

**The January Charity pairs, in association with the World Bridge Federation
 Wednesday 27th January 2021**

Our January Charity Pairs, raises funds for [UNICEF](https://www.unicef.org/) to help children in danger through the world. They need so much help now, not just because of war, famine, the need for medicines, clean water but now there is the added threat from the coronavirus. Please help us raise as much money as we can – send your donations to us and we will gather them together and pass them on to UNICEF from bridge players all over the world.

Just go to : <https://www.ecatsbridge.com/sims/wbfcharity/payments.asp> and you will see how to do it ... there is no specified amount but we do suggest £3 per player if you can manage that !

Help us to help these children who are in such need. Please. And please read the bit at the end of the commentary about future events (and to see the flower I have put there for you!)

Board 1. Love All. Dealer North.

♠ A 9 6 2 ♥ A K 10 8 ♦ 9 8 ♣ K 9 6 ♠ K Q J 10 8 4 ♥ 9 ♦ A K 6 ♣ A 8 3	♠ 7 5 3 ♥ 7 4 3 ♦ Q J 5 4 2 ♣ 5 2
♠ ♥ Q J 6 5 2 ♦ 10 7 3 ♣ Q J 10 7 4	

North opens INT, South takes out to 2♥ (probably via a 2♦ transfer) and West has a choice. Double to show a strong hand is one option. A direct leap to 4♠ is another. East will not give much encouragement! Despite the 4-0 break, 4♠ is makeable. If North does not attack clubs, declarer simply knocks out the ♠A. If North does lead clubs early, declarer must give up a club while dummy still has plenty of trumps. A sacrifice in 5♥ doubled is cheap, down only 100.

Board 2. N/S Vul. Dealer East.

♠ 6 4 ♥ K 10 ♦ 7 3 ♣ K J 10 9 8 4 3 ♠ A Q ♥ A 7 5 ♦ K 9 5 4 2 ♣ Q 6 5	♠ J 9 8 3 ♥ Q J 4 3 ♦ A Q 8 ♣ 7 2 ♠ K 10 7 5 2 ♥ 9 8 6 2 ♦ J 10 6 ♣ A
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West presumably opens 1♦ in third seat. At this vulnerability, North will think twice about bidding 3♣ (weak). East would double for takeout, which West might leave in. Losing 500 in 3♣ doubled will be a bottom. Left to their own devices, East-West bid 1♦-1♥-INT-2♣(enquiry)-2♥-2♠-2NT or similar. With the clubs blocked and the ♠K onside, game is there – indeed 10 tricks are possible in 3NT: two spades, three hearts and four diamonds.

Board 3. E/W Vul. Dealer South.

♠ A Q J 10 7 2 ♥ 8 4 ♦ 10 3 ♣ K 10 5 ♠ K 8 ♥ 9 ♦ K 9 8 7 2 ♣ Q J 9 6 4	♠ 6 4 3 ♥ A K 5 3 2 ♦ A Q 5 4 ♣ 8 ♠ 9 5 ♥ Q J 10 7 6 ♦ J 6 ♣ A 7 3 2
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What should North open in third seat? Game looks unlikely facing a passed partner. Then again, the two defensive tricks and flattish shape are hardly ideal for pre-empting. Even 1♠ poses problems. If East overcalls 2♥, West might bid 3♣, when East can bid 3♦. Of course, West will fear that bidding 3♣ (or 3♦, a less flexible bid) will merely elicit 3♥. 3♦ plays better from the West seat, with 130 possible. North can make 2♠. 2♥ (East) is two down.

Board 4. Game All. Dealer West.

♠ 10 6 4 ♥ A Q 6 4 3 ♦ A K 6 5 ♣ A	♠ K 7 2 ♥ 10 5 2 ♦ J 7 ♣ J 9 7 4 3
♠ Q J 3 ♥ J 9 8 7 ♦ 10 9 3 2 ♣ 10 8	♠ A 9 8 5 ♥ K ♦ Q 8 4 ♣ K Q 6 5 2

The computer has produced a beautiful deal. Have you spotted the best contract? 6♦ is the spot. You can throw two spades on the top clubs (West ruffs but it is with a natural trump winner) and set up the heart suit with a ruff. Next best is to stay out of any slam and play in no-trumps. You can set up a long spade or, without a spade lead, a long heart for 660. Quite a likely sequence is 1♥-2♣-2♦-3NT. North has to trust South not to have too many extra values.

