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**New Normal News March 2024**

1 message

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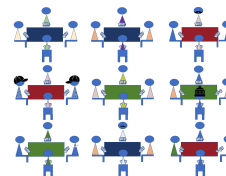
10 March 2024 at 18:36

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# Bridge Clubs Now!



## MARCH 2024



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

In this edition...

What does a typical club look like?

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Update to the Laws of Duplicate Bridge

January EBU Chairs Meeting

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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](#)

## What does a typical club look like?

I've been collecting information about duplicate bridge clubs for about two and a half years. There's enough to paint a picture of a typical club. From data collected, it:

- Meets once a week (Over 50%)
- Meets in a shared community space, typically a village or church hall (Around 80%)
- Offers face to face (Over 70%)
- Is either an informal association (37%) or has an unincorporated constitution (42%)
- Charges £2.,£2.50, or £3.00 table money (26%, 17%, 31%)
- May or may not be EBU affiliated (50%/50%)
- Is most likely to play sometime from Monday to Thursday
- Is most likely to play in the evening, though a substantial minority play in the afternoon
- Fills almost seven tables at each session
- Has a BridgeWebs web site (98%)
- Does not teach or refer potential learners to a teaching session on it's website.

From observation during data collection:

- It is run by two people
- It has moved away from collecting cash
- It puts an emphasis on friendly play
- It has a food/charity/social dimension
- It is likely to play in a village or town rather than a city

- The members are older people and mainly female

These are generalisations. Your club is unique.

## **Who Decides What the Rules Are?**

It's Table 3 North. T3N tells players they cannot bid because their partner has hesitated. T3N informs opponents their bid is illegal.

T3N considers that opposing declarers may not touch cards in dummy. They don't call the director, and neither does anyone else at the table. T3N is the law. T3N is wrong. T3N puts players off.

## **The Laws of Duplicate Bridge**

The World Bridge Federation (WBF) publishes the Laws of Duplicate Bridge, usually revised on a ten-year cycle, next update due in 2027. However, the WBF has recently issued an update to the laws (see below).

A duplicate bridge club not using the Laws is not playing the game of duplicate bridge.

The laws define the basic rules of playing the game and scoring. Two important laws are those on Unauthorised Information (16), and Partnership Agreements (40).

Other Laws include the requirement to leave the board in the centre of the table during play (7A); shuffle of hand before returning it to the board (7C). The Laws do not include the requirement to use the STOP card. They do not include details of any Announcing or Alerting rules.

The laws recognise various entities involved in organising events (80). These include National Bridge Organisations (NBOs), Zonal Authorities, Regulating Authorities (RAs), and Tournament Organisers.

## **Bridge Regulations**

NBOs, for example English Bridge Union (EBU) issue their own regulations to be applied to the competitions that they organise.

The EBU output of Blue Book, White Book and Appeals Proceedings apply to the competitions that the EBU organise, and probably to competitions they licence.

The EBU adjusts these regulations annually. Players in EBU organised or licenced competitions are used to keeping up to date with the details of this regime.

It may be impossible to hold largely social and recreational players to the ever changing and often puzzling mix.

A chasm is opening between club players and elite players. Not many clubs feel they must provide an opportunity for elite players to practice the full regime in a club session.

Any club is the Tournament Organiser of its own events. However, whether a club is EBU affiliated or not, it is not obliged to enforce EBU regulations or other RA (80B2f).

## **Your Bridge Club**

If you are going to call it Duplicate Bridge, you probably really need to be using the Laws to manage the game you are playing. However, after that, it's down to you what other regulations are in force. You don't have to mandate use of the STOP card etc.

These are often the minutiae that cause conflict, upset and even intimidation. They fuel Table 3 North's activities. Many clubs follow a level of regulation that suits their players. Club web sites promote their bridge as friendly and relaxed and implicitly, or sometimes explicitly, unconcerned about RA regulations.

The "Yellow" book is a practical combination of the Laws and of Regulations applicable to, for example, the use of bidding boxes. Many club directors rely on this to keep the game fair.

The EBU could consider making life easier for directors and clubs,

especially at a time when a new generation is urgently needed.  
For example:

- a reordered version of the laws needing less jumping about among apparently random numbered laws.
- a "Level 3" system definition suitable for recreational clubs.
- Announcing and Alerting regulations suitable for recreational clubs and updated no more than every three years.

I am sure more will occur to you.

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### **The Laws of Duplicate Bridge**

Changes to the laws are usually made every ten years. The next update was due in 2027. However, the World Bridge Federation have chosen to make changes that are already in force.

