



# Diplomacy

## UK Hobby Manifesto

Roadmap to a renewed F2F hobby in the UK





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## Mission

UK Diplomacy supports the UK face to face play of the board game Diplomacy. We support the interests of UK players whether domestic or abroad, and we support the interests of all players wishing to play Diplomacy in the UK whether they be British or otherwise.

We prioritize player enjoyment, well-being and safety over competition, as we believe that is a foundational element to building a sustainable hobby.

## Executive Summary

The UK has a long and deep history within the world of face-to-face Diplomacy. The UK hosted the first World DipCon in 1988 at ManorCon drawing a whopping 188 players! The UK went on to host World DipCon three more times after that (1994, 2004, 2017) with an average of 100 players and 45 boards each time. The UK has hosted EuroDipCon five times (1995, 1998, 2006, 2011, 2015). The UK has also been the source of countless zines and articles.

Sadly, those days are now in the past and the UK has been at best anemic in the past decade. There was some momentum when the UK last hosted the World Diplomacy Championships in 2017, which overlapped with the founding and rise of the London Diplomacy Club. However, the Covid-19 pandemic and lockdown hit the reset button on the hobby.

The UK now has an opportunity to rebuild its hobby and is seeking new players, new leaders and new organizers. UK Diplomacy has three goals for the next five years.

The **first goal** is to connect people. There are players from times past, there are current players and there are soon to be players. UK Diplomacy aims to connect those disparate groups of players across a set of platforms and communication channels with consistent messaging, and coordination and collaboration between organizers. UK Diplomacy and its leadership team should generate UK and UK-adjacent content.

The **second goal** is to build a sustainable hobby. UK Diplomacy aims to find and develop the new generation of UK Diplomacy leaders and organizers and give those leaders and organizers the tools to succeed. To build a sustainable hobby, UK diplomacy will have to develop a critical mass of leaders and organizers such that redundancies are sufficient to survive shocks, and such that the UK hobby can collaborate, plan and organize as a single entity. Collectively the individuals that make up the UK hobby need to agree on a direction and move together in that direction. Sustainable hobbies have players, organizers, leaders, clubs and tournaments across the UK.

The **third goal** is simply to play the game. In 2024 we saw the return of a UK National Diplomacy Championships, a successful Tour of Britain, and a strong play history from the London Diplomacy Club. That means we want to play more games at home (club or tournament). As we grow the hobby at home, UK Diplomacy aims to reestablish its presence on the international stage. That means hosting European Diplomacy Championships and World Diplomacy Championships again.



## Road Map to 2029

2024	Build the foundation	<p>Build the UK Diplomacy leadership team from motivated individuals who demonstrate the Leadership Behaviors and who believe the Leadership Actions will grow a sustainable hobby in the UK.</p> <p>Build connections, establish communication channels and connect people. This is not a single platform strategy. It's a single message across all platforms. UK Diplomacy will endeavor to move to the player and communicate across all the many platforms that players use. This should leave no one out, and lead to an inclusive hobby.</p>
2025	Year of the club game	<p>UK Diplomacy aims to see face-to-face games played in several cities across the UK. At least 20 face-to-face games played in the UK in five different locations.</p> <p>We will make efforts to increase the number of tournaments, but the priority will be on establishing regional player bases.</p>
2026	Year of the event	<p>Restart the event engine. Three separate events with at least two boards per round.</p>
2027	EDC	<p>Host EDC in the UK</p>
2028, 2029	WDC	<p>Host WDC in the UK</p>



## Leadership Model

Key to leadership in this vision for the hobby are to ensure player:

- 1) Enjoyment,
- 2) well-being, and
- 3) safety

This is at the expense of competition. Stated differently competition is not the priority here. Competition is not the sacred holy grail that we strive for. Success for UK Diplomacy and its Leaders is that everyone has fun and returns to the board. It is self-evident that this is critical for the hobby to grow.

The Leadership Model is composed of Actions and Behaviors, both of which are designed with the subordinated nature of competition in mind.

## Leadership Actions

The key actions expected of UK Diplomacy leadership in order of importance are:

1. Communicate
2. Organize
3. Support

**Communicate** is the paramount action. It takes priority. Communicate enthusiasm to draw new players in and communicate with past players to bring them back. Communicate across disparate platforms to make sure the message is consistently dispersed to players in all corners of the hobby. Communicate is the paramount activity because there are lots of Diplomacy players and soon to be Diplomacy players out there. Connecting all of them effectively will be the cornerstone of building a sustainable hobby.

