



27 August 2025

Newsletter No 4 for 2025

I don't know whether it is age, but each year seems to be shorter. We hold a meeting each month to ensure we remain focused on the wellbeing of the game.

Set out below is a summary of matters discussed:

Ranks and Grading Survey

We wish to thank those clubs and players who responded to the survey. We appreciate the turnaround was short, but we did receive some valuable feedback. Not surprisingly there is a wide range of views which is healthy and does demonstrate interest in the wellbeing of the game.

We asked three questions.

1. Should there be additional ranks above Emerald or the current top rank of Platinum.
2. Should we adjust the gaps between ranks to make these more consistent.
3. Eligibility for graded tournaments.

Like many other sports a ranking system provides a measure where you stand in relation to fellow competitors; a measure of the progress you are making; an incentive to improve. The responses are now being considered. Decision will be made next month or in early October.

Financials

A healthy surplus in July. Excluding unrealized gains or losses on our investment portfolio we are looking at an operating profit year to date of \$11k. This will be eroded and more when we account for world championship in Denmark.

In July the annual youth weekend was held in Wellington. 40 youth players took part. We were fortunate to receive funding from the New Zealand Bridge Foundation and The World Bridge Federation.

At the AGM we shared we expected an operating loss for the year. An increase in participation is helping our financial position.

As we look at FY2026 we are having to cut our cloth to ensure expenditure remains in check. This involves some hard decisions. Included are

1. A decision to play the regional championship round robin online.
2. Participation at the Asia Cup will be self-funded.
3. Reprioritizing what and where we spend our marketing dollar

Overall, we are forecasting savings of ~\$200k in FY26.



Auckland Northland Regional Committee Annual Meeting

The following is an extract from the meeting and highlights points that we thought regions, clubs, and players may value.

Congratulations to the regional committee. The hui featured nine speakers and two workshops.

1. Growing Club Membership- presented by Clare Coles, Cambridge Bridge Club. What makes a club special? It is about the people- players, committees, directors, teachers. It is about creating the right environment for players to thrive- such as having sessions for different levels and balancing the needs of 'social' and 'competitive' players.
(In April Beverley and I sold our apartment in Auckland as a precursor to moving to Tamahere (between Cambridge and Hamilton) in September. An early sale meant we had to find a temporary residence. Fortunately, we have friends who have a holiday home in Kerikeri. We joined both the Kerikeri Bridge Club and the Paihia Bridge Club. We were made very welcome and fitted into the local community. The backbones of these clubs are the people who are committed to having a welcoming environment and caring for their members at all levels).
2. Annual Financial Reporting. We continue to monitor the progress for registering under the Incorporated Societies Act 2022. It is pleasing to see Clubs making progress. A gentle reminder you have until 5 April 2026 to register. Help is available, refer to the Toolkit on the website. Registration brings new reporting obligations- clubs must produce financial statements in accordance with GAAP. Help is available, refer to the Toolkit on the website.
3. Player retention- presented by Ken Dixon, Waitemata Bridge Club. You're just finished lessons, what next? How do you keep players interested, motivated, and attending club sessions. Beginners are always 'dazed and confused'. Easy going sessions, mentoring programme, and extra learning and revision resources are among Waitemata's keys to success.
4. Fair Play Committee. The Fair Play Committee is a new committee. Player conduct and integrity are the focus of the committee, plus ensuring players and clubs alike know their rights, responsibilities and recourse. We are working with the committee to ensure it is fully functional by year end.
5. Teaching and Learning Committee. We have shared with you that this committee has a project to revise and contemporize our teaching material. There is a focus on improver lessons in 2026.
6. Tournament Scheduling Summary.
 1. Clubs are no longer limited to a fixed number of events in each grade. There are however constraints if an event conflicts with a neighboring region.
 2. Clubs may now offer a 2B one session event for charity and fundraising purposes.
 3. Non-consolation 3A tournaments are reserved for players at restricted open or below (National Master and below).
 4. Three weekends a year will be set aside for online bridge, in addition to fundraising events.

Marketing

Sadly, Mel is leaving us on the 4th September. Over the past two years she has steered our investment in marketing, helping clubs with their growth ambitions and raising our public profile, and will be particularly remembered for the "bridge is the new tinder!" campaign! We wish her well in her future endeavours and have enjoyed and thank her for her enthusiasm and commitment.

We are reviewing our investment and thinking where will focus our energies.

World Championship- Denmark

We are represented by open, women, senior, and mixed teams. Qualifying is now complete with the women finishing 14th and the mixed 15th. Every day Richard posts on the website what has happened the night before.

Congress 2025

Entries received to date are well ahead of last year, which is pleasing. For those yet to lodge their entries we encourage you to do so sooner rather than later. While we have space across the venue, please avoid the disappointment of missing should capacity be reached.

A reminder too, that entry fees fully paid by 30 September go into the draw to win one of 4 free entries.

I know I might sound like a broken record, but I know playing Congress was the making of our love for the game.

Cheers Allan