



SCBA- PLAYERS' SURVEY

Conducted March 6th-12th 2021

Summary

Between Saturday 6th March and Friday 12th of March the survey was circulated to the membership of the SCBA using email and the web site. 116 replies were received before the survey was closed.

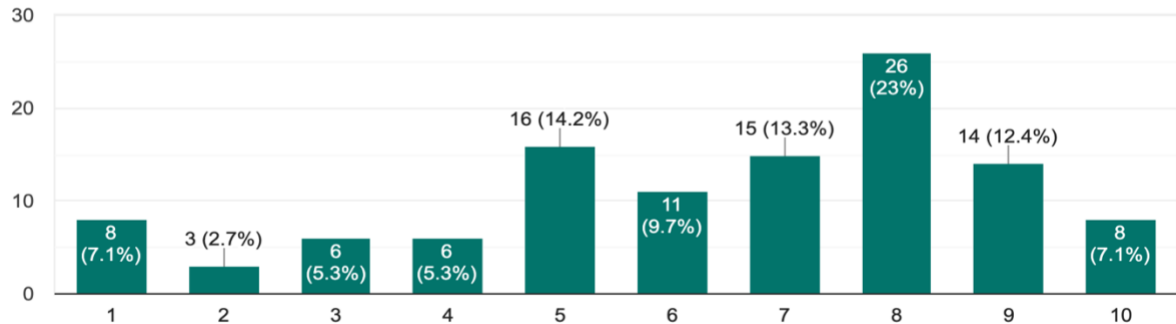
The main conclusions from the survey are:

1. With a median age of 69-70 years EBU, Counties and Clubs urgently need to redouble their efforts in recruiting the next generation of bridge players
2. Lockdown forced a huge proportion of our members into on-line bridge. We have no indications that this will change as lockdown eases. How and where Bridge is played has changed forever.
3. A large majority looks forward to a return to f2f bridge but expects covid security measures to be put in place.
4. Although 60% report that they will return to their club as soon as it re-opens that leaves 40% who may not which may have serious repercussions for the viability of some clubs.
5. On-line bridge is accessible. 2/3 of the sample group found it easy to learn.
6. Lack of face to face contact is a major downside to on-line bridge as are worries about cheating.
7. The overwhelming majority is pleased with the work the County has done since lockdown in providing an alternative. This has been of great importance to many of our members, enabling them to play with their friends and bridge community and to add some structure to their day.

THE QUESTIONS

How much are you missing bridge in person?

113 responses

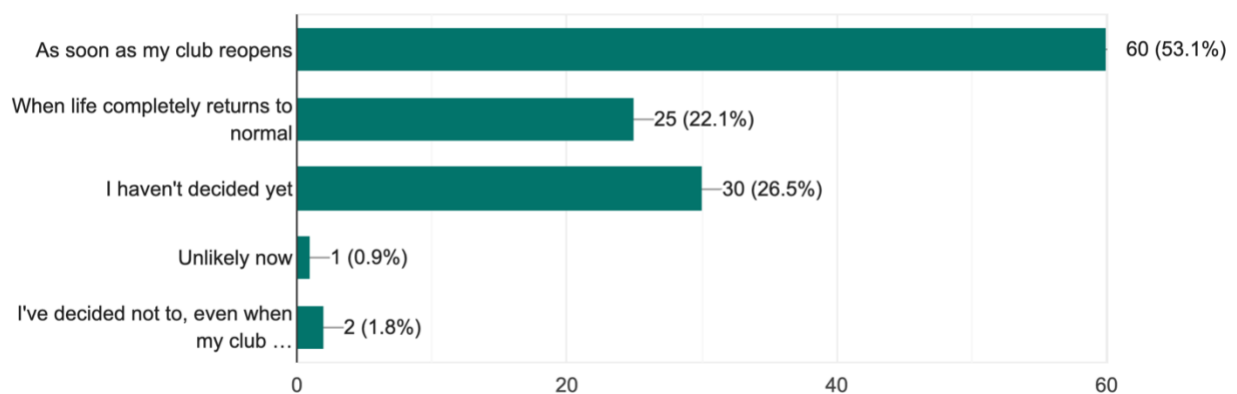


About 80% of respondents reported that they were missing f2f bridge to a greater or lesser extent highlighting the social importance of real life meetings.

When will you go back to play?

When will you go back to play? Tick all that apply!

113 responses

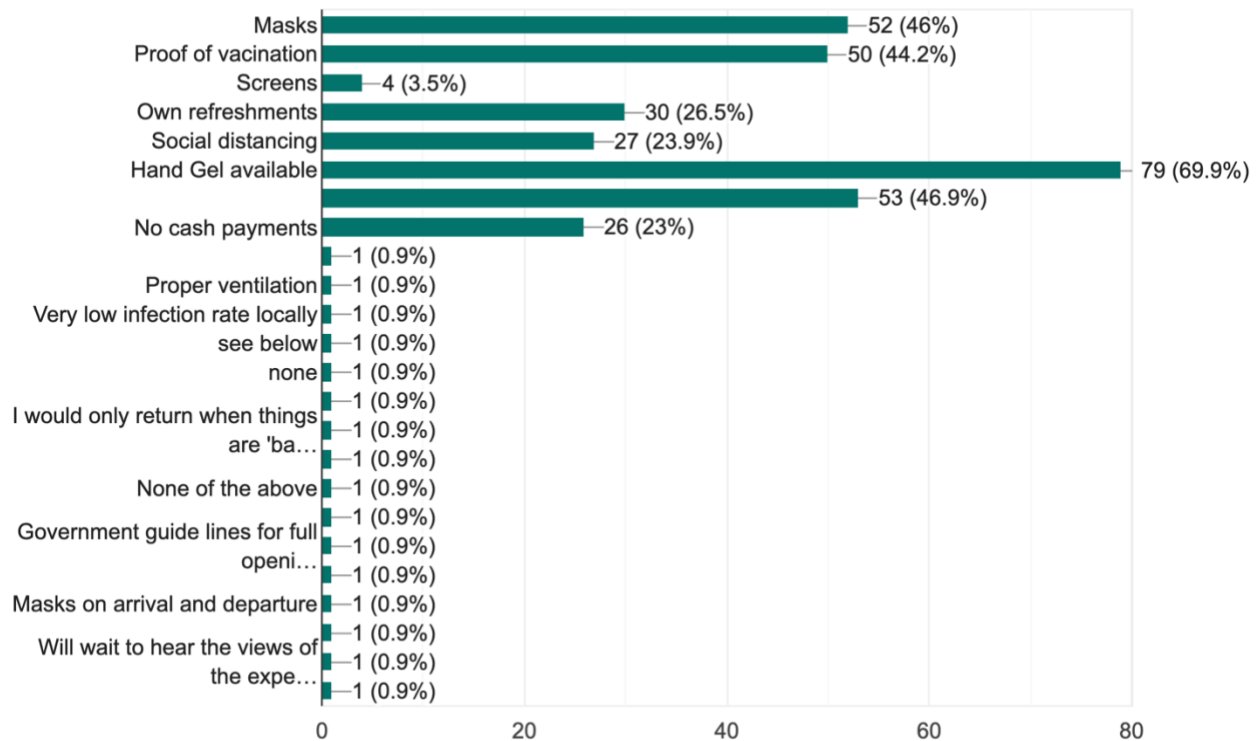


Most club members say they will return to their club as soon as it reopens but a quarter are still undecided and another large percentage will not return until life returns to normal whatever that will be.

