

## SECRETARY'S REPORT SEPTEMBER 2019

Please accept my apologies for non-attendance due to a family commitment. If someone can take the minutes and send them to me I will arrange for them to be circulated and published.

I have heard nothing further from the Chief Executive regarding fixing dates of the Premier League. Norman may have an update following the County Chairmen's meeting Norman and Malcolm attended and were going to raise this matter at the meeting.

I will also report the up-to-date membership figures.

Colin Crouch has said he wishes to stand down from the Committee and as Mid-Kent Area Secretary although he is continuing to organise the league this year.

I have received an email from Professor Sam Punch about an event to fund the Keep Bridge Alive which I reproduce below. Should we advertise this on the website and/or sell tickets at our events?

Hi Sharon,

Good to see you last week. I'm sending this email to give you the heads up about the raffle, but tickets won't be posted to you until October. For example, I don't know if you might have to go through the bridge club committee to get permission in advance to sell such raffle tickets? The most effective would be if you could announce it at the start of the club night/event and then hopefully your oppos and others might be willing to buy them from you – face-to-face encouragement tends to be most successful!

**Background info:** I'm building up a research team to promote the benefits of bridge (well-being/social connection/brain fitness/skill development) with the key aim of getting more people of all ages playing.

So we're now starting to organise the Keep Bridge Alive (KBA) Pro-Am Event which will take place on Thursday 20 February with drinks reception from 6pm, then nice food, followed by 24 boards of bridge and mingling afterwards up until midnight. We've just booked the Stationers Hall which is a great historical venue in the City of London.

Kitty and Sally are on board and we're really hoping to make it a very special event with two aims: to fundraise for KBA projects and promote bridge in general.

All the profits from an online auction and raffle for the pros will go directly to pay the researchers who work with me (ie not my salary nor overheads or admin staff costs as the university covers all of those). What UK universities no longer fund themselves is the actual research as they now rely on external funding (hence fundraising within the bridge community aimed at enhancing longer-term sustainability of bridge).

The University of Stirling and the alumni network have thousands of followers on Facebook/Twitter/Instagram so this is going to be a fantastic opportunity to raise the profile of bridge in wider society. There will be lots of pre- and post-event publicity to start the difficult process of trying to shift the stereotypical images that the game has (two assumptions prevail – only for old people or a gambling game).

So far four international pros, Boye Brogeland (Norway), Sabine Auken (Germany), Roy Welland (USA) and Dennis Bilde (Denmark) have confirmed they will attend on Thurs 20 Feb and we hope that most top UK pros will be able to join them (so far Zia, David Bakhshi, Tom Townsend and Nicola Smith are signed up). As far as I know, this is the only charity bridge Pro-Am that is giving back to the game itself so we really hope that Bridge Clubs will be happy to help promote it via the raffle.

When I last spoke to you, you kindly said that you could help sell some raffle tickets to win the opportunity to play at the Pro-Am with an international player: David Burn (Bridge Journalist), Liz McGowan (World Champion), Neil Rosen (Ace of Clubs) & Stefan Skorchev (Bridge Cloud)

The raffle tickets will be £1 or £2 each (we're just deciding that now – let me know if you have a view!). They will be posted out to bridge clubs (mainly in and around London) to be sold early October through to early January, with the draw made publicly at the end of the Scottish Winter 4s on 19 January 2020 at the New Melville Bridge Club, Edinburgh.

It will be a registered raffle organised by the fundraising team at the University of Stirling. One possibility for me to collect payment and raffle stubs (and unsold tickets) from you, will be at the year end congress in London at end of December. The fundraising team will send out further details/options when posting the tickets to you.

We also hope that tickets could be sold by the raffle volunteers at bridge events or in league matches they attend during those 3 months.

Let me know if you or your bridge club needs any more info at this stage (I attach a leaflet with general KBA info).

Given that I'm based in Scotland, your help would be hugely appreciated. And if anyone would like more info about bidding for a pro, do please send on their email (with their permission) or ask them to contact me directly ([s.v.punch@stir.ac.uk](mailto:s.v.punch@stir.ac.uk) or [philanthropy@stir.ac.uk](mailto:philanthropy@stir.ac.uk)) and we can send out an invite.

Many thanks,  
Sam