

# **LBC SURVEY MEMBER REPORT**

## **INTRODUCTION**

In the fall of 2018, the London Bridge Centre Board decided to conduct a comprehensive satisfaction survey of members. The purpose of the survey was to gather a broad cross-section of opinions to assist the Board in setting priorities and adjusting programs and practices to improve member satisfaction.

London Bridge Centre opened in November 2015. In the first three years, the priority was to get the club established. That has been accomplished, thanks to the very many volunteers who have generously contributed their time, talent and energy for the good of the not-for-profit club and their fellow members.

The survey asked: “What could we do better or differently to improve the bridge experiences and satisfaction of current members and visitors, and attract new members?”

The survey was conducted by a volunteer working group; Al Edwards (chair), Deb Ellison, Chris Piper, Jim Stewart and Hui Zhu. A questionnaire was developed and tested in the fall of 2018. Newsletter articles alerted members that the survey would be coming. An e-mail was sent through Pianola to the mailing list of all newsletter subscribers in January 2019, with a link to the survey. After the survey closed, Chris Piper organized and analysed the response data.

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

With a 47% response rate and covering a wide range of topics, the survey gives a credible view of member opinion. Overall satisfaction rates are very high, as are satisfaction with communications, player development, game operations, social events and the library.

Two significant opportunities are identified:

1. Add some more weekend afternoon games and a Tuesday 0-20 game;
2. Players would play more if they could find partners.

All comments received and additional detailed data have been provided to those with responsibilities in the various areas.

**Response Rates** – 206 responses were received, including 195 from current LBC members – 47% of the total membership. 64% of those LBC members who are also ACBL members responded, with very high response rates from those with fewer than 50 masterpoints. These high response rates suggest the results should be very credible. The response rates are detailed in the attached table.

The survey covered several topic areas, and this report is organized by those topic areas. There were several opportunities throughout the survey for respondents to enter comments; some sample comments are quoted in this report.

## **OVERALL SATISFACTION**

Respondents were asked to respond on a scale from agree strongly (5) to disagree strongly (1) with the following statements:

**“Overall, I am satisfied with my experiences at the LBC.”**

97% agreed. Average score was 4.56 out of 5, with the results very consistent across all masterpoint levels. Only 3 respondents disagreed.

**“LBC provides excellent value for money.”**

89% agreed. The average score of 4.52 was again quite consistent at all levels.

**“LBC has achieved the Code of Conduct goal of providing a welcoming, enjoyable, and conflict-free environment with games conducted in a spirit of friendly competition.”**

90% agreed, while 8% were neutral and 2% disagreed. Again, the average score of 4.41 was quite consistent by masterpoint level.

97% indicated their intention to continue as members. The 3 who say they definitely will not were former members. The four who were undecided included one potential new member and one current member who lives several miles from London, who has a very positive opinion of the club.

The survey asked for suggestions to improve the playing atmosphere. Several comments dealt with etiquette and conduct:

*“Continue in various ways to stress that, like any other game, there are protocols that aim to make the game enjoyable for all. Two annoying/distracting*

*behaviours concern coming to a new table and still be discussing the past hand, giving a running commentary after each hand or sometimes even during.”*

*“I know the club can't be responsible for the social skills or lack of, for everyone that plays there. I always go with a group but only occasionally have sat with strangers who were not aware of proper social skills i.e. gloating. I am pleased with how in the recent lessons I took this fall and last year both instructors Marie and Audrey covered proper etiquette. I think it is important to continue this and even repeat etiquette to cover as many players as possible.”*

*“I like to think of the opponents as people we play 'with' not 'against'.”*

*“Players who gloat (smile/ laugh) when a team messes up should be counseled by the director that it is inappropriate.”*

Six responses commented on noise levels, particularly on Thursday afternoon.

*“I have found everyone to be friendly and welcoming, and in these ways, the atmosphere has been wonderful. The only detraction for me has been noise levels on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons. Recently, I switched to Monday & Friday mornings, and appreciate how much quieter they are.”*

*“Raise the temperature a bit. Even with a full room it's chilly” (12 on this theme)*

LBC is living up to its mission well, with a very high level of member satisfaction for all levels of players. There is still work to be done on reinforcing the ideals of the Code of Conduct, but the progress that has been made is noticed and appreciated by the members.

