



County Survey Results

May 2021



Survey – Discussion Agenda

1. Responses and County Membership
2. Future Expectations
3. Pandemic
4. Successful Strategies Deployed
5. What Counties Value in the EBU
6. Successful Clubs
7. Main Conclusions



County Survey Results

Responses and County Membership



Survey Responses

- Sent to all 39 counties; 35 replies
- Representing:
 - 618 Affiliated Clubs (excluding EBU, Miscellaneous, and Counties)
 - 55,975 Members (based on member primary allegiance)

Note: some responses too late to be included in this presentation

Excellent response providing a good understanding of views



Club Affiliation and County Membership

Club Affiliation

- Total c.50% of clubs are affiliated.
- In Berks & Bucks c.85% of clubs are affiliated
- In Merseyside c.25% of clubs are affiliated

Membership

- Average members per county: 1,435
- Average members per club: 90
- Smallest County (Isle of Man) 99 primary members
- Largest County (Surrey) 5,748 primary members
- Population to membership ratio 4 to 32 (per 10,000) (ignoring Channel Islands 232)
- Recent member growth (2015 to 2020) + 94 (Oxfordshire) to - 26

Notes:

- Some differences between counties are due to boundary variations and clubs shifting allegiance
- History has driven some of the differences in affiliation

*Only 50% of clubs are affiliated;
Counties have very different affiliation %s and member to population ratios*






County Survey Results

Expectations for the Future



Do you expect the number of members in your county to rise or fall in the next 3 years

	Increase	2
	Decrease	16
	Stay roughly the same	19



We should expect a decrease in membership .. But some counties are bucking the trend (Kent and Suffolk expect growth)



How bridge is changing...

■ Definitely
 ■ Possibly
 ■ Maybe
 ■ No

There is an urgent need to recruit the next generation of Bridge players.

On-line Bridge is here to stay.

Weekday evenings and afternoons are the preferred times to play

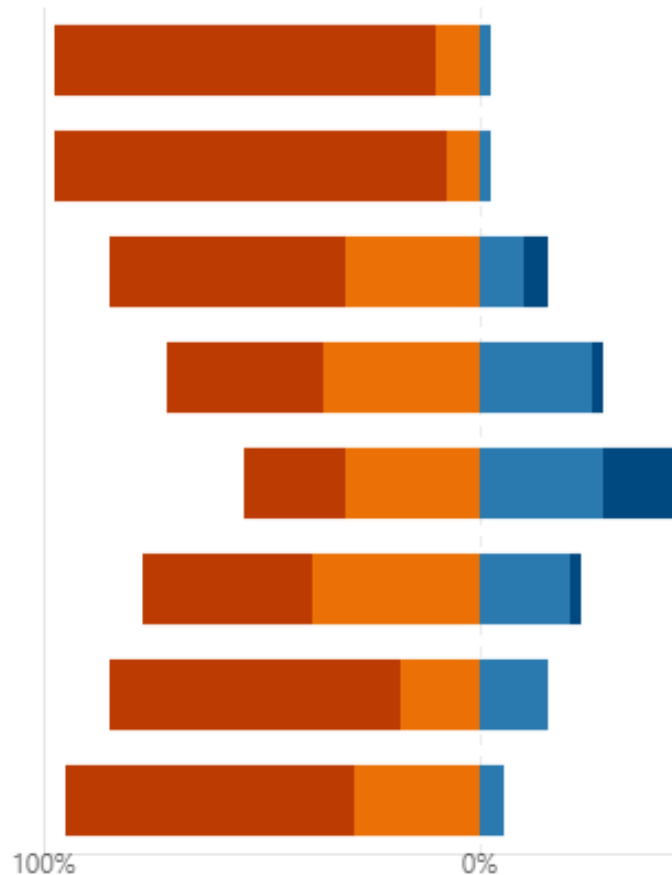
Some players enjoy playing against standards better than their own

Players of all levels would like to play for their county against similar level players

A teacher recruitment drive is needed

More club and county volunteers are needed

Players enjoy playing against those who are a similar standard to themselves.



