



THE ENGLISH BRIDGE UNION

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Press Release – for immediate publication

English Bridge Union works with Charity Commission

Documentation developed to help bridge clubs applying for charity status

The English Bridge Union (EBU) is pleased to announce that it has worked with the Charity Commission to develop an approved governing document and support materials for bridge clubs applying to register as charities.

Playing bridge is a hugely popular pastime in the UK, and achieving charitable status will enable bridge clubs to extend the range of services and facilities they offer, thus benefitting many local communities. The reinvestment of the extra funds that will be generated by clubs after becoming charities will aid both beginners, through the establishment of teaching programmes, and established players, through greater opportunities to play, often in improved venues and with updated equipment.

EBU Chairman, Jeremy Dhondy, said “We are delighted to have finalised the approved governing document with the Charity Commission. It will be helpful to our affiliated clubs which are eligible to apply to register as charities and in turn it will strengthen their membership and position in the local community”.

In April 2014 the charity English Bridge Education and Development came into operation, in part to help establish a national infrastructure for the teaching and playing of bridge. Simon Barb, Manager of English Bridge Education and Development, believes that this has been an important step for bridge in England. “Putting all our education activities under a charitable umbrella has enabled us to work even more efficiently on both our recruitment efforts and reaching out to our young and mature target audiences”. The documentation and materials put together by the EBU and Charity Commission will help continue this progress. It will assist clubs in achieving charitable status, enabling them to then undertake acts at a more local level alongside the broader activities of English Bridge Education and Development.

Bridge is a fun, challenging, sociable, and inexpensive mind sport¹, which can be played by people of all ages and from all backgrounds, but is also recognised as having significant health and societal benefits. Bridge is seen as an excellent way of improving mental acuity and delaying the onset of

dementia², and the social and partnership aspects of bridge are of great benefit to those who may otherwise become isolated. When more clubs achieve charitable status the opportunity to play, or to play more often, will be available to a greater number of people.

At an elite level England has recently enjoyed its most successful international tournament, with its teams winning Gold, Silver and Bronze medals at the European Championships. It is hoped that the accreditation of more clubs as charities may play a part in nurturing the strong 'club environment' which may produce the next generation of players to represent their country.

The development of the approved governing document with the Charity Commission is a significant step towards the registration of more clubs as charities. The EBU has worked with the Charity Commission to establish a series of documents which will assist the clubs in their applications. Neville Brownlee, Head of First Contact at the Charity Commission, said "Using up to date comprehensive governing documents is one way that charities can assure their regulators, funders, service users and the wider public that they are committed to running their organisation effectively. The Approved Governing Document (AGD) offers a template, which helps increase the standard of application and encourages a consistent approach from the EBU's member bridge clubs when registering as charities. It also provides members, and the public, with an easy to understand set of rules that should help with their effective governance of their charities."

Bridge clubs can be recognised as charities following a change in the law introduced by the Charities Act 2006 which recognised that whilst sport has often been used to advance charitable aims it is now charitable to advance amateur sports or games, which promote health by involving physical or mental skill or exertion, as an aim in itself.

The first bridge club to achieve charitable status was Hitchin Bridge Club in 2011, and a number of others have since been registered. "With the benefit of charitable status the club can now concentrate on providing a new community building for the residents of Hitchin which will provide modern facilities for playing the sport and a wide range of other community activities", said Mrs Margaret Eddleston, President and founder Hitchin Bridge Club. Andy Hughes, Chairman of Hampshire and Isle of Wight Contract Bridge Association, which became a charity in March 2014, said of the new status, "it will enable us to bring bridge to more people".

Further information for clubs wishing to apply for charitable status, along with the necessary documentation can be found on the English Bridge Union website – www.ebu.co.uk

Anyone wishing to learn to play bridge should contact English Bridge Education and Development via www.ebedcio.org.uk

For further information please contact the Communications Officer, Peter Stockdale, on 01296 317215 or at press@ebu.co.uk

1 – for information about bridge, please see below and <http://www.ebu.co.uk/about-bridge>

2 - see Annals of Internal Medicine, American College of Physicians and the Washington Post, 2003 reporting on: Verghese, J. 2003. The effects of mind games on Alzheimer's and dementia. Albert Einstein College of Medicine, Bronx, USA.

What is Bridge?

Bridge is a mind sport, played in pairs against other pairs (the pairs are sometimes combined into teams of four or eight); The partners sit opposite each other at a table. There is an auction (often called bidding) and

then the play, after which the hand is scored. The more tricks a partnership correctly predicts they will make the better their score - but if they do not make as many as they predict their opponents score points instead. In competitions the same hands are played at each table so you can compare your scores with the other partnerships and work out who did best with what they were dealt, thus almost eliminating the 'luck' aspect that exists in games such as poker. Playing bridge is one of the most enduring and popular pastimes in the world and for over 100 years, and it has fascinated people of all types and from all walks of life. It is one of the most popular leisure activities in Britain, with around 300,000 people playing on a regular basis.

About the English Bridge Union

The English Bridge Union (EBU) was formed on 23 May 1936 and is a non-profit making membership-funded organisation committed to promoting the game of duplicate bridge. It is also a National Bridge Organisation, affiliated to the European Bridge League and the World Bridge Federation. The national headquarters of the EBU are in Aylesbury where around 20 professional people support and advise the committees and help implement policy.