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**New Normal News October 2023**

1 message

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**Nicky** <bridgeforpleasure@gmail.com>  
Reply-To: bridgeforpleasure@gmail.com  
To: Nicky <nickyrbainbridge@gmail.com>

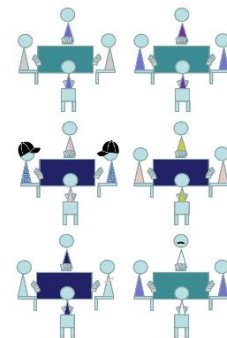
11 October 2023 at 07:54

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New  
Normal  
News



OCTOBER  
2023



[www.bridgeforpleasure.co.uk](http://www.bridgeforpleasure.co.uk)

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Thanks to everyone who contributes to the meetings and gives feedback about the newsletter, or lets me know they watch the conference recordings. As long as I know this is useful, I will keep going!

The audience for this newsletter is growing. If you would like to receive it, you can subscribe at:

[Click here to subscribe to this newsletter](#)

[Click here to view previous newsletters](#)

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## Realbridge/BAMSA Teacher-Coaching Conference

This fascinating conference took place over this weekend.

There were several excellent presentations on teaching. I recommend the presentation by [Ane Haaland](#).

Also check out Ireland's approach to certifying teachers! ([Dermot O'Brien](#))

The other big theme was rebuilding interest in bridge with stories from different countries. Some are focussed on Youth. The new executive director at the ACBL, ([Bronia Jenkins](#)), recently heard on Sorry

Partner, provided insights on teaching, and showed us a great tool to create and use online quizzes.

Check out reviving bridge in Iceland ([Matthias Imsland](#)) - great to hear a success story.

If you are seriously interested in the future of bridge, please do put some time aside to watch!

<http://https://realbridge.online/teacher-coach-conference-2023-timetable.html>

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## What time is best for bridge?

I have had a question:

*"I was wondering in your collection of statistics on return to F2F bridge and general bridge club health, whether you had ascertained a preference from those clubs going back F2F, that most of them have switched to daytime.*

*We have done a recent survey assessing the viability of switching to F2F from online on one of our stronger evening sessions and have met with a lot of resistance. This may be the timing of upcoming dark nights and winter weather and may have been better received if the plan had been to start in April, for example.*