Board 5. N/S Vul. Dealer North.

♠ 10 6 4 ♥ A J 9 6 3 ♦ A 7 5 2 ♣ J	♠ A 3 ♥ K Q 10 4 ♦ 10 ♣ Q 9 8 7 4 3
♠ Q 7 5 ♥ 7 ♦ K Q 9 6 3 ♣ K 10 6 5	♠ K J 9 8 2 ♥ 8 5 2 ♦ J 8 4 ♣ A 2

Given the vulnerability, East-West may well have the auction to themselves, with a simple 1♣-3♣. As only a diamond lead and a spade switch stops 10 tricks, I expect 130 to be a common score. If West prefers a 1♦ response, North bids 1♥, making a heart lead even more likely. Declarer can then grab the ♠A at trick two and throw two spades from dummy on the ♥K-Q. North-South do not want to buy the contract as 3♠ is down two and 3♥ worse.

Board 6. E/W Vul. Dealer East.

♠ 8 6 2 ♥ Q 7 6 ♦ 8 3 ♣ J 10 9 8 4	♠ 9 7 ♥ A K 10 4 ♦ 10 2 ♣ A Q 7 6 2
♠ K J 5 3 ♥ 2 ♦ A Q J 9 5 ♣ K 5 3	♠ A Q 10 4 ♥ J 9 8 5 3 ♦ K 7 6 4 ♣

After East opens 1♣, South surely doubles. The shape is great and the vulnerability favourable. If West redoubles, South retreats to 1♥ (the score for 1♣ redoubled with four overtricks is 1030 in case you did not know). West is not going to defend 1♥ doubled (down only two). All routes really lead to 3NT. Declarer has to give up a diamond to establish the suit, so 660 will be a common score – the ♥10 with East stops South from setting up the hearts.

Board 7. Game All. Dealer South.

♠ 6 4 3 ♥ 5 4 ♦ A 8 5 2 ♣ K 9 5 3	♠ A K J 5 ♥ A Q 10 7 2 ♦ K 9 ♣ Q 10
♠ Q 10 8 ♥ K 9 3 ♦ Q J ♣ J 7 6 4 2	♠ 9 7 2 ♥ J 8 6 ♦ 10 7 6 4 3 ♣ A 8

East opens 1♥ in fourth seat. West may raise to 2♥, whereupon East jumps to 4♥. If West decides the hand has no ruffing value – the Q-J doubleton may be just as useful (or as here useless) in no-trumps as in hearts – East should rebid 2♠ over INT. West then gives jump preference to 4♥. As it happens, the pairs who bid to 3NT will score a top, with 10 tricks available in hearts or no-trumps. Indeed 10 tricks are also there if you play in spades.

Board 8. Love All. Dealer West.

♠ 10 4 ♥ J 2 ♦ Q J 10 7 4 3 ♣ 6 4 2 ♠ A K Q J 9 8 ♥ A K Q 7 ♦ ♣ A 7 3	♠ 7 2 ♥ 10 8 6 5 ♦ K 9 5 2 ♣ Q 9 8 ♠ 6 5 3 ♥ 9 4 3 ♦ A 8 6 ♣ K J 10 5
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West opens 2♣. North may overcall 2♦ (or 3♦ if feeling brave). East may double. West bids spades and East may bid 3NT. This is awkward as West does not want to bid 4♥ and hear East pass. 6♠ may be commoner than the easier 6♥. One way to make 6♠ is to ruff the ♦Q, draw trumps, cash the ♥A-K-Q and play a club to the nine: South has no safe return. A squeeze also works if again you play South for the ♣K. 6NT (East) is makeable on a strip squeeze.

Board 9. E/W Vul. Dealer North.

