

THE NOTTINGHAM BRIDGE CLUB

Newsletter - March 2021

Annual General Meeting

AGENDA

1. Apologies for absence
2. Presentation of Trophies
3. Minutes of the AGM of 2020
4. Matters Arising
not elsewhere on the agenda
5. Nominations for
Officers and Committee
6. Chairman's Report
7. Treasurer's Report &
Receive Annual Accounts
8. Appointment of
Independent Account Examiner
9. Membership Secretary's Report
10. Motion
To discontinue prize money
when face-to-face bridge resumes.
11. Date of Next Meeting

This year's Annual General Meeting will be held on Sunday 21st March, starting at 2pm. In common with many organisations, we are having to go online using Zoom. The link is:

<https://zoom.us/j/99129701585?pwd=WUxiMTJlbnFNdkNRc0N0TnZOYjU3QT09>

or log into Zoom and use Meeting ID: 991 2970 1585 and Passcode: AGM

You can find documentation on the Club web site. Go to the tab on the left called AGM Information. There you will find minutes of last year's AGM, the Annual Report (the review of the year has been extracted from this and is on the next page of this Newsletter), and the annual accounts. If you have questions on the accounts, please email them to NottinghamBridgeClub@gmail.com in advance of the meeting so that we can ensure a detailed answer.

At last year's AGM, the subject of prize money was raised. After consideration, the trustees decided to put the matter to the membership and the agenda includes the option for a motion. Whilst some people may enjoy receiving the prize, the fact that packets often reside unclaimed for many weeks suggests that it is not a consideration to many. It also requires considerable effort in checking the winners and filling the packets. Moreover, the frisson of collecting your prize money may lessen if the club moves to a cashless system with prize money being credited to players' accounts. The subject of prize money can be discussed at the meeting.

Resolutions to be voted on, and nominations for Officers and Committee, need to be emailed (with details of seconder) to Chairman@NottinghamBridge.Club no later than 7th March. If there are new resolutions or more nominations than places, details will be emailed to members in advance of the meeting. Apologies may also be emailed to that address. Note that the Club constitution does not provide for votes by proxy.

BROADHEAD BOWL

The Broadhead Bowl is a members only competition traditionally run after the Annual General Meeting.

This year is no exception.

It will be an 18 board tournament held on BBO.

Sunday 21st March

Starting at 3pm

A Look Back at 2020

Pandemic

2020 came to be defined by the pandemic, which resulted in the Club premises being closed the day after the Annual General Meeting.

A rapid transfer to online bridge was made, with considerable support being extended to members to make the transition. Many members have commented on the benefits this has brought during the various lockdowns, as it has enabled them to maintain social contact with other members. Initiatives such as the closed facebook group and a monthly Newsletter were also introduced to reinforce the sense of a Club community.

As the first club in the county to enter into online bridge, support was also given to other local clubs as they followed.

Online Play

By the end of the year, the Club was holding six online tournaments each week, and there were more tables in play at the end of 2020 than there had been a year before. Over 140 members were playing online with us. This has been made possible by the contributions of over a dozen members who volunteered to run the tournaments, aided by our rota organiser and scorer.

The trustees continued the policy of giving free introductory membership to beginners. This resulted in a Wednesday evening tournament particularly aimed at less experienced players. An enthusiastic team are to be congratulated on their work in introducing people to online bridge and building up a tournament which regularly hosts ten tables.

When it was clear that the pandemic was going to last for some months, the trustees decided to hold the Club competitions online where possible. The Poyser Cup, Max Radford Bowl, Eric Nunn Trophy and Cullen Cup were all held and, after a gap of several decades, the Jordan Cup for an individual competition was reintroduced.

In the early days of the pandemic, when only two tournaments a week were being played, a teams of four competition was held, with five teams taking part. Some of these members are now playing in the teams of four competition run by the County. In addition, a Club team has participated with considerable success in an online international Danish teams of four competition.

Teaching

Andrew Scott decided that the online world did not provide a good match with his style of teaching beginners, so his course was put on hold. However, his enthusiasm for teaching could not be contained and Andrew has been coaching people individually, in pairs and small groups in various aspects of the game.

Graham Brindley made a very successful move to take his lessons for improvers online. Indeed, he now gets more people online than would fit into a room at the Club – and includes people who would normally fall outside our usual catchment area.

Graham and Ian Dovey took their teaching partnership, developed with the South Notts initiative, online to teach a dozen local beginners. Initially seen as something of an experiment, the combination of BBO and Zoom has been very successful and has resulted in an enthusiastic set of students who have made very good progress.

Ian has also been providing feedback on play at the Wednesday evening tournaments, to around thirty people who have requested it.

