



WEST MIDLANDS BRIDGE CLUB

Chairman's Report 2023/2024

The Club has again had a successful year with table numbers still steadily increasing, and the Club policy of encouraging students to become full members on completion of their courses working very well. Our membership numbers are holding.

A huge change for the Club was the employment of a new House Manager in October when Leyla joined us. It must have felt like a baptism of fire as she experienced Children-in-Need, Christmas, and the Midland Counties Congress (MCC) all within three months of being at the Club. She survived it all, ensuring we received the all-encompassing professional services needed, from a building organised to play bridge, to catering. Leyla has become an integral part of the Club's team, appreciated by the members for her delicious cakes as well as for her natural friendliness. On behalf of the Board and all our members I thank her, and her support team, most sincerely, for their work and contributions in ensuring the successful day-to-day running of the Club.

Financially, as you may have noticed, the Club is having a busy year. We have replaced the boilers and will have thermostat control over specific areas of the building, which, besides being more cost-effective, should also provide a more comfortable place to be in. We are also doing roof repairs and are in the process of replacing wiring and lights as well as the fire alarm system and fire extinguishers and the upstairs flat needs refurbishing. I know for some members this will raise the question of why do we stay in this building? Because it's the home of the West Midlands Bridge Club.

Should alternatives come on the market, they will be looked at and assessed. Your Board of Directors is not blinkered to change; however, any change must be in the best interests of the Club.

That said, it will not come as a surprise that we intend to raise our annual membership fee from 01 April 2025.

On the bridge front we have been busy with competitions and in welcoming back the EBU who are again using our facilities for league events and trials. For 2025, we also look forward to hosting the Warwickshire County Championship Pairs.

The roll of honour for 2023/4, and our congratulations to: -

The 909 Cup winners in September 2023 - Paul Ison and Jane Follett.

Winners at the MCC in January, including:

Ladies' Pairs (Allen Cup) - Lise Jan and Evelyn Whiteford

Open Teams (Hayward Bowl) - Brent Wormald, Tony Voogd, Adrian Knight, and Prue Knight

Swiss Teams (Joyce Hare Plate) Stratification C - Helen Thompson, Eileen Mitchell, Craig Skinner, and Faiz Bannourah.

Our thanks to Andrew and Helen Thompson for organising and doing most of the duplimating for this event. It was amazing.

The Club also hosted the Warwickshire Seniors' Pairs Event, held face-to-face in November, February, and April. The final event in April was won by



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Andrew Clifford, and Mike Thorley. Our thanks to Peter Abbott for organizing and Peter Randall as TD.

In the Mentored Pivot Teams in April at Coventry winners were Jazz Sohota, Alison Harms, Caroline Richards, and Marie Haworth.

In the Coventry Pairs League Division 1, Gordon Clark and Peter Abbott came first.

In the Birmingham Pairs League Division 2, Eddie Legg and Liz Court came first.

The Away Weekend in May was held at Saunton Sands in Devon and the Alan Bailey Award went to Angela Sandison. The Club is currently advertising the same venue for 2025, again in May.

Congratulations to everyone on your success, well done.

We are also hosting the Midland Counties Congress again in January, 3rd to the 5th, which Peter Abbott is master-minding. Applications can be made through the Warwickshire County Bridge Association website.

As already mentioned, Education and Training has continued to be very successful. Our thanks to our teachers, Penny, Mark, Vicki Hudson, and Geoff Parfitt.

The host system on Wednesday afternoons continues to do well and our thanks to Sally Hodgetts and Sonia Yagi for taking this on from Gill and managing it.

The WhatsApp to assist members to find a partner for other sessions is working well too and if you are not on it and wish to join, let a TD know.

And I take this opportunity to thank our TDs who, in many respects, are the backbone of the bridge club, we could not run our bridge without them.

We do, of course, always need TDs and teachers, so if anyone is interested in training as a TD and/or teaching, please speak to a director.

On a sad note, members and past members who have passed away this year include Peter Oldbury, Pip Whitehouse, Sue Rose, Ralph Roberts, and Gill Anderson. To families and friends, we convey our most sincere condolences.

And, though I repeat myself, I would like to say thank you my fellow Directors and to all those who assist at the Club. Support is essential and it is very much appreciated.

As always, we have much to look forward to and I hope you all have a very enjoyable and happy bridge playing 2024/25 season. Please encourage members to come and play as well as participating in upcoming events at the Club and throughout the County. And please do continue to make our students, new club members and visitors feel welcome. This is the place to be to play bridge in a competitive, social, and friendly environment.

Judith Currie, Chair
West Midlands Bridge Club