopped playing during the pandemic and bridge clubs cannot be complacent.

To raise awareness of the positive role of bridge in society, the conference showcased the multiple benefits of playing bridge and the social role of bridge clubs. Positive case studies from around the world are particularly relevant to governing parties committed to improving mental health and reducing social isolation.

The Scottish Bridge Union, the American Contract Bridge League Educational Foundation, the Leisure Studies Association and the University of Stirling all provided funding. Thanks to their support, the conference created a valuable online resource for the international bridge community. Recordings of all the sessions are being edited and full reports will appear on the BAMSA website late in the year.

The conference was free to attend. To support Bridge: A MindSport for All, please donate to the Keep Bridge Alive [crowdfunder](#).

Please follow BAMSA on Facebook page and twitter (@bridgemindsport). Visit the website and subscribe to the e-bulletin to keep up to date with news from Bridge: A MindSport for All.

Recordings of the Live Conferences will be made available in early August.

In the mean time two videos recorded before the proceedings that might interest bridge players....

A gender question:

Why we Need the Under-26 Women Category

Sofie Græsholt Sjødal (Under-26 Bridge Player and Bridge Teacher, Norway)

There might be a few reasons why the under-26 women category should be abolished. However, there are many more reasons why it should not. Sofie Græsholt Sjødal will tell you about why we need the category and how it can help to limit gender differences.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mEHjksBkVNM>

A view on how to teach bridge

Teaching Bridge

Rob Barrington (Bridge Teacher, USA)

Rob Barrington discusses the benefits of online education and offers strategies for successful teaching programmes.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kB8S5nSgDzU>

Rebuilding the Game

Traditional face to face clubs have an uncertain future. Many players will be lost to duplicate bridge for ever if these clubs cannot provide a service for them.

It's important to consider the advantages such clubs can offer, and perhaps a open game, in a well lit room, against players you can see, and you may have known for years, is one of them.

Hybrids....

Rugby Village Bridge Club plans to be a **hybrid club** for at least the rest of this membership year (to 31st March 2022). That means that we will offer face to face bridge at Dunchurch and also online bridge. These will be separate sessions at different times. Members are welcome to come to any mix of events that suits them.

The idea of **hybrid events** may solve situations where some players prefer to play in an event online, but others want to attend "in person".

These are managed by dividing the face to face and the online players into different "sections". The sections play the same boards. Each section can use a movement that suits the size and nature of the section. When the event has finished, the scores from the sections are combined into a single result. This isn't a new idea. Large events have been divided into manageable sections in this way throughout the life of duplicate bridge. However you do need enough players in each section to make for a meaningful competition within the section and for a meaningful combined result. Smaller clubs may not the numbers (or the directing resources) to take advantage.

There may be technology soon that allows face to face players to combine with online players in a single **hybrid movement**. Details have not emerged yet, but it is difficult to see how this could be done unless the face to face players are using tablets. For many players using computers keeps them away from the game, so this approach may combine the worst of all worlds rather than be the compromise that satisfies all.

For many years there has been a growing gulf between elite/competitive bridge and the grass roots world of enjoyable social bridge. While bridge has received a game changing boost in the online world, there's a worry that the gulf will become even wider.

EBU<->Club Communications

The existence of this project was confirmed at the May Chairmen's meeting, but no idea of progress or when clubs can look forward to improved information flow. With the emphasis on "collaboration" in the meeting, a two way dialogue is hopefully on the cards.

A focus group meeting was held in May and, in June, club attendees were asked for examples where communications could have been improved.

We really hope to see regular communication, to all clubs, about this project.

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
17th March 2021
21st April 2021
19th May 2021
16th June 2021.

A link for the next Zoom conference is below:

Nicky Bainbridge is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: New Normal July 2021

Time: Jul 21, 2021 02:00 PM London

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89114408353?pwd=ckFxZDZtOU9Hd2ZHdHFYbmlqelpOZz09>

Meeting ID: 891 1440 8353

Passcode: 198762

Zoom link for the next New Normal Bridge Zoom Conference

New Normal Newsletter

This is issued once a month generally on the weekend before the third Wednesday. 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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