Financial Position

The pandemic has tested the financial robustness of the club and has found it to be firm, with the flat rents playing their part in covering the day-to-day costs of the premises, even when they are not in use. As a consequence, the trustees decided not to pursue grants that became available to organisations during the pandemic.

The trustees took advantage of the premises not being in use to carry out a programme of refurbishment, overseen by Dave Treharne, Andrew Scott and Pauline Payne. The main components in 2020 were the replacement of the lighting in the Club with more efficient and environmentally friendly fittings, improvements at the entrance to the flats, and a brand-new kitchen. Other

improvements and decoration are planned.

At the end of the year, the Club's cash holding had risen by £740. This was aided by late receipt of rent from 2019, although this was offset by the fees involved in licensing the flats under the Nottingham City Council scheme. The licences last for five years.

The annual accounts are produced on an accruals basis and give a better indication of the financial position, as they allow for the phasing of income and expenditure, and also the depreciation of past and present (in 2020 the new kitchen) capital expenditure. The accounts show a surplus for the year of £1,265.

The Future

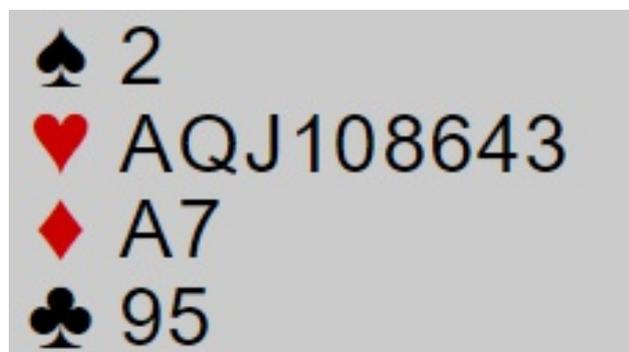
Membership continued to rise in 2020 from 220 to 270, as beginners moved from classes to free initial membership of the Club and others were attracted by our online offering. However, an appreciable proportion of existing members opted not to play online. The transition to online bridge presented a mix of challenges and opportunities. It can be expected that the return to face-to-face bridge will also not be straightforward.

Throughout the pandemic, the trustees have kept a watchful eye on when we may be able to return to face-to-face bridge, and what form that may take. There have already been a few false dawns, but the trustees continue to monitor the situation and are committed to returning to face-to-face bridge as soon as it can be delivered in a safe way, consistent with government requirements.

Each year the Club makes a formal report to the Charity Commission. This is the section for Achievements and Performance in 2020, and is to be taken as read as part of the Chairman's report at this year's AGM.

What's the rush? Trust your partner

This hand popped up at a recent club tournament. West was dealer, and South was looking at a hand with an eight-card heart suit.



♠	2
♥	AQJ108643
♦	A7
♣	95

'Pass' from West and you are pleased to hear partner open the bidding with 1♠ and RHO 'Passes'.

Eight (of 16) players bid [stop] 4♥ - why?

Partner has opened, and is an unlimited hand. Isn't it worth finding out what she has? Those who temporised with 2♥, 'heard' partner rebid 3♣.

And now more wheels fell off a few other trolleys, because a number of people rebid [stop] 4♥. But 3♣ is NOT simply "I have 5+ spades and 4+ clubs" – it is also showing 17+ (or a very good 16) points. So South can now either find out if (as expected) partner has the 2 missing Aces – or jump straight to 6♥. Sorry to say, there were four more disasters when the North hand converted to 6NT! (As expected, North had a void in hearts).

There are two lessons here –

1. You pick up a great looking 'playing hand' and partner opens – there is no need to set the contract before you find out what partner has.

2. If partner wishes to play in a high-level contract and you have a singleton/void in her suit – trust your partner. If she has made a mistake then your "correction" is simply digging a deeper hole.

Ian Dovey

Derek West Trophy

Congratulations to the winner of the Monday Afternoon Trophy. The Derek West Trophy was inaugurated in 2018 when the Derek West Bridge Club began to be absorbed by The Nottingham Bridge Club. The Derek West Trophy is awarded to the player amassing the highest number of (then non-EBU) masterpoints awarded during the year. No restrictions on partnerships or number of games played. In 2020 it was won by Colin Horsburgh. Well done! 2019 saw Bibi Sohawon, and 2018 JeanMcKee as winners.

The Derek West club was not EBU-affiliated and was a great place for those who had just had their teaching courses, and other beginners, to experience a 'proper' bridge drive. Using bidding boxes, having a Director, opponents who might play different variations of systems,

competitive bidding and the speed of play, all could be experienced in a relaxed atmosphere. It gave newer players a positive experience. There have been plenty of players who have graduated to other club nights, and have formed (online) teams. So the Monday afternoon drives have been a success. There was a short (15 minute) optional teaching session before the drive, and advice was available during play.