## **COMMUNICATIONS**

The section “information sources” touched on several aspects of communications.

94% agreed that “the newsletter provides information useful to me.” No respondent disagreed.

The pre-game announcements rated somewhat lower, with 84% agreeing that “announcements before the start of games provide information useful to me.”

Asked how frequently they checked the bulletin board and website (excluding Pianola), responses were:

## Bulletin Board

11%	Whenever in club
11%	Every 2 or 3 games
66%	Occasionally
13%	Never

## Website (not Pianola)

30%	Once a week or more
15%	Every two weeks
7%	Once a month
39%	Occasionally
9%	Never

ACBL members, especially those with over 150 masterpoints, check the bulletin board more frequently than non-ACBL members. ACBL members with 20 masterpoints or more are the most frequent website visitors.

33 people wrote in comments about communications. Many were congratulatory: *"I think the newsletter and web site are excellent."*

There were a couple of suggestions to move the bulletin board – either swapping with the nametags or the Education notice board.

A more dramatic suggestion: *"A large screen TV with revolving information such as previous winners, upcoming events etc. would be helpful."*

The newsletter is our primary communication vehicle and is very well received. Pre-game announcements are generally appreciated, but are less useful for those with difficulty hearing. The website and bulletin board are being used; we should consider moving the bulletin board for greater visibility. Rolling notices on the tv should be investigated. Overall, members are satisfied with communications.

## GAME OPERATIONS

### Pace of Play

The survey asked four questions related to pace of play. These were in a section of the survey that was only completed by those who were positive or neutral about interest in playing ACBL-sanctioned games where masterpoints are awarded – 88% of the total survey respondents.

ITEM	AGREE	NEUTRAL	DISAGREE
Games Move Too Slowly	21%	34%	45%
Games Move Too Fast	4%	36%	61%
Like the Game Clock	65%	26%	9%
A Late play is not a penalty	66%	25%	9%

These responses suggest that most members feel that the pace of play is satisfactory, and support use of the game clock to keep the pace of play on target. There are differences of opinion, indicating that this is a sensitive matter.

Those with over 150 masterpoints are more likely to find the games move slowly and support the use of the game clock and late plays. Average scores -where 3.0 is neutral, scores below 3.0 indicate disagreement and above 3.0 indicate agreement:

Item	0-20 mps	20-150 mps	150+ mps
Games Move Too Slowly	2.64	2.66	2.87
Games Move Too Fast	2.53	2.17	2.18
Like the Game Clock	3.38	3.68	4.03
A Late play is not a penalty	3.03	3.60	4.34

**Seeding the Field** – 54% agreed that it is important to distribute A, B and C pairs evenly across the field, with 8% disagreeing and 38% neutral. There was little difference by masterpoint level.

**Stratification** – 16% of respondents indicated that they did not understand how stratification works, with almost all of them having under 100 masterpoints.

**Masterpoint Awards** – 21% of respondents indicated that they did not understand how masterpoint awards are determined, concentrated under 150 masterpoints.

**An Opportunity** – To the statement “I am interested in playing in ACBL-sanctioned games where masterpoints are awarded”, while 50% of non-ACBL members disagreed, 47% gave a neutral answer, suggesting they are open to the possibility.

*“Re-organize sign-in procedure. Directors should announce the number of tables and the movement before the start of every game.”*

*“I think that people need to understand that showing up at 12:58 for a 1 pm game is not acceptable. It wreaks havoc for directors and delays everyone else. “*

## NEW GAME OPPORTUNITIES

The survey asked whether members were interested in playing more frequently if new games were offered. 99 respondents (48%) expressed interest.

Those who did not express interest in playing more gave the following reasons:

- 46% - already playing enough bridge
- 27% - no time available
- 15% - no partner
- 12% - other reasons (club too distant from home, schedule, health)

Those who expressed interest were asked to indicate which timeslots would be of interest, and what level of games.

**Weekend Afternoons** - Saturday afternoon (32 interested) and Sunday afternoon (37 interested) show the most potential. However, those interested are spread across the entire range of masterpoint holdings.

A follow-up question asked how many times per month the respondent would expect to play in a Saturday afternoon or Sunday afternoon Open game. The positive responses (39 for Saturday, 38 for Sunday – 29 of whom are the same people) and frequency suggest that we might get 4.5 to 5 tables weekly from the survey respondents. Adjusting for the response rates by masterpoint level – and assuming the non-respondents are as eager to play as the survey respondents – suggests we might get about 8 tables weekly on either afternoon.

