

## Report of the Promotion, Education and Social Team for AGM Sept 2023

Since our last AGM we have worked on three ideas for promoting bridge within Oxfordshire's clubs:

- 1) Encouraging existing players to visit other clubs, particularly those which may be struggling for viable numbers post-covid;
- 2) Offering assistance to clubs to run events aimed at social bridge players;
- 3) Planning a cafe bridge event in Henley on September 20 2023.

1) After considerable discussion the first of these led to the setting up of the OTT (Oxfordshire Top Traveller) and OOPS (Oxfordshire Online Playing Star) schemes to encourage members to play at clubs other than their own. To appear on our OTT Honours Board we offer £10 to anyone who plays in four duplicates at clubs other than their own, three of which need to be at a list of smaller clubs. For OOPS it is six online duplicates rather than four and without the small clubs limitation. So far no-one's name has appeared on the Boards, but perhaps it is early days. If you play at a club which is struggling for numbers, you should see the possible benefit to both clubs of going to other clubs and inviting people to come back and have a go at yours. This is a short-term measure to help clubs recover after covid.

2) Our plan for social events at different clubs around the county has not taken off and we feel there is a need for more action on the part of the clubs. We can only supply support, encouragement and financial strength. We believe we have as many teachers, if not more, in Oxfordshire as any other county of comparable size and hence as many people learning bridge. Through our teachers we should be able to attract a worthwhile number of people learning the game to come to a social bridge event run at your club. But it is up to your club to provide the venue and the welcoming members to make such an event a success. The OBA is prepared to underwrite any costs. Encouraging beginners to move on through the learning phase into bridge club membership is the longer-term way forward to recovering numbers.

3) At the time of writing we have 53 pairs signed up for Henley's cafe bridge. This can be compared with a very quick sign-up to 70 pairs when we planned to run a similar event in 2020 and reflects the decrease in numbers of people ready willing and able to participate in face to face bridge. Hopefully by the time of the AGM we will be able to report on a fun social bridge day in Henley on the 20th. We are in discussion with members of Abingdon Bridge Club about the possibility of running a similar event in Abingdon next spring.

Two future projects to mention:

- 1) A teachers' get-together which we hope to hold after they have (or maybe have not) attended a national teachers' event on RealBridge this October;
- 2) A national bridge promotion day that the EBU is thinking about for about September 2024.