The chart below indicates the measures that club members would expect to be taken before they would consider returning. It is clear that members have clear expectations of their club in respect of masks, social distancing, proof of vaccination, availability of hand gel and rigorous cleaning and these demands will impose heavy burdens on club committee

What measures would you expect to be in place before you would consider returning?

113 responses



NB The 46.9% below Hand Gel available refers to Rigorous cleaning

If you answered 'other' above what do you have in mind?

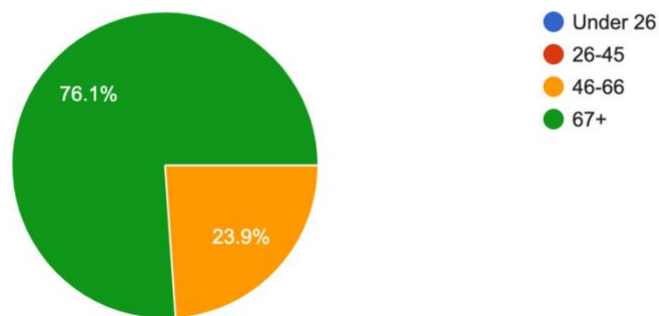
Total relaxation of government guide lines.
 Players including myself have had two vaccinations
 Good hand washing and drying facilities
 I would not treat face to face bridge in isolation but as a part of a process to normality and relative safety.
 Proper ventilation
 Just see what is happening in Minehead
 Life back to normal - so no special measures
 none
 None of these
 see above.
 Enforcement of masks being worn.

I see no need for any of them, so have ticked the one that seems the least pointless
I would really dislike excessive and unnecessary measures such as screens and social distancing. Proof of vaccination would be good and good hygiene.
Masks on arrival and departure
Adequate ventilation & spacing between table

About You

Age

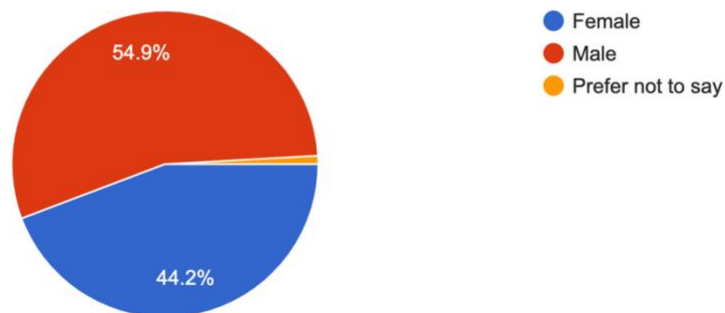
113 responses



This data suggest a median age in the range 69-70 years. The median age of the UK population is 40.5 . The median age for the UK's population over the age of 20 is about 49.4 years . A median age of 69-70 is alarming, and if this is representative of the wider bridge playing population, then the clubs must urgently address the issue of recruiting the next generation of bridge players.

Your Gender

113 responses

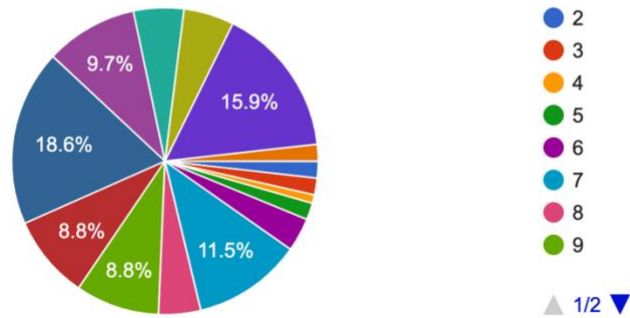


It is unclear whether this means that are more men playing bridge than women in Somerset which seems counter intuitive or that men are keener on completing surveys.

Your NGS grade

Your NGS Grade

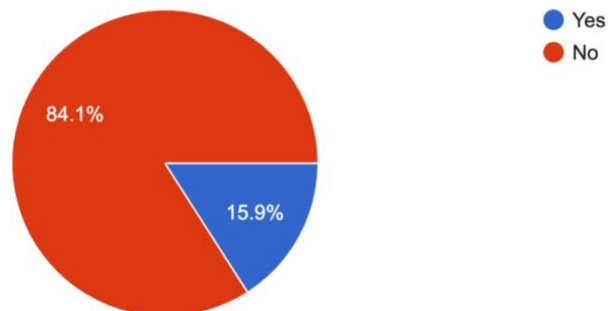
113 responses



This is reassuring in that our on-line bridge programme provides bridge suited for all levels.

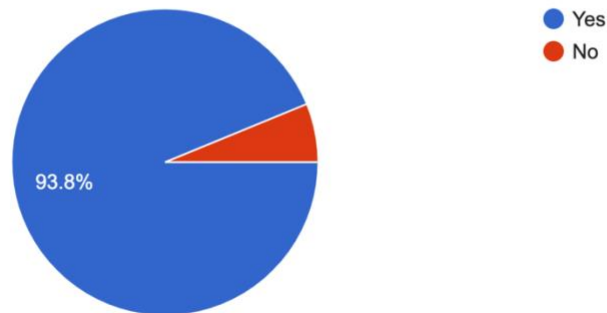
Prior to lockdown did you play Bridge online?

113 responses



During lockdown have you played Bridge online?

