



8 July 2024

Newsletter No 4 2024

Hi Everyone

Membership

Running any organisation is a lot easier when you have good people and when the organization is tracking in the right direction. That is the space we are in, notwithstanding running at a financial deficit. Our focus is on investing in the future and as a consequence a willingness to use some of our reserves. Over the last month we have seen a further uplift in overall membership, up 286 to 12,750. A special shout-out to the following regions and clubs.

Auckland Northland	53	Auckland BC 20 Kerikeri BC 19 Paihia BC 16
Waikato Bays	73	Tauranga BC 28 Mt Maunganui BC 19 Whakatane BC 13
Central Districts	70	New Plymouth BC 39 Palmerston North BC 15
Wellington	75	Kairangi BC 14 Masterton BC 11
Canterbury	12	Timaru BC 20
Otago Southland	7	Invercargill BC 16
TOPS	-4	Richmond BC 14

The uplift in membership over the last few months has been encouraging. It says if we maintain a focus of growing numbers then achieving a number of 15,000 over the next 3 years is within our reach. You may ask why 15,000. Well in March 2023 we set a target of growing overall membership by 25%. For the remainder of 2023 we continued to experience the aftereffects of Covid. However, for the first 6 months of 2024 membership is up 4.66%.



To assist clubs, we have invested in senior marketing capability. Part of our strategy is to help clubs grow the ability to market themselves effectively. There are strong signals this is happening. Key areas of focus are

Build Brand	Improve Club Success
Clear brand strategy.	Club scorecard.
Clear understanding of who our target audience is and what's important to them.	Toolkit developed.
Consistent presence across all channels.	Monthly marketing support calls.
Marketing campaign driving awareness	Case studies of successful clubs.
Annual PR calendar and execution.	Annual social media marketing campaign that clubs can opt into.
Annual social media calendar and execution.	Event marketing.
Website current and easy to use.	Club engagement.
Sponsorships	
Improve internal communications.	

To demonstrate progress let us consider the results from the club FB campaign. 28 clubs have run a Facebook campaign, and one club is about to start a second campaign. So far, we have reached 521k people, compared with last year's smaller campaign reaching 130k.

Participating Clubs	28
Time Period	January to May 2024
Average Spend	\$400
Average cost per click	\$0.58 (goal was less than 70c
Reach	521,820
Total Impressions	2,727,089 (the number of times the ads were seen)
Total Clicks	10,993 (clicked through to the website)
Conversion	2.09% (goal was 2.2%)
Most Active Audience	Females 55+ (followed by even split between females 45+ and females/males 35+)

National Conference

Later this month the national conference will take place in Wellington. The conference is aimed at ensuring we remain connected with the regions and clubs. This year we have a new committee in Canterbury and a major change in Wellington. The other regions remain relatively constant, allowing them to build on the work undertaken in the last 12 months. For those people standing down the Board wants to thank you for your commitment and contribution to the region and to our game.

The role of the regional committees is to work with clubs in their region, supporting growth and participation. They are also involved in management of the tournament programme, running interclub events or something similar, and selection of teams to participate in the regional championships (previously known as the Interprovincial).

The theme of the national conference is about remaining connected and sharing and exploring ways that we can help clubs grow and be resilient. Over the last 12 months we have shared advice on changes to the Incorporated Societies Act. We have undertaken a review of our constitution and developed a new constitution in accordance with the new Act. The draft constitution is presently with our solicitor for review. We will be sharing the draft at the national conference. Then in late July it will be circulated to all clubs. The intention is we will hold a special general meeting immediately before the AGM to approve the new constitution. We hope the document will be a useful framework for clubs as they embark on developing their constitution.

For some time, we have been talking about the development of a toolkit. Whilst conceptually the idea of a toolkit is very good, we need to find out whether clubs and regions will find it of value. We are keen to have Clubs feedback so we can discuss the matter at the above conference. Can you provide your thoughts, feedback to your regional committee or direct to anne.barrowclough@nzbridge.co.nz

We appreciate the larger clubs may have different needs to smaller clubs, that stable committees might have different needs to new committees, and so on. We are trying to think of the big picture, at this stage, so we can correctly scope the work required. The plan is the toolkit would be delivered online through a club only portal.

