

BRIDGE



IT'S A BIG DEAL!

Shareholders Report

The Festival of Bridge 9-15 September 2024

A BIG THANK YOU!

THANK YOU to everyone who joined in the *Bridge - It's a Big Deal!* Festival of Bridge. Your effort and contributions made the Festival a great success! Thousands of you took part in over 270 events across England raising over £130,000! For Cancer Research UK (target was £60K).

This achievement couldn't have been reached without the effort of the volunteers, clubs & counties around the country. This has been a great fundraising effort, but also has raised the profile of bridge throughout the country. The Festival saw excellent collaboration between clubs and counties who ran many joint events involving affiliated and non-affiliated clubs.

Bridge – It's a Big Deal! was the brainchild of former EBU Vice-Chair Tony Russ who had a vision to bring bridge players together to celebrate our wonderful game while also raising money for a great cause. Tony himself was diagnosed with cancer earlier this year and sadly passed away this August. He will be greatly missed but his legacy - both raising the profile of the game and raising major funds for Cancer Research UK - will remain following the great success of this event for the bridge community. We hope to bring you more such initiatives in the future.



THE FESTIVAL TEAM:

The team (from left to right); Samantha Kelly (Communications Officer), Fairlie Ruggles (Media/Marketing Advisor), Jonathan Lillycrop (Club Liaison Officer), Diana Nettleton (Board Member), Gordon Rainsford (Chief Executive), Espen Givold (EBU Member).



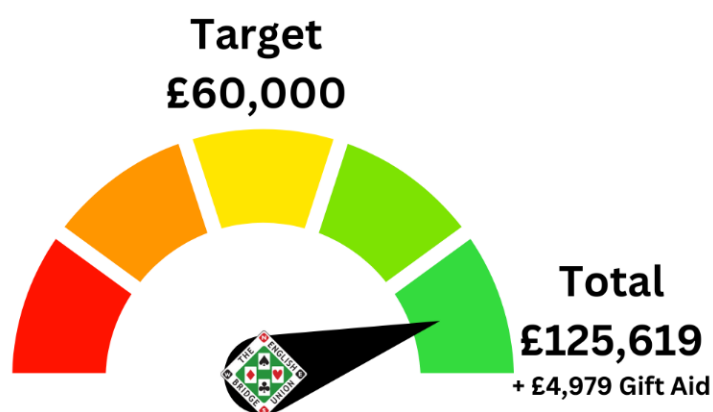
SUMMARY OF EVENTS:

There were a total of 283 Festival Events.

These included Open Days/Taster Sessions (approx. 45), Cafe Bridge, Duplicate Sessions, SIM pairs, Handicap Pairs, and many more.

The six national events were EBED Festival Simultaneous Pairs in support of Cancer Research UK; National Handicap Championship Pairs; Play Without the Experts Festival; Isle of Man Congress; Guernsey Congress and Festival Finale. A total of 7,266 distinct players played in the national Festival events.

FUNDRAISING TOTAL:



A Cancer Research UK online fundraising page was created to ensure 100% of the donations were received by the charity.

The initial target of £60,000 has been SMASHED! The final total is now £125,619.29 (+ £4,979.17 Gift Aid).

Cancer Research UK produced a short Thank You video for all the volunteers from clubs and counties that contributed to the above figure, you can watch this video via the [EBU YouTube channel here](#). At the AGM, Gemma Kitching, our Cancer Research UK coordinator, outlined some of the items the donations could fund:

- A PhD student outside of London for 4 years plus a postdoctoral researcher for 1 year
 - Our PhD students complete a 4-year training programme to equip them with the skills they'll need to make the research breakthroughs of the future. We fund around 550 PhD students in labs across the country.
- A team of nine cancer nurses for 3 months
- Our expert team of cancer information nurses are on hand to offer confidential support and guidance to people affected by cancer
 - The nurses are available every weekday and are happy to answer any questions or concerns about a cancer diagnosis, symptoms, or treatment options.

The vision for Cancer Research UK is a world where everybody lives longer, better lives, free from the fear of cancer. With the above donation, the English Bridge Union are contributing to this progress. A huge, heartfelt thank you from me and all at Cancer Research UK for your support.