About two-thirds of these players hold fewer than 300 masterpoints, so it would be important to keep the playing atmosphere welcoming to them.

It is more encouraging to look at the potential; in the club, about 70 people are interested in playing on a weekend afternoon, once a month or more. It may be better to run a game less frequently than weekly. Weekend games will be more influenced by holiday weekends and tournaments than weekday games. Advance registration could indicate if there will be enough players for a game on a particular day. If players come to the club and are disappointed to find the game cancelled because of low turnout, they may not come again.

**Monday Afternoon** - 12 people indicated interest in a 0-50 game on Monday afternoon – enough for three tables. 8 of the 12 had fewer than 20 MPS, so

potential for a 0-20 newcomer game looks like only 2 tables even though we have 46 members in that masterpoint category. Note there are several 0-50 pairs playing regularly in the Monday morning 0-300 game now. There isn't enough interest to sustain a Monday afternoon 0-20 section yet.

**Supervised Play Format-** there does not seem to be an obvious time slot for adding another Bridge Lab or Practice & Play session, although the lower (20%) response rate from non-ACBL members may be understating the potential.

### **Additional Game Formats**

The survey also floated a number of different formats, and asked players how often they would be interested in participating in each. Positive responses were:

≥Once per year	≥Once per month	Type of game
56%	10%	"Get-acquainted" – random partner assignment within strats
46%	9%	Individual game
38%	7%	"Eat & play" with 20-21 boards
13%	4%	Rubber bridge
17%	4%	Small cash prizes, no masterpoints
47%	12%	Express; two hours, 16-18 boards
47%	14%	Team play league

This suggests that we have opportunity to try the "get-acquainted" format. The individual game format was well received at the birthday party game in June 2018 and will be repeated. The express bridge and eat & play formats both have some interest for special events. There is interest in the team play league format, but success may depend on frequency of commitment.

### **Duplicate In Parallel with Bridge Lab?**

Audrey and Peter (and one Bridge Lab player) recently proposed trying a newcomer (0-20) duplicate on Tuesday afternoons, running in parallel with Bridge Lab. Audrey volunteered to direct the game to get it going.

The survey respondents include 62 who indicated that they had played in Bridge Lab at least once in the past year. Of those, 16 indicated they had no interest in playing in ACBL sanctioned games; 20 were interested; and 26 were neutral. This suggests that there is potential to hold a small game in the Teaching room while Bridge Lab is in the main room. It will cannibalize Bridge Lab to some degree – but Bridge Lab is close to overflowing the room at times now. It may also attract

some other 0-20 players who do not come to Bridge Lab currently. With Peter's support, this would be worth a trial.

*"Could they try a morning game for players 0-50 to see if that would work out? The one thing I found on the Monday afternoon 0-50 is when we had newer players they did not come back because they felt intimidated because the play was too fast and they knew they were holding things up.... but I thought the whole idea of the 0-50 on the Mondays was to welcome new players into duplicate playing, but maybe that wasn't the purpose-"*

*"More weekend games (0-300)"*

## **EXTRA CHARGE GAMES**

The survey had a section dealing with special ACBL games, such as STaC, which award extra masterpoints and involve a \$2 extra charge. Members are generally satisfied with the current approach, possibly with a few more charity games.

75% of those responding to these questions appreciated the opportunity to compete for extra masterpoints at the club level. Only 5% indicated that they avoid extra charge games, including only 3 respondents with more than 50 masterpoints.

When the extra charge goes to charity, it is viewed slightly more positively than when it goes to the ACBL or Canadian Bridge Federation.

There was very modest support for running extra point, extra charge games more often; 27% in favour, 17% opposed.

## **PARTNERSHIPS and PIANOLA**

**Partnerships** – Only those who expressed positive or neutral interest in playing in ACBL-sanctioned games were asked about partnerships and Pianola.

40% have one regular partner, 28% have two, and 32% have three or more.

Overall, 33% said that they would play more often if partners were available. This suggests an opportunity to increase table counts by one-third if LBC could find a solution to this perennial problem of finding partners, which faces all bridge clubs.