♠ K 5 ♥ A 2 ♦ A K Q 3 ♣ Q 9 7 6 4 ♠ A Q 8 3 ♥ 7 4 ♦ J 10 5 ♣ A K J 8 ♠ 10 7 2 ♥ K Q J 10 8 6 5 ♦ 9 2 ♣ 3	♠ J 9 6 4 ♥ 9 3 ♦ 8 7 6 4 ♣ 10 5 2
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North opens 1♣ and South responds 1♥ (or if it is natural rather than a splinter, 3♥). West doubles 1♥ and North redoubles. Soon South arrives in 4♥. West has two aces to take: having seen the ♣2 at trick one, West cashes the ♠A at trick two to find out whether the ♣2 was a singleton (expecting East to play low if it was). If West tries to cash the ♣A-K at tricks one and two, declarer can set up the clubs for 12 tricks and 480. Only 430 is available in no-trumps.

Board 10. Game All. Dealer East.

♠ 9 7 ♥ K 7 6 5 ♦ K 9 ♣ Q 9 8 3 2 ♠ K 10 8 3 ♥ J 9 3 2 ♦ A 7 3 ♣ K 4 ♠ 4 2 ♥ 10 ♦ Q J 10 8 6 4 2 ♣ 7 6 5	♠ A Q J 6 5 ♥ A Q 8 4 ♦ 5 ♣ A J 10
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The sequence 1♠-3♠-6♠ has much to commend it. The slam surely has some play whatever West has for the double raise. The friendly heart position means that an overtrick is there. If South bids 3♦ (weak) over 1♠, West must take care. A simple 3♠ suggests a hand that would have bid 2♠ without the overcall: a jump to 4♠ is in order. East is always bidding a slam if West bids 4♠ on this sequence. Courtesy of the heart position, 7♥ and 7NT are also on.

Board 11. Love All. Dealer South.

♠ 10 5 4 3 2 ♥ A 10 8 ♦ J 6 5 3 ♣ 10 ♠ J 9 ♥ K Q 5 ♦ K 9 8 7 ♣ Q 5 3 2 ♠ A K Q 8 6 ♥ 9 7 6 ♦ ♣ A K 9 8 7	♠ 7 ♥ J 4 3 2 ♦ A Q 10 4 2 ♣ J 6 4
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North-South might bounce straight back with a slam of their own. Can they bid it? Suppose the bidding starts 1♠-2♠-4♦(splinter). With an ace, a singleton, a fifth trump and very little wasted in diamonds, North has an enormous hand. If you do not play 4♦ as a splinter, it is a little harder to reach 6♠. Twelve tricks are there: five spades, a heart, two clubs, a long club and three ruffs. Only if West leads a club can you make all 13 tricks.

Board 12. N/S Vul. Dealer West.

♠ 10 3 ♥ 9 8 2 ♦ A Q J 5 ♣ Q J 10 2 ♠ K 9 6 4 2 ♥ 7 ♦ K 7 6 3 ♣ A K 6 ♠ A Q 5 ♥ 6 5 4 3 ♦ 9 8 ♣ 7 5 4 3	♠ J 8 7 ♥ A K Q J 10 ♦ 10 4 2 ♣ 9 8 ♠ J 8 7 ♥ A K Q J 10 ♦ 10 4 2 ♣ 9 8
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The players may struggle to stop in a safe contract on this deal. 1♠-2♥-2♠-3♠ sounds just plausible. Now West has to take a dim view of the singleton in East's suit to avoid reaching 4♠. With the ♦K protected, the defenders cannot make three diamonds and two trumps, so 3♠ makes. The play may start with the ♣Q to the ace and four rounds of hearts – the losers are three trumps and a diamond. Playing fewer hearts means two trump and two diamond losers instead.

Board 13. Game All. Dealer North.