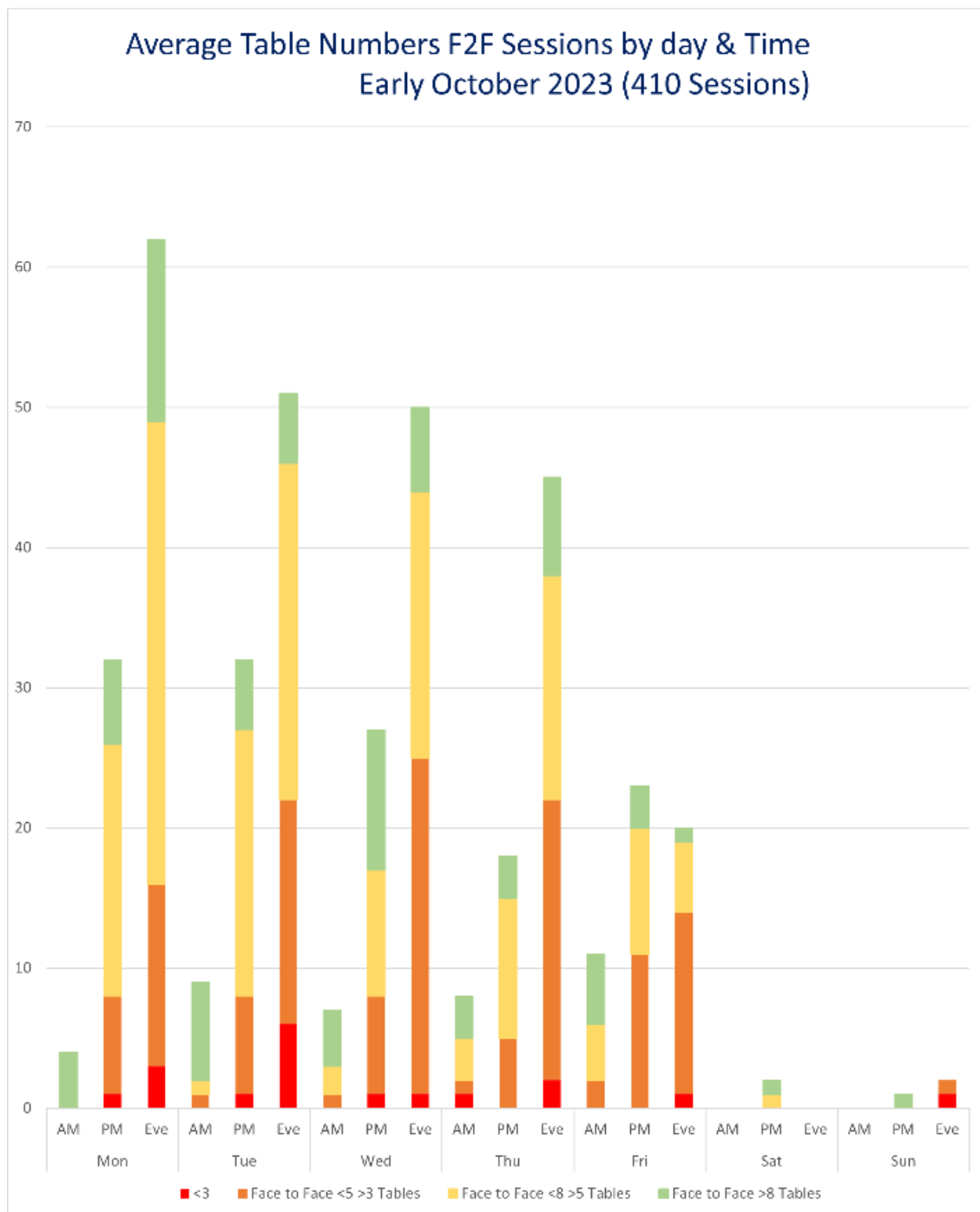
*But I was wondering if this was the case for a lot of the clubs- the trend back to F2F is more a day time event now, switching from evening sessions?"*

In my area, central England, half a dozen clubs find that evening bridge is not particularly popular, and that afternoon sessions do well. This is in four or five towns. It implies that retirees make up the players.

The research I do shows that there are most sessions on Monday to Thursday evenings. These sessions are generally viable. However,

there are relatively few mornings sessions, but the ones that run are very successful. I am so interested in this that I intend to start a new weekday morning session in the new year myself.

Please see the graph below. Please could our readers comment by reply!



**Clubs, the EBU and UM**

EBU UM (Pay 2 Play) was introduced at a time when individual member annual subscriptions were in free fall.

It caused great controversy at the time, putting the load onto clubs to administer memberships and events and collect the money. Some clubs disaffiliated, and indeed my own club formed when the older club in town broke away from the EBU. Like many others, they reaffiliated when members found they could not enter EBU and county competitions. Some of them also missed participation in the Master Point Scheme.

At present clubs pay an annual subscription of £28 for EBU Affiliation. When clubs hold qualifying events, the club pays EBU UM of 44p for each player (whether club members, or EBU members, or neither) AND a county fee per player. The county fee varies from 0p (Nottinghamshire) to 20p (Channel Islands). It's probably typically 6p. This is all well established and easy to manage.

The benefit to players is that their EBU subscription is invisible. The club has no problems with collecting any EBU subscription fee for signing up, or renewing, their members. If there was an additional annual subscription, the club would have to either collect it from members as a specific extra annual, almost certainly making it unpopular or roll it into the club's annual subscription, meaning an immediate rise to cover that. The club would perceive this as additional cost, and effort.

The advantage of UM as it stands, is that players who play more, pay more. When the scheme was founded, a limit was set on the amount any individual could pay. Any "over collection" was refunded to the club. It may not always have reached the player. After a couple of years (?) this was ceased. Equally there was a £2 rebate monthly if you paid by direct debit. Also ceased.