The changes are in the area of communication between players. I don't think there's any actual change to the game, but what I think we all knew has been properly codified. The new laws are available by clicking here. They are quite readable.

[https://www.bridgewebs.com/cgi-bin/bwoq/bw.cgi?club=bridgeforpleasure&pid=docs\\_\\_2024%2001%20Laws-73-and-89-Amendments.pdf](https://www.bridgewebs.com/cgi-bin/bwoq/bw.cgi?club=bridgeforpleasure&pid=docs__2024%2001%20Laws-73-and-89-Amendments.pdf)

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### **EBU County Chairs Meeting Feb 2024**

The recording of this meeting is available on the EBU YouTube channel.

At about 1 hour 28 minutes in a presentation on the state of bridge is given by Yorkshire's David Guild. It's really worth watching.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c2un9OPAxcl>

About 28 minutes in it emerges that they are looking to co-opt directors onto the EBU board. I am still here! I still want to help. In particular I am interested in representing duplicate clubs. This area doesn't seem to be allocated to any director at present. If you think it's a good idea, please email Adrian Darnell.

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## **Five goals for the EBU in 2024 - March Update**

### **1 EBU Member Numbers**

Let's see this deficit get smaller in 2024

It is now three months since it emerged, that in the year to Nov 2023 there was a 3.000 net loss in membership. That's a quarter of a year. The EBU will have access to the latest position and so will know whether there is any sign of improvement.

At the recent Chair's conference (date) (link to recording), David Gould gave a truly magnificent presentation. He included a plea for more management information. Come on EBU, publish more recent membership figures at the next, and each subsequent chairs conference, so that the chairs and the rest of us can see how it's going.

### **2 The Annual General Meeting**

Let's have a more practical, more open, more democratic format in 2024.

The AGM reverted to Face to face in a London hotel. This meant that representatives from counties some distance from London faced more expense and travelling time. Many resorted to proxies. The meeting was only open to shareholders and their proxies, no public, no press, no playing members, no representatives of clubs, teachers or other bridge organisers. It was not recorded, so the record of the proceedings is limited to formal minutes and informal notes and discussions.

The chair undertook to look at a hybrid online and face to face form with electronic real time voting. This would allow a far greater

audience, more participation, and a recording easily made widely available.

The draft minutes of the AGM appeared over a month after the meeting, and the draft minutes of the first EBU board appeared eventually. There is no progress in this area.

There also appears to be no director responsible for club representation to the EBU.

### **3 Updates from Aylesbury**

Any member able to request this newsletter by opting for it in their member account.

That way more people can be informed about bridge organisation.

The monthly update from Aylesbury is largely used as a vehicle for marketing EBU run events. However, it can contain information important to club and county organisers, and of interest to teachers and players.

At present, the EBU sends to its own distribution list of club and county officials. It is difficult to keep this list up to date.

It would be so good if the EBU could adopt a policy of actively informing and educating about bridge, especially organising bridge. You have to persist in searching the web site for so many things, or directly request access from individuals. It would be so much more powerful if any member can subscribe or unsubscribe from a complete and dynamic list of interests e.g. events, teaching, directing etc

### **4 EBU Teachers Directory**

There are about 200 entries at the time of writing. With wide publicity, let's double this number in 2024.

This directory is used by the EBU to pass on enquiries for lessons. Any

teacher can be on the directory. It's not limited to EBEDTA members, or to those who use particular materials, systems or methods. It shows real potential to boost numbers learning the game. Teachers have to put themselves into the directory.

Regrettably the count on 2<sup>nd</sup> March is still 200 entries. This is an area the EBU should be using all channels to promote. This directory has the potential to be the "landing page" for all people looking to learn bridge. This is key to recruiting new bridge players.

The EBU could promote it in:

All EBU members email

All Club/County organisers email (Updates from Aylesbury)

By agreement with EBED to EBTA members

## **5 Freeze UM**

Freeze UM in 2024/25 to reduce financial pressure on clubs.

UM is a cost of doing business for affiliated clubs. The level of EBU plus County UM has reached about 50p per player per qualifying session.

Table money is generally £2, £2.50 or £3. The median is £2.50. That means the EBU UM is 20%. Clubs have venues, and various other expenses to meet.

There is no official response to this idea. Informally, the comment is that the EBU don't see how they can afford it.

