

# Northern Ireland Bridge Union

## President's End-of-Year Report – 2025

**Harold Curran, President**

### 1. Introduction

As 2025 draws to a close, I am pleased to present this year-end report as President of the Northern Ireland Bridge Union (NIBU). It has been a year of steady progress, active competition, and critical reflection on our future direction. Our bridge community continues to demonstrate resilience, warmth, and dedication — qualities that have defined the game across generations.

### 2. Growth & Governance

Throughout 2025, the NIBU Council has worked tirelessly to support the development of bridge at all levels. I want to particularly thank Diane Greenwood, our Chair, whose energy, diplomacy, and deep knowledge have been indispensable. My sincere appreciation also goes to the full NIBU Council and our volunteers for their tireless service and guidance over the past year.

Their combined efforts have strengthened our structures, kept our events running smoothly, and ensured that the Union remains both transparent and accountable.

### 3. Club Participation: The Heart of Bridge

Let me be clear: without our clubs, there is no Union.

Our member clubs are the living, breathing heart of the NIBU. They promote the game, nurture new players, uphold its ethics, and maintain the social spirit that makes bridge so unique.

In 2025, club-level participation has held strong. Some clubs have even seen modest growth, a testament to the hard work of their committees and the enthusiasm of their members. Online and in-person events have co-existed well, showing our community's adaptability and the enduring appeal of face-to-face bridge.

We deeply value and thank each and every club and their members for their dedication to promoting bridge. You are the foundation on which everything else rests.

### 4. Competitions & Representation

2025 saw continued participation in domestic and international events. Our Northern Ireland teams represented us with pride and professionalism in major tournaments, and I was again privileged to act as NPC during key fixtures.

Local events and congresses, such as the Donegal and Ballybofey Congresses, maintained their reputation for warm hospitality and tough competition. It has been heartening to witness newer players stepping into the competitive sphere, alongside our experienced stalwarts.

## 5. Looking Ahead: A Crossroads for Bridge in Ireland

Bridge in Ireland is now at a pivotal crossroads.

The long-standing structure—two unions, north and south—has served us for decades. But times change, and 2025 has brought renewed discussion on whether we move forward with a full merger with the Contract Bridge Association of Ireland (CBAI) or retain our current independent status.

This is not a decision to be taken lightly. Both options carry implications for identity, funding, governance, and the future development of the game. We must consider what serves our members best and what will help the game thrive in the decades ahead.

As President, I remain open to dialogue, collaboration, and respectful debate. What matters most is unity of purpose and a shared commitment to ensuring that bridge continues to be a game for all ages, across all regions.

## 6. Conclusion: A Message of Gratitude and Optimism

To everyone who made 2025 a successful year: thank you.

- To Diane Greenwood and the entire Council — your leadership, insight, and teamwork continue to be the backbone of our Union.
- To our clubs and their members — your loyalty and passion keep the game alive.
- To our tournament organisers, volunteers, and players — you are the face of bridge in Northern Ireland and beyond.

As we enter 2026, let's carry forward the spirit of cooperation, innovation, and open-mindedness. The future of bridge is in our hands, and with a renewed sense of purpose, I believe we can make the right decisions together.

Here's to a year of strong partnerships — both at the table and within our Union.