

Clubs race to take up EBU grants



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Help to buy dealing and scoring machines

by Barry Capal, General Manager, EBU

During the past year several clubs have benefitted from a decision taken by the EBU Board to help with major financial projects that may otherwise have been unaffordable. As one would expect, the budget was limited but we still managed to provide support to nine clubs.

We opened up applications via the website at the beginning of April and after a week we were at capacity – not really a surprise!

We eventually provided financial support for the purchase of six electronic duplication machines, one batch of Bridgetab devices, one set of Bridgemates, and one hand duplicator. In each case the club had to ‘match fund’ what we could pay, and agree to repay a proportion of the grant support should they cease affiliation in less than three years.

The clubs we supported were Grange over Sands, Bourne, Monday, Phoenix, Abingdon, Hutton, Dorking, Alford and Winchcombe. All of them were very happy with the arrangement and some of their feedback is shown opposite.

Incidentally, there is a commonly held view that pre-dealt hands are ‘fixed’ in some way, but this is totally untrue – they really are just randomly dealt – something that rarely happens when shuffling is done by hand.

We are hoping to repeat the ‘grant budget’ in the next financial year, so be on the lookout for an announcement on the website.

A discounted ‘HandyDup’ dealing machine has enabled the club to be more cost effective and efficient running Sims events and to provide hand records for a new session aimed specifically at attracting improvers to the club.

**Tony French, Chairman,
Hutton Duplicate BC**

For a number of years we have paid for the supply of duplimate boards. Inspired by the very generous support available from the EBU for the purchase of a duplimate machine, we decided to take control of our own board duplication. It will pay for itself in under two years.

**Peter Litchfield, Secretary,
Abingdon Duplicate BC**

We were very pleased to embrace the grant made available by the EBU to get a dealing machine. We now have a Club Dealer who has mastered the intricacies of the computer programme and also the logistics of circulating the boards from home to club and back again.

Many are delighted that the club has progressed to the use of random dealing with the bonus of having hand records so that hands can be reviewed and analysed after any event. Others are sceptical and feel that the hands must be fixed so that finesses fail, or hands are misfits, or that NS or EW get all the good hands.

**Chris Frost, Chairman,
Phoenix BC, Nottingham**

Thanks to a generous grant from the EBU and a loan from a member, we have been able to purchase a set of Bridgemates. Our members now experience the benefits of such a purchase and appreciate the instant scoring. A few people struggled early on but have quickly learned how to use the equipment. Thus, thanks to EBU, we feel, for a small club, we are up to date with bridge technology!

**Mike Cornelius, Secretary,
Winchcombe BC**

WE’RE HOSTING A CAMROSE WEEKEND – COME AND WATCH, OR EVEN VOLUNTEER

6-8 January 2017

Brandon Hall Hotel, Warwickshire

This year England is hosting the first weekend of the Camrose Trophy with the five countries of the British Isles competing over two weekends. Scotland, as the host for the second weekend, will field a second ‘SBU’ team in addition to those from England, Wales, Ireland and Northern Ireland.

Spectators are welcome, but Gordon Rainsford is also seeking volunteers to help at the venue. If you can offer assistance, please email him on gordon@ebu.co.uk



CLUBS SUPPORTED BY EBU GRANTS



In 2017, as in 2016, money was made available from EBU funds to provide grants to assist clubs in acquiring capital items they may not otherwise have been able to afford.

The scheme was again very popular, with more requests than could be financed from the available budget, but it was still possible to assist nine clubs.

These clubs – in Essex, Somerset, Suffolk, Nottinghamshire, Worcestershire and Dorset – were helped to buy dealing machines or electronic scoring equipment. This new equipment has made

a big difference to the clubs, and the financial support has been gratefully received – as you can see from their feedback.

Their thanks should be extended to the whole EBU membership, as without your contributions to the EBU's funds the Board cannot make available these grants which help bridge clubs to grow and thrive.

The 'grant scheme' will be repeated in 2018, and information will be available on the website in April. Watch out for it if you want to apply!

The funding which the EBU made available contributed to the purchase of a new dealing machine for the club. Now we can: easily use boards for teaching purposes; provide hand commentaries to benefit inexperienced members; offer a more diverse events calendar, including Swiss Teams & Swiss Pairs.

As an EBU affiliated club, using the most modern bridge technology, we act as a magnet for people in North Worcestershire wishing to take up the game. I am immensely grateful to the EBU for the financial, and general, support to our club.

David Halford, Chairman, Bewdley BC

Keyworth was able to take advantage of a generous grant from the EBU to purchase a new dealing system. It has enabled our trainers to use prepared hands and boards to assist in training classes, and allowed members to analyse their scores against other players and optimum contracts, hopefully improving their understandings and performance. We hope that the whole club of varying abilities will see and enjoy the benefits that this technology delivers.

David Adams, Deputy Chairman, Keyworth BC

We used the grant to help with the purchase of an electronic scoring system and a dealing machine which, as a fairly small club, we'd never have been able to afford without the EBU's generous assistance. The purchases have helped our little club punch well above its weight – and our membership has grown healthily since we installed it. Many thanks, EBU.

Graham Daniel, Chairman, Kingston Seymour BC

The club had a year of austerity, and we took more from our reserves, but this still left us needing to buy five more Bridgemates so we would have sufficient to cover a good turn out. The EBU grant meant we could purchase the last five we needed, instead of having to have another year of austerity and hoping that we had no more than 10 tables until we could afford to purchase them. We're very grateful for the grant.

**Elizabeth Knowlson, Treasurer
Stratford St Mary BC**

We purchased a dealing machine and are now able to record the hands on our website and in hardcopy after every event – many of our members enjoy this and have used it to analyse and enhance their game. In May we will organise a 'Fast Track' teaching programme in cooperation with Yeovil and Castle Cary bridge clubs; the dealing machine will be a great help in dealing particular hands that we shall need during this course. This machine has been a valuable addition to the running of events and we are very grateful to the EBU for their help.

Barry Blight, Chairman, Sherborne BC

The club had been toying with the idea of shifting from traditional methods and 'going digital'. The grant aid available from the EBU acted as a catalyst for change within the club and, together with other forms of funding, including the clubs own resources, it enabled us to move forward and realise our aim. The hand dealing and scoring equipment has been sourced, is fully functional, and the club has now migrated over to the new way of operating.'

Steve Pedrick, Secretary, Isle of Wedmore BC