

Wotton-Under-Edge Bridge Club
Chairman's report for the Annual General Meeting on 27th March 2024

1. Review of the last year

As for last year, Membership remained very healthy, having 100 members in total. There were, however, a few members who had renewed their subscriptions but did not actually participate in any events during the year.

Average attendance on the RealBridge platform on Monday evenings was 7 tables, and F2F on Wednesday evenings was 8 tables, though steadily growing as the year ended. We are now back to pre-pandemic levels on Wednesdays, averaging ~10 tables.

Attendance at the Tuesday and Thursday afternoon sessions averaged just over 3 tables. My thanks to Tim, Don, Finbarr and Steve for sharing the role of directing these events. Please note that these sessions are open to all Club members.

The Christmas Party was very well attended – our largest ever, with 13½ tables. Sadly, the format wasn't such a good idea – personally, I blame the Chairman! Still most enjoyable – with thanks to Katie for the catering and Pauline for her photos, which are still available on the News Page of the website.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank Hywel for again operating the dealing machine throughout the year, and to Hilary for making sure that we always had adequate supplies of biscuits, etc. Also to our team of Directors who manage to keep all the events running.

Especial thanks go to Richard for the enormous amount of work he put into evaluating the Bridgewebs attendance/billing module, then getting it to work. Brilliant!

The one sad item to mention is that we lost two stalwarts of the Club due to serious illness. Our thanks go to Gill and Margaret for all the work they did in helping to run the Club. We also lost Ann Fisher. Finally, the Club's (joint) founder Brian Welch passed away. Personally, I owe a great debt of gratitude to Brian for gifting me my second career!

2. Looking forward

The Club is looking very healthy at the moment with the potential for many more players becoming full-fledged members in the summer when the current course of Improvers lessons finish. The Committee will have the task of keeping a watching-brief on Wednesday numbers as the Coombe Suite has limited capacity.

3. Competitions

Congratulations to Bob and Gavin, last year's winners of the Welch Cup, and to Sue for winning the Natalie Plate individual tournament in October.

We held our second Swiss Teams event in August, this time with 12 tables entering. The event was won by Barry/Gilly/Paul/Elaine. Many thanks to George for organising this.

Cleverly League. Only one team entered last year. Congratulations to Angela and her team for finishing a creditable 3rd with an average score of about 60%. We have entered three teams in previous years – please contact me if you think you can raise a team to have a go this year. You need 6 players, ideally, though a “dead keen” 4 would be enough. Games are played through the autumn and winter, roughly one game per month.

Sim Pairs. As agreed at the last AGM we participated in 4 Sim Pairs events last year. Note that an information panel is always put on the website for about two weeks either side of each event. This has links to results and analysis, available on the ECats website, also on how to donate to the relevant charities.

4. The website

Reminder to all Members that the website should be the first port of call for members who wish to find information on Club events/activities. George and I are trying to keep it up-to-date.

Note that you can find minutes (and the Accounts) of all past AGMs and Committee Meetings on the website, in the Members Area.

5. Teaching

The teaching program is very healthy with around 20 students attending the second year Improvers class and 12 attending the Beginners class.

It is essential that we continue to provide teaching courses every year. Please contact me if you are interested in helping or even becoming a teacher yourself. I'm very happy to explain what it all entails. Teaching is very rewarding. You do **not** need to be an expert, merely enthusiastic.

6. Committee

As per the Constitution, all members of the Committee stand down at the AGM. If anybody wishes to offer their services in any of the posts, please let me know, preferably well in advance of the AGM.

All the current Committee are eligible for re-election. All except Tim are willing to continue in their current roles. This means that we definitely have one post to fill – volunteer(s) please step forward. I will be happy to explain what is involved.

All the above is subject to voting at the AGM, and there being sufficient proposers and seconders.