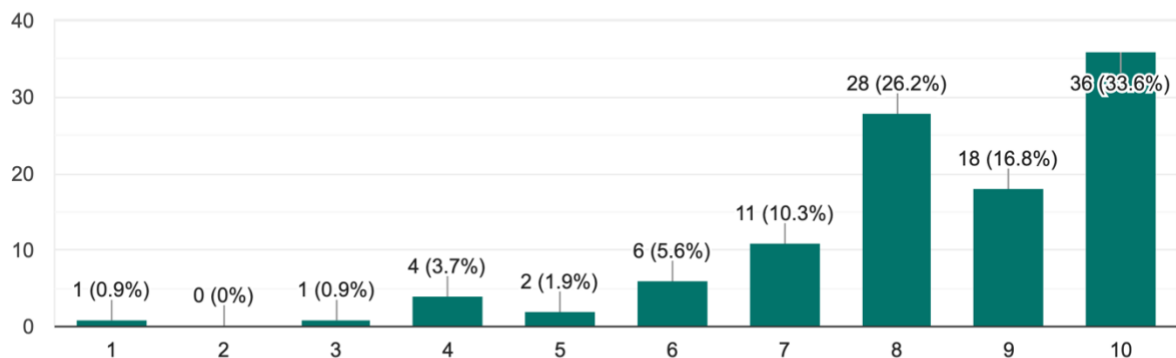
113 responses



We would encourage our readers to reflect on this chart. To the extent that this chart is representative of the whole membership, prior to lockdown 16% of respondents played on-line. Now 94% are playing. This is nothing less than a revolution in social behaviour! Such change in behaviour must have an impact on how we organise and offer services to our members. This willingness by our members to take up on-line bridge shows how important bridge is to them. Being a provider of a service covering an area of the life of our members that they regard as so important must urge us to provide an even better service for them.

If you have played Bridge online how easy did you find it to start?

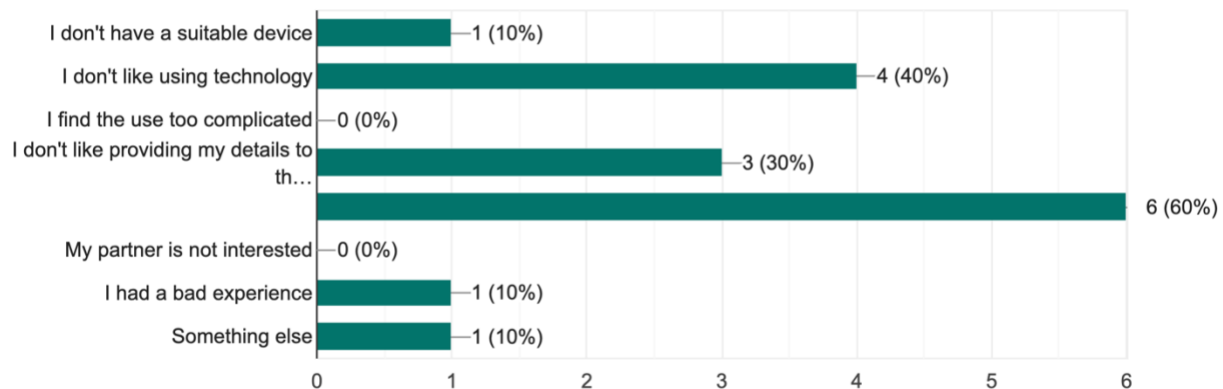
107 responses



Around 2/3 of our on-line players found it relatively easy to acquire the skills needed to play on-line. There are several possible conclusions from this: a) Bridge players are very smart b) Technology is not a barrier for senior citizens c) You Tube educational videos were of great help d) BBO and Realbridge are easy to learn. Regardless of what conclusions we draw, it is clear that we can use this when trying to encourage our non online playing members to start playing on-line.

However, if you decided to not play online bridge, what are your reasons? tick all that apply!

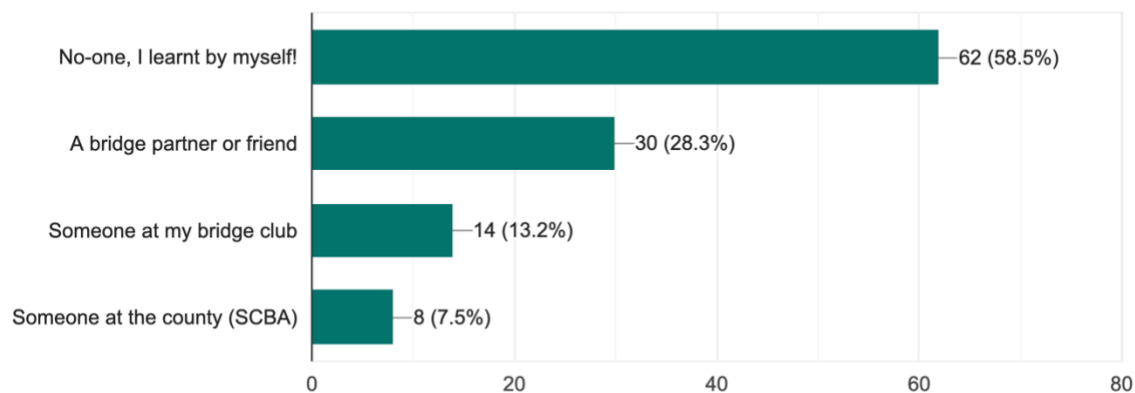
10 responses



Only 10 responses but of the 10 all reported lack of the social side (60%), worry about providing details to BBO and a dislike of technology).

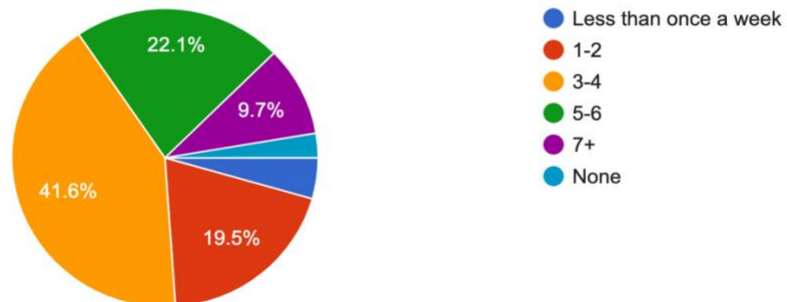
And if you play Bridge online did you get help?

106 responses

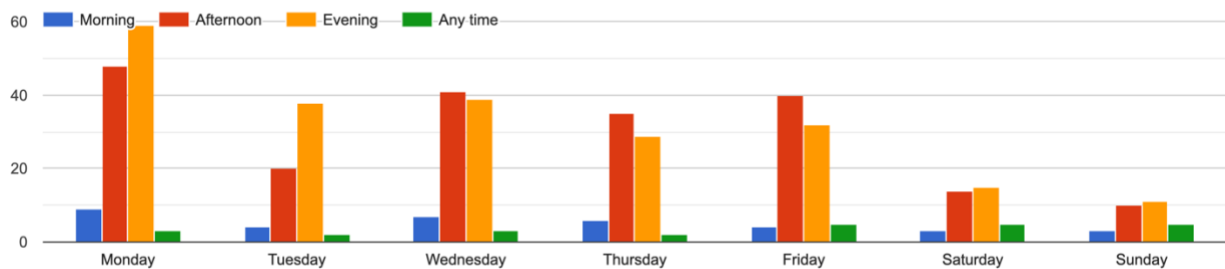


How Many Sessions do you play each week online?

