



English Bridge Union
Bicester Rd
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HP19 8AZ

May 2019

Dear Mr Lewis

The EBU's membership campaign and how Kent can be involved

Anyone who plays bridge is aware of the aging demographic in the game. We think that the average age of an EBU member is 72 or more. The consequence for bridge clubs is that they can expect to lose around 4% of their members each year, if they are not bringing in newcomers to maintain their numbers.

The good news is that there is a considerable thirst for bridge in the general population, and we have found that wherever bridge and bridge classes are actively marketed there is a good take-up. Many clubs are doing this with enthusiasm which means that for the moment the overall number of people playing in EBU bridge sessions is holding up well.

There are however several implications:

- We believe that all bridge clubs need a strategy to attract new members, including both teaching and gentle, supervised bridge for novices. We appreciate that not all clubs have the resources for this but encourage clubs in an area to work together so that every club has a positive answer to the question "how can I learn bridge".
- Novice bridge players today are predominantly in their fifties or older. With some exceptions, they are less interested in getting top scores and more interested in the social aspect of bridge and enjoying their game. This is why attendance at congresses and other high level competitions has been falling.
- Bridge clubs that are able to accommodate players of any standard are best placed to flourish in this changing environment. In some cases this might mean introducing new sessions or having existing sessions become more accommodating to novices.

The EBU wants to help clubs to attract new members and has embarked on several initiatives as a result. In 2017 the EBU supported a pilot scheme in Yorkshire. A Regional Development Officer was appointed by the county association and bridge marketing costs were part-funded by the EBU. The scheme delivered good results and our figures show how Yorkshire increased its bridge activity.

The goal now is to encourage other county associations to run membership campaigns. This involves the county making an agreement with the EBU that enables clubs to receive advice and joint funding for bridge marketing. You can find more details on our dedicated web site here:

<https://ebumemberdevelop.org.uk/index.php/what-is-the-ebus-membership-developmentcampaign/>

I have been appointed as the EBU's Membership Development Officer and would like to encourage your county to take up this offer. Whether or not that is something you would consider, I would love to hear your thoughts on club membership development and if there are ways the EBU can support you.

Below for your information are some statistics on session activity in your clubs. **Please keep these figures confidential to your committee; they are not for public posting or circulation.**

EBU Session activity March 2019										
Kent										
Summary data for period 01/03/2019 to 31/03/2019. Generated on 23/04/2019										
Membership factor shows activity based on primary members. A high value is a very active membership, or many players who are not primary members. A low value suggests many inactive members.										
Historical data is from the same month one and two years ago.										
ClubID	Club name	Region	Club primary members	Player session count	Player sessions trend	Average tables	Tables trend	Average NGS	NGS trend	Membership factor
KEN	Kent	KEN		236		19.5		57.53		
00210563	ABC Bridge Club	KEN	62	168		8.3		45.64		2.71
00210022	Aces Bridge Club	KEN	130	446		12.3		50.31		3.43
00208318	Ashford (Kent) Bridge Club	KEN	52	176		5.5		51.71		3.38
00202131	Beckenham Bridge Club	KEN	66	206		6.3		50.36		3.12
00475286	Bekesbourne Pilgrims Bridge Club	KEN	38	172		10.8		50.98		4.53
00204659	Blackheath Bridge Club	KEN	134	236		4.8		49.52		1.76
00481422	Bridge @ Kippington	KEN	74	198		9.8		51.46		2.68
00425773	Broadstairs Bridge Club	KEN	111	330		6.8		46.43		2.97
00415750	Bromley North Bridge Club	KEN	42	286		17.8		51.71		6.81
00207054	Canterbury Bridge Club	KEN	23	146		7.3		54.66		6.35
00210732	Chislehurst Bridge Club	KEN	156	480		8.5		50.27		3.08
00209449	Dover Bridge Club	KEN	70	82		5.0		52.32		1.17
00209392	Farnborough (Kent) Bridge Club	KEN	77	370		9.3		55.42		4.81
00204223	Folkestone Duplicate Bridge Club	KEN	71	162		6.8		47.17		2.28
00210417	Gravesend Bridge Club	KEN	50	122		5.0		51.58		2.44
00202056	Hampton Duplicate Bridge Club	KEN	89	318		6.0		51.46		3.57
00210429	Hawkhurst Duplicate Bridge Club	KEN	33	128		8.0		53.41		3.88
00207691	Maidstone Bridge Club	KEN	143	358		6.8		48.88		2.50
00207634	Medway Towns Bridge Club	KEN	54	168		3.8		44.18		3.11
00204916	Orpington Bridge Club	KEN	41	112		4.0		46.59		2.73
00208765	Otford Bridge Club	KEN	34	110		5.5		48.62		3.24
00211014	Pembury Bridge Club	KEN	75	204		7.3		48.40		2.72
00205629	Swanley Bridge Club	KEN	55	294		8.0		51.82		5.35
00203234	Tenterden Duplicate Bridge Club	KEN	60	200		12.5		51.23		3.33
00201866	Thanet Bridge Club	KEN	69	354		5.5		47.92		5.13
00422238	Thursday Evening Bridge Club	KEN	79	74		9.3		0.00		0.94
00207891	Tonbridge Bridge Club	KEN	38	98		6.0		47.14		2.58
00204441	Tunbridge Wells Bridge Club	KEN	433	1658		9.0		50.56		3.83
00475452	Tyler Hill Bridge Club	KEN	21	140		8.8		52.76		6.67
00210065	Weald Of Kent Bridge Club	KEN	90	624		11.0		50.44		6.93

For each club, this shows:

- Total number of player sessions for March 2019. A "player session" is one person playing in an EBU session, so for example a session with 8 tables would be 32 player sessions.
- Average tables per session. This can be a guide to the health of the club. Once tables fall below 6 or thereabouts it can be difficult to sustain the club. The colour coding is a visual guide from red (low) to orange/yellow (fair) to green (healthy).
- Average NGS grade per session. This gives some idea of the overall standard of bridge at the club. Note that a lower than average NGS is not a bad thing; it means that the club is successfully accommodating a range of abilities. Sessions with a high NGS are more likely to struggle to attract new players.
- Historic figures showing the equivalent data for the same month one year ago and two years ago.

The reason to share these figures is to give a picture of how clubs are doing in your region. Please note that they do have limitations. They do not include unreported sessions, such as novice sessions.

They do not take account of clubs which have closed, perhaps boosting membership at nearby clubs. Finally, the Player Session Count may vary artificially from one month to another if a session day occurs 4 versus 5 times.

We are considering circulating these figures on a regular basis. Please let me know if this would be of interest.

Please do email or call me with your response to the EBU's membership campaign.

I will be at the EBU meeting for county chairs on 15th May and would also be glad to discuss it there.

With best wishes

Tim Anderson

Membership Development Officer

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