



**BIDDING  
FOR THE FUTURE  
2013 -2018**

Duplicate Bridge is one of the most enduring and popular games in the world.

It embraces people from all walks of life, young and old.

It provides a framework for making new friends and learning new skills.

It helps individuals obtain, maintain and retain a healthy and agile mind.

Simply, it is one of the greatest games of all time.

The English Bridge Union is responsible for the advancement of Duplicate Bridge and the provision of the infrastructure to play the game in England.

In 2008 the EBU launched *Bidding for the Future*, its strategic plan to develop duplicate bridge in England. From 2008 until 2013 the EBU's staff and national volunteers set out to implement the strategy and we are delighted to report that this hard work and effort has helped us achieve the vast majority of the objectives we set ourselves.

Over the past year we have been working to update our strategy. The successful launch and implementation of universal membership has provided the Union with a stability from which to grow. It is our duty as a Board elected by the representatives of our membership to ensure that the game of duplicate bridge in England continues to develop. The following strategic plan will be used to help us achieve that simple objective whilst ensuring that we continue to uphold our values:

- **To act always in the best interests of our membership;**
- **To take pride in delivering quality and value for money;**
- **To respect each other and celebrate diversity so that everyone can give of their best.**

## OUR STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

The average age of the population of England is increasing and the options open to young and old to fill their often expanded leisure time is also increasing. These factors are both an opportunity and threat to the EBU – but one thing is certain: we need to continue to encourage people to play duplicate bridge and provide even better services:

- To our existing members, so they enjoy their game more and play more often;
- To potential members, who may currently play socially or in unaffiliated clubs, and who we can welcome into the organised competitive game;
- To potential members, keen to learn, or return to, the game in a friendly environment, perhaps because their friends or family already play, or because they recognise the value of bridge to the mind.

To succeed in this expansion of our game, the EBU has three main strategic objectives:

- To get closer to, and stay in touch with, our membership;
- To promote the value of bridge to players and potential players alike;
- To harness improvements in technology to make the game more enjoyable and accessible.

With these key strategic objectives as a priority, the EBU has identified nine broad areas of activity on which to focus the organisation's energy and resources over the next five years. Each area will be measured and championed by an EBU Board Member, and we will report progress at least annually. However, how much we can do will inevitably depend on the funding and resource we have to move things forward. We will press to be more efficient where we can, and grow our income to invest in our future. But we will also be prudent and only invest additional resource in these strategic objectives when we have created the headroom to do so.

## OUR KEY ACTIVITIES

### GOVERNANCE AND CHARITABLE STATUS

To convert all or part of the EBU into a charity to widen the appeal of the game, make it more cost effective for people to play and attract charitable funding. In particular, we will:

- Continue to have an organisation of which its members are proud – transparent, with clear and visible governance, involving and respected by the Counties and Clubs;
- By April 2014, set up a charity to encompass education, fulfilling all the requirements of charitable status, to develop the game of duplicate bridge;
- Adopt the Charity Commission Good Governance code as our standard for Corporate Governance;
- Provide regular transparent communication to Counties and Clubs about progress in implementing this strategy and all aspects of our operations – and we will listen carefully and constructively to feedback about our activities and plans;
- Ensure that we provide advice and support on volunteering in our counties and clubs;
- Continue to keep up-to-date with developments in playing Bridge worldwide to enhance our own services to our members.

### SUPPORTING BRIDGE AND SECURING THE FUTURE

To generate, through the provision of products and services and from charitable donations, a surplus each year to invest back into the development of the game. In particular, we will:

- Each year promote, both to our members and more widely, the game of duplicate bridge, including *English Bridge*, teaching and the promotion of benefits on well-being.
- Also invest in developing and supporting our best players for international competition.

