

PROPOSED OXFORDSHIRE FESTIVAL OF BRIDGE

We (Robert Procter, Barbara Jordan and Annabel Wade) have had a preliminary meeting. Nothing is cast in stone and there are many aspects that we are still to decide upon - however our initial thoughts run along the following lines:

Venue: St Hugh's College in St Margaret's Road (Maplethorpe Building for the bridge and opening reception, Dining Hall for the dinner) (provisionally booked)

Period of event: From early afternoon on Monday 4 September 2017 to late evening on Thursday 7 September 2017.

Activities: Day 1 - an introductory early afternoon tea reception including a "get to know each other" non-bridge activity followed by the first formal session of bridge to finish about 7 o'clock. Day 2 - one or more seminar type activities followed by late afternoon bridge session again finishing about 7 o'clock.

Day 3 - cafe bridge in Oxford including two course lunch valued at £15 followed after a few hours break by an evening bridge session.

Day 4 - one or more seminar type activities followed by late afternoon bridge session again finishing about 7 o'clock. Gala dinner at St Hugh's at 8 o'clock.

Bridge sessions: The formal bridge activities would preferably be duplicate pairs - but could include a teams session and/or a Swiss movement - and if there was demand for some rubber bridge tables we could accommodate that. (Not discussed at our meeting but it occurs to me that we could encourage our members to make themselves available for teach-ins or "Play rubber bridge with an expert" at other times of day). Note, that we estimate capacity in the main hall to be 28 tables but there is an adjoining wide corridor and a couple of seminar rooms that could also be used within the agreed price.

Seminar teachers: We have talked of three possible names - Andrew Robson, Abbey Smith and Simon Stocken.

Target market: We are aiming the whole event at "social" players including the type of person who goes to holiday bridge events. We do not intend to award local points or offer substantial prizes, but do plan a wide range of smaller fun prizes, not only for winning the bridge duplicates. We are not aiming either for beginners or "competitive" players although anyone who is happy to fit in with the social objectives of the event is welcome.

Price: We propose charging £150 per person to cover all the above activities. People will be encouraged to book for the whole event and we will only take bookings for the whole event at first. We may then open a separate price list for individual activities if we still have free capacity.

Accommodation: For people coming from a distance to play and needing accommodation we propose to supply a list of options available in the area, leaving them to make their own arrangements.

Objectives: To give participants a fun time and show that competitive bridge need not be intimidating;

to improve the image of the county in the eyes of social players;

to provide an opportunity for bridge learning;

to market the county and particularly our clubs;

to make a surplus which can be added to the funds available within the county for promoting the game.

Effort: There will undoubtedly be a lot to organise and we will need a bigger team than just the three of us managing the event together with many helpers. The more we can do ourselves with voluntary labour the greater the surplus that we might be able to achieve for the benefit of expanding the game in Oxfordshire. We hope our members will come forward to offer their services.

Delegation: We need to identify people who will help with the following tasks (and this list may well get longer as we think more about the details):

Additional members of a "Festival Management Team".

Dealing with enquiries about the event in advance of the event - Annabel has volunteered to take this on.

Handling entries and the receipt of entry fees.

Running the cafe bridge day - perhaps a club that has already run such an event might take on full responsibility for this.

Ensuring we have all the equipment we need - again a club might be willing to take responsibility for organising this (and our budget below is based on the assumption that we won't have to pay for table hire, boards, bidding boxes, bridge mates etc)

Tournament directors for the events - they will need to direct with a light touch - we are aiming at people who may not be used to "the heavy hand of the law"! One possibility is that we could invite neighbouring counties to organise one day's bridge each - Worcestershire have already indicated that they might be willing to do this.

People to help at the event - with organising the bridge, moving boards, advising visitors about things like where they can eat in Oxford, standing in as bridge players to make the numbers right etc.

Seminar teachers and experts - as indicated earlier.

Liaison with the venue.

Publicity: By email to all Oxfordshire members.

On the county website and on those of our clubs.

Through the chairs of the Midlands counties who work on the Midlands Counties Working Group.

Through English Bridge.

On the EBU website.

At EBU's "Really Easy" weekends.

On a commission basis through various holiday bridge companies.

Using Barbara Jordan's database of people who have attended Henley Cafe Bridge.

Advertising content: Must answer the questions "Who?" "What?" "Where?" "When?". As well as giving links to local accommodation we think we should include links to what there is to do in Oxford (college visits, museums, punting, bus tours, walking tours, The Oxford Story, Blenheim etc) to encourage people to extend their stay to make it a week or more's "Holiday in Oxford".

Perhaps they just want to be able to say "I went to OX - BRIDGE"!

Budget: The following costs are likely to be incurred whatever the size of the field:

The hall for four days - £3240

Tournament direction - four sessions - say £600

Seminar teachers - say £1000

Advertising - say £500

Other costs that relate to each participant:

Reception tea - say £8

Cafe bridge lunch - say £15

Tea, coffee and water available throughout - say £12

Gala dinner - £35

Total these items - £70 pp.

Allow £1000 for prizes and £2000 for other contingencies.

This gives total costs and income:

For 80 participants: Income £150 X 80 = £12000 Expenditure £13940. Loss £1940.

For 100 participants: Income £150 X 100 = £15000 Expenditure £15340. Loss £340.

For 120 participants: Income £150 X 120 = £18000 Expenditure £16740. Surplus £1260.

Budget comment: Clearly the more participants we have and the more that is done by volunteers the greater the chance of making a surplus. Certainly there are events such as an Andrew Robson seminar where we might be able to pack in a few more people to enhance the income and careful management may avoid the need for expenditure out of the contingency fund.

Commitment: With the support of the MC and the clubs we believe it is possible to ensure a surplus and we invite the MC to commit to going ahead along the lines described. Subject to the level of support outlined above being forthcoming, RP is willing to underwrite any loss up to the sum of £1940.

8 November 2016