Initially that means moving to the player. UK Diplomacy will aim to communicate widely, across many platforms, with unified messaging. UK Diplomacy will not drive single source of the truth communication but may consider moving to that model in the future.

**Organize** is the hardest things to do, but not the most important. If we communicate effectively, we will find the organizers. For those that take the organizer path, get a game going. If it's only two face-to-face games per year, that's a start. Organize the games, and communicate about the game beforehand, and tell people how it went afterwards. For players to play, they need to know there are opportunities to play. For players who didn't play, they need to hear how games went so that they are drawn to play next time. Proof that games are happening will be important evidence that anyone can play.

**Support** can take many forms. For people that are not organizers themselves, they can support the organizers. That can take many forms as organizers always need help.



## Leadership Behaviors

Create a **safe environment** for players that is free of discrimination, intimidation and harassment.

**Inclusive** behaviors that aim to consider people of all types. Players are the life blood of a hobby. Without players there is nothing. All leaders should make sure that the only reason people walk away from the game is because they don't like the game.

Leaders are strongly encouraged to make the game **fun**. Whether organizing or just playing, we should all do our best to make sure everyone around the board enjoys themselves.

## Communication Strategy

The primary leadership action is Communicate. This should be done in a structured way. Ultimately the goal is to get **The Message** to as many players and potential players as possible, in a consistent way.

The initial communications strategy for UK Diplomacy is the **Wide-Net Strategy**. The strategy is supplemented by a Communications Channel Map at the end of this document. The Communications Channel Map is by my no means static. This Map should be updated as often as necessary to meet the goals of the Wide-Net Strategy. The Map is split into primary and secondary channels. Primary communication channels to be used regularly. We must push our message here constantly. Secondary communication channels used tactically.

This all ties in with the **Player Acquisition Strategy** explained below.

## Wide-Net Strategy

The Wide-Net Strategy is about going to people instead of creating a central communication platform. That means that we will communicate regularly and consistently across many platforms. That's email, Reddit, Zine notices, Facebook, Whatsapp, Discord, etc. The reason for this is that there are already many players out there in the UK. Players that have played in the past and players that play online. To pull those players into the face-to-face hobby, we need to go to where they are and communicate using their communication channels, and we must do so consistently.

A central communication platform is an option for the future after the UK hobby achieves some mass and momentum.

## The Message

The Message is any information relevant to the Mission stated above. That is any UK generated, UK relevant and UK adjacent information for face-to-face Diplomacy.

## Player Acquisition Strategy

To establish a New Hobby, we need to grow from the current base of activity that we have today. That involves maintaining our current hobby, while adding new players, new leaders, new events and new opportunities.

We must be thoughtful about communication strategies for each player group. This is subject to change as we try various tactics and learn what works and what does not work. Below is an initial framework.



Online players. Use their communication channels whether it's Discord, online forums or Reddit. Share enthusiasm about the face-to-face play of the game. Funnel online players to the appropriate face to face organizers regardless of whether they are UK based or not (if we help players everywhere, organizers everywhere should help the UK hobby).



Veteran players can be engaged through past connections. Players we engage from times past can help build more connections with their past friends.



The existing hobby needs to be kept informed and engaged.

