

On-line Bridge Booms in Lockdown in Chelmsford!

Founded in 1952, Chelmsford Bridge Club faced potential collapse in March 2020 in the face of the pandemic. Chairman, Valdie Poter, faced a dilemma: Should Chelmsford Bridge Club close its doors as six other Chelmsford based Bridge clubs had done or re-invent itself and embrace the challenge that the COVID pandemic presented.

A year ago, on-line Bridge offered some alternatives to the Face-to-Face game and Chelmsford decided to put its faith in technology and develop the club around it. This was not a light decision. With most players aged between 60 and 90 years old and not familiar with technology, Chelmsford faced quite a challenge.

Ann, a player in her 80s, swore she would never play Bridge on-line. She not only mastered the game on her iPad but also taught some of her other friends to play aged 80 to 90.

Audrey, also in her 80s, not only mastered the game but went on to direct and help launch a new video-savvy on-line Bridge playing platform called RealBridge. A product of the pandemic, RealBridge, has allowed Bridge players to emulate the Face-to-Face game.

The spin off has not only been the chance to play a great game with friends in Lockdown but also has given many elderly folks confidence to use technology for zoom calls, shopping and other necessary activities.





The take up of on-line Bridge has been incredibly popular and it was not long before Chelmsford moved from just a Monday night club to offering Bridge play to members nearly every day of the week. Chelmsford Bridge Club even ran a session on Christmas Day to support members who were alone at Christmas.

One player said: "I like the scope for playing whenever free to do so. I enjoy the discipline of playing at a regular time at a regular club but also access to other clubs within Chelmsford. On-line bridge has been a saviour in lockdown."

Another: "I don't drive therefore rely on friends to take me to the bridge clubs I usually play out. Because of this it is great being able to play online, particularly Real Bridge, as contact with other people is so important. Though I would like to be able to play at my regular clubs, I am certainly glad to have the opportunity to play independently, without needing to rely on the kindness of friends."

Although many players are looking forward to getting back to Face-to-Face, nearly everyone expects to continue to play on-line as well.

A friendly club, Chelmsford now caters for every type of player with members ranging from complete beginners and improvers to those who have represented Bridge at a County and National level. Everyone is welcome.

To learn more or to learn Bridge visit <https://www.bridgewebs.com/chelmsford>