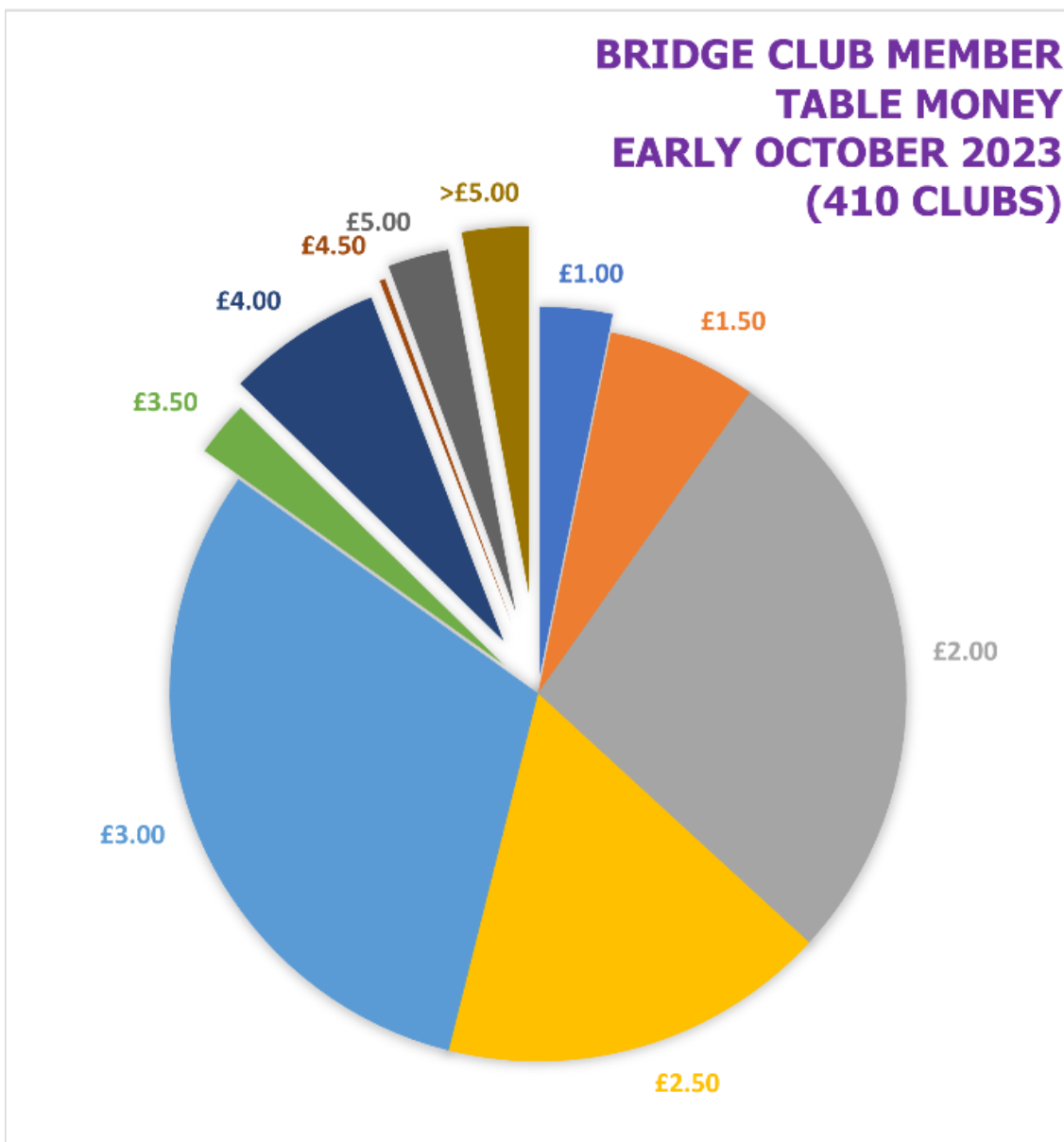
The negatives about UM from are:

It has increased in line with or ahead of inflation. Increases have always been whole pennies despite talk that the system could apply

fractions of a penny. At 50p it is now a huge chunk of table money. With many clubs providing a social activity rather than a highly competitive atmosphere, this might not seem worth it. The benefits to player and to club are nebulous.

