

AEO report for KCBA Committee Meeting 11th September 2022

SmartBridge

Following the last Committee meeting when I asked for help in finding a fourth Club to take part, Maidstone BC have stepped forward and taken that role.

The four Clubs involved in this trial are therefore:-

Ace Bridge Club, Deal

Farnborough BC/Bromley North BC as a joint venture

Maidstone BC

Thanet BC

I have spent a great deal of time since the beginning of July, working with the volunteers from these Clubs who are taking part in the SmartBridge Trial.

All four Clubs are committed to making this work and they have done all the preparatory work in getting volunteers to take part in the online lessons and the supervised play sessions. They have all marketed this trial extensively, using a variety of methods, including printing and putting up posters, handing out marketing leaflets, and using Social Media sites to get out the message in their local community with members from all the Clubs becoming involved.

The date was set for the course to start on 12th September and to run for 12 weeks with a break at half-term.

Unfortunately, despite the best efforts of all four Clubs we have had very little response from participants wanting to learn to play Bridge. In my experience, this is extremely unusual and I believe that it may be a combination of outside factors beyond our control such as the trial being marketed during school holidays, the current uncertainty in the population regarding the cost of living crisis and potential energy bill hikes and a general apathy for people willing to take on new ventures following Covid which many sports and leisure clubs have witnessed. Whatever the reasons, the response has been the same in all four local areas despite the massive amount of work that has been done in every Club to get the message out in their community. As an example, in Deal, this has been marketed on six different Social Media local sites reaching out to a minimum of 8,000 people and we have had just 3 enquiries from this source.

Giorgio Provenza has therefore postponed the trial which will now start on 9th January 2023 and will run for 12 weeks from that date. This should give all Clubs the time to find the 12-15 participants which EBED have said would be the optimum number needed for the trial.

These four Kent Clubs have all confirmed that they are still willing to take part in the trial in January 2023.

I am continuing to liaise regularly with all the volunteers and I shall report again on this at the next Committee meeting.

Sevenoaks Teacher Training Course

10th July I received the dates for the new TTC in Sevenoaks from Chris Lohan and emailed all Clubs on the same day asking for them to pass this information to their members having given them all advance notice of the course on 31st May.

15th July Norman Innes then followed this up with a letter to all Kent members

18th July Jeremy Willans had asked TWBC to send out my initial email to all of their 550 members and he advised me on this date that 3 of them had signed up

1st August I received confirmation from EBU that the course is already completely full with 12 participants registered including 2 who are taking the course as a direct result of the SmartBridge trial.

My thanks to Norman and Jeremy for your involvement which has helped us to achieve filling this course in record time - just three weeks from advertising it to the course being full.

Pat Welsh

AEO

9th September 2022