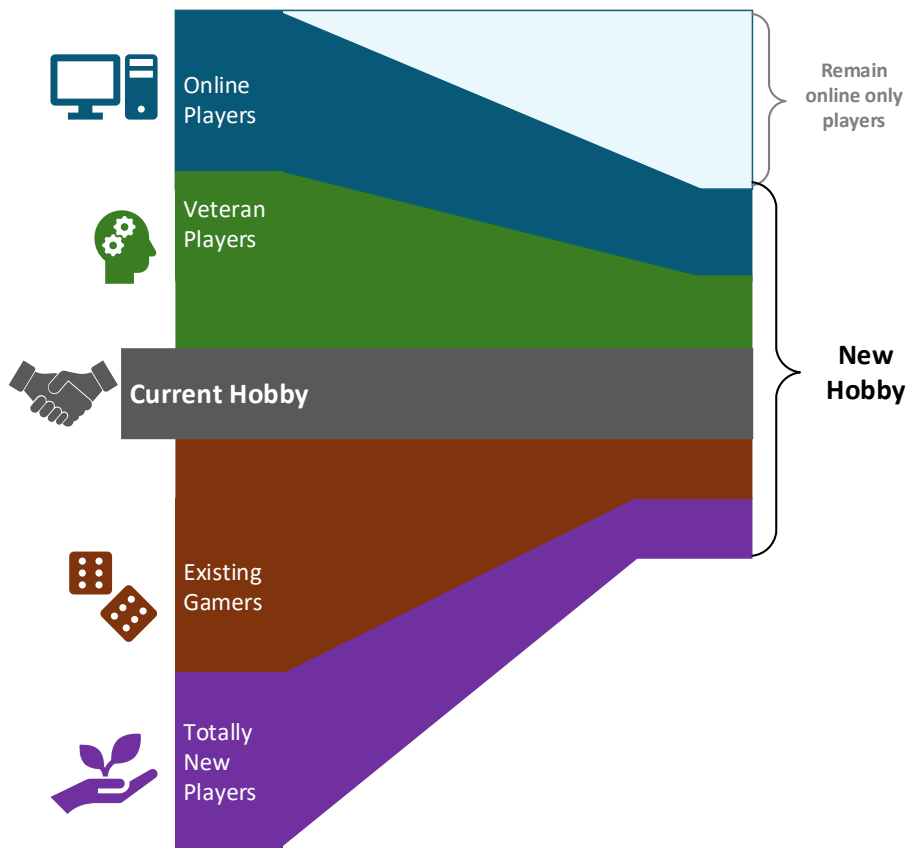


Existing gamers. Attend their events and clubs. share enthusiasm about the game. Share details about how to engage. We must try our best to get their contact details so UK Diplomacy leadership can connect with them directly.

A key gamer channel that has historically been very important are gaming conventions. ManorCon and MidCon are large gaming conventions that historically have hosted the UK's largest Diplomacy events. Collaboration with organizers and running teaching games at these events could be very successful.



Totally new players require communication emphasizing i) low barriers to entry, i.e. everyone is welcome and ii) sharing enthusiasm for the game.



## Organizing events

No wrong or right way to do it. UK Diplomacy will support any event that any organizer wants to put together so long as that organizer endeavors to make their event safe and fair.

## Key Performance Indicators

The goal is to get people to play Diplomacy in the UK again. So, the most important KPIs are how many people are playing and how many boards are played.

**Primary KPIs** – metrics that directly measure the club's success on its stated objectives

Boards played per year	Include a breakdown club vs tournament games
Unique players per year	Simple count of the number of players that have played at least one game per year.
New players per year	Simple count of players that played in the current year but not in the previous year.
Returning players per year	Retained players = total players less new players. Converted players = new players from the prior year that have played again





If we are doing well to make the game fun, we should see healthy retained and converted players.

Non-returning players

Players that played in the prior year, but did not play in the current year.

**Secondary KPIs** – These are primarily metrics that measure engagement and outreach. These secondary KPIs focus largely on the delivery of the Communication Strategy

Players with more than one game per year (ie committed players)

Useful to understand this. Can we convert players that are playing only one game per year to play two games per year? This is growth.

Media produced by club members

This is interesting but it is not a key objective of this document and of the next few years for the UK hobby to be thought leaders. However, this is a good indicator of player engagement and potentially a way to raise UK visibility. Players are encouraged to mention that they are UK based in all media.

Newsletter readership, subscriptions

KPIs to be further developed.

UK Diplomacy website visits

Google analytics was activated in November 2024

Social media metrics

Consider tracking success and engagement on various socials (as per the Communication Strategy).



## Next Steps

The next step is to answer the question of 'who?'. This document ignores how decisions are made, and who should doing what. This is a framework on the 'how' and 'what.' This represents the work and the vision of a few. To be create a sustainable hobby, wider buy-in on this document is required, and a set of leaders who believe in the Leadership Model, Leadership Behaviors and the Road Map to 2029, must put their hands up and make decisions about this document's unanswered questions through consensus.

A sustainable hobby has a governance structure, and this document is intentionally silent on that. Although messy, governance should be decided by consensus among those that choose to lead.



## Appendix – Communication Channel Map

