

## Chair's report 2023

This year has flown by. Many of our clubs are back face-to-face and bridge is being played throughout the County. However, a couple of clubs have failed and player numbers are generally down. It would be good to see better coordination of sessions offered throughout the area and I hope we can make some progress with this.

Sadly, this year, we lost long-time active county members Michael Robinson, David Bygott and Esme Alden. As players and as people who gave a lot of time to county affairs, they will be missed.

It is good to see the actions of the Promotions Group and I encourage everyone to follow their initiative and join in the spirit of travelling around the County's clubs in the OOPs and OTT challenges. The recent Henley Café Bridge was a success and drew in many players who are not regular duplicate players. It's a pity clubs have not taken up the offer of the county's help with running social events, an approach designed to widen our appeal and attract new players. On the upside, Ken Langdon has a great initiative going for social teams in the North of the County, which we hope to extend to the South.

We have begun the task of analysing the role of the county, asking what our priorities should be and this is ongoing. All ideas welcome.

Competitions continue. Our regular monthly events (cross-IMP pairs and multiple teams) attract reasonable numbers and bring in some revenue. This year saw our first face-to-face congress since COVID. I am told that a new venue and new date always requires time to build up numbers, so it is good to see that we made a small profit. We will be obtaining feedback and making a decision about next year's congress shortly.

Junior bridge is continuing thanks to the stalwart efforts of Joan Bennett and Holly Kilpatrick. After some knock-on effects of COVID, this looks to be set to build back up. Our financial support is well used – this is the future of the game.

Congratulations to all our competition winners and teams that won their Wessex League divisions. I hope you enjoyed the events and will continue to play in the future.

Last year we took the decision to employ Stephen Brown in the role of secretary. He has proved to be enormous value for money and is now also performing some of the accounting tasks. This is necessary because we do not currently have a Treasurer. Thank you, Stephen. And thank you to all officers and committee members. Particular thanks go to Robert Procter for his help with the accounts, John Briggs for the (non-trivial) inspection of the accounts, Sandra Nicholson for Wessex League organization, Dave Tarsky for Wessex administration and both Patricia and Cliff Hones for help with directing and technical issues. Thanks also to Matthew Covill for organizing the County Teams. Thank you to Alan Wilson, Sandra Claridge and Sandra Nicholson for being shareholders and representing our interests with the EBU. Sandra C and Sandra N have recently stepped down. Thank you to Charlie Bucknell for stepping in to fill one vacancy – the other is still to be filled. Thanks to Charlie also for heading up the education team.

*Kathy Talbot*

*28 September 2023*