

Paraparaumu Bridge Club

PRESIDENTS REPORT 2022

Is there Covid in the room or could there be?

It has been at the forefront of the committee's efforts to ensure the wellbeing of our members was the first priority. It has been one of the contributing factors in a reduction of both numbers playing and revenue.

We instituted COVID-19 policies to protect our members which resulted in some members not attending whether their concern was mask-wearing, or not wanting to be in the room with potential for Covid to be present, or other health reasons.

All members are thanked for their understanding and support as we worked through the continually changing COVID environment.

COMMITTEE

The committee have worked hard introducing new administration and system changes. We know, not everyone likes change, but change is necessary if you want to improve.

We have changed the administration with all our members records now being held in the Compass platform. All reports and bulk emails now come from this system.

Brett has our members accounting functions operating through Compa\$\$ and the Compass platform. Jane has spent a huge amount of time and effort in getting all data into usable format on Compass.

With Compa\$\$ we no longer need to pay and collect table money at the start of each session or manage MSTs.

Compass is proving to be cost-effective with true and accurate results for playing and recording attendance. Results are quickly sent out after each session played, allowing you to review and replay to see if you can increase your performance.

Now there is one place to pay for subscriptions, table money, new name badges, and tournaments. Compass has produced big savings compared to Pianola.

There has been a lot of work behind the scenes to upgrade and improve our website. Trevor organised the moving of our website from being hosted in the US, to now being hosted by Fuzion, a local company in Otaki. This has resulted in halving our monthly costs, making the website more secure, upgrading several functions that were not working properly, and much better local access if we want changes.

I would like to pay a special thanks to all the members who served on the committee during the year namely: Trevor Smith, Jane Gilbert, Brett Windley, Alan Stevens, Hugh Norton, Linda Pender, Ray Cachemaille (part year) Theresa Cook, Tina Connell-Pine, Tina Fulton – as they have worked hard to keep the club running so well.

VOLUNTEERS

The club would not function without the work of the many other volunteers outside of the committee who are the backbone of the club. Our Directors, Scorers and Dealers are three groups of dedicated members who deserve special mention – many of whom have been providing great service to the club for many years. Thanks to all of them.

I believe special mention is also due to some members who work for many hours in the background, almost unnoticed, performing activities vital to the club.

- Marion Sillick does a good job keeping our honours book up to date, She checks all results each month and produces the lists of voucher winners and prize winners.
- Dale Wills spends more hours than he would like to admit producing our programme book each year
- Ian Nicholls is the person to thank for keeping the surrounds of the club clean and tidy
- Ken Thomas has been the hard-sell man at the raffle table for several years, working his magic on all who pass by

These dedicated people deserve our thanks.

I must offer a special, special mention to two members who are stepping down from their roles.

Firstly, Helen Edwards who is stepping away after being our Head Scorer for longer than anyone can remember. I say stepping away – rather than down – because I'm sure she'll be involved in some small way for a little while yet. The Compass Scoring system is not an easy animal to tame, but Helen valiantly persevered and brought it under control and the club owes a huge debt of gratitude to her.

Secondly to Francie Vagg, who due to the session changes, has stepped down as a convenor and dealer after many, many years in these roles.

Such long-serving commitment to the club deserves all our thanks.

I invite the meeting to thank our dedicated volunteers collectively.

Applause

MEMBERSHIP

At the start of the year there were 50 members who choose not to play or renew subscriptions. Our membership list received an extensive tidy up resulting in 122 members on 1st January 2022, the beginning of the subscription year.

Current membership is 167 members as at 1st November 2022.

We organised ringing lists to help maintain and show club support for all members. There were 49 members who were not attending and through constant, excellent management we have reduced that number to 11 (most of whom were unable to attend due to illness).

Our secretary has arranged really eye-catching flyers to help in the effort of attracting members to our club. Now your family, friends and neighbours can be approached with a handout, you may wish to add a personal note hand-written on the bottom. Your help will make a

difference. Remember lessons for 2023 start in the second week in February.

We have worked hard to build members' continued engagement with the club. You are the club and your actions can influence how people see us and the experience they have. We have lost members in the past due to inappropriate comments and unnecessary criticism at the table. Now we are getting comments from visitors that they have had an enjoyable playing experience at the Paraparaumu Bridge Club.

