

# **Relationships with Unaffiliated Clubs : Discussion document**

## **from the OBA Duplicate Bridge Promotion and Youth Team**

Presented to the March 2014 Management Committee meeting

### **1. Notes from Mike Fletcher**

#### **Background:**

*Extract from Robert Procter's original Development Plan for Duplicate Bridge Promotion and Youth:*

To promote and run events increasing awareness of bridge in the community, particularly the awareness of duplicate bridge amongst existing bridge players

To provide assistance to groups who wish to set up duplicate bridge clubs

To promote and run events (in conjunction with the Social and Education Teams) that help beginners to make the transition to comfortable participation in club duplicates

*Extract from my report to the 2013 AGM:*

Duplicate Bridge Promotion

The objective is for all bridge players in the OBA area to be aware of duplicate bridge, and to be given the opportunity to learn how they could incorporate duplicate bridge into their own bridge groups.

- To provide documentation to support the move to duplicate bridge
- To be given a contact point for advice and help
- The OBA to provide members for on-site support
- The OBA/EBU to provide start-up interest free loans for wallets and cards
- In conjunction with the Social Team the OBA to run events for Novices & Students, and Next Steppers
- Affiliated clubs to be given the responsibility to "foster" groups new to duplicate.

#### **CURRENT INITIATIVE**

I think we need to recognise that Robert's email re unaffiliated clubs is an addition to the objectives set out above which are essentially devoted to generating awareness, and assisting groups convert to duplicate bridge within the OBA umbrella. However this new initiative is providing support to unaffiliated groups without necessarily expecting affiliation.

A prerequisite is to obtain contact details for all groups (and individuals) that are potential duplicate bridge players, but are not members of affiliated clubs.

So how do we go about getting this?

- Advertising. I cannot see any sensible way of how we might advertise to get this information.
- Personal contact. Probably the best option.
- Sports clubs, village hall committees etc. There may be some scope here, but it would probably take a lot of legwork.

Robert's email does make some assumptions as to how we might use any such information, but does not invalidate the objective.

*"It seems that several counties have done much more than us to build bridges with those clubs. Apart from running some joint events a fairly common theme was that they put full details of the bridge sessions and contact details for the unaffiliated clubs on their websites."*

And

*“I think it is important that the unaffiliated clubs concerned are "sold" the benefits of closer links with us in the right way, as there may be past ill-feeling to get over ”.*

I am not sure what the benefit will be to unaffiliated clubs. My guess is that they are unaffiliated because they do not want the ‘high pressure’ environment they have either experienced, or assume to be prevalent in affiliated clubs. And that they are comfortable in their own groups with no aspirations for improvement or expansion.

Nonetheless it would do no harm to get in touch with them and offer joint events such as the Blewbury Social Event (Feb 19<sup>th</sup>).

At Frilford we do have a pair from Abingdon Alternative and I will speak to them about their view of the relationship between their club and local affiliated club(s).

My suggested initial plan would be to draw up an email requesting the information using as a template the sort of info we hold in the prospectus for affiliated clubs. Sandra could forward this to all the club reps. And then we wait for the replies to come flooding in.

### **Other things to consider**

- Sell the benefits of affiliation – what are they?
- Charity Bridge Drives – at least provide a link to other sites with bridge drive details.
- Monitor the success of the Blewbury Social Event
- U3A sessions
- Buddying – affiliated clubs “buddying” with non-affiliated clubs
- Space on the website for those interested in starting. (Education ‘next step’ details not yet set up).

## **2. Note from Mike Webley regarding the position of unaffiliated clubs in Oxfordshire and how we can identify and then liaise with them**

Further to the discussion document prepared by Mike Fletcher, I have had some preliminary discussion with two of the local clubs who are unaffiliated.

Haddenham Bridge Club now has 60 members. I had a telephone conversation with the Chairman who initially did not seem at all keen on the idea of having any liaison with The OBA and did not see any point in appearing on The OBA web site.

She has subsequently discussed this with members of the Club and has let me know that they are going to discuss the position at their AGM in April. I got the impression that there will be a move to have their Club listed on The OBA web site, although they consider themselves to be a closed Club and do not welcome visitors. She also mentioned to me that there is another largish group in The Haddenham U3A run on similar lines.

I also had discussions with the lady who runs the Long Crendon Bridge Club. The discussion was similar although she did feel there might be some benefit in having their presence on the web site in case membership numbers dropped in the future, although she thought that unlikely.

I am obviously aware of these clubs as they are close to where I live and people who play in either Thame or Aylesbury also play in the Haddenham and Long Crendon Clubs.

I know that Mike Fletcher is aware of some clubs in his neck of the woods.

There are also some bridge clubs attached to local Golf Clubs, although these are just over the border in Buckinghamshire.

I think the best way to identify other Groups and Clubs which are unaffiliated would be to write to the Secretaries of all our affiliated Clubs and ask them if they could identify for us unaffiliated Clubs and Groups in their area.

If they could then feed this information back to the Secretary, it could all be held centrally and they could then be approached to discuss what relationship they wish to have with the OBA in the future.