- *89%: on-line is here to stay*
- *87%: an urgent need to recruit new bridge players*
- *66% say more volunteers are needed*
- *Only 38% think a teacher recruitment drive is definitely needed though only 2.5% say it isn't necessary at all*
- *Players mostly like to play with their own standard*
- *Some enjoy playing against better players*
- *More than half think there is a demand for inter-county play at a lower level*
- *Most prefer to play weekday afternoons or evenings*

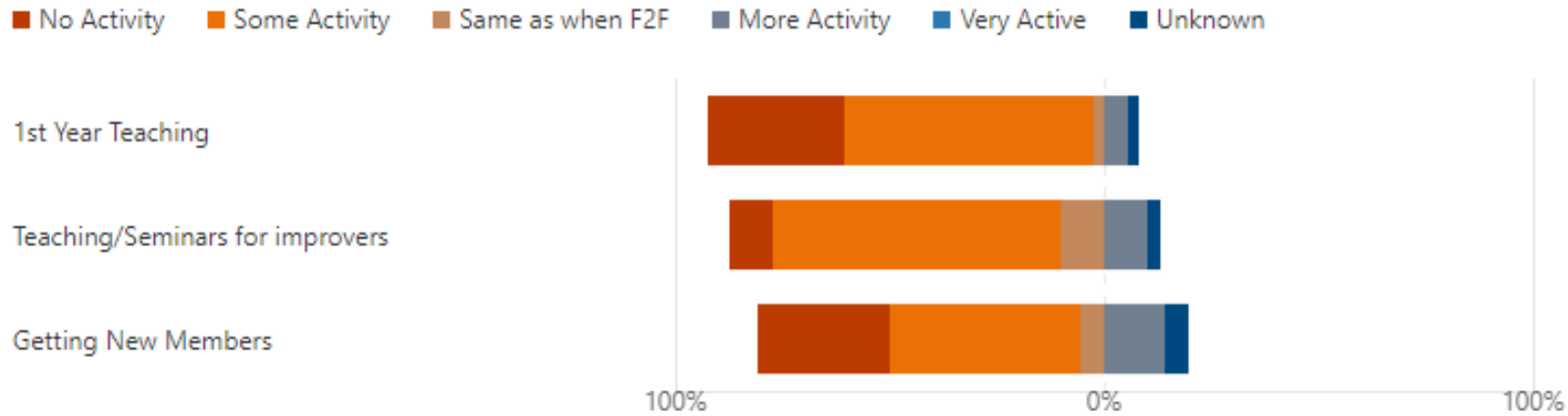


County Survey Results

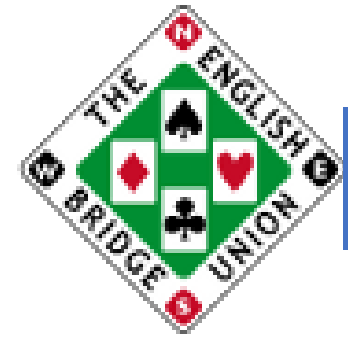
PANDEMIC



How Did Clubs Perform in the Pandemic



- *Over 30% offered no first-year teaching during the pandemic. Only 5% of respondents saw an increase.*
- *Just over 10% offered no improvers teaching during the pandemic but around 10% increased improver teaching.*
- *About 30% did no new player recruitment during the pandemic. Around 13% increased efforts to get new members.*



How Did Clubs Perform in the Pandemic

Question:

Number of Active Affiliated Clubs (running on-line/F2F sessions) in April 2021 compared to in February 2020

● More than 75%	6
● More than half	15
● Less than half	14
● Less than 25%	4
● Difficult to say	0



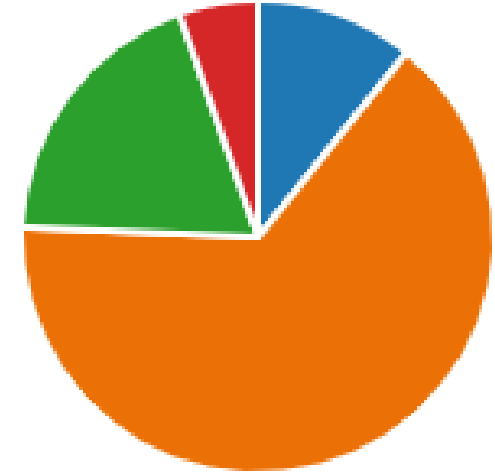
c.50% of affiliated clubs are playing on-line in April 2021 vs F2F in February 2020

c. 80% of players are playing in 50% of clubs



How many Clubs Will Not Reopen?