OBITUARY

Sadly during the year, we lost a colleague, partner and friend who will be missed.

Chris Rodwell hadn't played at the club for a while but she had been a long-time dealer. I feel it's appropriate we remember her and acknowledge the contribution she made to the club.

Please stand for a moment's silence.

LESSONS

Up stepped Trevor Smith, when Suzanne Duncan was unavailable this year. He has led a team of willing helpers who regularly attended the learning sessions. The lessons produced several new members who are enjoying the game. The only improvement needed now is to get more learners to share this knowledge with. This is an important role you all can play – spread the word. Good word of mouth is the basis for the successful marketing of the Club.

Next year will be a first when we offer "Free Lessons" with all new members paying a pro-rata subscription on joining the club.

Having worked hard to recruit new members, it is vital that as more experienced players, we go out of our way to provide a warm, friendly and welcoming environment for them.

In the last two years, we have not any improvers lessons, but we will be scheduling some this year coming. We are planning in-house improvers sessions and we are negotiating with Richard Solomon to present some courses also.

KITCHEN and BAR

Our regular supplies have been managed by Eliza Thomson, who has done a great job.

Talking about great, what about Noella Squires for her tireless and sterling efforts in running the Kitchen for all tournaments, with lunches and afternoon teas. With help from Tina Connell-Pine, Tina Fulton, Kay Adamson, Marg Lees and all others who have pitched in – a big thank you.

Thanks also to Ray Cachemaille for managing the bar stock and purchasing quality drinks, and to him and his bar helpers for their warm service.

ALMONER

Linda Pender has done a remarkable job in helping us stay in touch with members and former members who are unwell. Linda also supports members returning to the club and helping new members build their confidence, which is very valuable in retaining members.

CLUB RECORDER and NEWSLETTERS

Keith Lees, our Recorder, has helped when members felt issues should be addressed.

He is also the Newsletter Editor who sends out news on tournaments and any notable events.

Keith also took on the role of sole judge at the Halloween afternoon with aplomb, and showed real talent for the job, witty and very entertaining.

TOURNAMENTS

Again, Covid disrupted our tournament schedule this year. In March, the club hosted our Open Tournament online with RealBridge (18 tables), and also the Intermediate Tournament (10 tables) in May, but both the Junior Tournament and Multigrade Tournaments were cancelled due to poor attendance.

However, our in-house competitions were again successful and were well-attended. I think everyone who is able to attend our in-house Sunday afternoons has a good time and the recent Halloween afternoon is a great example.

Hugh Norton has taken on the task of Tournament Manager with help from Trevor. Doing an excellent job.

PROPERTY

We had some problems with leaks on the north wall of the building and these were dealt with promptly by Alan Stevens and a dedicated team of helpers. There is still some maintenance to be done to make the building fully weatherproof in extreme conditions and our options are being investigated.

DIRECTORS

Brian Pender leads our Directors Group that meets bi-monthly, bringing current issues, reviewed rulings and curly problems to the table to discuss. No one is ever happy with slow play, but remember it affects the whole room and is very hard to manage. Patience is needed when it happens. Our Directors perform an important job to get the best and fairest results for all members.

SPONSORSHIP

We have been reviewing our sponsorship portfolio, and to cater for inflation we have increased our advertising charges for pages in the programme book.

We have lost some sponsors this year, primarily due to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on their businesses, but we have also gained some new sponsors and also some new sponsorship deals. We will soon be offering sponsored prizes for competitions, including some Christmas competitions this year.

If you can think of a sponsorship opportunity, please let us know.

FINANCIAL

Through all our financial struggles we are not recommending an increase in subscriptions this year.

There was a very small increase in table money in July when we started using Compa\$\$ platform, and the table money fee (if you used an MST) was rounded up by 34 cents.

A full update on the club's financial position is in the papers emailed to you.

It's been really great having as our Treasurer an Accountant who gets things done and is dedicated to making savings.

FINALLY

Thank you, members, for the privilege to be your president for the last two years.

Despite our setbacks this year, our core membership has proven to be resilient and the club is in good shape. For the future, our emphasis needs to be on attracting and retaining more members while still being responsive to the needs of our existing members.

Getting to the 70% plus club is great, but for others getting over 50% is a really good achievement.

See you all back at the tables, mastering or at least trying to, the challenge of this great game.

My very best wishes to all for a safe, happy Christmas and new year.