20% have posted at least one advert on Pianola Partner Finder in the past year, and 20% expect to do so in the next six months. All but 3 of those who have tried it intend to use it again. While 31% consider that they have an intermediate or advanced understanding of Partner Finder, 24% expressed interest in training on Partner Finder.

There are significant differences by masterpoint level in all of these responses.

Item	Overall	Non-ACBL	0-20	20-150	150+
No. of respondents	173	17	38	48	70
Play more if had partner	33%	12%	47%	31%	30%
No. of regular partners	2.1	1.8	1.9	1.8	2.5
Used Partner Finder $\geq 1$ time	20%	5%	8%	33%	21%
Int or Adv Partner Finder*	31%	0%	19%	49%	45%
Interested in PF Training	24%	29%	44%	15%	20%
Expect to post PF Ad	20%	12%	10%	28%	23%

\*Intermediate or Advanced understanding of how Pianola Partner Finder works

The appeal for suggestions on arranging partnerships drew several comments agreeing that it is an important problem. The few suggestions ranged from “scramble at the door” to phone lists to a telephone partnership convenor.

*“Don't have a solution but the inability to find a partner (even with Pianola) is a drawback to joining the club.”*

*“We have Pianola to look for a partner. I wonder whether that might be combined with an informal last minute partner search at the door ---- as many clubs do without Pianola?”*

*“As a new member it is a daunting task to make partnership arrangements at LBC, knowing very few of the members.”*

These responses suggest an opportunity to increase table counts by one-third if we could find a solution to the perennial partnership problem facing all bridge clubs. Pianola Partner Finder is part of the solution, but has only been tried by 20% of members so far. While training should help with acceptance of the tool, some people will still not be comfortable posting an ad.

It would be worthwhile to set up a working group to consider possibilities and look in to approaches used by other clubs.

**Other Pianola** – 89% of respondents consider Pianola to be a valuable service to LBC members. 85% spend at least 5 minutes reviewing results after a game, with 34% spending at least 25 minutes on this activity. Those with 20 to 300 masterpoints are most inclined to engage in the detailed reviews.

## **PLAYER DEVELOPMENT**

### **LESSONS**

The survey asked only a few general questions about lessons in order to keep the survey under 15 minutes. The Education Committee conducted an extensive survey related to lessons in 2016.

To the statement **“I would recommend LBC lessons to a friend or relative who is interested in bridge”**, 96% agreed.

To the statement **“Lessons and other educational opportunities are a valuable LBC service to its membership”** 97% agreed. For both statements, the high level of support was consistent across all masterpoint levels.

Several comments relate to scheduling:

*“Begin classes right after Labour day so snow birds can get them in before heading south.”*

*“More evening/weekend lessons as some people that are interested are working.”*

### **BRIDGE LAB and PLAY & PRACTICE**

67 players indicate that they play regularly or seasonally in Bridge Lab, and 28 in Play & Practice, virtually all under 50 masterpoints. Of the Bridge Lab participants, 87% agreed that they found the pre-session lesson interesting. About 30% of each group indicated a willingness to participate more often if schedules permitted. Over 80% of each group feel that the sessions help to develop their bridge skills.

*“Peter's style on Tuesday afternoons strikes exactly the right note and players with a wide variety of experience enjoy the sessions.”*

*“Love the lab and Sat practice and play.”*

103 respondents said they would recommend Bridge Lab and/or Play & Practice to a friend who plays bridge; 50% of the total survey respondents, including several of those at higher masterpoint levels.