## OUR KEY ACTIVITIES

### RELATIONSHIPS WITH OUR COUNTIES AND CLUBS

To increase our number of affiliated clubs, and influence with non-affiliated clubs. In particular, we will:

- Work closely with our Counties, including establishing a County-led working group to address key areas of development;
- In partnership with the Counties, grow the number of clubs we support through universal membership with development of teaching programmes, promotional services, and support services;
- Determine a policy towards non-affiliated clubs which balances the need for the EBU to prioritise its activities for the benefit of affiliated clubs, while extending our influence to attract players who play in non-affiliated clubs, online and elsewhere;
- Introduce, by 2015, with our affiliated clubs, a low-cost or free way for citizens with limited income to learn and play duplicate bridge.

### EDUCATION

We will invest significantly in education, both younger and older people, to generate increased membership and interest in bridge. In particular, we will:

- Retain feedback from the schools who have taken part in the Minibridge programme so that we can develop the project to increase participation from schools across England. We will start a strategically targeted fundraising programme at the end of 2013 to assist with resources for the project.
- Continue to develop our programme of teaching and the promotion of benefits of playing bridge as a way of attracting those aged over 55 to take up duplicate bridge and return to play bridge regularly. This will include fundraising to support teachers and students in clubs where there is either a lack of space and/or potential teachers. In addition, we will investigate funding to research the benefits of playing bridge on the cognitive function of older people including the benefits of social interaction amongst the elderly.

## OUR KEY ACTIVITIES

### TOURNAMENTS AND REGULATIONS

We will provide a more flexible, responsive and comprehensive range of tournaments, both national and regional, face-to-face and online, appealing to all players. In particular, we will:

- Develop tournaments which appeal to all sections of our membership, such that tournament participation increases significantly over the period;
- Be the leading provider of online competitions probably in partnership with others;
- Regularly review our rules and regulations and will ensure that they are accessible, simplified as far as practical, and understandable to the full range of our membership;
- Find engaging ways of introducing new players to the rules of the game embracing the laws of tournament bridge and EBU regulations

### INTERNATIONAL TEAMS

We will secure funding to improve the consistency of results of, and support for, our international teams of all ages. In particular:

- All our international teams will regularly be participating in the final stages of Europeans, Home Internationals, Bermuda Bowl and Venice Cup, and the World Mind Sports Games;
- We will host at least one major international tournament, which will be used to help promote bridge;
- All Bridge Organisations have not only to be effective, but also transparent in the way they conduct their affairs; we will be influential, with others, in improving relations with the EBL and WBF to achieve these aims.

## OUR KEY ACTIVITIES

### TECHNOLOGY

We will seek to finance a significant and radical investment in technology including tournaments, a state-of-the-art up-to-date website, and communications. In particular, we will:

- Use an effective mixture of increasingly online but also paper communications tailored to the needs of our membership;
- Deploy suitable technology at our congresses and online to enhance members' enjoyment and help us attract new players;
- Trial EBU-branded online tournaments, and investigate whether online bridge can be used to improve some existing tournaments, for example, some of our knock-out events;
- Progressively, over the first twelve months of this plan, introduce a flexible high-quality website, which will also be a vehicle for accessing all our services and products with a secure online payment capability.

### OUR EMPLOYEES

We will recognise the importance of investment in employee development to underpin the leadership and lean management of all we do. In particular, we will:

- Ensure our employees have an employment package that compares well against similar organisations in our locality;
- Look to our employees to understand and champion all elements of this strategic plan;
- Continue to make employee development, including succession planning, a cornerstone of our HR strategy over this plan period;
- Develop and implement a long term strategy for housing the EBU in fit-for-purpose premises, which makes good use of the resources of the EBU, including the use, where effective, of home working.

## OUR KEY ACTIVITIES

### ARCHIVES

The EBU has a duty as the guardian of bridge records and history; we will, with our Counties and Clubs, improve our record keeping, be responsible in the matter of collecting, storing and making available such data, including having an archive, which future players, historians and others can look at and use for research and information.

## REPORTING AND COMMUNICATING

We are committed to achieving greater popularity for Duplicate Bridge and its recognition as a game of great fun and worth to all sections of society. This Board is determined to realise these goals through the process of review, communication and delivery of this strategy plan over the next five years. We will report on our progress regularly to our shareholders and our membership.

*EBU Board,  
8th May 2013*

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