● Less than 5%	4
● Less than 20%	24
● Less than 50%	7
● More than 50%	2

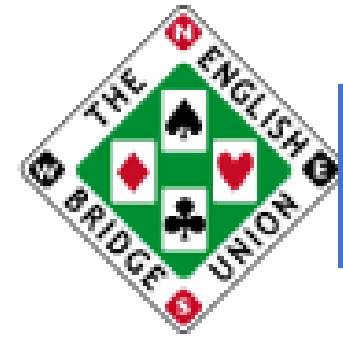


9 counties are expecting over 20% of Bridge Clubs to not re-open by the end of this year

(Somerset, Kent, Nottingham, Derbyshire, Surrey, Herefordshire, Hertfordshire, Suffolk & Leicestershire)

A significant number of our 618 clubs not re-opening/potentially closing this year

(Assuming that those who have not replied are roughly on a par with those that have)



Statistics during the pandemic

- April 2019 vs April 2021

Year Month	Total Sessions	Max Unique Players
April 2019	178,701	36,358
April 2021	146,680	20,701
April 2019 vs 2021	<u>82%</u>	<u>57%</u>



County Survey Results

Successful Strategies Shared



Successful Strategies to recruit new learners

Posters + Newspaper stories + Social media + tasters + word of mouth → new players

If we increase the velocity of publicity and make it easy, we will find people who want to play bridge

Good Teachers have a very loyal following.

Off-line	On-line	Word of Mouth
Local Newspaper press releases Town/Church/Local Magazines Library/Church/Local Noticeboards Playing in public places with sign up	Facebook advertising Website Publicising on other web sites E-mail communications	Taster sessions Learn in a weekend Recommendations Free introductions Tell your friends Bridge creates friendships that create demand



Successful strategies to teach new learners and existing players

Play + Seminars + Competitions + Social Events = new members + member retention

Website with everything going on helps!

Help everyone enjoy the game!

Beginner	Improver
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Beginner Lessons (staggered calendar)Beginner Seminars (on/off line)Supervised PlayHand Reviews (on/off line)Fun competitionsSocial bridge eventsOnline lounges to just playWeekend bridge holidaysMake it funCharity Events	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Improver lessonsOn/Off-line Improver SeminarsOn/off-line Hand ReviewsInter-county competitionsThemed play to learn a conventionTeach/Play/DiscussCoachingMentoringBanded NGS Events e.g. < 9Weekend bridge holidays



County Survey Results

What You Value in the EBU



What you value in the EBU...

National Body

- Provides National face of Bridge
- Respected Governing Body
- Guardian of Bridge's reputation (esp re cheating)
- Handling Conduct Issues
- "Run" Bridge

Competitions

- Co-ordinate National games where county is not big enough
- Run national competitions for different levels of players
- NGS & MasterPoint systems
- Green Point Events
- The Annual Calendar of Events

Promotion

- Runs Social Media and Media campaigns

Teaching

- Works with EBED to provide TD and Teacher training

Services: Members, Clubs and Counties

- Wealth of information via its web site
- MyEBU for members, clubs and counties.
- Provides email and Zoom updates
- Provides Member Services
- Provides Club support
- Provides County support
- Shares success stories across the regions

*A similar survey 2 years ago showed that the value of the EBU was not so well understood
The pandemic crisis has underlined the value of the EBU*

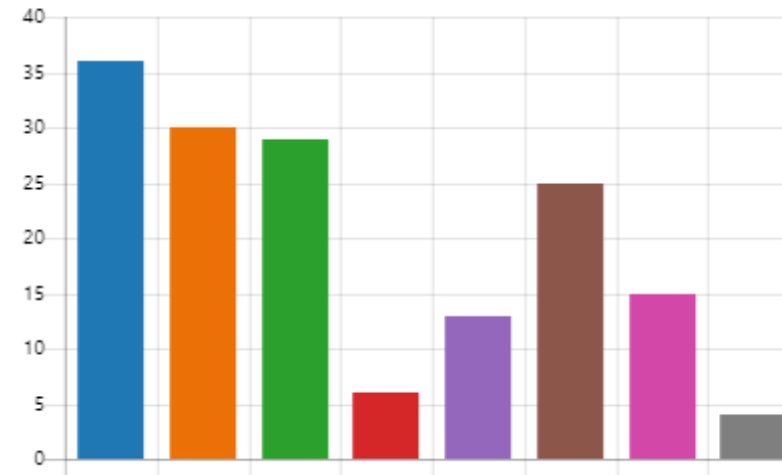


How has the EBU Supported You In the Pandemic?

