

# Suffolk Contract Bridge Association

## **2019 AGM – Chairman’s Report for 2018-2019**

Good afternoon everybody, welcome to the 2019 AGM, and thank you all for coming

I’d like to start by welcoming a new member - the Dovercourt Bridge Club - to our association. They meet at the Tower Hotel on Tuesday evenings for Chicago, and on Thursday evenings for Duplicate, and they welcome visitors. Our County Association now comprises 22 affiliated clubs.

From time to time the SCBA committee meets with representatives of affiliated clubs, to discuss matters of mutual interest. After a break of several years, we reintroduced the practice last year and had a very constructive meeting attended by almost all our clubs, discussing a range of topics including the format of county competitions, teaching, directing, and attracting new members. There will be another such meeting in July, and this time we’re considering inviting a few selected non-affiliated clubs.

Congratulations are due to Malcolm Pryor, on his selection for the England Seniors team to play in the World Bridge Teams Championships (the D’Orsi Bowl) in China later this year.

In the Eastern Counties League we finished fifth in each of the three leagues of seven or eight teams, which is about average for us and exactly where we’d expect to be given the relative playing strength of the counties involved, according to the NGS ranking. The current season has started well for our A team with a closely-fought win in our first match against a strong Hertfordshire team that has been winner or runner-up in each of the last five seasons.

In the Tollemache qualifier we finished equal seventh of eight teams in our group.

The Abbeygate Shield – the Suffolk Club Teams-of-8 championship – was hosted by the Colchester club and contested by 12 teams. It was won, for the fourth year in succession, by Ipswich & Kesgrave and this entitled them to represent Suffolk in the Garden Cities Regional Final, where they finished a very creditable third equal, just missing out on qualification by two VPs.

We held two successful Green Pointed events during the year. Our County Congress at Felixstowe in October attracted 63 tables over the two days, which was down by 10 tables on the previous year mainly due to a timing conflict with the EBU’s Overseas Congress. We’ve changed the scheduling of this event to avoid such conflicts in future. We awarded over £1600 in prize money. Our surplus was reduced because of increased costs and reduced numbers, but we still made a healthy contribution to County funds as our Treasurer will report. The event was well supported by Suffolk members who again accounted for more than half of the competitors, and it was particularly gratifying to see Suffolk players amongst the prizes. The Swiss Teams was closely contested, with first place going to Helen Mason, Norman Less, Peter Bushby and Mike O’Reilly,

who won on a split tie from last year's winners David Willson, Simon Riley, Diane Whitley and Eric Newman. The main prizes in the Pairs again eluded Suffolk players; Tony Shearman and Robert Green in 5<sup>th</sup> were the best placed pair in the Congress Championship, but Cathy Rowland and Din Gudka won the Consolation Pairs Final from Michael Kempster and Ralph Parish in 2<sup>nd</sup>. The Really Easy Pairs was won by Alison & Conrad Simons. In March we ran another East Anglian Bridge Weekend, with 49 tables over the two days. The team of Malcolm & Karen Pryor, Neil Bresler and David Cooper were second in the Swiss Teams, and the Swiss Pairs was won by Rick Hanley, playing with Essex's Graham Beeton. The Relaxed Teams was won by Mark Leggett, Lynda Tibbs, Tony Trathen & Mary Moir. These 'Really Easy' and 'Relaxed' sections for less experienced players have become a regular feature of key County events and it's good to see that they are so well supported, thanks, mainly, to the efforts of Chris and Paul Rickard. This year's Felixstowe Congress will be held on the weekend of 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> October, at the usual venue, and the next EABW is planned for the weekend of 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> March 2020, at Elmswell.

We've again had a very full and successful programme of County events, managed by Competitions Secretary Chris Rickard, as Chris will describe shortly.

The SCBA committee has taken an increasingly firm line against bad behaviour in recent years. Players at county events are reminded about the standard of behaviour expected with printed cards (produced by Paul Rickard) on every table and additionally by an announcement from the tournament director prior to start of play, and there's a humorous cartoon strip (produced by Peter Bushby) on our website. In addition we've convened a Conduct Committee, comprising Richard Evans, Peter Bushby and Chairman Malcolm Pryor, to investigate allegations of bad behaviour. That committee has examined three incidents and taken action where it's appropriate.

Most of you will have noticed that our website changed shortly after last year's AGM. It's now managed jointly by Richard Evans and Paul Rickard, and their focus has been on marketing the SCBA's activities with more photographs, news items, articles, and contributions from members. The changes appear to be popular, with over 33,000 hits since the beginning of this year. Incidentally, Richard is a keen advocate of using websites in this way, and is willing to offer help and advice to clubs wishing to get more out of their own websites.

We've had a number of changes to the Committee in the last 12 months, and I'll say more about that when we get to item 7 – Election of Officers and Executive Committee members.

Finally, I'd like to thank all my fellow committee members for their commitment and hard work during the last year. Without exception, they provide an invaluable service for the county.

Questions? Comments?

Jeff Orton

Chairman SCBA

May 2019