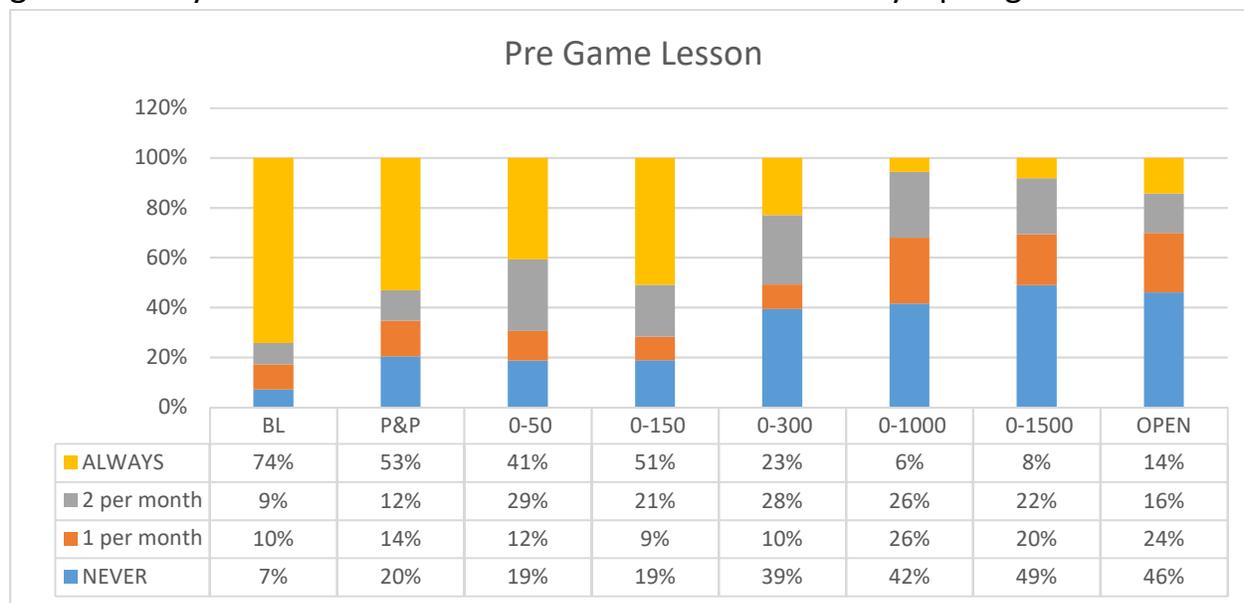
### MASTER YOUR GAME and ROOKIE MASTER

Both these formats have been quite well received and enjoyed by players, with Master Your Game having slightly higher ratings from both levels, with the difference more pronounced for masters/coaches.

Category	# of players	Worthwhile (5 max)	Play again? (5 max)
MYG players	56	4.5	4.3
MYG coaches	22	4.5	4.4
RM Rookies	43	4.2	4.1
RM Masters	41	4.0	4.1

### PRE-GAME LESSONS

Respondents were asked how often they would like a free 15 minute pre-game lesson. These lessons are very popular in Bridge Lab – 75% believe there should be one every week. Popularity drops for higher level games – 51% for the 0-150 game to only 14% who would like to see them before every Open game.



## **LOST & FOUND**

17 respondents indicated that they attend Lost & Found regularly when they play Monday mornings. 41 said they would be interested in attending these sessions after other games, concentrated under 300 masterpoints. 61 felt that these sessions could be helpful in their development in bridge.

## **SEMINARS WITH GUEST TEACHERS**

28 respondents had attended a Barbara Seagram seminar, 31 an Audrey Grant seminar, and 41 had attended both – for a total of 100 who had attended at least one. 109 respondents agreed that sessions like these are helpful in their bridge development, and 104 expect to attend in future, most of them under 500 masterpoints. 93% felt that hosting these sessions is a valuable LBC service to members, with the strong ratings consistent across all masterpoint levels.

As to which is the most important consideration in deciding whether to attend a seminar, 50% chose the instructor, 42% topic and 8% cost.

## **PLAYER DEVELOPMENT CONCLUSIONS**

Overall, members see good value in LBC's player development opportunities and would recommend them to friends who are interested. The supervised play formats are very popular. Master Your Game, Rookie-Master, Lost and Found and Guest Teacher seminars also get high marks. While there are many comments and suggestions, most are asking for more of the same!

*"I have learned lots from each workshop/course that I have taken at the club.....keep offering the courses with many different instructors so the participants get a well rounded experience"*

*"It's a terrific club. I think a session addressing taking the leap from being an enthusiastic social player to playing duplicate would be helpful. By this I mean, specifically what bridge skills are required, not the mechanics of the game. There is such a long continuum that it's hard to judge if one is ready."*

*"Master your game works best for me. Can play with my regular partner and get the help."*

## SOCIAL EVENTS

### Established Social Events

The survey asked whether respondents had attended various social events, and about their intention to attend in future. 15% to 25% of respondents skipped the questions in this section; the percentages in the table below are of those who responded to the respective question.