13. How has the EBU supported you during the Pandemic (tick all that apply)

[More Details](#)

● Moving play to on-line	36
● Providing advice for the future...	30
● Keeping Members engaged w...	29
● Engaging non-members in cas...	6
● Providing telephone support/...	13
● Holding Zoom meetings for C...	25
● Regular e-mail support	15
● Other	4



- *A huge thanks to Jonathan and team for helping the clubs move on-line - mentioned by many counties!*
- *In the crisis the EBU and its staff stepped up and were there to support clubs and counties*

- *Several unaffiliated clubs have affiliated as a result of the Pandemic.*
- *The EBU achieved this in a climate of significantly reduced revenues and staff cut backs.*



Suggestions – a selection...

Increase Membership and Teaching:

- Bold initiatives are required to recruit and teach new players. There are some great examples in some counties. EBU Board needs to select and propagate.
- More advertisements promoting the benefits of learning to play bridge.
- More is needed to advertise the game and get beginners interested.
- National efforts with juniors, when school bridge has almost died. Maybe a nationally-coordinated campaign to attract teachers and new players?
- More social media presence + use of influencers to reach and attract the young
- EBU needs to take this opportunity to rebrand bridge as an exciting online game for young people.
- A second level of club membership might help bring unaffiliated clubs on board.
- Teaching, teaching, teaching.
- We need a strategy to get more new players. To facilitate that we need a publicity campaign and more teachers, and a way to fund both of those.

Competitions and Playing

- Develop a free of charge How to Play Bridge primer to introduce more new players to the game.
- Do not exclude non-members from EBU events and to downgrade master point allocations for events that include non-members.
- Reduce the P2P amount. It is crippling our online games.
- Look closer at Green Point events, the cost of actual green points and making events double session are reducing numbers in some areas.
- More support ideas and advice about running successful events online.
- More support for counties to run things on RealBridge for those who like the social element of the game.
- Advice on providing competitions for less experienced players.
- Be more thoughtful when scheduling major tournaments and competitions.

Communication and Approach

- EBU tends to be too formal and bureaucratic. Need to take a more relaxed pragmatic approach.
- Maybe a Zoom seminar on how to organize post-Covid club nights.
- Sharing of best practice from around the county in a user-friendly format.



County Survey Results

Successful Clubs



A selection of Clubs you told us are doing a really good job:

- Highgate Golf Club Bridge Club
- Fivehead Bridge Club
- Axe Bridge Club
- East Midland Bridge Club
- **South Bucks Bridge Club**
- Caterham Bridge Club
- Dorking Bridge Club
- **Bawburgh Bridge Club**
- Corsham Bridge Club
- Marlborough Bridge Club
- Newcastle Bridge Club
- **Cheltenham Bridge Club**
- Ashby Bridge Club
- Grantham Bridge Club
- Ross Bridge Club
- Chelmsford Bridge Club
- **Deva Bridge Club**
- Warrington Bridge Club
- Manchester Bridge Club
- Cambridge Bridge Club
- Hitchin Bridge Club
- **Watford & Bushey Bridge Club**
- **Leeds Bridge Club**
- **Wetherby Bridge Club**
- Ilkley Bridge Club
- Ripon Bridge Club
- **Sheffield Bridge Club**
- Hull Bridge Club
- **Stamford Bridge Club**
- **Wallingford Bridge Club**
- **Welwyn Garden City Bridge Club**
- Trowbridge Bridge Club
- Chippenham Bridge Club
- **Bolton Bridge Club**
- **Southport Bridge Club**
- Ipswich & Kesgrave Bridge Club
- **Scunthorpe Bridge Club**
- **County Bridge Club**
- ... and more ...

Red Clubs = Top 50 by players 2019/2020

We will work with these (and other) clubs in order to share their successful strategies with other clubs & counties.



County Survey Results

Key Messages to Counties



Main Conclusions

- *Online is here to stay. People like it.*
- *The numbers of players has been decreasing over many years*
- *Most counties expect numbers of players to decrease over the next 3 years*
- *Number of active affiliated clubs is expected to significantly decrease*



- *A country-wide drive to get new players and new teachers is required*
- *Based on collaboration between the EBU, Counties and Clubs*
- *We must embrace the online game and find the best ways to incorporate this format of the game to help support counties, clubs & players.*



Player Recruitment, Membership & Communications

New Team:

Gayle Webb (Club Liaison)

gaylewebb@blueyonder.co.uk

Cath Fox (Marketing/Technology)

cathfox@btinternet.com

Kay Preddy

kay.preddy@ntlworld.com

Assisted by:

Ron Millet – long serving Board member with on-going responsibility for Player Development

We are keen to work with and learn from Members, Clubs and Counties.



Thank you !