In the Jan 2024 EBU board minutes ([link](#)), there are notes of a discussion about the offer to non affiliated clubs to join. This has met with, at best, mixed success. It shows that the value of affiliation is unclear to non affiliated clubs. Affiliated clubs are likely to question it.

During enquiries we made before the 2023 AGM, it emerged that the Aylesbury building has been valued at £1.1M. There is over a million pounds of shareholders money invested in a building that is clearly too big.



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## How are clubs doing?

The 829 clubs in the database offer about 1228 weekly duplicate sessions.

1047 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.

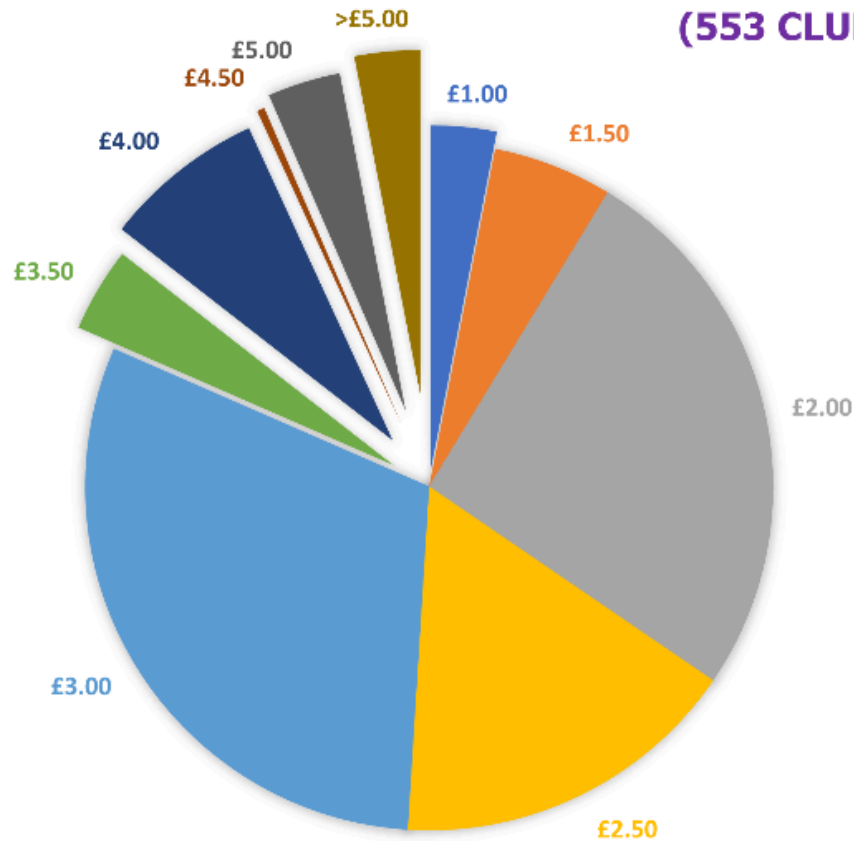
### F2F Average Tables

Slightly up on last month.

All Clubs F2F	6.71
EBU Clubs F2F	6.95
Non Affiliated Clubs F2F	6.34
Dedicated Premises	7.57
Shared Community	6.49
Section	5.39

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## BRIDGE CLUB MEMBER TABLE MONEY EARLY MARCH 2024 (553 CLUBS)



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

[BFP Club Statistics Page](#)

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[Click here to view previous newsletters](#)

### Monthly Discussions

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 about once a month at 10.00 on a Friday morning.

### Next Zoom discussion

Nicky Bainbridge is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: Bridge Clubs NOW!

Time: Mar 15, 2024 10:00 AM London

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83198489511?pwd=K2JpTUlmRGpDcXRldzQ1R1lUbnh2dz09>

Meeting ID: 831 9848 9511

Passcode: 505641

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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 March 19th May	17th February 21st April 16th June
	21st July	<a href="https://youtu.be/PbTyAz9vuHA">https://youtu.be/PbTyAz9vuHA</a>
	18th August 22nd September	<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	<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>

6th June  
15th September  
20th October  
1st December

<https://youtu.be/WY2PUDMHBQA>  
[https://youtu.be/1j6yXjO\\_cLc](https://youtu.be/1j6yXjO_cLc)  
[https://youtu.be/J6R8u\\_a5CdI](https://youtu.be/J6R8u_a5CdI)  
[https://youtu.be/J6R8u\\_a5CdI](https://youtu.be/J6R8u_a5CdI)

2024

2nd February

<https://youtu.be/aRoMH6l68g0>

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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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