

BRIDGE ENTRY SYSTEM SOFTWARE (BESS).

Entering bridge competitions has traditionally been a fairly informal process. At club level a “pay cash on the day” approach has been the normal approach. At “area” level competitors email the area tournament organiser (ATO) and send a cheque or make a direct transfer into the “area” bank account. For national congresses you would tend to complete a paper entry form and send this to the national tournament organiser (NTO) with a cheque or make a direct bank transfer.

In the case of area or national events the ATO or NTO (or entry secretary) will maintain a list of entries and collect any outstanding payments on the day of the competition (often these would be a cash payment).

The area or national organisation treasurer then needs to reconcile all the payments for each event and usually produce a P&L account. Having been an area treasurer for many years this reconciliation process can be very time consuming.

Whilst there has always been a need for a better way of entering bridge events, the advent of online bridge where the bridge platforms either do not directly take payment from the competitor or if they do have that option, better rates can be obtained by taking payment independently of the bridge online platform (for example Bridge Base Online and Real Bridge). At club level due to COVID, there is also a recognition that in future paying table money in cash is undesirable.

BESS provides a comprehensive method of setting up entry mechanisms for bridge competitions. It is an end-to-end system, where all the entry and secure payment information needed is collected from the competitor, entries can be tracked by the tournament organiser and organisation treasurer. The tournament director can generate entry lists in CSV format for upload into the online bridge platforms.

BESS has been used for Welsh Bridge Union national trials and is currently being used for the East Wales February 2021 congress. It can be used free of charge* for any Welsh areas wanting to trial the software during 2021. BESS is under continual development and if you would like to use BESS for one of your events in 2021 please email Simon Gottschalk at simon@msg.uk.com

**A Stripe account (www.stripe.com) is required for online payments and there currently is a fee charged by Stripe of 1.4% of the transaction total plus £0.20 per transaction.*