

## President's Newsletter

It is some time since my last message.

Many of you have been in touch in the interim period seeking advice and/or updates on many of the items I referenced as “works in progress” or “under development”.

The most important consideration which really underpins everything else is which rules, advice and guidance should be adhered to and/or followed by the SBU, Districts and Clubs when considering if and when it is safe to return to face to face (F2F) bridge in Scotland.

It is relatively easy to provide good advice as to how best to ensure safety, once it is clear that any bridge provider is, all things being equal, free to consider restarting F2F bridge.

There are excellent bridge club tailored risk assessment templates available. There are many sites offering various environmental economical safety enhancers- Table top dividers; table extenders; screens; table top card dealers; sanitisers etc.

However, it seemed to me to be irresponsible and unsafe for the SBU to give out any information that might suggest we were endorsing a return to F2F bridge under any circumstance if it were not absolutely certain that such information was sound.

The reference text in Scotland, as reported in our original message foretelling the advice for all F2F bridge to cease in March 2020, was and remains that found here-

[https://hpspubsrepo.blob.core.windows.net/hps-website/nss/2973/documents/1\\_covid-19-guidance-for-non-healthcare-settings.pdf](https://hpspubsrepo.blob.core.windows.net/hps-website/nss/2973/documents/1_covid-19-guidance-for-non-healthcare-settings.pdf)

However, Section 3, “Information and Guidance for Specific settings” does not specifically or even generally cover bridge Clubs. E mail exchanges with Health Protection Scotland seeking clarification, resulted in the advice that Bridge Clubs should adhere to the Household gathering rules pertinent at the time irrespective of the setting. The latest published Document, as of September 14<sup>th</sup>., stated

*When meeting people outside your household for a social gathering, you may meet people socially from no more than 1 other household at a time indoors or outdoors. You should stay at least 2 metres apart from people from other households at all times.*

*No more than 6 people in total (from a maximum of 2 households) may meet at any time in such settings,*

I am sure I don't need to remind you that today this advice became tighter. Now you cannot mix with any other household member indoors.

**Having been advised by Health Protection Scotland that such rulings were unlikely to be relaxed for the foreseeable future, the SBU Council, on the 20<sup>th</sup> September 2020, agreed that Clubs and Districts should be advised that F2F bridge in Scotland will not be possible until such time as significant changes or clarifications to the rules are announced.**

If and when we can announce that, with all Public Health measures being in place F2F bridge can resume, we shall provide as much help as we can to help play resume safely.

We have clarified, for example, the terms of our cover with the SBU Insurers. Once it is considered safe to return to F2F bridge in Scotland, as long as we and Clubs which rent premises can evidence that we have done everything we can to follow relevant guidelines to mitigate the risk of players

and/or staff contracting coronavirus in the play environment the SBU Public Liability Cover would protect us. Scott Macdonald, SBU Treasurer, will be happy to advise eligible Clubs further on the terms of cover. Clubs who own their own premises should seek advice from their own Insurers.

The SBU is now planning an online Bridge Calendar for the 2020/21 season. If in the meantime F2F can resume we shall regroup. The Tournament Committee, together with the Master Point Committee, and the Finance Committee are tasked with drafting up asap an on-line calendar to include National events, hoping to be able to provide a reasonable mix of events for all, whilst doing their best to not stifle Club and District initiatives.

Our newly renegotiated Contract with BBO with the removal of the Exclusivity clause, now allows us to consider other on-line bridge providers. This will help all of us broaden the type of on-line bridge experience we can offer.

In line with Scottish Government advice as described, the SBU December Congress at Bellshill has been cancelled by the hotel. It is hoped to run, on the same WE, a National on-line Congress, convened by Bill Whyte. I have asked for a virtual president's drinks party to be included! [Bring your own.]

Meanwhile, an advert is being prepared for a replacement Congress Convenor to help ensure continuity with our work with GEBOS [formerly BOS].

The Tournament Committee has reported that over 30 BBO TDs were trained through the first training programme. Many of those trained have, in turn, volunteered to train others to help Clubs start their own online presence. These new trainees are "finished" off by Anne Brodie Allen to help ensure our trained BBO TDs meet the spec. laid down by BBO.

There are now many games available in the various SBU, SBU\_X, and SBU\_X\_XX virtual clubs. A considerable amount of work is undertaken by the TDs themselves, by Eddie McGeough, Alison Carmichael, Gordon Milne, and Alan Officer to ensure that results are uploaded in usable and recognisable forms, and that, where applicable, MPs are allocated. The SBU has agreed to trial embedding a Bridgeweb site on their own Website to help further the translation and scrutiny of results.

Thank you for so patiently waiting for your BBO earnings. As you know, the first payments have now been made.

The Membership Secretary reports a so far near normal return in Subscriptions. We are indebted to our members for their loyalty and especially to those working so hard to keep clubs "going". Although some clubs are hibernating, some are temporarily merging, and one or two new applications are the pipeline from clubs seeking to affiliate.

As referenced earlier, the SBU aims to do everything they can to help Clubs keep afloat.

The new SBU branded teaching courses have been launched and there are a considerable number of on-line teaching initiatives happening across Scotland. As stated in the previous Home page post from our Education arm, the SBU supports all teaching initiatives across Scotland. New consortiums of teachers already report extremely rewarding and valuable resource sharing.

Although the Council has not agreed to publish Council minutes, they have asked me to regularly update you on significant decisions.

Please, in the meantime, do continue to contact your District Chairs or, where appropriate the SBU Secretary, Convenors or myself, with your comments and concerns.

With Best wishes, Joan

22/09/20