Clubs and counties who took part in the Festival:

Abbey Smith Bridge Club	Forest of Dean Bridge Club	Selsdon Bridge Club
Afternoon Bridge Club	Framlingham Bridge Club	Sheffield Bridge Club
Allingham Bridge Club	Gloucester Bridge Club	South Croydon Bridge Club
Altrincham Bridge Club	Grantham Bridge Club	South London Oshwal Bridge Club
Ascot Bridge Club	Halifax Bridge Club	Southam Bridge Club
Avenue Bridge Club	Harrogate Bridge Club	Southport Bridge Club
Aylesbury Aces Bridge Club	Heathercroft Bridge Club	Sovereign Harbour Bridge Club
Bagworth Whistlestop Bridge Group	Heighington Bridge Club	St Annes Bridge Club
Barrow Bridge Club	Hemel Hempstead Bridge Club	St Annes Bridge Club, Lytham
Basingstoke Bridge Club	Heritage Coast	St Ives Bridge Club
Bawburgh Bridge Club	Heritage Coast Bridge Club	St Leonards Bridge Club
Beckenham Bridge Club	Hertfordshire	Stamford Bridge Club
Bedford Bridge Club	Hexham Bridge Club	Stannington Bridge Club
Bedfordshire	Hitchin Bridge Club	Stansfield Bridge Club
Billericay Mayflower Bridge Club	Hoby Bridge Club	Stratford-Upon-Avon Bridge Club
Bletchingley Bridge Club	Horsham Bridge Club	Stroud Bridge Club
Bolton Bridge Club	Hull Bridge Club	Sussex
Bookham Afternoon Bridge Club	Hunstanton Bridge Club	Sutton Coldfield Bridge Club
Boston Bridge Club	Isle of Man	Swaffham Bridge Club
Bourne Bridge Club, Farnham	Kenilworth Bridge Club	Swindon Bridge Club
Bradford Bridge Club	Kettering Bridge Club	The Bridge School at Gerrards Cross
Bradford-on-Avon Bridge Club	Kings Sutton Bridge Club	The Manchester Bridge Club
Bradgate Bridge Club	Kingsbridge Estuary Bridge Club	The Monday Bridge Club, Battersea
Bradshaw Bridge Club	Kiplings Bridge Club	The Monday Bridge Club, Chorley
Bramhall and Cheadle Hulme Bridge Centre	Lane End Bridge Club	The Wey Bridge Club
Braunton Bridge Club	Langport Bridge Club	Thirsk Bridge Club
Bridge @ Kippington	Larkhill Bridge Club	Thorpe Bay Bridge Club
Bridge Days Spoons	LCBA	Thurlestone, Kingsbridge Regal, Modbury and Kingsbridge Estuary Bridge Clubs
Bridge on the Heath Bridge Club	Leighton Buzzard Bridge Club	Tim Chanter Bridge Teacher
Bristol Bridge Club	Leverstock Green Bridge Club	Towcester Bridge Club
British Airways Bridge Club	LMBA	Trafford Bridge Club
Bromsgrove Bridge Club	Loughborough Bridge Club	Trowbridge Bridge Club
Brunton Bridge Club	Loughton Bridge Club	Tudor & Guildford Bridge Club
Buckingham Bridge Club	Louth Duplicate Bridge Club	Tudor Bridge Club, South Gloucestershire
Bury Athenaeum Bridge Club	Lymington Bridge Club	Tunbridge Wells Bridge Club
Cambs and Hunts	Lytham Bridge Club	Upminster & Cranham Bridge Club
Carbis Bay Bridge Club	Maidstone Bridge Club	Wakefield Bridge Club
Cardiff Bridge Club	Malmesbury Bridge Club	Wallingford Bridge Club
Caterham Bridge Club	Malton Bridge Club	Warrington Bridge Club
Caversham Park Bridge Club	Manchester	Wearside Bridge Club
Charnwood Bridge Teachers	Market Harborough Bridge Club	West London Gay Bridge Club
Cheddar & Wedmore Bridge Club	Marylebone Cricket Club Bridge Society	West Sussex Bridge Club
Chelmsford Bridge Club	Medway Towns Bridge Club	West Worthing Bridge Club (West Sussex)
Cheltenham Bridge Club	Meon Bridge Club	Westbury Bridge Club
Chichester Bridge Club	Milton Keynes Bridge Club	Wetherby Bridge Club
Chipping Campden Bridge Club	Morpeth Bridge Club	Whitby Bridge Club
Churchdown Bridge Club	Nettleham Bridge Club	Whitley Bay and Tynemouth Bridge Club
Clare Bridge Club	New Earswick, York Bridge Club	Wigan Bridge Club
Clevedon & Portishead Bridge Club and Nailsea Bridge Club	New Hertford Bridge Club	Wiltshire
Club 52	Newton Abbot Bridge Club	Wimbledon Bridge Club
Corsham Bridge Club	North Cotswold Bridge Club	Winchcombe Bridge Club
County Bridge Club, Leicester	Northallerton Bridge Club	Winchester Bridge Club
Coventry Bridge Club	Northamptonshire	Winscombe & District Bridge Club
Crawley Bridge Club	Noverre Bridge Club	Witney Bridge Club
Crewkerne Bridge Club	Orton Bridge Club	Woodberry Bridge Club
Cross in Hand Bridge Club	Oswestry Bridge Club	Woodcote Bridge Club
Deal and Dover Duplicate Bridge Club	Oxford Bridge Club	Worcester Bridge Club
Deva Bridge Club	Patcham Bridge Club	Worcestershire
Douglas Bridge Club	Pershore Bridge Club	Workington Bridge Club
Durham Bridge Club	Perth Bridge Club	Worthing Bridge Club
Eating Golf Club, Bridge Section	Plymouth Bridge Club	Wotton Under Edge Bridge Club
Exmouth Bridge Club	Pocklington Bridge Club	York Bridge Club
Falconer Bridge Club, Lincolnshire	Pulborough Bridge Club	Yorkshire Contract Bridge Association
Farnham Bridge club	Scunthorpe Bridge Club	Young Chelsea Bridge Club
	Seaford Bridge Club	

