

Paraparaumu Bridge Club

PRESIDENTS REPORT 2023

President: Trevor Smith

I welcome you all to the Annual General Meeting of the Paraparaumu Bridge Club 2023.

I'd like to take this opportunity to reflect upon some of the highlights of the past year and, along the way, to express my gratitude to all our members for their continued support of our Club.

It's a familiar story throughout the Bridge community that most NZ Bridge clubs have still to return to the levels of membership and activity we had before Covid, but it's encouraging that our table numbers are gradually increasing, so the future is looking positive.

COMMITTEE

I would like to pay a personal and special thank you to all the members who served on the Committee during the year:

Brett Windley, Anne Brunt, Myf Skuse (for part of the year), Alan Stevens, Hugh Norton, Linda Pender, Theresa Cook, Tina Connell-Pine, Eliza Thomson and Gillian Travers – they have all worked hard to keep the Club running smoothly, fighting the fires when they arose, and always looking for ways to improve the Club for the well-being of its members.

SUCCESSFUL YEAR

Has our Club had a successful year?

We certainly have. We've had success with the tournaments we've hosted, even while sometimes struggling to get good numbers of full tables, success with our in-house tournaments, a successful improvers series, and we've been successful in overcoming the curve balls that came our way during the year.

Let's consider a few of the ups and downs.

The Compa\$\$ system continues to be a great success, providing significant savings in time and effort. We no longer need to collect money and clip MST tickets at the beginning of each session, we don't need to administer an MST ticket system, and the need for physical banking of cash has diminished dramatically.

Now, we have one place to pay for subscriptions, table money, new name badges, and local tournament entries.

A couple of other successes we've had this year...

The first is an issue that was threatening to become very serious but was thankfully resolved.

After performing well for more than a year, over a short period, our tablet's response time slowed mysteriously and dramatically, causing frustration to us all and embarrassment during one of our tournaments.

We upgraded our network, which improved response times but did not solve the core problem. With help from Bob Fearn (the guy who created our Compass scoring program) and Akaroa Bridge Club, who had the same problem, the fault was traced to an automatic update to some software used by BridgePal. All tablets were reconfigured and have since performed well – although lately one or two have shown signs of their old habits and will need further attention.

Richard Solomon Improvers Programme.

One of the aims of our Club is to help our members improve their Bridge skills and, hopefully, thereby, their enjoyment of the game.

This year, we invited a Gold Grandmaster, Richard Solomon, to present a series of improver lessons. We opened the invitation to our neighbouring clubs, and there was a good attendance at all sessions. To be honest, I've still to absorb **all** the gems he imparted, but I have the notes, and someday soon...

Another welcome initiative this year was to introduce PBC Pens as prizes to competition winners. A small offering, but it does recognise and help celebrate our winners.

KCDC Activities Day on 24 October.

Thanks to an organising sub-committee of Anne Brunt, Linda Pender, and Theresa Cook, we had a rewarding day at Coastlands, producing many public discussions and several promising contacts. One feature was that many PBC players on duty didn't want to leave when their shift was up; they were enjoying themselves too much.

SOCIAL BRIDGE

Social Bridge was reintroduced this year, at first on Thursday afternoon and then Wednesday afternoon, thanks to the efforts of Eliza Thomson. Although attendance has fluctuated, those attending have expressed their appreciation of having a place to discuss and learn in a non-competitive environment.

WEDNESDAY TEAMS

Another re-introduction, thanks to the hard work of Gillian Travers, was an ambitious and very enjoyable Teams event on Wednesday nights. Keeping the teams stocked with a full complement of players was a challenging job, requiring plenty of patience and persistence, but very successful in the end.

LESSONS

This year's series of beginner's lessons produced several new members who are currently enjoying the game.

Next year, the lessons will once again be free. Remember that lessons for 2024 start on the 12th of February. We seem to always make this plea, but the most effective communication for making the community aware of our lessons has proven to be word-of-mouth, so please have a conversation with family, friends, and acquaintances and let them know about our lessons and be an ambassador for the Club and the wonderful game of Bridge.

This is an important role you all can play – spread the word.

So many people work so hard to run the lessons and recruit new members. It is vital that our more experienced players go out of their way to provide

a warm, friendly, nurturing, and welcoming environment for our new players.

TOURNAMENTS

Tournament attendance has still not picked up to pre-Covid levels, a trend unfortunately being experienced throughout the whole country.

In March, the Club hosted our Open Tournament with 10 tables, and also our Intermediate Tournament (15 tables) in May. The Junior tournament drew 8 tables and was won by Brett and Sandra Windley. Congratulations to the Windleys.

To the surprise of some participants, we drew 13 tables for the Multigrade tournament on 8 October where some of our members did very well. Dale Wills and Jane Bradbury won the Intermediate section and Anne Brunt and Sharon Henry triumphed in the Junior section.

Well done to our winners.