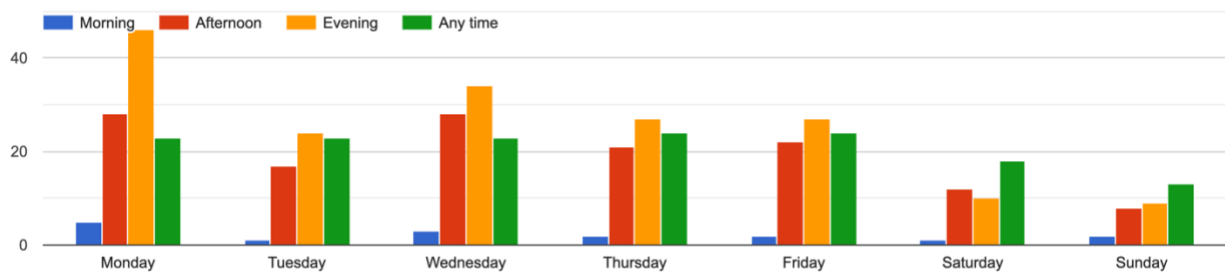
113 responses



Which days and times of day do you CURRENTLY play?



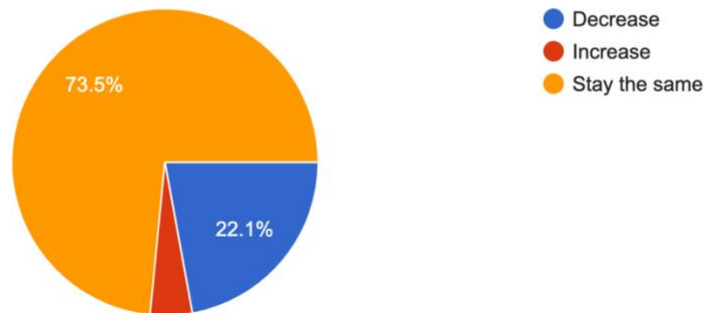
In FUTURE which days and times of day would you like to play?



There is clearly interest in playing bridge on all days of the week and at all times with mornings being the least popular. This suggests that the traditional club night might be augmented by other online sessions.

Is this likely to increase or decrease in the coming months?

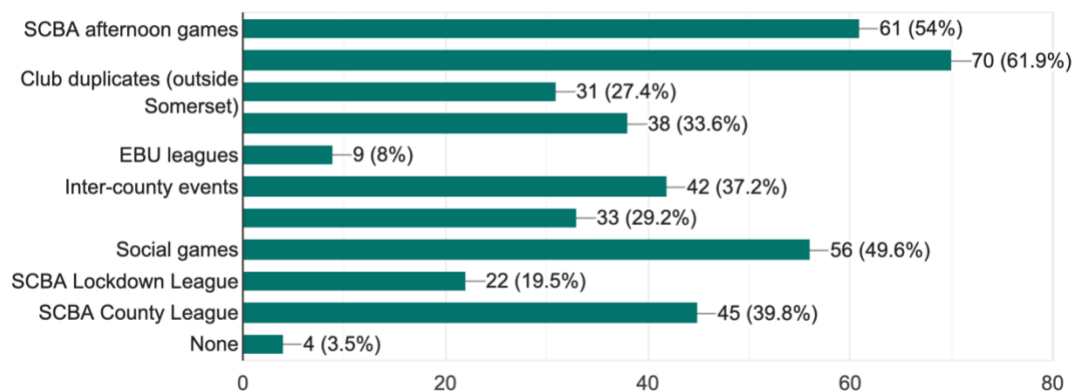
113 responses



There is no reason to believe that on-line bridge will subside after the pandemic. It is here to stay.

Which of kinds of bridge have you played online?

113 responses



61.9% refers to virtual clubs in Somerset

29.2% refers to weekend events

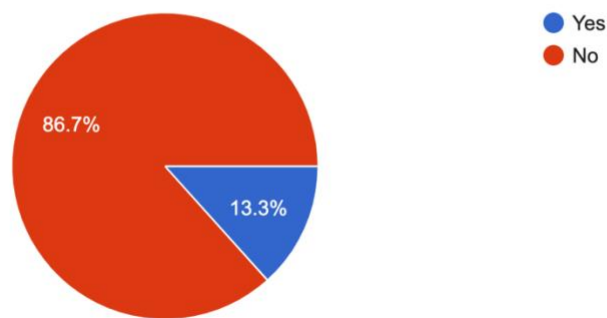
Somerset members have participated with enthusiasm in the programme of online bridge that has been offered. Interestingly 50% of respondents have also been playing social bridge online and there is no reason to think that this enthusiasm for and availability of online bridge will decrease significantly in the coming months. Online is a resource to be embraced.

During the first two weeks of March 125 different players played a total of 440 games in Somerset Online games. In addition, eleven virtual clubs are operating mostly on BBO but two using Realbridge. During the week of this survey this involved 101 tables or 404 player sessions.

SCBA ORGANISED EVENTS

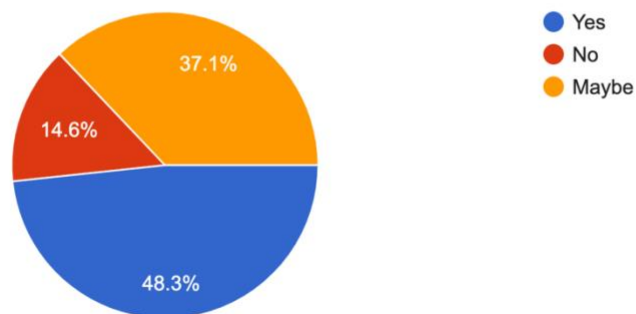
If you HAVE NOT YET played in online SCBA-organised events, is there anything holding you back?

45 responses



If you HAVE played in online SCBA-organised events, are you intending to play in more?