POST FESTIVAL MEMBER SURVEY RESULTS:

The number of player sessions in September 2024 was 151,041, compared with 142,015 in September 2023.

Following the Festival, an email was sent to all clubs and counties asking them to take part in our post-Festival survey. We asked that just one person from each club submit the details, and clubs were encouraged to respond even if they had not participated in any Festival events.

113 clubs responded to the survey. 71% responded confirming they took part in Festival activities. We were pleased to see that over 40% of clubs co-operated with other clubs or counties to run Festival events.

Nearly 50% of clubs that took part in Festival events stated they have seen an increase in interest at their club from potential new members, and 44% of clubs noticed an increase in the visibility and awareness of the bridge club in their local area. 1 in 5 respondents said they have seen an increase in table numbers and player sessions following the Festival. Below are a few of the good news stories:

- Abbey Smith Bridge Club has filled two new beginner courses following taster sessions. The social bridge games at the club also attracted some new players to the duplicate sessions following the Festival.
- Northallerton Bridge Club attracted 80 visitors to their Open Day, with 15 looking to attend the Beginners lessons at the club this Autumn.
- Pocklington Bridge club, in collaboration with the Dunnington and Allerthorpe clubs ran a series of events from which they have 11 potential future new members.
- One anonymous club confirmed they had more than double the number of students sign up for their beginner lessons as a result of their Festival Open Day.
- Worcestershire played in eight different venues across the county, a mix of events which promoted greater awareness of the clubs. They have reported the effort was worthwhile and has helped Worcestershire a lot.

Many clubs commented that fundraising for the charity promoted interest not just from current and previous members, but from visitors wanting to support the charity. As a result, the feedback is some of those visitors, initially attending solely to support the charity, found themselves wanting to know more about the game and have since signed up for beginner lessons.

Other clubs noted that the Festival gave them the motivation to hold special events which helped to bring club members together and gave them encouragement to hold similar events in future. For example, Wetherby Bridge Club ran a bridge and bowls day which is to become an annual event, increasing their contacts with the local bowls club.

12 clubs reported they had received press coverage in their local papers, details of this and more press coverage can be found in appendix A.

It is difficult to tell how many new members we have at this stage. It will take a while for new members signing up for courses to be visible in the EBU player number statistics as the pathway to this varies from club to club and teacher to teacher. What we do know is that in September we had 610 students registered, in October the figure increased to 793 and in November it is 903.

COMMS / RESOURCES:

The team ran a series of dedicated Festival communications over the 12 months leading up to and during the Festival.

Sam Kelly, our Communications Officer, built a new section on the EBU website, which housed all of the resources and information related to the Festival. 95% of people who responded to the survey confirmed they were aware of the resources available, with nearly 70% of people making use of the resources. The pages are still available for clubs and counties to use as ideas or inspiration for future events.

These resources included but were not limited to: press releases, promotional videos, logos & branding, promotional flyers and posters, email templates, QR code and leaflet for donations, bunting and donation boxes. You can see the full list of resources available at <https://www.ebu.co.uk/festival/resources>.

