

Allan Morris 22 Jan 17 Bridge Consultation at Cambridge

Retired 11 years ago. On a few boards. He cares. Passionate about bridge and NZB to succeed. Concerned about the direction NZB taking. Asked NZB to consider an independent review (which this is). Free mandate. Complete report by first week of Feb prior to election process. Been poor communication by NZB but it has improved in recent weeks with the Arrowside (Barrowclough) report and governance rationale released and nothing will happen pre-election. Chair will not be standing.

Stephen Henry in Southland

Agenda

Why are we here?

What led to this review?

Any other issues?

Background

Finances and affordability

Summary of correspondence

Open discussion. Are they on right track? Any other ideas?

Why are we here

NZB not handled situation well at all

Does not want a split into two organisations like UK. Too small a country, fixable situation.

Want to see informed decision making.

Wants to give incoming board a focus for the future, an idea of what the playing community think are the important issues.

What led to this review?

Debate about management vs governance and what governance is about

Board members spending too much time in operational matters. Volunteers. Given up a lot of time.

They thought they needed a CEO to run the business for them. But it is a small business.

Constitution allowed for this

However concern from greater community was whether this was an affordable model?

Inappropriate board behaviour going on.

Mendable not catastrophic

Led to breakdown in trust. Bad environment

Poor communication

Minutes of Board minutes say nothing

Board not being transparent nor explaining what is it doing.

It is not listening to its members or club correspondence

Next elections- needs right people applying and being elected

Anna- clubs are powerless in the way the constitution is set up

Shift from volunteer roles to paid employment needs assessing as to whether affordable
This was raised in Barraclough report. Note coincidental that it was now president of AKL bridge club who compiled and wrote the report.

Other aspect was business improvement programme. Can we get some business functions done cheaper? Eg masterpoints (and not discussed but also applies to board meeting expenses).

Allan

Forget governance, operations etc but develop a business improvement programme and look at its affordability in part or total, cost of change etc. and then what resource do we need? Have we got roles that need tweaking or do they not have or want these skills/ roles? In which case change management kicks in. Organisation survives on volunteers. Needs a blend of volunteer and paid employment to get better outputs.

Objectives of review

Provide bridge community with a direction and a say.....

Caveats- review is not binding. Would be disappointed if incoming Board did not take cognisance of what bridge community is saying.

Findings will be published via regional committees to clubs

Chairperson is nominated by six bridge playing members. Voting occurs by clubs and number of votes depends on size of club. Committee votes. Unlikely committees consult with its membership.

Objectives of NZB

Fostering, promoting and conserving the game of bridge

Are we / the Board achieving these core objectives?

NZB is bound by a constitution and this needs a review. Allan believes this is a high priority

NZB been working as a management committee supported by two employees and a raft of volunteers. Some get honoraria and most don't. Some really good things have been done eg first class teaching programme, improved communications from developing website as single line of communication but needs to more user friendly

Jane- consultation

What about our letters from clubs to NZB? Were they ignored? Will the info from them be used?
Allan has been given the core issues from letters. Over 54 letters of correspondence. Review has prompted this information to be more seriously considered.

Rona- regional committees and other clubs only aware of correspondence if clubs chose to share it via regional committees or requested the information be shared

Three places for new Board . Chair and 2 members. Carol's vacancy will be an appointment by the new board after election.

Finances

Using audited set of accounts that were presented at AGM and are publicly available. 470k expenditure. 45k surplus. 3-4 years ago, deficit for two years in a row. 276k in reserve and 150k held for regional committees, which have sub bank accounts so NZB holds accounts. This funding is ring fenced for regional committee use.

Quite big expenses eg 12.5k external accounting costs (saving potential via Xero accounting), 20k world bridge fees, 35k meeting fees, 13k honoraria, 11k printing and stationary, 147k salaries and wages (inflated with holiday pay out),

Incoming Board will need to demonstrate financial management, especially how any increase in expenditure will be affordable and justified (well spent). This may include the spending of reserves.

Challenge with small organisation is when employee on holiday or sick there is no replacement capacity and activity stops.

Correspondence from clubs

54 letters / emails that should be acknowledged. Majority of clubs have not written but this does not imply disinterest.

Some were just critical of board and others wrote to support board. Blind faith!

