

MEMBERSHIP REPORT FOR THE 2025 HBA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The last 12 months have been broadly positive for HBA as regards membership, and bridge playing in general.

HBA remains with 20 affiliated clubs and those clubs make their own decisions as to what programs to offer, including in terms of face to face or online sessions. Some of the larger clubs 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, which gives a good choice for HBA members.

There has been a change in the mix of face to face and online play over the past 12 months in Herts with there being a continuing move towards more face to face. 12 months ago something like 60% of club bridge was being played face to face and recently that figure is more like 65%.

Over the first 8 months of 2025 the number of player sessions played at Herts clubs has seen a small increase over those same months of 2024. That is on top of an 8.5% increase for the full 2024 year over 2023 and 6.8% for 2023 over 2022, so signs of good steady growth.

At the time of writing this report HBA has 2,127 members (including 42 secondary members). This is an increase of 82 since my 2024 AGM report so overall membership continues to grow.

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

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. The accuracy of the HBA member database continues to improve with the assistance of the various clubs. 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 95.5% to over 96%. Most of those who do not receive either don't have access to e mail or have unsubscribed as they have stopped playing bridge with their club membership due to lapse at the next club membership renewal.

Alan Woof

HBA Membership Secretary