The Monday afternoon drive also featured a handicap competition (Nov/Dec) and an individual event (May). The drive has been online since June 2020 and now comes with EBU masterpoints. We average 5 to 6 tables and there have been over 50 different players involved.

Phil Gross

Ask Andrew

Andrew Scott is continuing his Zoom sessions on Monday evenings: see the home page of the Club website for the Zoom link. The starting point for the session is hands of interest from the Friday evening tournament, but he is happy to give his opinion on any question you may have. You don't have to have played on the Friday to get the benefit!

In addition, Andrew is offering to have private sessions for a pair who play together and want to improve their

performance. Using past hands played by the pair, it gives an opportunity to discuss their system and card play. If you're wondering "what one thing could we do that would make a difference to our performance?" then this could be a time to get an answer. Contact Andrew via Andrew.Scott42@hotmail.co.uk to book your session.

Pairs who have already taken the opportunity have valued the input.

Overcalling - Back to Basics!

I have been watching many of you bid (and play) on BBO and, having the ability to access your history, I have spotted a common theme of poor decisions in overcalling. It seems that having acquired some experience of overcalling, many players then tend to want to bend the sound technique they learned as beginners.

Namely deciding to overcall with 4 card suits, poor use of the takeout double, and not overcalling 1NT correctly.

So let's revisit the basic guide lines.

Overcalling with a SUIT

Overcalls are based on a FIVE card suit or longer and can be as few as 8pts at the ONE level and 11pts at the TWO. The fewer points you have in your hand the more the points need to be within your bid suit or suits you intend to bid.

For example, if the opponents open 1C then, holding these hands,

♠43	♠K65
♥AKJ54	♥Q9843
♦10982	♦QJ7
♣72	♣Q5
1♥ is fine	PASS

The first hand only has 8pts, but a nice suit and good if partner ends up on lead and the opponents win the auction. The second hand has 10pts, but slow tricks and a poor suit, just wait and see if partner can bid.

The TAKEOUT DOUBLE

For a takeout double, you should have tolerance for the unbid suits (with 4 cards in at least two of the suits). be short in the opponents' bid suit, and the values to make an opening bid.

The shape will usually be 4432, where the 2 is in the opponents' suit. Only double when you hold 3 if you have both the majors, but it can get awkward if partner bids your two card suit. If you have a 5332 hand then just bid your suit; don't double.

For example, if the opponents open 1♥ then, holding these hands,

♠AJ95	♠AJ9	♠AJ9
♥98	♥982	♥98
♦A654	♦A1054	♦AJ654
♣A76	♣A96	♣KJ8
X for takeout	PASS	Bid 2♦

The first hand ideal for a take out double: short in opponents' suit and good tolerance for the other suits. With the second hand, Pass. Why double? Your partner is likely to hit one of your 3 cards suits. Just wait to see if he bids. With the third hand, just bid your five card suit. The times I see players doubling with this shaped hand ... horrible.

The 1NT Overcall

For a 1NT overcall, you need 15-17pts and a stop in the opponents' suit, preferably with a balanced hand. Straightforward! If you have this type of hand, then bid 1NT even if you have a 5 card major. It's much more descriptive than bidding your major as an overcall.

For example, if the opponents open 1♥ then, holding these hands,

♠KQ98	♠KQ987
♥A97	♥A53
♦KJ8	♦KJ8
♣K65	♣K9
Bid 1NT	Bid 1NT

The first hand is easy ... bid 1NT. But the times I see players double - to try to find a fit with their four card spade suit, I presume? If partner doesn't bid spades, then what? 2NT? Which now shows a massive balanced hand of 18-20pts since you didn't bid 1NT in the first place. Don't forget partner can always use Stayman after your 1NT. With the second hand bid 1NT. I know the temptation is to bid 1♠, but that could be made on a much weaker hand. Give your partner as much information as you can about your strength and shape. All 1♠ would do is say 8pts+ and a five card suit!

Andrew Scott

JANUARY MASTERPOINT PROMOTIONS

Local Master	Karel Dvorak - Sandra Kirk Lesley Warren - Mick Wicks
Club Master	Warren Allison - Marian Donaldson David Gregson - Lois Wilson
Area Master	Paula Foulds - Sue Hollins Colin Horsburgh - Morag Hunter Gerry McCormack - Stefka Samus
District Master	Frances Linehan - Bibi Sohawon
Advanced Master	David Tillcock
3 Star Master	Geoff Caldwell