

PRESIDENTS REPORT MARCH 2022

We have emerged from a tumultuous 2 years.

The nature of Bridge has obviously changed irrevocably. We are being forced to make some very hard decisions, however we do need to embrace the change

In the light of the above I would like to thank the committee for their hard work, dedication and support through very trying times. The committee has worked extremely hard often unnoticed.

I would particularly like to thank Andre Truter and Ian Holdsworth who are leaving us.

Online bridge has established itself as the future of bridge. With it come both advantages and challenges.

- We have trained approximately 100 new beginners online. Most of these are in their 20s and 30s all who have embraced online bridge
- It does appear that bridge in Europe is experiencing a resurgence due to young people discovering online bridge. Most European national events will be held online in future.
- Cheating is rife, particularly on BBO. Several South African players have been sanctioned and this is probably only the tip of the ice berg. The results of some of our major online events are suspect.
- New technology has proved to be challenging particularly for our older members.
- As you are all aware there are many online tournaments on offer. The majority of our members do not play in WC online events. In order to retain the loyalty of our member base we need to experiment and innovate our online offering.

Face to face bridge has suffered as a result of the closure of our clubs during Covid. South African surveys have shown that between 10 – 20 % of our existing

members have no intention of returning to face-to-face bridge. Which is in line with the experience of the rest of the world.

Our clubs have recently re-opened with approximately 20-25% of members returning. This should gradually increase to 80 – 85% of pre-covid numbers if we follow the trend in Europe, Britain and Australia

The social aspect of bridge is important and our clubs will survive. Some members remain unvaccinated, others have co-morbidities and others are nervous of the pandemic but they will return to the clubs once the threat of Covid has been sufficiently diminished.

Sponsorship is obviously important

I would to thank our sponsors Warwick Wealth and Personal Trust who have stood by us. It goes without saying that it would have been very difficult without their support

Warwick Wealth:

- Have supported us for many years
- I am pleased to announce that they have agreed to provide additional sponsorship for a new monthly online bidding competition starting in April

Personal Trust:

- Sponsor our monthly Sunday online lectures which have been very successful
- They also sponsor the Monthly Thursday RealBridge team's event
- And have agreed to sponsor our new monthly face to face Sunday bridge events at the Bridge Centre starting shortly

The WC Department of Sports:

- provides some grant funding for our educational initiatives, running expenses and the Cape Festival of Bridge

at this juncture I would like to acknowledge Michele Alexander who has raised donations in excess of a R140 000. Despite most of her

donors wishing to remain anonymous we acknowledge, amongst others, Warren Buffet, David Beckham and Luis Suarez

We are about to start negotiations with a new potential sponsor

The current committee has completed several Initiatives

- **the Bridge Centre has been completely revamped at a cost of approximately R200 000.**
 - **Kitchen and appliances**
 - **Bathrooms**
 - **Bar area**
 - **Office and storage area behind**
 - **New outside storage room**
 - **We are currently refurbishing Thabo's ablution block**
 - **We will be installing insulation in the roof**
- **We are very grateful to Brian Paxton for developing and successfully installing our new website and database**
- **All our new educational initiatives will be dealt with at a later stage**
- **Carol Stanton on behalf of the WCBU has run 2 Tournament director training courses. I think in excess of 45 people attended both courses. The TD training is ongoing. Every participant will receive a copy of the abridged 2017 rules book**
- **Whenever you play in a WCBU event you immediately receive an email with your results. Michael Alexander has very kindly attached an explanation of a rule to the email, this gets updated once a week.**
- **Kathryn and Eckhard, our members based in Germany, have written a very good book on the strategy of Match point pairs. In addition to Tim Cope I understand that the book has been vetted by 3 European champions. Shortly we will be printing 300 copies of the book. we intend selling the book for approximately R70 each and 100 copies have been pre-ordered. Personal Trust have very kindly partially sponsored the book.**

- **we are about to form a new Ethics committee. Comprising Michael Alexander and Brian Galgut. This sub-committee will deal with any complaints of unethical behavior and all disciplinary issues**

Mark Kenyon

Treasurer's Report – March 2022

The Financial Report of the WCBU for 2021 is available for your inspection. I would like to thank Eric Marx and his colleagues at Marx Gore for undertaking the review of the union's financial statements.

There are several items which I would like to bring to your attention. During 2021 the WCBU earned more than R 380,000 from BBO table money. Without this income during the Covid pandemic the WCBU might well not have survived.

On the expenses side, the Bridge Centre cost more than R 250,000 to run during 2021 with very little income to offset these expenses.

According to our records, some 1,150 SABF members reside in the Western Cape. The task of collecting SABF subs from each and every one of these members is proving an extremely onerous task. This is made worse by the fact that all the subs are remitted to the SABF with nothing retained for the use of the WCBU. This matter needs to be addressed urgently in the year ahead.

During 2021 we closed our ABSA bank accounts and opened new accounts with FNB and with Personal Trust. These new arrangements are working well.

Finally, I would like to thank Cary Roberts, our bookkeeper, and our finance sub-committee for their assistance during the year.

Hilary Nick

Bridge Education Report – March 2022

Carol Stanton has done a wonderful job of leading our 2021 bridge teaching initiatives. Using a combination of Zoom and RealBridge she has introduced more than 60 new players to the game. Feedback from those who attended her classes has been positive, verging on ecstatic.

Carol has also been instrumental in arranging and, in several cases, delivering the monthly Zoom lessons for intermediate players which frequently attract 80 or more players from around the country. Again, the feedback has been very positive.

Due to Covid we have not been able to arrange face to face lessons nor have we been able to re-enter schools bridge teaching. We hope to resume these activities this year, assuming we can find enough teacher volunteers.

In the meantime, the WCBU website has provided a means to disseminate bridge teaching materials with the Learn Bridge page being viewed more than 1,000 times during 2021.

Finally I would like to say a special word of thanks to Carol Stanton, as well as to Arie Ridderhof and the other mentors who have assisted during the RealBridge sessions.

Brian Paxton