SOCIAL EVENT	ATTENDED	FUTURE YES	FUTURE NO
New Year's Day Brunch	28%	27%	38%
Alzheimer's Longest Day	43%	47%	18%
Annual General Meeting	33%	37%	23%
Holiday Pot Luck	32%	37%	27%
Volunteer Appreciation	25%	29%	25%
LBC Birthday Party	28%	32%	21%

The "Future Yes" and "Future No" percentages are those who agreed or disagreed that they would plan to attend in future; in each case, a large number of respondents were undecided.

In the results, those with over 150 masterpoints are more likely to participate in club social events of all kinds.

ATTENDED SOCIAL EVENT	Non-ACBL	0-20 mps	20-150 mps	150+ mps
New Year's Day Brunch	3%	14%	21%	52%
Alzheimer's Longest Day	21%	29%	52%	59%
Annual General Meeting	9%	0%	27%	65%
Holiday Pot Luck	11%	6%	30%	60%
Volunteer Appreciation	6%	3%	17%	52%
LBC Birthday Party	3%	0%	19%	47%

The Alzheimer's event stands out – the highest percentage of attendees and of those who definitely plan to attend in future. Of the various social events, it also had the highest participation rate for non-ACBL members at 21% - twice as many as the next highest. This fundraiser has spanned three days, with the silent auction plus the Wednesday events, and seems to be quite popular.

## Return Intentions –

The following table shows, for each event, those who have attended the event in the past and whether they intend to return. In each case, over 80% of those who have attended intend to return, a high satisfaction rating.

Event	# who have participated	% of participants who will attend again
New Year's Brunch	42	86%
Alzheimer's Longest Day	71	89%
Annual General Meeting	51	82%
Holiday Pot Luck	48	92%
Volunteer Appreciation	38	82%
LBC Birthday Party	34	91%

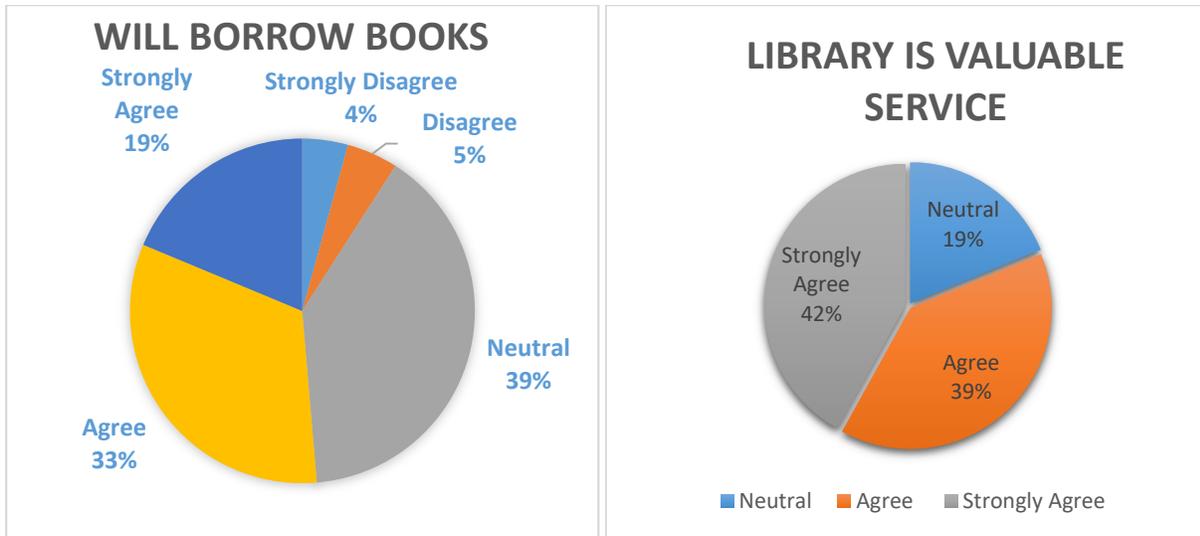
**Sample Comments** – *“Although they are not events I attend now I'm so pleased they are available. The events provide a sense of belonging to a club for so many people.”*

**SOCIAL EVENTS CONCLUSION:** Social events are supported by and enjoyed by LBC's higher masterpoint members in particular. They seem to have less appeal for non-ACBL members and beginning players. It might be interesting to try an event targeted at newer players – or one that that did not involve playing bridge? (The Holiday Pot Luck and New Year's Brunch have limited capacity to expand.)