89 responses

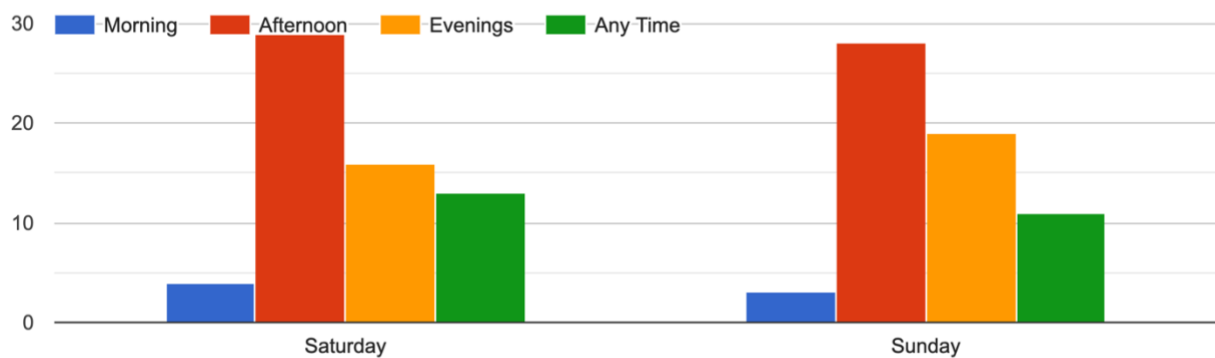


Almost 50% of respondents intend to play online more in the future.

and if no, what might inspire you to play online Bridge in SCBA-organised events? What can be done to improve the games for you?

Quite happy as is
Games for people with limited experience.
lower playing fee
Nothing as play enough already
Better weather. Less bridge. SCBA events are great.
Not interested on line
Confidence
some information about events....I have received nothing
I do not like paying online. It feels risky.
Getting a new computer
Much prefer casual games, no pressure and less stressful.
Don't know
Partner with experience
It has become too competitive and unfriendly. Unnecessary calling of Director
Addressing slow playend boards all boards not completed quickly enough
spare partner
8 minute games

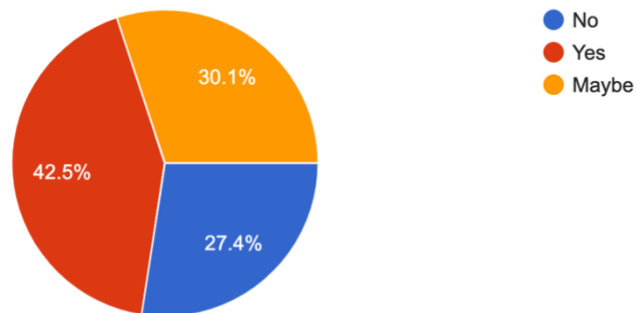
If Yes or Maybe to the previous question, what day(s)/time(s) would you prefer



There is clearly interest in SCBA events on weekend afternoons.

Would you be interested in playing in inter-county events with teams of players with comparable levels of experience to you?

113 responses

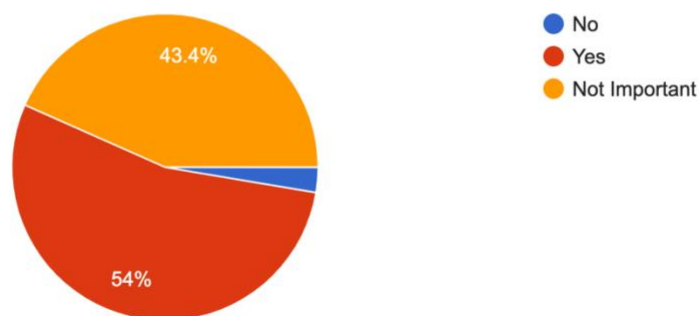


It is encouraging to note that over 40% of respondents would be interested in playing stratified inter county events. This reflects the policy of the SCBA selection committee which is offering inter county games to all those expressing interest.

Your thoughts about Online Bridge

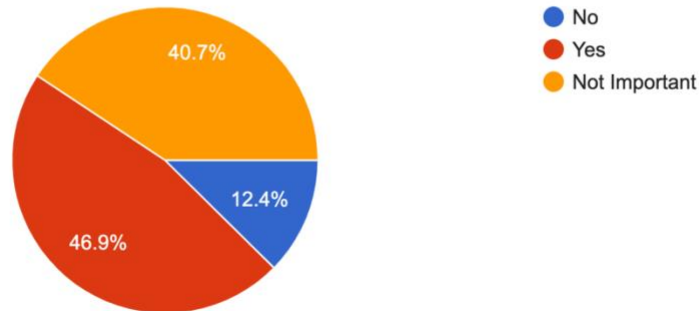
When playing on-line do you like to receive Master points?

113 responses



When playing on-line do you want the game to count towards your NGS rating?

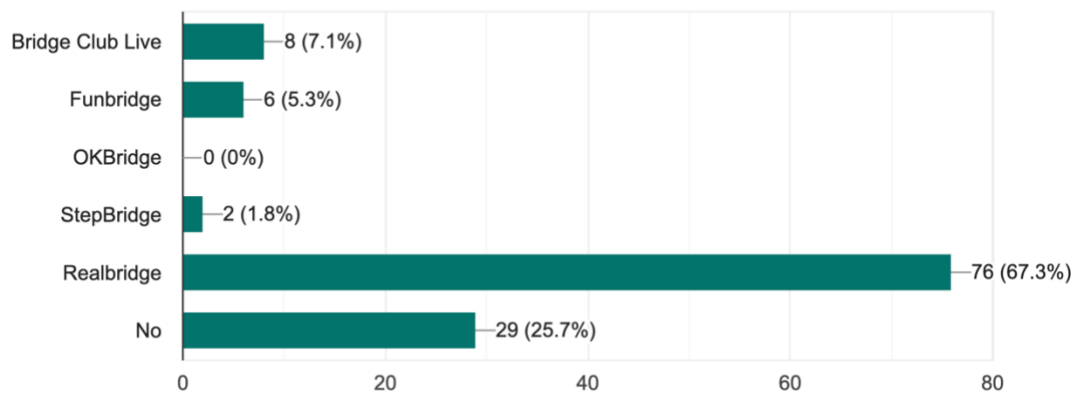
113 responses



Master points appear to be more important than NGS ranking to players but about half of the total don't consider either to be very important reflecting the balance between social and tournament players.

Do you play bridge on-line using other platforms than BBO?

113 responses

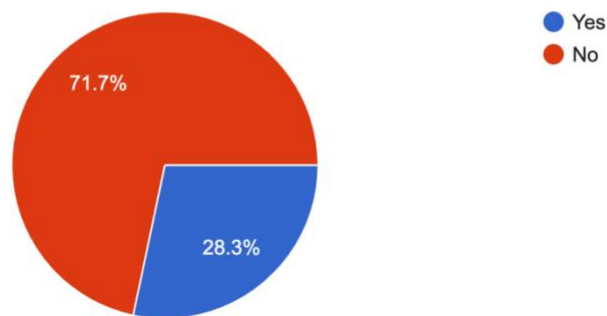


Realbridge is now a real player and between them BBO and Realbridge have cornered the market. Both platforms have their advocates as evidenced by the comments made in favour of and against both platforms in the player comments. - it is a matter of choice but a choice has been made by the EBU who it appears will now be running all their competitions on Realbridge.

Improving your bridge using online methods.