♠ 10 9 6 5 3 ♥ A ♦ 4 2 ♣ A K Q 10 9 ♠ A J 4 2 ♥ K Q 9 7 6 ♦ 8 3 ♣ 6 5 ♠ K ♥ J 10 8 4 ♦ Q 6 5 ♣ J 7 4 3 2	♠ Q 8 7 ♥ 5 3 2 ♦ A K J 10 9 7 ♣ 8 ♠ Q 8 7 ♥ 5 3 2 ♦ A K J 10 9 7 ♣ 8
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With terrible spades (and an awkward strength), North opens 1♣. What does South do after East overcalls 1♦? Expecting West to have the spades, a jump to 3♣ seems best. This is not a strong action – 2♦ would show a sound raise. West scrapes up a double of 3♣. Rather than guess which major to bid, East is likely to take this out to 3♦. North competes to 4♣ to end proceedings. 4♣ is on. For East-West, both 3♦ and 3♥ are on but obviously not 3♠.

Board 14. Love All. Dealer East.

♠ A 10 9 2 ♥ J 8 ♦ 9 8 7 2 ♣ A K 4 ♠ 7 ♥ A 10 7 4 3 ♦ A K Q 10 4 ♣ 10 2 ♠ Q J 5 ♥ Q 9 6 5 2 ♦ 5 ♣ J 9 8 5	♠ K 8 6 4 3 ♥ K ♦ J 6 3 ♣ Q 7 6 3 ♠ K 8 6 4 3 ♥ K ♦ J 6 3 ♣ Q 7 6 3
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West opens 1♥ in third seat and North doubles. East, with five spades, bids 1♠. South probably tries 2♣. West rebids 2♦ to end the auction. To stop 10 tricks North needs to lead a trump early in the play – at trick two most likely having cashed a club at trick one. Dummy cannot then make the ♠K, the ♣Q and ruff a heart. With (in theory) only 110 available in diamonds, no-trumps scores more, with 8 tricks and 120 possible. No contracts make for North-South.

Board 15. N/S Vul. Dealer South.

♠ K Q J ♥ K Q 8 2 ♦ J 9 8 6 ♣ Q 3 ♠ A 9 5 3 ♥ 9 7 4 ♦ A K 5 4 ♣ 9 8 ♠ 7 ♥ 6 5 3 ♦ Q 7 ♣ A K 10 7 6 5 4	♠ 10 8 6 4 2 ♥ A J 10 ♦ 10 3 2 ♣ J 2 ♠ 10 8 6 4 2 ♥ A J 10 ♦ 10 3 2 ♣ J 2
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A 3♣ opening from South may well begin and end the auction. West is too flat to come in with a double while North has too few aces to contemplate a pot at 3NT. To beat 3♣, having led a top diamond at trick one, West must switch immediately to a heart. This way the defenders get two tricks in each red suit as well as a spade. Bashes who bid 3NT as North may be in luck as the lead to let it make – a spade – is the natural one for East to make. 3♠ would be two off.

Board 16. E/W Vul. Dealer West.

<p>♠ Q 8 4 3 ♥ J 10 9 7 ♦ 9 5 ♣ 7 3 2</p> <p>♠ 10 7 ♥ K 2 ♦ A 7 3 2 ♣ A K Q 10 8</p> <p>♠ A K 9 6 2 ♥ A 5 3 ♦ K Q 6 ♣ 9 5</p>	<p>♠ J 5 ♥ Q 8 6 4 ♦ J 10 8 4 ♣ J 6 4</p>
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When two passes follow West's 1♣ opening, South is too good for reopening 1♠ and doubles. West might rebid 1♦ or, in an effort to shut out the majors, 2♣ or 1NT. North does not need much shutting out but clearly South bids again, introducing the spades. Most likely South gets to play in 3♠ after East-West have competed to three of a minor. 3♠ yields 140 with four tricks to lose. Normal play in the diamond suit should allow West to make 3♣ or 3♦.

Board 17. Love All. Dealer North.

<p>♠ 8 4 ♥ A K 10 3 2 ♦ 10 8 ♣ A K Q 10</p> <p>♠ 7 3 ♥ Q 9 8 ♦ 6 5 ♣ J 9 8 7 6 4</p> <p>♠ Q 10 6 ♥ J 7 6 5 ♦ A J 9 7 3 2 ♣</p>	<p>♠ A K J 9 5 2 ♥ 4 ♦ K Q 4 ♣ 5 3 2</p>
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What does South bid after North opens 1♥ and East overcalls 1♠? I like 3♦, a fit-showing jump: heart support, the values to raise to at least 3♥ and a source of tricks in diamonds. All routes in fact seem to lead to 4♥ by North. East cashes a top spade but has no good continuation. A second top spade sets up the queen while switching is worse, letting declarer throw dummy's spades on the clubs and perhaps make 11 tricks. 4♠ doubled would be costly.

