

Cash Collection for Bridge Clubs – Spadetickets.com

Introduction

Many bridge clubs have ventured into the unknown world of online bridge over the past months with the aim of keeping bridge alive for their members. Basingstoke is no exception. With the help of the EBU we started running online sessions at the end of May on BBO, in conjunction with Zoom at times. We have looked at other platforms and have faced the dilemma of not wanting to ask members to learn another set of IT skills for another platform, but also give them the opportunity to trial a different experience with enhanced social contact. We opted to sign up for RealBridge.

Basingstoke is the largest club in Hampshire with over 220 members. It has its own premises (with associated overheads) which closed in mid-March and hasn't reopened since. We started running 2 sessions a week on BBO and the Club share of the table money revenue just about covered our overheads. Moving some sessions to RealBridge created the challenge of how to collect table money. We considered several options all with pros and cons and finally opted to try Spadetickets.com – which is essentially a web-based event management set up tailored for bridge clubs. This article describes our experience of using the service, which went live in the middle of November last year.

What is Spadetickets.com?

Essentially, it is E-commerce: On-line software that can be accessed by computer, tablet, or smart phone. – SpadeTickets.com is a specially designed platform for Bridge and social clubs aimed at booking events or selling services.

What does the software do?

- Allows Members (and non-members) to book attendance at sessions.
- Automatically produce invoices and emails them.
- Allows payment by various methods.
- Can be used to collect membership fees or any products associated with teaching

Exactly how can payments be made?

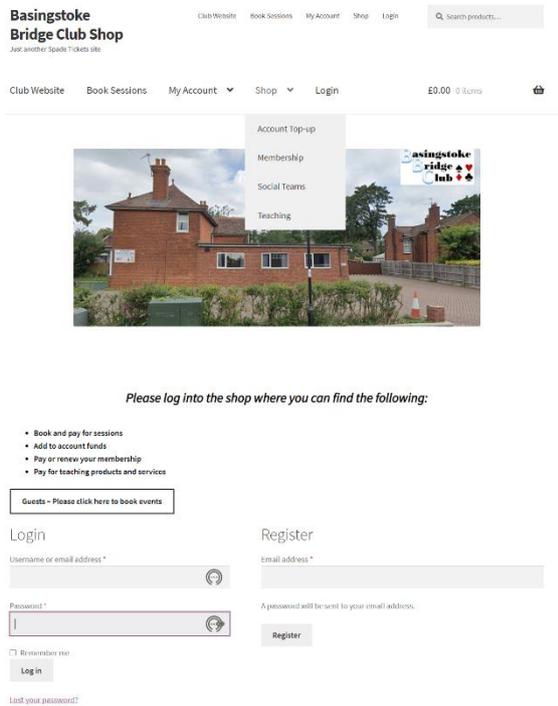
- Secure Payments can be taken on the website through: Credit Card, Debit card (Using Stripe or WorldPay) or by PayPal
- A Pre-payment can even be made to the Club and the system will support this as payment method. This is a bit like buying BBO\$, which members can use to pay for sessions.

Some of the above features depend on the level of service that you choose.

How does Basingstoke Bridge Club use the platform?

Currently, the club is running duplicate sessions every Monday, Wednesday and Thursday. On alternate Fridays we run a gentle duplicate or Supervised play. We run teaching sessions on Tuesday and Wednesday evenings and at the time of writing we are trialling a Social Club Lounge one afternoon. Just over half of these sessions run on RealBridge. We use our Spadetickets.com 'Shop' to enable people to register and pay for sessions run on RealBridge or teaching/Supervised play sessions run on any platform. We also use it to collect membership renewals and new membership applications.

Registering for and using the service



Book Sessions

To book a session, click on the event and add it to your basket. You can only use your account funds to pay for a session if you are logged in. To log in click [login](#) from the menu before checking out.



The shop home page is the starting point for all transactions – first registering and then logging in. Most of our members are purchasing £20 account funds as a first step and use this to buy session tickets or other services. Once the account funds have been purchased, members can choose book

sessions. Once a purchase is completed the tickets are emailed to the attendees and in the case of RealBridge, the ticket includes a link to join the session.

How easy is it to set up?

The basic set up was very quick – a 2-hour call with Spadetickets.com resulted in the Shop being open. This includes registering for the credit card process service Stripe and building the basic structure of the website. As Basingstoke has been an early adopter of the service, we have also influenced some of the development to meet our needs. Spadetickets.com helps to set up the ticketing – which is a little complicated when you start out, but once you have a single event set up correctly, it is easy to copy all the settings for any subsequent events, just changing event specifics.

How easy is it to use?

Some of our members have taken to it very quickly but there have been some who have found the Shop challenging. As a club we have tried to listen to members and improve the user experience. At the time of writing the Shop has been running for 7 weeks and we have processed over 600 orders through the shop. The most common issues we have encountered relate to receipt of tickets – some email platforms are slow to process emails sent from the shop. An enhancement that we requested for the platform has been delivered which allows users to download any tickets purchased from their account or to open the ticket to access the session link.

2021-01-04 RealBridge Duplicate

Date: 4 January 2021
Time: 19:30 GMT - 22:00 GMT
Location: Realbridge

Ticket Number: 3586856401
Ticket Holder: John Glasscock
Membership: Member

Please make sure that you check out your camera and microphone using the following link before the session - <https://play.realbridge.online/camera.html> You should use the link below to log in to the session 15 minutes before it is due to start entering your full name and your EBU Number

[Click this link](#)

What about the finances?

We have worked closely with Spadetickets.com to generate standard reports that make our treasurer's life easier. At any point in time, we may need to know sales completed (tickets booked and sessions played), orders received for account funds not yet used for buying products, orders received for sessions in advance of sessions happening and finally, reporting on Credit card payments made that haven't reached the club bank account (there is around a 7-day lag between transaction and receipt of funds.) All these reports can be run at any time. There is also the facility to provide a refund for items purchased that are not used or a coupon/voucher which can be used for payment of a future service.

How much does it cost?

There are three levels of service and the annual fee currently ranges from £120 - £360 +VAT per annum – look at Spadetickets.com for the various packages. The only other fees are the credit card charges which will depend on the service provider – they are likely to be a small, fixed fee plus a percentage of the transaction charge. The overall card fees can be kept down using the larger purchase of account funds – we use £20 as a minimum account top up.

In summary, this has been a significant development for our club driven by our need to enable members to book and pay for RealBridge sessions. It has, though, brought many other benefits as members can use our shop to pay and book training sessions, pay their subscriptions etc. When we move back to face-to-face sessions we now have a cash free option for members providing benefits for both online and face to face environments.

John Glasscock
Basingstoke Bridge Club Secretary