

Kent Contract Bridge Association
Committee Meeting 3rd October 2026
Chairman's Report

The KCBA AGM was held as usual during the Phillimore Cup on 19th July. For the most part this went smoothly but I would just like to pick a few points on which I will comment further. Martin Davies, our independent financial examiner, has stepped down after providing four years of support for which we are very grateful. This role being empty presents us with a problem. It is important that we find a replacement for Martin as soon as possible. If anyone knows an appropriate person who might be prepared to take this on, please let me or Georgina know. Secondly the issue of the Dyer Smith being played on BBO and the possibility of cheating was raised again. Some members at the AGM and others since have told me they would not play in it while it was held on this platform. I have not seen any evidence to support this proposition but clearly it is a strongly held view. We switched from RealBridge to BBO because this was the preferred platform for a number of the clubs. We will keep the platform under review, although my personal preference is to get back to playing the Dyer Smith and other smaller competitions face-to-face if only we could get sufficient numbers.

I began my last report by focusing on youth bridge in Kent concluding that we would not put significant further effort into this area at the county level until we saw the results of further development by EBED. This remains the case. Our lack of a youth officer to maintain a closer relationship with EBED exacerbates this situation. Pat Welsh has recently referred me to a teacher in East Kent who may be interested in this role. I will be discussing the role with him shortly and will update the Committee at the meeting on whether this is likely to progress.

We decided at the last Committee meeting to set up a working group of Sharon, Pat, Charles and me to review our relationship with the clubs with the objective of making it much stronger to the benefit of the county and the clubs. It was not possible to meet in July and August because of absences and other commitments. We held our first meeting on 15th September. There was a useful discussion out of which a number of themes emerged which we will explore further individually and report back to the group at our next meeting in October. There will be a proper update on our progress at the next Committee meeting.

Stephen and I have put together a proposal for a new Kent blue-pointed pairs event in conjunction with Farnborough, Maidstone and Canterbury Bridge Clubs. This is covered in detail under Agenda Item 6.

At our last meeting we discussed a request from Helen Erichsen to submit a resolution to the AGM on the subject of the EBU policy on the eligibility of transgender players for women's and mixed teams events. The request was declined because the deadline for submissions had already passed and a new EBU policy was expected imminently. This policy has yet to emerge and Helen is now proposing to call an Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM) about this issue. This is covered under Agenda Item 9.

Stephen will report in more detail on the competitions under Agenda Item 5 but from my perspective I would like to thank Sharon and Charles respectively for continuing to run NGS9 High and Improvers Pairs so successfully during the summer. With only a week to go entries for the Dyer Smith are still disappointingly low. I hope numbers pick up in the coming week. The Congress is still four weeks away and so it is rather early to be talking about numbers. Nonetheless at this point the Swiss Pairs is looking promising but the Swiss Teams could do with more support.

It always feels rather invidious to pick out just some players, pairs or teams to congratulate when there are many examples of success from Kent. However, I am still going to pick out three for special mention:

Helen Erichsen for European Gold

Jeremy Willans and Jill Skinner for the EBU Scarborough Teams

John Amor and John Hemington for the Phillimore Cup

My congratulations to them all and everyone else who has enjoyed success over the past three months.

Jonathan Wittmann

KCBA Chairman

25th September 2026