This form of UM created a stable income for the EBU at relatively low cost. The shop has to pay for goods etc, and compete with other suppliers. Face to face tournaments are difficult to make money from, burdensome to organise and surpluses are not certain.

Is it time for a review of UM? Let me know what you think.



Our informal meetings are open to all interested in organising duplicate bridge. They do not have any formal role. Small and large clubs, face to face and/or online clubs, affiliated or not, in England, or outside. Please join us.

We usually hold a discussion about running bridge once a month at 10.00 on a Friday morning.

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## Top 50 Clubs

In July the EBU published the list of the 50 clubs with the most recorded player sessions in 2022/23.

This had not appeared since 2019/20 as the EBU chose not to recognise the efforts of clubs who kept going through the pandemic.

Top handful were generally the same, but interestingly there were two new entries of new clubs, both exclusively online. In at number 17, the Oliver Cowan bridge club and at 44, the Lancashire Online Pairs.

It's going to be interesting to see where the nature of online bridge settles.

<https://www.ebu.co.uk/article/top-50-clubs-players-202223>

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## How are clubs doing?

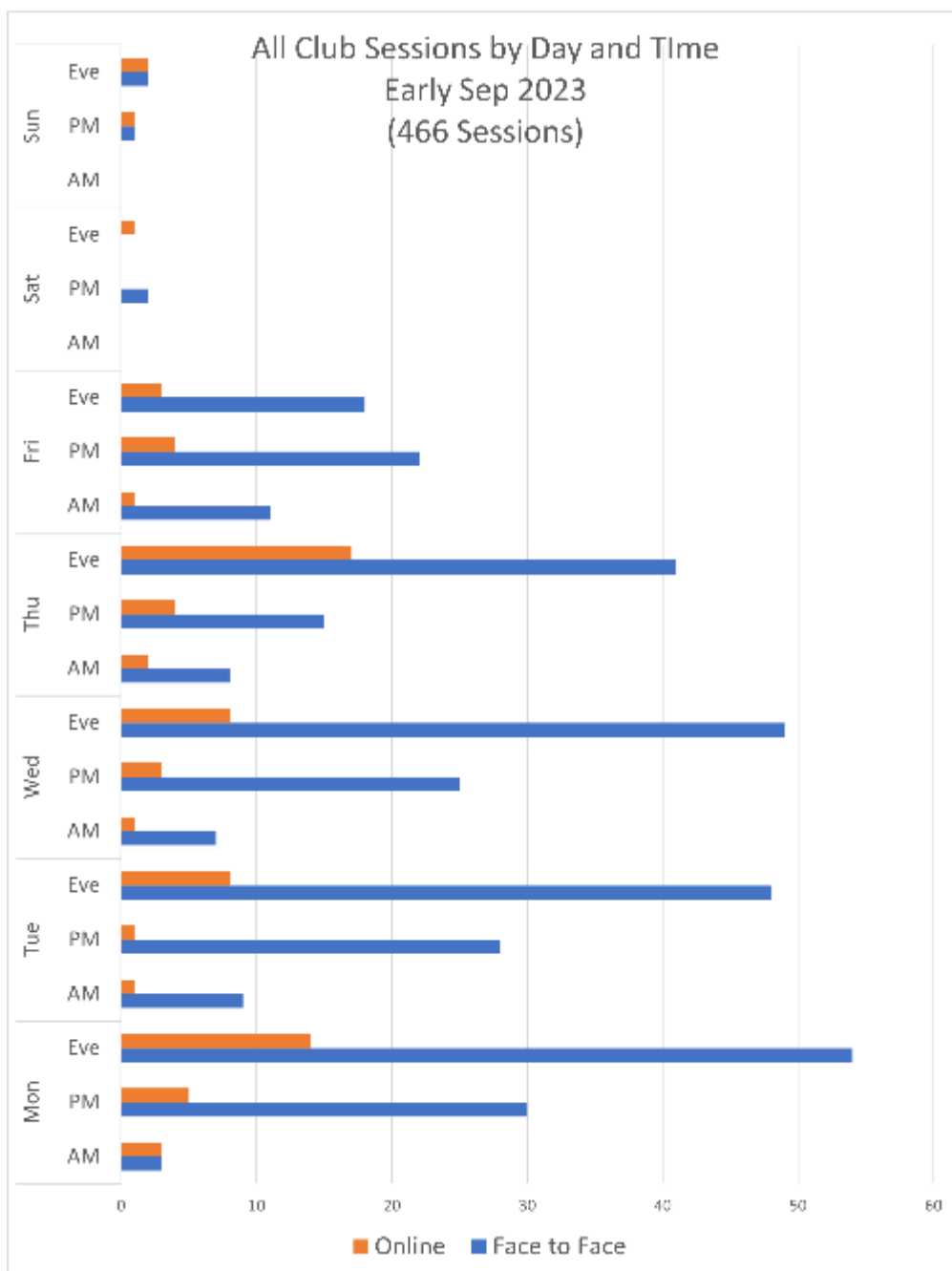
The 786 clubs in the database offer about 1700 weekly duplicate sessions.

