

Kent Contract Bridge Association
Committee Meeting 10th January 2026
Chairman's Report

In my last report I stated that my first challenge as Chairman was to find a new Youth Officer for Kent and then to make progress in developing youth bridge across the county. Some progress has been made. Ravi Athwal has spent considerable time in discussions with Anton Mauve to understand what has been done in the past and together with his wife, Lee, has developed a draft framework for developing youth bridge. Ravi is proposing that we hold a workshop of interested parties as soon as possible this quarter to turn the framework into a concrete plan. We will be discussing the framework and development of the plan at this Committee meeting. In addition, I believe it is very important that we engage with English Bridge Education and Development (EBED) to draw on their considerable expertise and resources. To this end I have spoken to Richard Croot, the EBED CEO, to explain our approach and seek their assistance. To begin with I am hoping to have an EBED representative attend our proposed workshop. I am very grateful to Ravi and Lee for the effort they have put in to get us this far.

In November I attended the EBU AGM, which was held at York Bridge Club. I decided to attend in person rather than through Zoom, because this was my first opportunity to meet the EBU Board and other key EBU staff. It was also my opportunity to meet other County representatives who chose to be there in person, although in practice not many turned up. This is not the place to go into the meeting in detail: the minutes will be published on the EBU website in due course. However, it did enable me to meet Richard Croot, as mentioned above, and the Treasurer, Diana Nettleton. I raised with Diana, the issue of the eligibility of some counties, of which Kent is one, and larger clubs for Corporation Tax. I would like central guidance from the EBU on how best to manage our tax affairs, rather than have Kent and other counties and clubs trying to solve a similar problem individually. Diana and I will be having further discussions on this and other subjects in the coming months.

Turning to competitions, the two county events held this past quarter were the Dyer Smith Mixed Pairs and the joint Kent/Sussex Congress. The numbers for the Dyer Smith were quite low, only 6½ tables. The declining numbers and hence maintaining the viability of these smaller county events represent a considerable challenge for the Committee. On the plus side, the numbers for the Congress, 18 tables for the teams and 24 for the pairs, were respectable. This was a successful and enjoyable Congress but nonetheless maintaining and ideally improving numbers in future years will continue to require considerable effort. The list of winners is too long to include here – they are on the KCBA website – but I would like to offer my congratulations to them all.

The online competitions run by Kent, the NGS9 & Below and the Improver Pairs, continue to be very successful. My thanks particularly to Sharon Baynes and Paul Gibbons for directing these as well as the other Committee members who occasionally step in. The new Jack-High

Pairs competition got off to a promising start in November. I hope this will become a regular fixture in the calendar.

We have been looking at how best to display the trophies awarded to the winners of Kent competitions. Currently, a number are displayed behind the bar at Tunbridge Wells, some are kept at the homes of the winners, and the remainder are locked in cupboards that we rent from TWCBC. There are over 20 trophies, although some are for competitions that are no longer held. We have agreed with TWCBC that we can have our own display cabinet matching the two that contain the club trophies. Approval for the expenditure will be sought at this Committee meeting. In addition, we will be discussing whether to continue the policy of letting winners keep the trophies at home. This has been brought to a head by the loss of the Mitchell Salver which we have now replaced. I would particularly like to thank Brian Forty for the considerable effort he has put into organising both the new trophy cabinet and the replacement and engraving of the Mitchell Salver. I would also like to thank Gerald Soper for tracking down the complete list of past winners of the Mitchell Salver to enable the engraving.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to wish you all a very happy and prosperous 2026, which I presume for us bridge players should include a steadily rising NGS ranking.

Jon Wittmann

3rd January 2026