Our thoughts on content are

1. **Folder 1: Governance**- constitution pro-forma, committee and meeting management, policy development (health and safety, privacy, and finance), relationship with NZB and providers, insurance, budgeting, planning and strategy, resource management, roles on the committee, etc.
2. **Folder 2: Club Administration**- volunteer management, membership, health and safety, privacy, contract management (people and property), money handling, staffing (as required), complaints, information and technology, etc.
3. **Folder 3: Delivery**- directing, scoring, masterpoints, tournaments, rules, etc.
4. **Folder 4: Growth of the Game**- Teaching, marketing, etc.

In addition to the above there will be a session on marketing strategy and progress, financial results, regional championships and their future, teaching, online bridge, national events.

Finances

In May we incurred a deficit of \$8.8k (budget surplus \$14.4k). Year to date shows a deficit of \$26.9k compared to a budget of \$22.8k. The monthly deficit assumes a small unrealized loss within our investment portfolio.

Significant items

1. Masterpoints were estimated in April and May and will be billed on 15th July. At the end of May we had a negative variance to the budget of \$13.2k. We project a reduction in the deficit when the billing is completed.
2. World Bridge Seminar which was not budgeted for. We reported on the outcome of this meeting in the last newsletter.
3. Salaries and wages are over budget and will continue throughout the year.
4. The balance sheet remains healthy.

Youth Bridge Coordinator

We are pleased to announce that Marcus Dudley from Te Puke has agreed to take over the youth coordinator role made vacant by Paul Coleman (although Paul is still coordinating youth weekend this year).

I have played a few times against Marcus, and he brings to the table a great deal of enthusiasm. I am sure his enthusiasm will spill over into this role.

Marcus can be contacted via email on youth@nzbridge.co.nz or by phone on 027 370 0728.

On behalf of the Board, we extend huge gratitude to Paul for his hard work over the past few years.

Teaching and Learning

Last month we provided a snippet of what happened at the Teachers Committee meeting held at the end of May. We are now able to provide further details. At the meeting in May we were able to share our objectives and expectations from the committee. The committee has adopted a 3 I's strategy.

Introduce	Integrate	Improve
Up to date teaching material	Retention initiatives	Continual learning
Equip teachers		Pathways for improvement

To date emphasis has been aligned with Introduce and Improve. Integrate has been primarily left to individual clubs in an ad-hoc manner. It was agreed work in this area needed to be nationally monitored.

At the end of day 1 the following strategies emerged to meet the NZB goals

Introduce	Integrate	Improve
Minibridge/Hool Learning mini bridge would provide a positive outcome for all learners that did not complete the lessons; as well as leave an avenue for a future return to lessons.	Player retention was accepted as the measure we should be using to measure our teaching success. Teachers in many cases are the first contact with new players. They are ambassadors and need to be well equipped.	Self-taught plan
Simplified lessons, smaller modules, principles only. Adopting an international trend for minibridge and smaller modules	Nationally led	Online and face-2-face
Teacher support	Data based tracked communication	Certificated
	Club support	

For most clubs' new members are only currently recorded after completing the lessons and officially members of a club. This approach has two weaknesses.

1. It loses the ability to track and identify all factors influencing a potential new member from start to completion of lessons.
2. It removes a potential future market of customers who have already expressed a desire to learn bridge but for whatever reason did not do so at their first attempt.

The committee is committed to building a national database with the intention of tracking all learners, no matter at what stage they are at.

Diamond Celebrations

Over the weekend Kerikeri Bridge Club celebrated their 60th birthday.

It was a privilege to be invited and to share in the festivities.

Friday evening was a cocktail party where stories were shared, and then on Saturday a session of bridge followed by a celebratory lunch.

The most joyful thing was observing how a club comes together and is very much part of the community. As I commented, clubs are not about bricks and mortar. They are about the people.

Where people can indulge their passion but equally build friendships and socialise.

All of that was in abundance. Congratulations and Happy 60th.