We set up monthly zoom calls with clubs and counties to build opportunities for local club organisers to meet and feel supported by the EBU Festival team. Initially the Zoom calls were about promoting the event, generating the ideas for the event and introducing them to the help available on the website. It was great to see clubs of all sizes getting involved. Below are some specific stories:

- Barrow Bridge Club in Cumbria were very enthusiastic and used the Festival as an incentive to run a charity pairs and taster sessions. The club made use of the Festival bunting supplied by the EBU and the additional bunting and donation boxes supplied by Cancer Research UK. We helped them prepare a press report for the local journalists, who were very happy to include details of the open day as an article in the local paper. They now have a new contact at the paper that they may utilise for future events.
- Northallerton are a newer club, run by an enthusiastic team new to the game. They joined the Zoom meetings in May and we had a lot of fun helping them to plan their Open Day.
- One of the first clubs to sign up to join the Bridge - It's a Big Deal! Festival was Nettleham Bridge Club in Lincolnshire. Nettleham Bridge Club held a sellout charity day, which attracted a series of articles in the village magazine and donations from local firms, plus the list for the beginners' class has grown!
- Robyn Glynne-Percy, Communications Officer for the Scottish Bridge Union, joined us for a number of Zoom meetings, she was helpful and enthusiastic, providing updates on different events being planned by Scottish clubs.
- Gemma Kitching from Cancer Research UK also joined the meetings and was able to speak to clubs about the items available from the charity. Cancer Research UK provided fundraising packs for any club that requested them, the packs included bunting and donation boxes for cash donations on the day. In some cases, the charity was also able to organise local speakers to attend events and explain in person the impact of members donations.

These innovative and constructive meetings worked well and provided a great opportunity for the EBU team to get to know more about our clubs, counties and members and how the EBU can best support them in the future.

FACEBOOK PRESENCE:

One of our objectives was to develop our social media profiles, the Festival gave us the impetus to produce more content for social media and gain traction to increase our followers and interactions. Facebook “reach” is the number of people who see content from the EBU page. “Followers” relates to the number of people who have liked and followed the EBU Facebook page, these accounts see posts from the EBU Facebook account direct to their feed and are included in the “reach” figure. “Interactions” are the number of likes, shares or comments at post has.

We also created a new dedicated Festival Facebook Group. This group was specifically for discussions and posts about all of the events and activities happening around the Festival. The group is “opt-in”, meaning that people request to join. At present we have 584 members in the Festival Group.

The increase in posting has been very successful, with a 42% increase in the number of accounts that the EBU Facebook page reaches. The below table shows the highlights of the outcomes with a year-on-year comparison.

Here we report on the progress made from 2023 to 2024 during the three-month period July – September in each year:

Media	2023	2024	+/-%
EBU Facebook page Reach	5,400	7,600	+42%
EBU Facebook page Interactions	408	757	+84%
Festival of Bridge page Members		570	All new members
Festival of Bridge page Interactions		1,370	All new interactions
Festival of Bridge page Posts		297+	All new posts
Festival of Bridge page Increase Aug-Sept	Posts +164%		Reactions +249%
EBU Website “Find a teacher/club”	365	437	
Festival of Bridge Webpage	N/A	2,832	+2832

The EBU Board recognise that social media has a key role to play in our communications in the future. The Festival Facebook page has been the first step on this journey.

NEW INITIATIVES / PARTNERSHIPS:

Fairlie Ruggles, volunteered her time as a Marketing Consultant, to offer her expertise to the Festival team. Along with supporting communications for the Festival, Fairlie produced multiple videos for the EBU YouTube Channel. These short videos featured well known bridge players inviting people to join in and get involved with the Festival. They were then shared on the EBU website and Facebook pages. Here is what she had to say:

I was very happy to be asked to be part of the Festival team and raise funds for the charity. I am a long-standing bridge enthusiast and a big believer in promoting the game to the wider community. There are so many positive aspects about playing bridge including finding like-minded people and using our minds in a positive way. Most of my friends and family hear me enthusiastically talk about bridge and it makes sense that I help in a professional capacity as a consultant. I have spent many years managing national media campaigns and large-scale charity events.

On a personal note, I have experienced heartbreak through losing both a brother and ex-husband to one of the most brutal forms of cancer, each time only having a matter of weeks to say goodbye. I believe investing in research can get us better outcomes and support anyone who is willing to help contribute hence my dedication to the Festival.

Thank you Fairlie for all your ideas, enthusiasm and commitment to help us make the Festival a great success.

THANK YOU TO THE BRIDGE PROFESSIONALS WHO KINDLY SUPPORTED BRIDGE - IT'S A BIG DEAL!