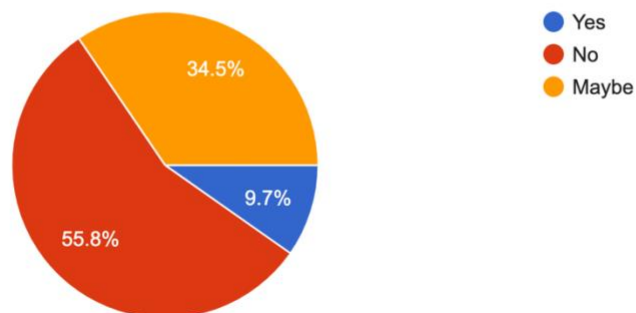
Have you watched online video lessons or tutorials?

113 responses



Would you be interested in online lessons?

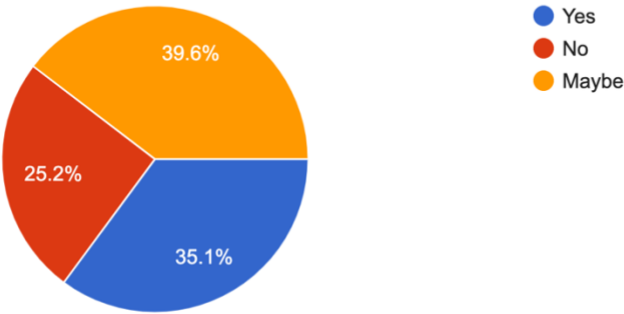
113 responses



There is a small minority of players who would be interested in online learning.

Would you like to play sometimes against tougher opposition than you and your partner are usually used to?

111 responses

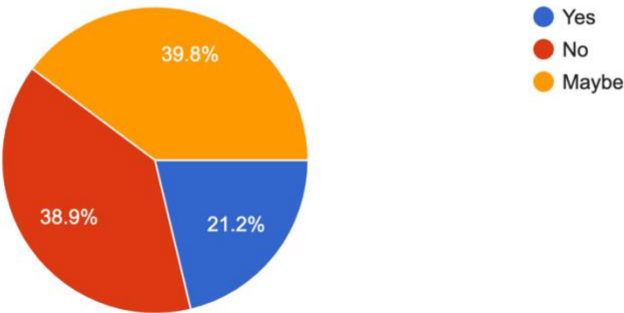


There is a large group in favour of playing against tougher opposition.

Helping Bridge in the County

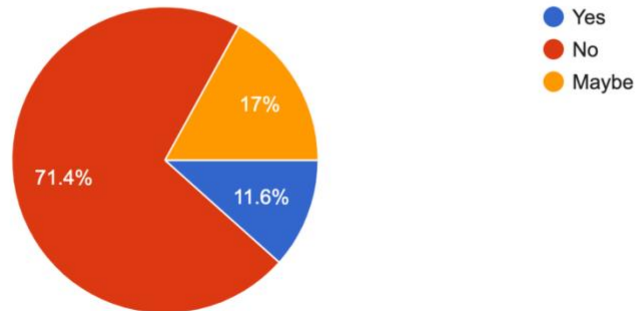
Would you like to help grow and develop Bridge in the county?

113 responses



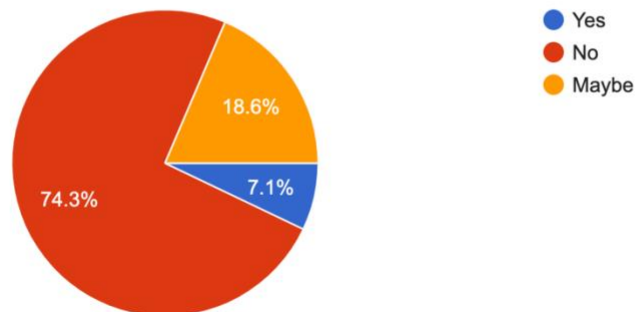
Might you be interested in teaching bridge?

112 responses



Would you consider volunteering to help on the SCBA Committee?

113 responses



Unsurprisingly the majority simply want to play the game and enjoy the social side of their club. Thank goodness that there is a small percentage prepared to help and the Chairman would definitely like to hear from the 7% prepared to volunteer for the SCBA committee or to help in any way.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the answers to our questions we are confident that we can draw several conclusions. Of course, we have to bear in mind the large non-response bias, but this taken into account we can draw the following conclusions:

1. There is an urgent need to address recruitment of the next generation of bridge players. The median age of the sample is about 70+ years. It is obvious that EBU, Counties and Clubs have to take urgent action. In light of conclusions 2 & 3 we now have a new and unique platform through which to reach and recruit.
2. The way we play bridge has changed forever. Prior to lockdown some 10% of our sample played on-line bridge, now close to 94% do. According to the question as to what they like and dislike as well as their response to whether or not they thought they would play more or less in the next few months we have every reason to believe that how we play bridge has fundamentally changed. Therefore, we should consider continuing our on-line presence after the pandemic is over.
3. On-line bridge is easy to learn. There is a perception that senior citizens are less capable of using new technology. Our survey blows a hole in this myth. A sample with a median age of 69-70 found it easy to access on-line bridge.
4. Bridge is an important part of bridge players' lives. The fact that so many of our members have taken to on-line bridge, and play close to 4 sessions a week is a clear indication of this.
5. The convenience of online bridge and not having to travel is very attractive to some members.
6. Afternoons and evenings are the preferred time to play. This might be a surprise when we know that most of our members are retired.
7. Weekdays are more popular than weekends. This might indicate, if on-line bridge does continue as we predict after the pandemic, that we might reconsider when to arrange inter county and other events.
8. There is space for a weekend duplicate - enough people indicated an interest in weekend events.
9. There are enough pairs wanting to play in inter-county events.
10. The age profile of our players is the clearest possible indication that clubs must involve themselves in teaching the next generation of players.

APPENDIX A

What do you dislike most about online bridge?

Not much social interaction.

Lack of social interface

Cheating and slow play

No social contact

I don't really like all the onscreen distractions with RealBridge

Staring at a screen

not seeing the person - other than with realbridge

Typing comments - much slower than speaking (but sound/vision on Realbridge not good).

Unnecessary chat between partners which slow the play

Inability to talk to other players.

The chat

Nothing in particular.

Lack of social contact

Not being able to discuss hands with opponents/partner; being timed out by slow opponents

Difficult to chat on BBO and other people's dodgy equipment on Realbridge

I find it more tiring than face to face bridge

Slow play causes me a huge concentration problem on occasions.

Not seeing people. Cheating

Not talking to people. Realbridge is better than Bbo for talking but can be very distracting with feedback

Not friendly

hard to be social

Video and audio with BBO. RealBridge better.