At each of these tournaments, we received compliments from many participants regarding how well they enjoyed the tournament. At our most recent Multigrade tournament, there were many positive comments about players' enjoyment of the day, and of course the special feature often mentioned is the great lunch we provide. This provides a big attraction to play at our Club.

This is what we love to hear, so great job to all involved.

Unfortunately, our interclub participation this year did not produce the glorious results we were hoping for, but I'm sure everyone enjoyed themselves.

This year, in July, for the first time in several years, we sent a team to the Wellington Regional Club Championships. Considering the competition, our team performed very well and, building on this experience, we hope to send another team next year.

All our in-house competitions were again successful and were well-attended. I think everyone who attends one of our in-house Sunday

afternoons has a good time, and the recent Halloween afternoon is a great example.

PROPERTY

On a sour note, vandals broke into the Club through the bar window in May. Luckily, the alarm scared them off. Nothing was taken, and the damage was quickly repaired.

A heads-up. The Committee is reviewing our usage of gas. We're currently paying \$60 per month gas line charge. We pay this whether we use any gas or not. Our current gas **usage** is only between \$2.50 and \$5.00 per month. If we switch to electricity for water heating, the estimated cost would be \$10-\$20 per month – a saving of between \$45 and \$55 per month.

CLUB ROOMS HIRE

This year, we have actively sought opportunities for the hiring of our clubrooms. The clubrooms have been hired to:

- The Breast Screening Service caravan, who asked to be able to use our toilets from March to June for a small fee of \$50 per month.
- Over the weekend of 23-25 June, we hired the clubrooms to the Capital Swim Club to support their regional swim meet at the Aquatic Centre. They left the Club in perfect condition, so the result was a win for both parties.
- On Election Day, the 14th of October, we hired our clubrooms to the Electoral Commission as a voting place. The day was successful, and we took the opportunity to strategically place information about the Club for all voters to see. The move may bear fruit; who knows?

We'd like to expand the hiring of our clubrooms, so if anyone is aware of a community group or Club looking for premises on a one-off or regular basis, please talk to someone on the Committee.

SPONSORSHIP

We lost a couple of sponsors recently due to Covid pressure.

However, one very beneficial new arrangement, thanks to the boldness of Tina Connell-Pine, was to get Tuatara Breweries on board as a Sponsor/Supporter, agreeing to provide Tuatara products as prizes for selected competitions. This year, all end-of-year Christmas competition winners will receive a Tuatara prize pack. Next year, we have introduced a special Tuatara Pairs competition in October on Tuesday Afternoon with Tuatara prizes awarded to the winners.

Sponsorship is important to us. If you know or can think of a sponsorship opportunity, please let us know.

MEMBERSHIP

I'd like to welcome our newer members who have joined this year, some as graduates of the lessons and some from the wider community. We value you all and hope for your continued enjoyment playing at the Club.

I'd also like to recognise and thank the solid core of players whose engagement with the Club extends over many years who have given great service to the Club in many roles and hopefully will continue to do so. You are the backbone of this Club. Our Club is successful and continues to be successful because of your dedicated efforts and support.

At the start of the year in January, our membership was 152. This number dropped in April to 143. Our current membership is 157 members as at 1st November 2023.

The introduction of Compa\$\$ prompted a review of our new members application and resignation process, as both processes now need to be coordinated with Compa\$\$\$. The new members review also aimed to enable and encourage new members to play as soon as possible without having to wait for the paperwork.

As part of the new requirements of the Incorporated Society regulations, a clause has been added to the membership application form to the effect that the applicant agrees to abide by the Club Rules.

OBITUARIES

Sadly, during the year, we lost some colleagues, partners and friends who will be greatly missed.

I'd like to mention them now.

Narita Breingan

Lorraine Tidey

Nan Page

Stuart Thurston

Jeanette Newport (former President)

Pat Prenderville

And just last week, Edna Garriock

I feel it's appropriate we remember our former members and acknowledge their contribution to the Club.

Please stand for a moment's silence.

VOLUNTEERS

None of our accomplishments would be possible without the tireless efforts not only of our Committee but also our group of dedicated volunteers. Their commitment, hard work, sacrifice of time, and passion for Bridge have been instrumental to the long-term success of our Club.

You may think that the Club is managed and run by a small group of people. I totalled up the numbers.

The number of members who perform a significant voluntary or supporting role for the Club is 50! And these people perform over 60 separate roles for the Club.

I extend my heartfelt thanks to each and every one of them for their invaluable contribution. The Club would simply not function without their help.

Our Directors, Scorers, and Dealers are three groups of dedicated members who deserve special mention – many of these people have been providing excellent regular week-upon-week day-after-day service to the Club for many years. Thanks to all of them.

Talking of Dealing... Some Dealing machine statistics:

Our machine deals 250,000 cards per year and has been working since 2007 (16 years), so in total, more than 4 million cards have passed through our dealing machine.

