

UNAFFILIATED CLUBS REPORT FOR JUNE 2026 AGM

NEWSLETTER

Robert Procter has produced three newsletters, issued at the end of December, February and April. Pat Barbour has written to him with a number of welcome and constructive suggestions as to how it can be made more relevant and appealing to a wider audience than just competitive players. He will try to act on this! Kathy Talbot has agreed to join Robert on an “Editorial Board” and has suggested a couple of people we might ask to join it and volunteers would be welcome. This will spread the workload as well as potentially broadening the input. This may not happen in time for the next one which Robert is nevertheless planning to get out at the end of June. Contributions will always be welcome.

ONE BRIDGE COMMUNITY - MEETINGS WITH UNAFFILIATED CLUBS AND MARY COUSINS

Mary Cousins is working for the EBU with a brief to expand membership and she was keen to meet with this group and find out what they are doing with our unaffiliated clubs to try to build a single bridge community and to tell us about what the EBU is doing to expand membership.

Robert invited all the clubs he was aware of in our catchment area to a meeting at Haddenham at the end of April. (Mary was visiting EBU headquarters in Aylesbury and staying in Thame - hence the choice of venue)

Their first meeting comprised Mary, Malcolm, Robert, five people from Haddenham’s Monday and Friday clubs and Barbara Jordan and Paul Morris who both teach beginners in the area.

The second comprised Malcolm, Robert, two people from Witney U3A Thursday club and one from Bampton.

It was explained to the unaffiliated club representatives what is available from both the EBU and OBA to help them with **teaching, marketing and financing equipment**. Robert & Malcolm stressed our wish to see them become **part of the wider bridge community** without any strings of affiliation attached. They could achieve this by using the EBU and OBA websites and the OBA News to publicise their playing and learning opportunities and by entering our leagues.

The Haddenham clubs were most concerned with maintenance of numbers and hopefully the introduction to Barbara and Paul can help them. The possibility of a grant or loan to all three Haddenham clubs was also mentioned.

Witney U3A’s main concern was that it is about to lose its TD, who runs and scores their duplicates. Currently they score manually but they are going to look into using the BriAnBridge App with the help of Michael Hopkins, the Bampton representative at our

meeting. They have agreed to let us know how they get on with this and we have offered to find them more support if they need it. Witney U3A has two other sections making about 100 members in all. They thought that several members would welcome opportunities to play beyond their current weekly duplicates and they were keen to become part of the wider Oxfordshire bridge community. Our leagues, which they are welcome to join, will be covered in the June newsletter.

Robert and Malcolm shared the view that both meetings were worthwhile. They will follow up by emails with the clubs concerned.

They would welcome personal introductions to others on the list which are Abingdon U3A, Bloxham, Burford, Carterton, Children and Sparsholt, Chinnor U3A, Cotswold, Frilford GC, Henley GC, Henley Wednesday, Long Crendon, North Oxford Association, Quainton, Shipton under Wychwood, Woodstock.

After the first meeting Mary wrote to us with a number of thoughts:

we could run a local teacher training course;

clubs should put classes and taster sessions onto the EBU website;

we should set up a Facebook page (we have one but are not using it);

clubs can affiliate so as to contribute to the future of bridge but then exclude NGS so as not to become too competitive;

clubs can obtain duplicated boards direct from the EBU;

we can promote our cafe bridge events through the EBU.

Overall there seems now to be a willingness to promote bridge wherever it is taught and played, whether or not in affiliated clubs - a welcome step in the right direction in my view!

Robert Procter June 2026