No dislikes

Lack of ability to ask questions

lack of face to face

Not seeing friends and having conversation

Losing connection, possibility of cheating

My ability to forget about the hands

Lack of social interaction

Typing niceties to opps

Not seeing people's faces and I think it could be easy to cheat online

Very happy with Realbridge, but not so with BBO as what is there to stop those living in the same house from colluding?

People who take forever to respond to a stayman enquiry

No personal interaction

Hands taken away when the opps are too slow.

Other people having technical issues - particularly on RealBridge
people not alerting
Occasional interruption to online connection
Absence of real face to face interaction
robots
1.00 start. Would prefer a bit later e.g 2.30
everyone talks at the same time
Obvious cheating by those in same household
far too often the bidding and play is too slow. There are even long pauses after alerted system bids with fixed responses. Often when you do have to think in the play you have very little time left.
Difficult to analysis hands after a game
Having to self alert
Lack of social contact (other than in RealBridge)
My internet cuts out quite a lot
When my iPad plays up.
Realbridge - at the moment!
Nothing to dislike
BBO - poor explanations, opportunity to cheat
Played Realbridge once. Not a good experience.
Realbridge. Play in it when asked but there are always computer issues
self alerting
Slow play
Not answering questions about system bids
Realbridge on tablet gives eye strain
Robots
Not sociable
Slow play 18 board matches
cross-table conversation by text not as enjoyable as face-to-face conversation
lack of atmosphere
not having the equipment to play
Slow, clumsy communication on BBO; and alerting/announcing own bids
It is not the social event as that of playing and talking at a Bridge Club.
The fact that you cannot socialise properly with other members of your club
Not meeting with friends
Losing
I don't dislike online bridge
The possibility that cheating is easier. Sometimes claims and unfinished boards are whipped away quickly when I'd like a moment to study them.
1. The small chance of collusion, etc (see EBU reports about cheating). 2. Fewer boards.
It's obvious on occasions that partnerships are discussing
BBO can be flaky especially with login

No informal chatting with partner & opponents during and between rounds

It is not very social. It is lovely to meet people on Realbridge but it is very distracting with so much going on on a small screen.

Not seeing opponents

Not seeing opposition on BBO

Not having supper and socialising with friends / getting to know other players. It's addictive and stops me doing other things I'd like - particularly Funbridge. Setting up team bridge matches for multiple players is unnecessarily complicated on BBO. Setting up social matches on Real bridge doesn't seem to be an option.

impersonal and it is just not the same

failure to advise system and delays caused by chat

play can be slow

Realbridge. There can be problems with sound quality due to internet issues. There is often echoing and feedback making it an unpleasant experience.

Communicating via "chat" is a bit time consuming if one is a two fingered typist.

Pretty much fine with all of it

Prefer bbo to Real bridge by a significant margin

Lack of personal contact; fear the opposition are cheating; fear the opposition might think I am cheating! I think this might be addressed by RealBridge. But then I don't get History...
social contact

APPENDIX B

What do you like most about online bridge?

It's easy to play from home with no travel involved,

Ease

Comfort of your own home

I like playing on BBO as it is easy to concentrate totally on the cards without distractions and I am disappointed the EBU has gone completely down that route.

Easier to concentrate

don't have to drive anywhere

Detailed review of play available, and others' bidding and play.

The fact that I can actually play competitive bridge during lockdown

Peace and quiet to concentrate.

Relaxing at home especially winter months

That I am able to play bridge in lockdown.

Convenience. I can play with partners outside the local area

Great practice

Not having to go out in the cold and wet (especially on Friday evenings to Woolavington!)

I don't have to travel to the club

It's better than nothing but not quite the real thing.

Being able to play anytime doing a social bridge

Not having to travel

Staying home

it's readily available - without there need to travel

Ease of use. No travel needed to play and easy scoring.

convenience

no travelling

no need to travel to club

Don't have to travel

Easy to play, make friends, play at any time

Keeping in touch with my club members

Relaxed, no travelling, refer to notes, anonymous,

It is fun and has improved my game being able to see afterwards where I went wrong

Regular and no travel needed.

No driving particularly when foggy, wet, snowy etc

Very random dealing better shuffling than the average club shuffle

Not interested in staring at a screen

It's COVID safe!

Ease of access & multiple convenient events to play in

Ease of life, no travel, warm and comfortable

I can concentrate better

Having significant hearing loss, online bridge is much more enjoyable.
It is a necessary evil
no travel
Not having to drive miles - just being at home
everything else
So convenient and fuss free. Not having to put up with rude people at the table
Fills the time and keeps the mind going!
Enjoy watching professionals discussing as they play on You tube.
Find it very easy to assess a hand
Amount of history to learn from on BBO
You can have a comfortable evening without going out especially in winter
Able to play bridge during lockdown, Not having to drive to a club,
convenience, ability to see hand results immediately and partner's hand when dummy,
chance to play with wider pool of players
Relaxed - at home
All very well organised
No travelling. Varied opposition. No going out on a winter evening.
Comfort of own home
It gives one something to do in lockdown, otherwise dislike it in all forms
Convenience
being unable to revoke or lead from wrong hand
Availability
bbo no slow play
BBO very easy to use but security worries
No travel, fast play
Everything
Tea and coffee , food delivered to table
not having to leave the house and venture out on cold, wet evenings
lack of noise
Impossible to make insufficient/out-of-turn bid or to revoke
Keeping in touch with regular partners.
not having to go out in the evening
I think the hands are more interesting on the whole
Lack of distractions during play
It saves time. Taking into account journey times for face to face, tea and other breaks, slow starting etc, and online session can give 24 boards in half the time
Not having to go out on a winter evening, and no one munching biscuits and drinking coffee at my table.
1. Convenience. 2. The opportunity of playing against more widespread opponents.
Ease of playing
Ability to play regularly with my favourite partner who as moved a long way from Somerset

No need to travel. No need to sign up until the last minute. When you are dummy you can see how your partner is playing. If you play quickly enough you can see how other pairs have bid and played a hand, while it is fresh in your memory.

Nothing

Lack of face to face bridge so the only option!

Seeing and talking on Realbridge

I love the online bridge scoring system, getting scores as you go along, being able to check hands and play afterwards, being able to practice, play social bridge and having multiple options on what sort of game you want. Playing with cards will not be so much fun without the scoring system.

the comfort of your own home, particularly in winter

As dummy watching declarer play

Convenience, removes the need to travel meaning it is cheaper, much better in bad weather including ice.

generally players are very friendly

Ability to concentrate better with no distractions.

Playing bridge

Not having to direct ..being this able to concentrate

no travelling/parking, waiting to start

Convenient; maximum bridge for time allocated (no travel).

