

County Bridge Club Chair Report AGM 2024

Welcome to you all for our AGM and I am very pleased to be here with such a lovely hard working and committed group of volunteers who sit with me as your committee. Without their dedication and many and varied skill set we would not be able to run this very successful Bridge Club.

What is success? How to define success in our post covid 'new normal' world? In this world we have more daytime sessions, less in the evenings. Most Clubs are at 60% of pre covid levels. Costs have ramped up eg. Energy costs have tripled and consumables like tea, coffee, toilet roll etc have doubled. On the income side, less activity means less income from external rentals. There has also been the loss of members who did not return and lower numbers attending sessions. This is the reality we face as a Bridge Club, but your committee did not just accept this. They have tackled each issue to mitigate the effect and make sure the Club goes forward on a sound footing.

Looking at income... Members stand at 194, social bridge with lunch attracting 60 plus new members over the 2 years that the session has run. We had 16 new members this year but 22 leavers. We claimed gift aid of £1500 for the first time on membership subs. As to renting out the club...Blaby have joined us on a Tuesday, the Go organisation are now a regular rental and we have run training courses for Juniper lodge. The LCBA continue to use us but are running less competitions but still ensure an income of £1500. We continue to look for more external rental customers. Our biggest income stream is table money which is up just £1,812 over prior year.

Costs, energy bills are at £8,681 so we are running a project to install solar panels and batteries to generate our own power. We are changing the meter to reduce standing charges of £2000 a year, saving £1500. Business rates were £2500 pa reduced to £260 pa plus a refund. Insurance for next year will be £1,000 cheaper. Repairs are very significant, £7657, due to the ladies' toilets and various electrical work. We know we are busy because of the amount of consumables we go through.

On the Bridge side we have, for varied personal reasons, lost our senior directors for periods of time, and our duplimator. Our new young team of

directors are the core of a club like this. Without them we could not run sessions and I commend their work as they learn on the job. The same goes for the new crew of duplimators.

Our Social Calendar's highlight was the Christmas Party. Sixty people to cater for and we all just fit into the big room. Great fun was had by all.

Our Charity events paid tribute to Richard Smith, our Life Member who passed away suddenly and is much missed by all. His contribution to the Club was immense and we all miss him. The committee are still, a year on, having to work hard to fill this gaping hole in our Club. A lunch raised £1,100 for the family's nominated charity Versus Arthritis and was attended by 52 people. Our second charity event, a Swiss Teams lunch, was held in conjunction with LCBA raising £781 for Action Homeless Leicester.

The housekeeping teamwork every week to make sure we have what we need to run the club. You have no idea how many chocolate biscuits we get through! Stop Press the team have just been re awarded the 5 star rating for Food Hygiene.

Investments took a hit with the post Covid Ukraine and bond market crash. We are still not making significant income on our investments, but we have almost regained the ground we lost in capital value. We have cashed out £50,000 to fund the solar panels and cover the recent repairs and the losses the Club is making. The loss has reduced but operating losses are £2500 not including depreciation. We aim to break even and no more but we must address this loss, we will continue to drive costs down, but table money and membership fees will have to increase modestly to cover the increased costs of energy etc. We have a motion for the increase which would raise about £3,500 on table money.

The club seeks to be the best we can for our members, and we have invested in new IT, a new broadband provider, overhauled the bridge mates and updated all our IT programs and databases. This is all work behind the scenes that is essential but is rarely noticed. The same goes for the Website, what used to be a mystery to me. I am having to learn as I try to do things, and yes, I need rescuing regularly.

We have a long history as a Club and after much debate we agreed to put up the Tournament Boards from St James in the Club room. We now must

decide what to do with the winners since we moved to St Oswald. Another little project. The holiday is back have you booked your place? Another little project.

Our longstanding Teaching group have also had staffing issues with people needing time away due to illness and other commitments. We welcome new teachers to the group, and we have started a Friday morning beginners' session to offer more choice. We are now advertising for new students for both Tuesday evening and Friday morning but currently our student numbers are low. We need everyone to find us new students. They are the future of the club.

Marketing our Club is a challenging topic, word of mouth is the best advert and the cheapest. Printed media is very expensive and not effective, so our new project is something different. So, coming soon a marketing website to challenge us all with QR codes, likes on Facebook and Instagram posts you would think we were in the 21st century! Well, we try!

Almoner – It is with great sadness I report on the loss of the following members Ted Garrett, Derek Esterson and Ron Ferguson.

Thank you to all our volunteers who help run the club day to day and deal with any crisis which comes along, from finance, members accounts, toilets that don't work , wifi signal issues, and duplimator power adapters. May I ask for a round of applause for the Committee.

Any Questions

Now to the prize giving. We used to ask guests, but times change, and I would like to keep this honour in house. Starting with Life Member and immediate past Chairman, Ian will present the prizes.