## LIBRARY

81% of members view the Library as a valuable service to members; those who are ACBL members are particularly positive in their view. No respondent disagreed, 19% were neutral.

52% intend to borrow books; interest is spread across the full range of members by masterpoint holdings, with the least interest among those who are not ACBL members.



There was slightly more interest in reading lists by level (66%) than in book reviews (48%), although both ideas have support. This slight preference for reading lists was shown across the masterpoint range.

There was general support for buying some new books each year, with 47% agreeing and 9% against. ACBL members were more enthusiastic than non-ACBL members.

38% supported adding educational software to the library. The non-ACBL members showed more interest in software than books.

41% were aware that the Audrey Grant Better Bridge magazines were available to borrow, 48% were not. Awareness was lowest in the 50 – 150 masterpoint range, who would likely be among those who would benefit the most from this resource.

There were 27 comments on the library, with the most common being thanks to the Jolliffes for their work as Librarians. Another repeated comment was from individuals who look to the internet for information rather than books.

*“The way the library has been set up, organized and cataloged is very impressive. Thanks to Judy & Roger Jolliffe for all their hard work to make this happen!”*

*“My neutral responses result from my ability to go on line and find multiple articles on any aspect that I am interested in.”*

*“I can't read about Bridge and learn anything. I learn through practice and mistakes.”*

**PLAY ELSEWHERE** – 32% of respondents play at least once per month in other ACBL-sanctioned clubs; these tend to be higher masterpoint players. 56% play at least once per month in unsanctioned games at other venues; non-ACBL players and those with under 150 masterpoints are the most likely to do so.

**FORMER MEMBERS** – 8 former members were generous to share their thoughts by completing the survey. Each response was reviewed to look for patterns that could help with membership retention. Six of the eight agreed that overall, they were satisfied with their experience at LBC; one was neutral and one strongly disagreed. 3 of the 8 indicated that they planned to continue as LBC members, suggesting that their current non-member status is temporary. Two others made comments that indicate that they now live some distance from London.

Considering the very wide range of bridge experience and differing desires for competition and social enjoyment, it is a daunting challenge to meet the wants, needs and expectations of everyone who comes to LBC.

### **IF YOU COULD MAKE ONE CHANGE...**

As a concluding question, respondents were asked “If you could make one change at LBC, what would it be?” Responses were grouped by topics:

Schedule – 7 comments asking for more games, 3 for earlier afternoon start times

Game Operations – 2 comments favouring non-playing directors, 2 re sign-in procedures, several one-offs

Partners – several comments reinforcing the importance of finding partners

Development and labs– positive comments, requests for more volunteers at Bridge lab

Conduct – *“More fun - less seriousness. It's a game”*

Location –ten suggestions to move to central/north London

*“Would like the club to be closer to home. I know this will not occur.”*

Facilities – five requests for more heat; survey was taken in January cold snap

Misc – generally positive comments.

*“I have only positive comments about the LBC and would recommend it to all bridge players.”*

*“Can't think of any changes. Those people who take responsibility for the operation of LBC have done a magnificent job! Thank you!”*

*“Get more people involved in helping at the club.”*

And the last word goes to a newer member:

*“I am just delighted to play the games that I play at The London Bridge Centre. My husband died two years ago. Shortly thereafter an LBC member "tricked" me into coming to the club for a couple of Thursday afternoons as her partner. I was hooked from the first game. Absolutely love it. Thank you for all you do to keep this club going. It is absolutely the best and has done wonders for me. Kudos!!!”*

SURVEY Jan 2019

Respondents by Masterpoint level REVISED

MP range	Response count	Membership from Pianola	Response Rate
Non-ACBL	33	166	20%
0 to 20	45	46	98%
20+-50	25	31	81%
50+-100	13	26	50%
100+-150	9	13	69%
150+-300	17	28	61%
300+-500	8	18	44%
500+-1000	20	46	43%
1000+-1500	6	12	50%
1500+	19	33	58%
<b>Total</b>	<b>195</b>	<b>419</b>	<b>47%</b>
<b>ACBL members only</b>	<b>162</b>	<b>253</b>	<b>64%</b>

counts only 2019

paid members

Total 206 responses include 8 former members, 2 potential new members & 1 visitor