We would like to thank all our collaborators for their time and effort in recording the videos:



From left to right: Steve Raine (bridge player and Vlogger); Professor Samantha Punch (Research Director at the University of Stirling -BAMSA); Abbey Smith (EBU Board member); James Smith (EBU Shareholder and Committee Member for London Metropolitan Bridge Association); Andrew Robson OBE (professional bridge player and teacher); Charlie Bucknell - Bucknellbridge (Under 21 Squad leader) and Michael Byrne (Captain and U20 Squad Leader).

Some of these videos led to new initiatives and partnerships. Thank you also to the following collaborators: "Play Bridge at Sea", SBU, Non-EBU affiliated organisations, Andrew Robson BC, U3A, Steve Raine, Jack Stocken. Local councils, press and government representatives, community groups and clubs.

FINANCES:

The direct costs for the Festival included the following expenditure:

- Marketing consultant for two months following the Festival £4,500
- Playing cards sent to Cancer Research UK for distribution at cost of £250
- Festival Bunting £158.10

In addition to these the EBU passed on income generated from:

- £3446.52 of UMS donations from all events “BIABD” clubs sessions
- Competitions: National Handicap Championship Pairs (HCP) £468
- Festival Finale: £398.10

Total: £8,822.62

TAKEAWAYS FOR THE FESTIVAL TEAM:

Things we did well:

- We worked consistently through the year to support clubs, counties and members to make the most of the opportunity of being part of the Bridge – It’s a Big Deal! Festival
- We built a strong professional link with Cancer Research UK
- We set a realistic target for fundraising and what we delivered surprised Cancer Research UK
- We set up monthly Zooms with clubs and counties to build communications
- The feedback from the clubs was that the events brought in new visitors, previous members and provided opportunities for fun share the fun and enjoyment of the game
- We created brand new resources and were able to share these with clubs and counties
- With the support of our marketing consultant we were able to signpost clubs to the local press and wrote press releases on a number of occasions
- The take up was positive for the first year we have run a weeklong Festival. The survey showed that the majority of clubs (approx. 95%) are interested in future events which is very encouraging

The Festival team acknowledge there are things we could improve for future events

Things to think about for the future:

- Taster sessions are vital to growth
- There is an enthusiasm from clubs for the EBU to create national project that provide opportunities for engagement from wider communities
- There is much more to be done to develop the EBU social media presence
- There was feedback from clubs on their need to help with the transition for new learners from classroom to clubroom
- There is more to be done to help our members and clubs navigate the vast resources the EBU has available on the website and the EBU YouTube channel

Appendix A: Survey Results

Around 560 individual surveys (113 respondents). The event was well received with a high participation. Many clubs ran taster sessions resulting in new players, and enhanced enjoyment for existing players. The majority are keen to participate again in something similar.

Item	Response %
Participation levels who took part	74.1
Ran Duplicate sessions	59.5
Sim Pairs	17.7
Taster sessions / Open days	32.9
Increased awareness of their club in the local community	45.5
Increased interest from potential new members	48.5
Increase in table numbers and player sessions	22.7
Enhanced player experience for existing members	39.4
Cooperated with other clubs for the Festival	48.3
Aware of the Festival specific resources	95
Accessed Festival specific resources	67.5
Local press coverage	48
Interested in future events	93

Appendix B: Press/Media Coverage:

Written Articles

The Festival received widespread local coverage and we have provided you with links to the direct articles:

[The Times](#)

[Sussex World](#) - Bridge at the Bridge

[Sussex World](#) – Horsham Bridge Club

[West Sussex Club article](#)

[Sussex World - Bridge at the Bridge](#)

[The Mail](#) - Barrow Bridge Club

[NWEMail](#)

[The Bucks Herald](#)

[MK Citizen](#) - Milton Keynes

[In Your Area](#) - Leicester County Bridge Club

[Pershore Times](#)

[Sunderland Echo](#)

[Kinsbridge & Salcombe Gazette](#)

[Lincs Online](#)

[Cancer Research UK newsletter August](#)

[Cancer Research UK newsletter October](#)

Radio and TV Coverage

We also had coverage with BBC radio and ITV Regional News (we cannot provide the links for these as they were only retained for 30 days):

BBC Radio Hereford & Worcester: *Mike & Yvette from Worcester Bridge Club were featured on BBC Radio Hereford & Worcester, talking all about their "Bridge - Everywhere!" cafe bridge day.*

BBC Radio Humberside - Hull Bridge Club: *Hull Bridge Club invited Kofi Smiles, the local breakfast show presenter at BBC Radio Humberside to join them for a session or two, he had a lovely time, as he explained on his radio show.*

ITV Regional News Guernsey

Samantha Kelly, EBU Communications Officer