Board 18. N/S Vul. Dealer East.

<p>♠ 10 7 ♥ 5 2 ♦ A 10 9 6 4 3 ♣ K Q 8</p> <p>♠ 3 ♥ 9 8 7 ♦ K Q 8 7 5 2 ♣ 6 5 4</p> <p>♠ J 6 4 ♥ A K Q 10 4 ♦ ♣ A 9 7 3 2</p>	<p>♠ A K Q 9 8 5 2 ♥ J 6 3 ♦ J ♣ J 10</p>
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If East opens 4♠, South will feel tempted to come in with 4NT (any two suits). If North bids a restrained 5♣, the move works. West cannot effect a trump promotion on the third round of clubs and 5♣ makes. There is a way to get a better score. If South doubles 4♠, the defenders might cash their six top winners to leave North with the lead. Then a second round of diamonds promotes South's ♠J for 800. 5♥ fails as West can ruff the third round of spades.

Board 19. E/W Vul. Dealer South.

<p>♠ K J 10 ♥ K Q 10 7 6 ♦ A 9 6 ♣ 5 2</p> <p>♠ 8 5 3 2 ♥ A 9 4 2 ♦ J 7 ♣ K J 7</p> <p>♠ A Q 9 7 4 ♥ J ♦ 8 5 4 2 ♣ 10 8 3</p>	<p>♠ 6 ♥ 8 5 3 ♦ K Q 10 3 ♣ A Q 9 6 4</p>
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North opens 1♥ in third seat. If East bravely bids 2♣, South doubles for takeout. West then raises to 3♣, probably ending the auction. 3♣ makes, with two hearts and two aces to lose. If East passes over 1♥, South bids 1♠ and North may well pass this. East reopens with a double but it will be less clear to compete up to 3♣. South makes 2♠ in comfort, losing two tricks in each minor and the ♥A. 2♥ can go two down if East gets two spade ruffs.

Board 20. Game All. Dealer West.

♠ A K 7 5 3 ♥ A Q 3 2 ♦ Q 9 5 ♣ Q	♠ J 10 9 ♥ J 8 ♦ A 8 6 ♣ A J 6 4 3
♠ Q 8 6 4 ♥ 6 5 ♦ J 10 4 3 ♣ K 10 7	♠ 2 ♥ K 10 9 7 4 ♦ K 7 2 ♣ 9 8 5 2

1♠-INT-2♥-3♥-4♥ sounds like a good auction. With the singleton ♣Q not pulling full weight, a jump rebid of 3♥ would be a big overbid. For South, it would be pusillanimous to pass 2♥ when holding five-card support. With trumps 2-2, declarer should manage an overtrick in 4♥ without raising a sweat. If North raises INT to 2NT, this goes down if East wins the diamond lead and switches to a low club. If South passes 1♠ (a poor move), it makes 8 tricks.

Board 21. N/S Vul. Dealer North.

♠ Q 10 2 ♥ 10 9 8 5 ♦ A J 10 2 ♣ A J	♠ 7 5 ♥ A K J ♦ 8 6 5 4 3 ♣ 9 7 6
♠ A J 8 4 3 ♥ Q 6 4 3 ♦ 9 7 ♣ 8 2	♠ K 9 6 ♥ 7 2 ♦ K Q ♣ K Q 10 5 4 3

In weak no-trump land, many will bid INT-3NT. Can the defenders unscramble their winners? Obviously, if East leads a diamond, the answer is 'no' – declarer rattles off 10 tricks. The potentially killing lead is a top heart. West plays the six (encouraging), then the four (suit preference) and finally the three under the jack. East should now work this out and switch to a spade. Well done if you did that – and bad luck if it happens against you! 4♣ clearly makes.

Board 22. E/W Vul. Dealer East.

