

Christmas 2020 Newsletter

First I would like to wish you all **a very Happy Christmas and a Happy New Year**. Of course 2020 will go out without much happiness and most will say good riddance!! At least we have enjoyed some if limited bridge on line. But many members of the club for various reasons have not been able to take part.

Finances

By the time you read this you will have received the message for your annual subscriptions. Now some may ask why with no bridge at the club and limited online club bridge we are being asked for annual subscriptions. In addition, didn't we get a government grant of £10,000 in April?

The club building is owned by its members and that means we all have to contribute to look after it and make sure it is available once restrictions are lifted.

Had we not had the grant then the bank account would be under £1,000 by year end. Then at the start of next year we have nearly £4,000 of expenses just for Insurance and Security to the building. So the grant is keeping the bank account healthy but as 2021 progressed we would soon be eating into our Building Society reserves. Remember we are unlikely to be able to reopen until the end of April at the earliest which is another four months of no significant income.

So why not use the reserves? Well they are there for emergency use with unexpected capital costs in particular those associated with the building that is not covered by insurance. The reserve fund has changed little over the last ten years and part of the table money increase was to try and raise the reserves in line with rising costs over this period of time.

I believe the annual subscription is a small price to pay for making sure we have somewhere to play bridge and meet socially when things start to return to normal.

At the last on line committee meeting, it was decided, **the first two weeks back will be free play for all members attending during this period. No limit on the number of times you may play for free.** In addition the first week will not qualify for NGS or master points to allow members to adjust back to normal bridge. So something to look forward to!

Your committee continues to monitor the government and EBU advice as to when we may be able to play bridge face to face again.

Online Bridge Club

We have now trained our online directors and they are prepared to do this for a fee less than the £40 charged by the EBU directors we used and therefore my thanks to them. As a result the table money has been reduced to 3 BBO\$, equivalent to £2.80.

This will still give the club a small income each month after BBO and EBU expenses. So please support us online if you can.

We have also increased the number of sessions as follows:-

Monday evening 19.00

Tuesday afternoon 14.00

Wednesday afternoon 14.00

Thursday afternoon for relaxed duplicate 14.00

Friday evening 19.00

At the same time I managed to arrange two online team matches (six teams from each club) against St Albans BC. We lost the first 5-1 but won the second 4-2. Thank you to those who took part.

In additions I have arranged six more team matches in the New Year, two each month for January, February and March with the promise of more in April if we want to continue.

These matches are against Kings Park bridge group (Herts.), Bedford BC and Southend BC. If you are currently playing in the club online then please contact me if you want to take part.

Dimme Fleming Award

Congratulations to Dick Wheeler who has won this award for his services to county bridge administration, well deserved. This award is made by the EBU on recommendations from county committees.

Club AGM

Our constitution states we have to hold this on an annual basis. The committee is meeting in early January to decide the details on how to hold it online as March seems almost sure still to have restrictions on the size of gatherings. The date is [Saturday 13th March at 10.00](#). More details will be issued in January after the committee meeting.

Once again my very Best Wishes to everyone and I look forward to meeting once again at the club in the New Year.

Ernie

December 2020.