514 weekly sessions have been analysed in some detail. The session details include tables numbers (average of latest three

weeks at review data) by day of week and time of day. The type of venue or online platform is also recorded.

This data shows clubs typically offer 1.4 sessions a week.

The average face to face field size amongst the weekly sessions has been rising steadily and has reached 7.27 (affiliated and non affiliated).





Clubs are being resurveyed now (roughly annually), any trends are from new clubs being added, new data being added, and a bit of changes in the "existing" data. September 2023:

There's more information here, typically updated once a fortnight.

## BFP Club Statistics Page

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### Nicky is standing for the EBU Board

You know that I am a believer in the pleasure and well being that face to face bridge gives many players. I have taught bridge for over twenty years, and run a club for more than twelve years. I have qualified as a teacher and as a county director. I have served as county chair and on county working group. I provide this newsletter and forum for discussion, especially around the pandemic.

I have offered my services to the EBU administration before. I have respect and admiration for everyone who works to make bridge happen, most of all the army of volunteers. The time has come to recognise the need for change over the need for stability.

I have met David Parry who shares my aspirations for bridge, and whose knowledge and skills complement my own and we have launched a joint manifesto. Our election to the board will be on a vote of shareholders, so if you are, or know, a shareholder, please draw their attention to our manifesto.

### Time for Change

Bridge is enjoyed by millions around the world. However, it is struggling to retain its place as a leisure activity, or even as a competitive mind sport in the face of intense competition from screen-based entertainment.

The pandemic stopped face to face bridge for a while. Online bridge in both social, and competitive form increased in numbers,

accessibility, and popularity. The balance between online and in person bridge has changed for ever.

It is now time to increase the appreciation and knowledge of bridge in England and grow the numbers playing the game. New players need to be attracted otherwise the relentless rise in the typical age of bridge players can only result in a slow and inevitable decline.

The future of the game in England can be turned around. With your support we will make it happen.

- We will raise the profile of the game to attract greater interest and more players.
- We will work actively with all teachers to enthuse a wave of beginners.
- We will engage with every club, no matter how big or small, whether EBU affiliated or not, and we will support beginners moving to play in club sessions.
- We will work to introduce bridge to younger players. We will support every teacher who teaches bridge in schools. We will launch a university student teaching initiative. We will promote bridge to young professionals.
  - We will breathe new life into the competitive game by developing a new and inspiring national tournament structure. We will give counties and regions the autonomy to run a broader range of green-pointed tournaments. We will reduce the national schedule and expand the regional program, providing enhanced flexibility and increased opportunities nationwide.
  - We will delete “control bridge” from the EBU’s Memorandum of Association and replace it by “promote and support bridge”.
- We will recognise the increasingly professional nature of the game at elite level. We will respect the needs of professional players so that England may always be represented by the best possible team in all major international championships.
- We will streamline operations and focus on core activities. We will cut out waste. We will be pragmatic. We will downsize from the current headquarters to much smaller, less expensive

premises.

