

MEMBERSHIP REPORT FOR THE 2023 HBA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The last 12 months have been a lot more stable than the previous year as we move further away from Covid. HBA remains with 20 affiliated clubs with the majority now in a stable or even growing position.

Individual clubs have made their own decisions as to whether to offer bridge face to face or online and the larger clubs have been able to offer a program that includes both options in order to appeal to and attract a broader membership. Overall across the clubs in Hertfordshire there are multiple bridge options on offer on most days of the week. The majority of bridge sessions are face to face and over the past 12 months this is the option which seems to have grown most, largely due to the more social aspects of that option enticing back players.

Over the first 8 months of 2023 the number of player sessions played at Herts clubs has increased by 6.7% over those same months of 2022. More significantly every month of 2023 so far has seen more bridge played than in the same month in 2022. We are still not back to the levels we were pre Covid but we are heading in the right direction – and of course to a large extent the bridge world has changed and a direct comparison to the past is no longer relevant.

At the time of writing this report HBA has 1,999 members (including 45 secondary members). Although this represents a reduction from the 2,097 twelve months ago that is a misrepresentation. Covid brought a significant change in clubs membership and it is only in the last twelve months that some clubs have been able to complete a full review of their membership. One club for example when they completed their review earlier in 2023 reduced their membership by over 140 members.

Overall it seems that most indicators are positive for the future and Hertfordshire does seem to be doing better than many other counties. Many clubs across Herts are offering new teaching programs from September/October and these should bring new players into our clubs in future.

HBA does seek to engage with its affiliated clubs and members as much as possible and I would like to thank the various club contacts and Membership Secretaries for their assistance and support throughout the past year. HBA does issue a short monthly communication to its members and I am pleased to say that over the past twelve months the proportion of members receiving that has risen from almost 93% to almost 95%.

Alan Woof

HBA Membership Secretary