



Future Options for BDBC

On some levels 2021/22 was a successful year for BDBC, but there are clearly some challenges for the future.

The Committee has identified 4 options:

1. Continue as a hybrid club, offering both online and F2F sessions
2. Continue as a club offering online bridge only
3. Seek to merge with another local club
4. Close and donate our surplus funds to EBU, SCBA or charities nominated by members

Option 1

We have worked hard in the past year to operate as a hybrid club, but we must be realistic, and say that this has had limited success:

- Our re-opening in Autumn 2021 saw us achieve an average of only 4.5 tables over 11 sessions. Indications from those attending were that these numbers would drop over winter. Hence the decision to suspend F2F sessions until Spring 2022
- Responses from members to the emails canvassing support for re-opening suggested that we had sufficient support to expect an average of 5 tables at F2F sessions
- Attendance at our first three F2F sessions has been below those expectations; being 4, 4 and 3.5 tables

There are positive and negative aspects of running a hybrid club:

- Online is much easier to run and participate in
- F2F has a much greater opportunity for social interaction, but it requires more volunteers to run it and incurs expenditure not necessary for online sessions
- Low table numbers reduce the enjoyment in either format, as there will typically be longer sit-outs when playing with half tables
- Some members have commented that although they have returned F2F out of loyalty to the Club (or intend to so) they prefer, or are at least equally happy, to play online

There is an opportunity to seek to gain more online participants by advertising the Club on RealBridge, and we would welcome members views regarding this possibility.

The AGM is our chance to ask members directly for their views as to whether we continue as a hybrid club, including answers to these three key questions:

1. How long do we persevere with our Monday evening sessions, recognising the considerable work involved in running them?
2. Should we be formally stating a benchmark to help reach the decision regarding continuation of Monday evenings? For example an average of 5 tables over a 2 month period?
3. Is there any appetite for seeking to establish an alternative daytime session?

Option 2

If online only emerges as the preferred format, we can easily revert to the pattern of offering online session on both Monday and Tuesday evenings.

Whilst low table numbers is a concern in this format also, it is felt to be less concerning than low numbers in a F2F setting, and the same opportunity exists to seek additional members via RealBridge advertising as mentioned above.

Options 3 & 4

Merger or ceasing activities are felt to be more theoretical possibilities that have not been formally considered by the Committee. Either of them would require resolutions at a Special General Meeting. Nevertheless the AGM is an opportunity to identify if members feel that these are options that should be being investigated at this time.

Fee proposals for 2022/23

Mindful of our healthy cash position, and desire to see the club flourish, it is proposed that:

1. Membership should be free for the whole of next year for all those members who paid a membership fee in the twelve months to 31 March 2022.
2. Table money for both F2F and on-line bridge continues at £1.50 per session.
3. Visitors should continue to be welcome at a fee of £2.50 per session, for a maximum of 2 sessions
4. New members should pay a joining fee of £5

It is recognised that this may result in the Club operating at a loss during the year under option 1, but it is believed that this is justifiable in the interests of the Club becoming re-established.