

# CHELMSFORD BRIDGE CLUB

## CHAIRMAN'S REPORT: 2020-2021

This report marks the end of my second year as Chairman of Chelmsford Bridge Club. Despite the lack of face to face contact, I feel that I have got to know many of the members and supporters of the Club much better. We have not met for the whole of this past year due to Covid 19 with the restrictions that has placed on our lives, but we hope that as these ease we will be able to look forward to once again meeting and playing in person.

My sincere thanks go to our committee; Colin Peden as Secretary (who has also taken the role of my therapist), Julie Payne as Treasurer, Daphne Hunt dealing with IT and the Club website as well as Ted Cockle and Denis Anderson who have developed a programme of competitions that are suitable/accessible for everyone of any ability. Ted recently arranged a teams match against Tyler Hill, which members thoroughly enjoyed and is now in the process of arranging additional matches. Thank you to Cath Fox, who has written articles for the Chronicle and Sunday mail publicising bridge as well sending the survey to everyone. I'd also like to congratulate Cath for joining the EBU Board.

I couldn't thank only our committee, as it's with the help from others that we were able to have such a successful year. I'd also like to thank those who helped to direct and host on RealBridge, so thanks to Alan Rodger, Jeff Jones, Robert Elliott, Richard Eason and especially to Audrey who has been more than helpful whenever she was needed (also not forgetting Colin, Ted, Julie and Denis from the committee who also played such a big part). Thank you to David Sparkes for his help and input to the competition programme.

Due to the pandemic, we have had to adapt and therefore we started using BBO. BBO enabled us to play online similar to a normal Club meeting, without being able to see or talk to other members. RealBridge was also introduced, however it enabled members to see and talk to each other. From the survey, members were split between BBO and Real bridge in which they preferred. We therefore have tried to provide games for both platforms. BBO is used on a Monday evening and Wednesday afternoon and Real bridge on a Tuesday and Thursday evening as well as Friday and Sunday afternoon. In addition to these we have social room available seven days a week and groups of four are arranged and paired up by Richard Eason to enable play on a Thursday afternoon and evening.

One of my personal favourite things that the Club has introduced is that we are now offering tuition and supervised play. We are currently working through a series of lectures given by Club experts; these cover a variety of subjects and are well supported amongst members of the club. We've supplemented this with supervised play in which a group of four play "predict" hands watched over by an

experienced player who gives advice on play rather than the bidding. This has also been well supported and we hope to continue with this in the future.

Can I take this opportunity to thank Robert Elliott, Audrey Hartley, Richard Eason and Ian Moss.

Ted Cockle has been teaching on-line and has just completed his first 4 and will be looking for new students to continue his good work.

The Club now has over 175 registered players and many of these have become members paying the required £2 annual subscription. The big question is the direction of the Club post Covid 19 , the likely resumption of face to face bridge and the use of the internet in addition to or as replacement for normal club meetings. A survey has been carried out to explore members views on the subject and it would appear that the majority of players prefer to go back to face to face play. We have explored the means of playing safely in a Covid secure environment and this may involve screens, 24 boards per table, the use of masks, sanitiser and social distancing. The committee are currently waiting for EBU to outline its guidelines after the next meeting in late May. Once this information comes through, we will update you on when we intend to resume in person play. The current view is that post pandemic we will be playing as normal on a Monday evening in person but also playing online using BBO/RealBridge as long as the demand is there. We also hope to continue with tuition and supervised play.

I hope you have all enjoyed bridge over the last year. Personally, I've found that online bridge has been a welcome sense of normality since the pandemic began, allowing us all to stay connected.

We've all worked hard to adapt so we can continue to enjoy the game and we hope to continue with the development of the Club in the year to come.

Valdie Poter