38 wanted the issues fixed before progressing the proposal for a CEO.

Some called for the resignation of whole board.

Some threatened to withdraw levies or become disaffiliated

Some were in support of board and need for change

Main message from clubs was for NZB to consult.

No rationale provided by NZB. Just believe us!

Concern about lack of transparency. Board has lost the trust of its members.

Request for a delay of any decision re CEO to after elections

Board needs to deliver on values and how it serves members at grass root level

Need for NZB to support current staff

Support for Alan T etc etc

Allan used analogy of Sydney to Hobart race which uses not just first past the post but a concurrent handicapped competition. We might do this with tournaments.

Opened up forum:

Issues, what going well and what needs to change

Jane- concern about current employees and risk of tribunal, employment dispute and costs therein.

Requests that NZB sorts out employment issues.

Allan concurred but not there to get involved with employment issues. Concurs with Jane and will feed that back. Usual scenario is for Chair to manage staff and chief director employment.

Clare- if relations have broken down between chair and staff that the Constitution has a default position to manage that situation

Jan asked about how to deal with lack of trust between Board members. Allan stated that he

believed that neither current chairperson nor Alan T should stand for chairperson. And current members should not / unlikely to be re-elected. Needs new approach that does the right things for the right reasons as stated above. We need a cohesive Board with a new chairperson who can steer ship in right direction. Alan T will make his own decision whether to stand or not. Arie has already made his call and is retiring from NZB this election.

At Rotorua a suggestion was made to have a common format for CVs for nominated Board members.

Question from Huntly re Board structure

Arie chairperson- resigning and not standing

Alan Turner

Alan Joseph- resigning but can stand for re-election

Phil Rutherford- resigning but can stand for re-election

Carol Richardson- resigned but term still has two years to run

Karen Martelletti

Noel Woodhall

Two retire every year. Three year cycles. Can stand for election up to three times (nine years)
Vacancy for chair and two other vacancies by rotation plus a vacancy to fill an unfilled position

Huntly- asked why such high Board expenses and not meeting via Skype? Allan suggested routine meetings could be held using technology. Alan T said there were problems using Skype with members living in remote areas. Used phone where they could. Some meetings were started Sunday lunchtime and finished Monday daytime and involved overnight hotel expenses. Board has recognised it can spend less.

Anna- would like some of these ideas coming into fruition and ongoing consultation with clubs occurring. Allan suggested workshops.

Brett- information been forthcoming since these consultation meetings have been planned. Board been operating in this way for too long. Frustrating about the lack of empowerment and involvement of clubs at grass roots levels. Members disempowered.

Nick- rationale for change makes sense but no plans for future or how it will enable it.

World champs- NZB missed opportunity to celebrate the success of our male pair winning gold. Needs more thinking from Board members. Eg get Mayor which in turn would get press along.

Need skill sets in Board members.

Business improvement plan - may need a GM role

Peter- need SMART objectives for business. Review needs to be meaningful with SMART recommendations or at least makes point to Board that objectives need to be SMART

Need benefit analysis. Who would do it?

Allan said he was not standing for the board.

Rob- supported Peter ie the SMART, business improvement model

Clare - can consider contracting roles for specific timeframes, do not need to employ a permanent person

A CEO may cost about 120k and this may be offset by savings in current staffing

Members may pay more levies if they support the concept eg \$5 per member is 70k

Funding can be generated by better marketing and sponsorship

Salaries should not rely on sponsorship.

Allan- could foundation and board collectively look at education programmes into every club?

Peter- any opportunity to collaborate with Oz clubs? Allan- in theory, yes but in reality he is unsure.

Michael- Adelaide club manager doing amazing things, Could we learn from him?

Constitution needs changing

Baby boomer bulge huge opportunity. Who has done the analysis? Where is the plan to take advantage of this group?

Alan T - in Dec we reached 14,000 in membership and now just dropped down to under 14,000. NZB asked clubs for age demographics of its members but clubs did not provide info.

Some discussion about club play eg cheat sheet and no doubling of learners etc. need friendly sessions

And social aspects.

Anna asked about how do we get everyone's feedback? Allan responded said one idea is to fund NZB to do its own business and core services and then fund the regions to do what it needs to do via a plan that is funded by its membership.

Action

Send Allan our letters