

## **Chairman's Report 2023**

This is a shorter report than last year's, which covered the move to the RAFA Club and our relaunch following the pandemic closure. Our concern in the eight months from our relaunch to last year's AGM was to create a stable environment and programme of playing sessions that would suit members and prove financially viable, and this past year has been one of consolidation on those foundations. We hold five sessions a week, as we did 12 months ago. Player numbers at the more competitive sessions on Wednesday and Friday evenings are fairly stable, though not as high as we would like, but attendance at the gentler Monday afternoons continues to be good – even stretching our capacity with nine tables in one recent week – and this has been joined by the rise of the similar session on Friday afternoons. Many thanks to David Jones for directing the majority of these afternoons. Our Thursday Improvers session of supervised play continues to attract both longstanding regulars and new faces, many of whom have proceeded to join the Club. As a reminder, a partner will be provided if you turn up on your own for any session except Friday evenings.

Relations with the RAFA Club continue to be good and are now mainly through Jan Duncan, who will provide more detail shortly. We thank Alan Peak-Payne for the addition – and maintenance I hope – of the plants at the entrance.

Our Treasurer will provide a financial update in a moment, but the Committee did make one big commitment this year. At four sessions a week, we use a new set of random computer-dealt hands, and we have our own machine to deal the boards, though it has mainly been operated by Gareth Evans. Until recently we used a Duplimate machine dating from about 2012. It was serviced in 2021 but developed further problems. Gareth used his own machine for a period (for an extra fee), but the Club took the decision to invest in a new state-of-the-art machine, a PlayBridgeDealer 4+. At over £4000 such machines are not cheap, but with some servicing it should last many years. Though Gareth was very reliable, we also decided to deal the boards ourselves, and Gareth has trained Jan Duncan and Jane Chapman, who have kindly agreed to deal the boards in future. Bundled with the PlayBridgeDealer 4+ were four new sets of boards, which have replaced some damaged sets.

One feature we reintroduced this year is quarterly leagues for first Monday afternoons and then also Wednesday evenings. Small cash prizes are awarded each quarter to the two players with best seven ranked results in the period. You can track your progress and past winners on the website.

Another possible reintroduction later this year is a Christmas lunch event, perhaps with another pantomime, but there are no more details yet.

As I have indicated, I am leaving the Committee from today, but I still intend to help here on Thursday afternoons and I will also continue some work on the website. I am sure the Club will continue on a sound footing in the capable hands of those standing for the Committee today.

**Alan Evans, May 2023**