

PROPOSAL ON AMALGAMATION OF CBAI & NIBU

SUMMARY FOR MEMBERS (15 May 2026)

- A formal resolution proposing that the CBAI amalgamate with our counterpart body in Northern Ireland, the Northern Ireland Bridge Union, will be put to the AGMs of both bodies this June.
- For the CBAI, the proposal is made by the CBAI's Governing Council and has the endorsement of its Management Committee, with both groups believing that an amalgamation would be in the best interests of bridge in Ireland, and bridge players in both the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland.
- For the typical club player nothing of substance will change. Your weekly game(s) will take place under the same conditions, with the same table money, and the same prizes. Your annual registration fee will not change. Nor will your grade, or your masterpoints (with the minor exception that the masterpoint regime will in the future provide members with the ability to remain essentially social rather than competitive players if they wish).
- At the wider level, it is felt that amalgamation will create a better background for the promotion and development of bridge throughout Ireland. In the long run, therefore, it is hoped that Irish bridge players and bridge clubs will benefit from the support of a regulatory body which will be better able to advance and develop the game.
- It is planned to institute a specific Promotion & Development Committee to co-ordinate this effort.
- No major change to the current suite of competitions is planned. Existing CBAI and IBU events will continue, being titled "All-Ireland" championships at the relevant format or grade.
- A new legal structure, that of Company Limited by Guarantee registered in the Republic of Ireland, is proposed for the new amalgamated body, under the name "Bridge Ireland". This will enhance the governance of the organisation, is in line with best practice for sporting and not-for-profit organisations, and was strongly recommended by our legal advisers.
- The directors of the Board of the company will be elected by the membership in annual meeting, via the regional structure. The Board will consist of 6-9 members, with terms limits applying to their service. The Board will have overall responsibility for the running of the company, with particular focus on the supervision of governance, finance, and risk matters.

- The Bridge Management Group, broadly similar to the existing Governing Council of the CBAI, will have responsibility for day-to-day bridge-related matters. This group will comprise two nominees from each of the regions (see below), plus the President, President-Elect, and Outgoing President.
- The staff of the new body will be unchanged, and will continue to operate from the CBAI's current premises. The range of services provided to members will be unchanged; indeed, it is hoped that they will be enhanced by the introduction of a new member database, which is currently in development.
- The former NIBU area, designated as "Northern Ireland", will form a region within the new body, joining the thirteen current regions of the CBAI.
- Regions will continue to have a large degree of autonomy in how they organise bridge within their territory.
- The Northern Ireland Region is guaranteed representation on the Board of Bridge Ireland for at least the first nine years of its existence, and will attain the Presidency (a ceremonial one-year role) at the first opportunity, expected to be season 2028/29.
- Agreement has been reached that both Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland can continue to play in the home international series for at least a further five years, if so desired.
- Nothing will change on our international teams, other than that the Irish Bridge Union will be dissolved and Bridge Ireland will be the body recognised by the European and World Federations.
- There will be some costs to amalgamation, but these will be kept to a minimum, and some may be recovered by way of external funding.
- Amalgamation of the NIBU and the CBAI will create one of the very few newsworthy events within bridge, which may represent an opportunity for publicity for the game. A plan is being devised to consider how best to achieve this.
- If approved by the CBAI and NIBU AGMs, the new arrangements will take effect for the new bridge season, starting on 1 September 2026, subject to all the necessary practicalities being concluded. All clubs currently affiliated to either the CBAI or the NIBU will be deemed to be affiliated to Bridge Ireland, unless notification to the contrary is received.

This document summarises the key features of the proposed amalgamation of the CBAI and the NIBU. If you would like to see more detail on this, including the rationale behind the recommendations, a more comprehensive document is available [here](#).