We are standing for election to the EBU board, by the shareholders, on Wednesday November 29<sup>th</sup>, 2023.

David Parry (London), standing for election to the board and for the office of Chair.

Nicky Bainbridge (Midlands), standing for election to the board, and for the office of Vice-Chair

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## Next Zoom discussion

Nicky Bainbridge is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: New Normal Discussion

Time: Oct 20, 2023 10:00 AM London

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87202231030?pwd=WDZ5VVdzbXdaK1JHamlEc254TTdlZz09>

Meeting ID: 872 0223 1030

Passcode: 161782

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## Previous New Normal Zoom Discussions

The meetings are informal gatherings. They are intended to bring together a wide range of perspectives. They should allow constructive debate.

The proceedings are informal and are recorded and published on YouTube.

Previous Zoom conferences:

2020	16th September 18th November	21st October 16th December
2021	20th January	17th February

	17th March 19th May	21st April 16th June
	21st July 18th August 22nd September	<a href="https://youtu.be/PbTyAz9vuHA">https://youtu.be/PbTyAz9vuHA</a> <a href="https://youtu.be/pPEzFxs8VBA">https://youtu.be/pPEzFxs8VBA</a> <a href="https://youtu.be/QJlu3PIn02s">https://youtu.be/QJlu3PIn02s</a>
	20th October 17th November	<a href="https://youtu.be/VRP7eaeqaH8">https://youtu.be/VRP7eaeqaH8</a> <a href="https://youtu.be/DAv-7POhNHU">https://youtu.be/DAv-7POhNHU</a>
2022	19th January 16th February 16th March 20th April 18th May 22nd June 20th July 17th August 21st September 19th October 23rd November	<a href="https://youtu.be/3w9hl3UWG70">https://youtu.be/3w9hl3UWG70</a> <a href="https://youtu.be/Z5jOfwcpueU">https://youtu.be/Z5jOfwcpueU</a> <a href="https://youtu.be/nlW1BIMG6-0">https://youtu.be/nlW1BIMG6-0</a> <a href="https://youtu.be/ekPnjt-KIZs">https://youtu.be/ekPnjt-KIZs</a> <a href="https://youtu.be/hond7ZCvKzM">https://youtu.be/hond7ZCvKzM</a> <a href="https://youtu.be/cz1sBGPMisE">https://youtu.be/cz1sBGPMisE</a> <a href="https://youtu.be/1McE5pexdjg">https://youtu.be/1McE5pexdjg</a> <a href="https://youtu.be/5pegkP_R_Ro">https://youtu.be/5pegkP_R_Ro</a> <a href="https://youtu.be/uxmPqzTQNqo">https://youtu.be/uxmPqzTQNqo</a> <a href="https://youtu.be/uxmPqzTQNqo">https://youtu.be/uxmPqzTQNqo</a> <a href="https://youtu.be/H-xaZ-moSGg">https://youtu.be/H-xaZ-moSGg</a>
2023	18th January 22nd February 22nd March 6th June 15th September	<a href="https://youtu.be/aRoMH6l68g0">https://youtu.be/aRoMH6l68g0</a> <a href="https://youtu.be/Og5VRoX9lXY">https://youtu.be/Og5VRoX9lXY</a> <a href="http://youtu.be/ZdhdvzIVeZw">http://youtu.be/ZdhdvzIVeZw</a> <a href="https://youtu.be/WY2PUDMHBQA">https://youtu.be/WY2PUDMHBQA</a> <a href="https://youtu.be/1j6yXjO_cLc">https://youtu.be/1j6yXjO_cLc</a>

Zoom link for the next New Normal Bridge Zoom Conference

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### New Normal Newsletter

This is issued roughly once a month. 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

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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