Convenience of being in your own home - no travel on a dark/ icy December night
quick, cheap

APPENDIX C

What feature would make on-line bridge more enjoyable?

Pretty happy with BBO as it is.

Make the chat column exclusively for the director

Good internet connection

It has certainly made a huge qualitative difference to our lives being able to play during lockdown. A fantastic set up.

Nothing in particular.

More reliable broadband for everyone

In general faster play.

If I had better pc!

Video and Audio with BBO.

Can't think of anything

Having the visual of players

I cannot think of anything

Better and reliable platforms e.g screen sizes

Not sure

OK as it is.

All events on Real Bridge

I like it as is

More reliable internet.

Opps having more stable IT! Like the sociability of RealBridge but much prefer the BBO platform. Would be good to have double dummy & replays available on RealBridge too

Maybe video chat

I'm quite happy as it is

ban robots!

Quite like it as it is

more conversation practice

Cameras and mics

printed hand sheets

The audio and visual facility in RealBridge

Maybe having easier contact rather than chat

More than 12 board sessions on BBO

Don't know

Not possible it isn't particularly enjoyable

no slow play

Less screen clutter on realbridge

Good as it is

At least voice conversation

more reliable internet links

Better Zoom-style communication (even RealBridge not perfect, here)
More time to look at the played hands before they are whipped away. I know that we can look back at the hands after the game has finished, but by that time have lost interest.
Can't think of anything!
Not sure as I really enjoy it as it is
A 7 or 8 high game that has no ringers
I don't generally have a problem with online bridge. No robots please.
It's already very enjoyable. We'd be lost without it during lockdown.
More boards although I realise this places even greater burdens on organisers.
Sound
Scrap it
Being able to look at hand just played for a couple of minutes after last card played
I'd like BBO to have a live feature to see other players.
banning undos
quicker play
Realbridge is excellent as you can see people and talk to them. However, sound issues spoil my enjoyment.
Addressing slow play as outlined above
8 MINUTE GAMES! I hate the time pressure of 7.
I like real bridge where you are able to chat

APPENDIX D

Any comments or suggestions you'd like to make to the SCBA committee?

I believe they are doing a very good job in difficult circumstances.

I think you are doing a great job...thanks

What has been achieved by the committee and Tony Russ in particular is remarkable. Thanks and well done.

Not at this particular time - it is functioning well. Thank you.

A big thank you

You have done a brilliant job in the past year.

Just to thank you for all you do even if most of it doesn't affect me

I think you all do an amazing job keeping bridge going and I am sorry that I do not have time to be more involved.

1. My reluctance to sit on SCBA committees is because I already have committee responsibilities in other pursuits. 2. How about graded inter-county matches?

SCBA seems well run to me.

many thanks to the committee for getting online bridge running so well

Really miss Bruton weekends

I hope congress stays on realbridge. Must be so much easier to organise and cheaper?

I would love to see County and Western Leagues move to RealBridge permanently!

Keep going you're doing a great job

I'd like SCBA to encourage Somerset clubs to join EBU and support them in this. Otherwise, it means that those of us playing in non EBU clubs don't have a chance to get rated properly on EBU and miss out on promotion.

Thanks to Tony Russ for doing an excellent job in promoting bridge in the county.

less than 50% of players play online. A big drop in income. Village clubs in danger of closing

I think the organisation of the bridge on line games is brilliant. Some of the other games are good. Three cheers for the committee

If you do not finish the round in time the result is presented to you and you do not always know if it is the correct one and there is not an option to not agree

A very big thank you to Tony and Frank and everyone who has made Somerset BBO and Realbridge possible and so enjoyable during the past year.

The committee do a superb job

Please continue online bridge but not real bridge

Use BBO rather than RealBridge

make games cheaper

I want live bridge to be resumed as soon as allowed

Thanks for all your work.

Keep up the good work

Thanks for all your hard work. You are providing a splendid diet of online bridge.

Keep up the good work. You're doing a very good job supporting clubs in the county, encouraging individual players to get involved and generally promoting the game. The committee has done a wonderful job setting up various matches on different days. It would be good to keep some Orwell done, keep safe these options open after lockdown. Just a big thank you for enabling us to play bridge online so successfully. Thanks & please keep the competitions coming!

As above, can we have more time for the regular online games. 7.5 or 8 per board instead of 7.

believe they are doing a good job. Thanks.

Not at the moment

Tony Russ has done a magnificent job!

Thank you for all your input

Just to say Thank You for organising bridge online and for all your hard work

I would like to thank SCBA for all the hard work that they have put into keeping bridge alive during this difficult time

APPENDIX E

Do you have any other thoughts you'd wish to share?

I hope Somerset continues to use mainly BBO for their online games rather than RealBridge
Somerset has been superb in lockdown

Might be interested in the Realbridge duplicate if it wasn't at an inconvenient time.

As a Bridge teacher, I'd like to be able to teach several tables at once on RealBridge, uploading my own Notes/sample deals

My continuing admiration for competition organisers.

it's been a life saver for some isolated people

I miss Somerset teas.

Huge thanks to Tony and Frank for all you have done to get us playing with our fellow Somersetters and near neighbours! It's been a real mental health saver in the winter months.

I want to thank those involved with organising online bridge during pandemic. I don't know how I would cope without it.

Thank you for all your work setting up and running online bridge in Somerset.

I think it would be great fun to arrange more team matches between clubs - online, using Bridge Club Live. I'd like the website to be more accessible, so we can see who is involved and what is happening... Also, I think we need to be more supportive for people who are members of clubs but haven't been able to play online during this period. Some of them are incredibly lonely. I wonder if we could arrange visits to their homes and set up home matches, even before clubs re-open. Support from SCBA would be wonderful.

no

I think all master points and grading for on line bridge are unrealistic as they include results against robots which can be anywhere.

I have enjoyed playing Bridge on line as long as someone else kindly sets it up for which I am very grateful

Please continue online bridge but not real bridge

Hope afternoon online events continue even if many clubs meeting F2F

I hope clubs have survived this ordeal of lock down

No!

Just a big thank you to all the organisers and scorers

Keep up the good work. You're all doing a wonderful job

When Covid comes to an end do you think clubs will provide a mix of online and face-to-face bridge?

Well done, keep safe and thank you.

My regular partner is to move to another part of the country at some point and we would still like to play bridge together. Do you plan to run online sessions when Bridge Clubs are able to reopen?

Not like real bridge

Tony is doing a great job. Plus Frank the undertaker.

No thank you.

Not sure about driving particularly in winter time any more - become rather lazy about leaving home and prefer on line bridge!

When I said interested in On-Line lessons - it's lessons in how to teach and how to run Social Bridge on RealBridge (not BBO) say for the U3A which I did in person before lockdown.