

Promotion, Education and Social Team Report– April 2025

1. Cafe Bridge

An event is being planned for September 4 in Burford. The initiator of this is Pat Barbour, a founding member of the recently-formed unaffiliated Burford Bridge Club. She is working with BrianBridge on this venture. The OBA has agreed to help with marketing and with provision of equipment and boards.

Joan Bennett hopes to run an event in Henley also in September, but hopefully not on the September 3 date that BrianBridge had provisionally set aside for this. Whilst they apparently see advantages in running them on consecutive days we think that these are outweighed by the disadvantage of some potential participants for both only choosing to play in one. Abingdon remains under consideration.

2. Teachers' get-together and Education Officer

A regional one was being organised by EBED on March 9 but this has been deferred. When it is held we would like our teachers to ask teachers from other counties how they coordinate their activities and whether they have the equivalent of our Education Officer to do this. Charlie Bucknell is moving to France so we will need to find a new one if we decide to continue with the role. We plan to organise ourselves a get-together for just Oxfordshire teachers. Barbara and Kathy will be working on this.

3. Social Bridge on RealBridge via the EBU's platform

During covid the EBU set up a front end for using RealBridge for social games. We are exploring how we could best use this platform to provide an online social bridge forum for Oxfordshire bridge players, whether or not OBA members, who wish to play non-duplicate bridge. This could provide us with a link to non-members which would be useful for marketing social events that we run such as our cafe bridge events.

4. Encouraging existing groups of bridge players to form clubs and affiliate

Having just helped to form Burford Bridge Club, Pat Barbour was invited to report from recent first-hand experience on the steps that they had taken. She reports that their move from social to duplicate was a "bit of a jump" for the members. Expansion was achieved through word of mouth, advertising in local shops and in

The Bridge Magazine. Scoring is done on paper travellers with results being published through WhatsApp the following day. (Robert will be exploring whether we can help them to develop further and to consider the benefits of affiliation some time in the future.)

What is clear from their experience is that these things only happen when there is someone local who is ready willing and able to drive the project forward and Burford is fortunate to have two such people in Amir Hashimi and Pat Barbour.

In passing Pat commented that for a relative newcomer to bridge she was finding it difficult to find a partner at a similar stage in their bridge development willing to work together to advance. We should consider how we might set up a partner-finding service across the county.

5. Diversity, Equity and Inclusivity

Kathy intends to obtain another county's (Yorkshire?) written policy on this to see what we maybe could or should be doing.

6. Effects of Online on Face to Face

We have debated a letter written by Ken Langdon of Kings Sutton BC to the EBU Chair. In it he laments the effect that online has had in taking away mainly the better players from his club and suggests that the EBU needs to focus more on club bridge. Our discussion concluded that online bridge is here to stay and that the two forms of the game need to be mutually supportive, but we don't disagree with the feeling that the EBU may be over-focused on the competitive player who maybe favours online rather more than the social player.

Robert Procter.
March 2025