♠ J ♥ 8 7 5 3 ♦ Q 9 6 5 3 ♣ A 7 6	♠ 8 3 ♥ K J 10 9 2 ♦ 8 7 ♣ J 9 8 5
♠ A 10 7 6 4 ♥ 4 ♦ K J 4 2 ♣ Q 10 4	♠ K Q 9 5 2 ♥ A Q 6 ♦ A 10 ♣ K 3 2

1♠-INT-2NT is the normal Acol sequence. With no tens and a singleton in South's suit, North should not go on to 3NT. Of course, some South players will bid 3NT over INT. Double dummy the only lead to beat 3NT is a diamond from East. On a heart lead, an inspired declarer might make it. You have two tricks in each suit. The ninth trick comes by endplaying West with a diamond, forcing a spade lead to set up the nine in dummy. 4♦ and 3♠ are makeable.

Board 23. Game All. Dealer South.

♠ Q 8 7 ♥ J 3 ♦ Q 6 4 ♣ K Q J 9 6	♠ A K J 10 9 ♥ 10 2 ♦ K J 10 7 ♣ A 5
♠ 6 4 3 2 ♥ Q 8 7 ♦ 9 5 3 ♣ 10 8 4	♠ 5 ♥ A K 9 6 5 4 ♦ A 8 2 ♣ 7 3 2

South opens 1♥ and North responds 2♣. With the spades so good, and the desire to stop South from bidding 2♥, East may bid 2♠ rather double. Now South might bid a good/bad 2NT (like Lebensohl – the 2NT precedes a competitive bid). As it happens, only a diamond lead stops the tenth trick in a heart contract – maybe East should have doubled 2♣ after all! 3♠ doubled goes down at least one. 3NT by North also fails by a trick.

Board 24. Love All. Dealer West.

♠	K Q J 5 4 3		
♥	Q		
♦	A 6		
♣	6 4 3 2		
♠	10 6	♠	A 9 8
♥	A 10 7 6 3	♥	9 8 2
♦	10 8 3	♦	K Q 4
♣	K J 8	♣	A 10 9 5
	♠ 7 2		
	♥ K J 5 4		
	♦ J 9 7 5 2		
	♣ Q 7		

1♠-INT-2♠ seems the sensible auction. I hope that nobody decides to rebid 2♣! Dummy in 2♠ is useless, not making a single trick if the defenders are on their toes, so declarer goes two down. In theory, East-West do better if they buy the contract. With the aid of a few good guesses, you can make 3♥, losing a spade, a diamond and two trumps. Nine tricks are also available playing in clubs. East can make INT but is unlikely to get to play there.

Remember that we are planning to run other Charity events during the year – the **Charity Challenge** for 2021 will be raising money for two Cancer Charities, which have been so badly affected by COVID ... Cancer Research UK and Marie Curie with the funds split between them. That will be held from 15th – 19th March with different hands each day and we expect it will all be played online but we are getting used to that aren't we ☺

In July there will be the **Kidney Research Pairs** – again we are looking at running this for a full week, with different hands each night, starting on Monday 5th and with the last day on Friday 9th July. And we may include a second charity as we are doing for the Charity Challenge and split the funds raised between them. Maybe, just maybe, some clubs will be playing face to face by then, it would be lovely to think so, but in any case we can mix and match with the scoring to accommodate both online and face-to-face clubs. All part of the challenges we are facing at the moment!

Then comes November and our **Children in Need event** – maybe there is an even better chance of being back at the bridge table by then, I know we must all be looking forward to that. As ever, different hands each night and I am looking at the dates being Friday 5 November, then Monday 8th – Thursday 11th. We don't yet know when the BBC will be doing their CiN "night" but I am guessing it will either be 12th or 19th so our dates should be just fine.

Do keep an eye on the website – obviously we will publish the amounts raised for the various events, and of course it's quite different with individuals donating but hopefully we can raise some goodly amounts for charity – the charities are all having such a tough time of it at the moment, so hopefully by doing these events we can all help a bit.

Thank you for joining us, thank you for your support – really truly we appreciate it so much – and here's a lovely sunflower to say thank you !

Best wishes

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