



President's Report

Tweed Bridge Club Annual General Meeting — September 2026

It is a pleasure to present my report to members on what has been a busy and, I believe, very productive year for Tweed Bridge Club.

The Club continues to benefit from a strong and committed membership, an active playing program and a remarkable willingness among members to contribute their time and skills to the running of the Club. I would particularly like to acknowledge the many members who volunteer as Directors, assist with catering, competitions, administration, dealing, teaching and the many other tasks that allow the Club to operate successfully.

A Year of Growth and Development

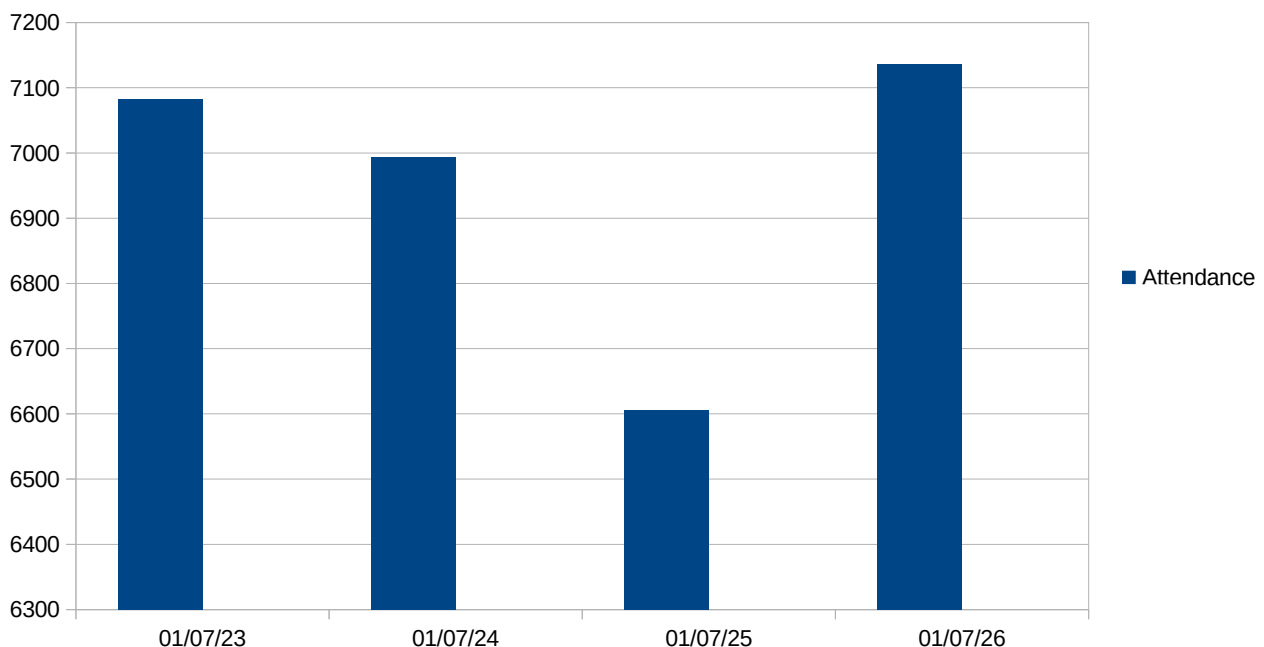
One of the principal objectives of the Committee has been to increase participation in Club activities while maintaining the friendly and social environment that makes Tweed Bridge Club such an enjoyable place to play.

A particularly successful initiative has been the introduction of the **Quarterly Teams Competition**.

The competition has provided members with an opportunity to compete against players of broadly similar ability, rather than requiring lower-ranked players to compete directly against the strongest players in the Club. The early results have been extremely encouraging, with attendance increasing by approximately 8% during the initial period of the competition.

The following chart shows that there was a steady annual decline in the October – June attendance for three straight years to 1 July 2025. In the current three quarters to June 2026 we have now reversed the trend and established an attendance record that is higher than the corresponding period of 2022 – 2023.

Year on Year Attendance October to June



Importantly, the competition has demonstrated the value of using the Club's ranking information to construct competitions in which teams are genuinely competitive at their respective levels. The very close results in the lower divisions towards the end of the season provide strong evidence that this approach is working.

The financial benefit is also significant. The Quarterly Teams Competition has strongly contributed to the **\$3,500 per annum in additional table-fee income**, with very little additional cost to the Club.

This is an excellent example of the type of growth that the Committee should be pursuing: increasing participation and enjoyment while simultaneously strengthening the Club's financial position.

Encouraging Participation at All Levels

The Committee's objective is not simply to increase the number of people attending the Club. We want members to have reasons to come regularly, to enjoy their bridge and to feel that there are meaningful opportunities for competition at their own level.

This is particularly important for players in Divisions 3, 4 and 5.

Historically, these members have tended to participate less frequently in competitions. The Quarterly Teams Competition provides an opportunity to change this. Players do not have to be the strongest players in the Club to have a realistic chance of competing successfully because they are competing primarily against teams at their own level.

