



15 March 2024

Newsletter No 1 2024

Hi Everyone

On Tuesday the Board held its regular meeting. Set out below is a summary of matters considered.

Online Bridge

We recently released our 2024 plan for online bridge. The plan is not perfect, but we have done our best to provide a balanced opportunity for both forms of the game- face-2-face and online. We have delayed implementation to May to provide time for clubs to make the necessary arrangements as they see fit. In an ideal world the proposal should have been with clubs last year but alas we failed to meet our own goal of early notification. We apologise for any inconvenience because we should have done better.

We equally appreciate that the opportunity to transfer an event to online may conflict with a scheduled face-2-face event. Whilst we cannot control who plays what event we remain hopeful that players will support events in their region. For many Clubs the success of their event underpins what they do for their members and their finances.

Tournament Schedule

We know the current schedule is packed with something like 400 events a year and with little scope for anything additional. There is a tendency to rollover events year after year. This may meet the needs of clubs. On the other hand, clubs might want to reconfigure their events to better meet the needs of their membership.

We propose in the second quarter (April to June) to seek your feedback, so the 2025 tournament schedule is aligned to needs.

Membership

We all know the benefit of increasing our overall membership. We are encouraged by the numbers registering for lessons. The challenge, which is not a new one, is keeping beginners. We could say more people know about the game and that must be a positive, but we need club members who contribute to the future wellbeing of the game. We need to find ways to encourage beginners to stay connected with the club.

Over the last two months we have seen a decline in the overall membership. This is not unusual as players who joined as part of the lessons are dropping off. This is why we are urging clubs to find a better way



of retaining beginners. We are all spending a lot of money getting beginners through the lessons. A beginner who joins and plays twice a week is an asset.

Financial Position

We are doing our best to keep our costs in check but like for every club and for every person all our costs are rising. Increasing the affiliation fee and/or the participation cost could be seen as a quick solution, but we know this is not sustainable. We need to be very focused on what services we provide and ensure they are core to our offering, rather than nice to have.

We have to balance the books, so inevitably we will have to cap expenditure or find additional revenue streams or both.

The above should not be interpreted as that we are not willing to invest in our future. Hopefully you are seeing the value, for example- investment in marketing and communications. We have also made the decision to register under the new Incorporated Societies Act. We hope the work we are doing in this space will help clubs navigate through the change. To support our operations, we have to re-engineer our website. The platform is no longer supported so change is a must. This is an opportunity to be more customer-centric and to protect our underlying intellectual property.

Future Roles

Like bridge clubs and committees, we take on these roles because we have a passion for the game and a belief we can contribute to the future wellbeing of the game. Because of necessity the Board over the last 5 years has had a focus on operational matters. We now have an opportunity to reduce the level of operational involvement and deliver more focus on forward thinking, strategic direction, oversight, and governance.

The following changes have been made.

Strategy	Chair: Allan Morris Members: Board members
Governance, Risk and Insurance, Incorporated Societies Act, Health and Safety, Constitution, Club toolkit	Chair: Anne Barrowclough Member: John Skipper
Administration and Secretarial including Zone 7, WBF, ABF, Foundation, and Manual	Chair: Alister Stuck Member: Allan Morris
Relationships- Clubs, regions, players. Communications- newsletters, articles	Chair: Alister Stuck Members: Mel Auld, Allan Morris
Website	Chair: Mel Auld Members: Alister Stuck, Sam Coutts
Staffing	Chair: Allan Morris
Finance and Treasury	Chair: Sue Brown Member: John Skipper

Teaching and Education	Chair: Douglas Russell Members: Kate Terry, Shirley Newton, Phil Noye, Mary Christensen
Congress and Major Events	Chair: Bridget Hannaway Members: Anna Kalma, Murray Wiggins, Sue brown, Jenna Gibbons, Teri Logie, Alister Stuck, and Allan Morris
International	Chair: Members: Jonathan Westoby, Martin Reid, Jan Alabaster, Nigel Kearney, Kris Wooles, Sam Coutts
Youth- Domestic, International	Chair: Sam Coutts Member: Anna Kalma
Handicapping and Grading	Chair: Sam Coutts Members: Murray Wiggins, Daniel Skipper
Marketing	Chair: Mel Auld Member: Anna Kalma
Online and Surveys	Chair: Kate Terry Members: John Skipper, Murray Wiggins
Directing including education, scorers, recorders	Chair: Murray Wiggins Member: Caroline Wiggins
Regulations and Complaints	Chair: Mathew McManus Members: Murray Wiggins, Caroline Wiggins, another national/director senior player (tbc)
Tournaments	Chair: Kate Terry Members: Rona Driscoll, Regional Committees
Masterpoints	Chair: Alister Stuck

Upcoming Meeting

It is easy to fall into the habit of rolling business over, particularly when times are good. When the wind is in your face, as is the case at present, we need to cut our cloth accordingly. In early April the Board has a 2-day workshop focusing on the delivery of future services. We committed to supporting clubs and providing an environment for clubs to flourish.

Marketing and Communications

Over the last 2 months the focus has been on supporting clubs with their advertising campaigns, the teachers tip Zoom call, completing a photo shoot to upgrade our imagery and new banners. 26 Clubs have joined the Facebook campaign with all campaigns reaching 432,000 people. 8709 have clicked through to the website. We have dispatched 1687 lesson booklets.

2024 Congress

We appreciate there were a few challenges with the 2023 format. Our focus for 2024 is to ensure the event runs smoothly and everyone has a good time. The plan is not about replicating what other congresses do but to ensure it is a unique New Zealand experience.

Congress after all is our national championships. We encourage players of all grades to support the event.

2024 is the last year of our 3-year contract with Baypark. We are presently investigating available options for 2025 and beyond.

International

The trials for the World Championships in Argentina have now been completed. Those who took the opportunity of either watching in person or viewing the last day on BBO saw some wonderful bridge. The final selection came down to the last few boards.

We wish the teams the best of luck.

Open- Mathew Brown and Michael Wibley, Michael Ware and Mathew McManus, Geo Tislevoll and Leon Meier.

Women- Linda Cartner and Glenys Palmer, Mindy Wu and Kate Terry, Christine, and Jenna Gibbons.

Mixed- Barry Jones and Jenny Millington, Patrick Carter and Julie Atkinson, Liz, and Blair Fisher.

Senior- Murat Genc and Anne Sommerville, John and Jane Skipper, Richard Solomon, and Alan Grant.

Cheers Allan