We therefore need to continue improving our communication with these players so that they understand that the Quarterly Teams Competition is **their competition as much as anyone else's**.

Open Day and Community Engagement

Another important part of our strategy has been to engage more closely with the surrounding community.

Our Open Day earlier in the year has provided some very encouraging evidence that there is an audience for what the Club has to offer.

Approximately **30 people attended**, with **10 signing up for training on the day**. The subsequent training session attracted approximately **18 participants**, many of whom appear to have originated from the Open Day, online promotion and other community outreach.

This is particularly encouraging because it demonstrates that community engagement can produce measurable results.

The Club has an opportunity to introduce bridge to people who may not previously have considered it, including younger people and those who are still working. This is an important component of our longer-term strategy because the sustainability of the Club ultimately depends upon attracting new generations of members.

A Sustainable Financial Model

The Committee has also been conscious that there are two fundamentally different ways in which a club can increase its income.

One is to increase prices.

The other is to increase participation.

Our preference is very clearly for the second approach.

Bridge has an enormous inherent advantage compared with many other recreational activities. The cost of providing a bridge session is relatively low, while the social and intellectual benefits to members are considerable.

Keeping table fees affordable therefore gives Tweed Bridge Club a significant competitive advantage within the local leisure market.

A strategy based primarily on increasing fees risks creating a downward spiral. Higher costs can discourage participation, particularly among members on fixed incomes, while an ageing membership without sufficient replacement from younger players can eventually reduce the Club's revenue base.

A growth-led strategy is much more sustainable.

The Five-Year Strategy

The Committee has therefore continued to develop the Club's Five-Year Strategy.

The strategy is not intended to predict the future with precision. Rather, it provides a framework against which Committee decisions can be tested.

Its central themes are:

1. **Increasing participation** through attractive and fair competitions.
2. **Maintaining a welcoming social environment** in which members enjoy coming to the Club.
3. **Engaging with the wider community** and attracting new and younger players.
4. **Maintaining financial sustainability** through participation growth rather than relying primarily on fee increases.
5. **Planning for technological and social change** rather than reacting to it after it has occurred.

The Committee will continue to update the strategy as better information becomes available. The attendance information now being collected provides us with a much stronger basis for identifying trends and making realistic projections.

Preparing for Change

The Club operates in a rapidly changing environment.

Technology, demographics, patterns of employment and leisure and expectations about how recreational organisations operate are all changing.

The Committee's responsibility is therefore not simply to manage today's Club. It is also to prepare the Club for the environment in which it will operate several years from now.

An example of this forward-looking approach is the work now being undertaken by the **Robot Committee**. Autonomous robotic technology is developing rapidly and may eventually provide practical assistance with cleaning, hospitality, room preparation and other repetitive tasks currently undertaken by volunteers.

There is no proposal that the Club should purchase such technology now. Rather, the Committee is researching the subject so that we understand what is becoming possible and can make an informed decision if and when the technology becomes financially and operationally appropriate.

This illustrates an important principle of our strategy: **research early, plan carefully and introduce change when the evidence supports it.**

The Importance of Volunteers

None of this would be possible without the volunteers who keep the Club operating.

Our Directors, teachers, Committee members, dealers, competition organisers, catering volunteers and many others contribute enormous amounts of time to the Club.

One of the challenges facing the Club over the longer term is ensuring that the burden of voluntary work is distributed reasonably and that we do not become dependent upon a small number of people carrying an excessive workload.

The Committee has therefore been working towards clearer definitions of Committee responsibilities and procedures designed to distribute work more fairly.

This is not simply an administrative exercise. It is essential to ensuring that future members will be willing to take on Committee and volunteer responsibilities.

Looking Ahead

The Club is in a strong position, but we should not become complacent.

Our challenge over the coming years will be to build on the positive developments of the past year while maintaining the qualities that members already value.

We need to continue to:

- attract new players;
- encourage younger members;
- provide meaningful competition at all levels;
- maintain our social atmosphere;
- keep participation affordable;
- support and protect our volunteers;
- use technology intelligently;
- and maintain a sound financial position.

The evidence we now have from the Quarterly Teams Competition and our community outreach gives us reason for optimism.

The task for the incoming Committee will be to build upon these foundations and continue developing the Club in a measured and sustainable way.

Acknowledgements

Finally, I would like to thank all members of the Committee for their contribution during the year.

Committee work is often undertaken quietly and without recognition, but the Club could not function effectively without the willingness of members to take responsibility for its management.

I would also like to thank our Directors, dealers, teachers, volunteers and all those members who contribute in countless ways to the daily operation of the Club.

Most importantly, I thank the membership for continuing to support Tweed Bridge Club.

The Club belongs to all of us. Its future depends upon our willingness to participate, contribute and adapt while preserving the friendly and welcoming environment that makes it such a special place to play bridge.

We have made some very good progress this year, and I believe we are now well placed to build an even stronger and more sustainable Club for the future.

David Freilich

President

Tweed Bridge Club

September 2026