So, while the Dealing Machine might be a machine, our volunteers are definitely not. These dedicated people deserve not just my thanks but all our thanks.

I'd like to mention in particular a few of our team of volunteers.

KITCHEN and BAR

Our regular kitchen supplies have been managed this year by Theresa Cook, who has satisfied our hard-working appetites with food and drink.

A special mention to Noella Squire for her tireless and sterling efforts in running the Kitchen for all tournaments. Noella doesn't only heat and serve the lunches, she prepares many of the food items at home, from garden to stove. With help from Tina Connell-Pine, Kay Adamson, Marg Lees, Yvonne Rowe and all others who have pitched in – a big thank you.

Thanks also to Ray and Margaret Cachemaille for managing and running the bar, and to them and their bar helpers for providing us and our guests with friendly and efficient service to wind down after a long day's Bridge.

ALMONER

An unsung behind-the-scenes role that's not obvious to many members. Linda Pender has done a remarkable job in helping us stay in touch with members and former members who are unwell.

CLUB RECORDER and NEWSLETTERS

Keith Lees, our Recorder, has helped when members felt issues should be addressed. He has provided a sympathetic ear and wise words.

He's also been our Newsletter Editor for a few years, sending out news on tournaments and notable events.

Keith also took on the role of sole judge at the Halloween afternoon this year as well as last with aplomb. He showed natural talent for the job on both occasions, with witty and very entertaining commentary and judgements.

DIRECTORS

Brian Pender leads our Directors Group that meets bi-monthly, bringing current issues, reviewed rulings, and curly problems to the table to discuss. One of the issues that keeps reappearing is slow play. No one is ever happy with slow play, but remember, it affects the whole room and is very hard to manage. Please try to keep up with the rest of the room. Patience is needed. Help the Director do his job.

Our Directors perform an essential job to run each session and get the best and fairest results for all players. It's important our Directors and the job they perform are acknowledged and respected.

Volunteer Thank You Afternoon Tea.

Last Saturday, on behalf of the Club, the Committee hosted a Thank You Afternoon Tea for all our Volunteers. It was a very enjoyable get-together to recognise a very important group of people.

I invite the meeting to show their appreciation for our amazing team of volunteers.

Applause

FINANCIAL

A brief word about finances - a topic our Treasurer will cover more thoroughly.

Through our financial struggles with rising costs and relatively low membership, we are not recommending an increase in subscriptions this year. The Committee recommend the subscription amount remain at \$75 per year with a surcharge of \$5 for late payment. Our subscription amount is similar to that of our neighbouring clubs.

This year, we have had increased ongoing expenditure in three significant areas:

- Our Insurance Premium for premises and contents has increased by 28% (+\$1500 per year)
- KCDC Land Lease increase of 22% (+\$500 per year)
- NZBridge Tournament Fees – from \$1 per player per session to \$2.50

More minor but still significant increases have been felt in tradesmen costs and power costs. Also, the cost of club security monitoring went up 48% - an additional \$100 per year.

To balance these increases, in October, the table fee was increased from \$4.50 to \$5.00

A full update on the Club's financial position was in the papers emailed to you.

My thanks to Brett. The Treasurer has an arduous job requiring regular, almost daily attention and activity to keep the Club's financial wheels rolling along and under control. Brett has kept those wheels well-oiled and running smoothly, checking in regularly even when on holiday overseas.

I'd like to thank Linda Aarsen who has assisted Brett throughout the year with bankings and computer updates.

FINALLY

Thank you, members, for the privilege to be your President for the last year.

While, due to factors previously mentioned, we have recorded small cash losses in the past years, our core members have shown solid support, and the Club is in good shape. We must remember that we are a not-for-profit

organisation with substantial reserves. As stated in our mission statement on our website, our focus is:

To provide an enjoyable bridge-playing experience for all levels of players and to encourage all players to further develop their skills in a friendly, competitive, and challenging social atmosphere.

For the future, our emphasis needs to continue to be on attracting and retaining more members while still being responsive to the needs of our existing members.

Looking ahead, I'm very optimistic about the future of our Club. We have a strong and solid club. Our table attendance is growing, and I want to see that continue so all our members can benefit while we continue to explore new opportunities for growth, host popular and rewarding tournaments, and, above all, strive to create an even more inclusive and supportive environment where everyone feels welcomed and valued.

In conclusion, I'm proud of what we've achieved this year as a bridge club. I encourage all of you to be involved, share your ideas and your passion, and, as members, continue to contribute to the success and growth of our Club.

See you all back at the tables at the end of this year and into the next, enjoying the challenges and rewards of this great game that we love.

We're approaching the end of the year, and although this is looking forward a month or so, my very best wishes to you all for a safe, happy Christmas and a happy, enjoyable, and fulfilling New Year.

Thank you for being part of the journey this year. Let's continue to foster our friendships, let's continue to exercise our minds engaged in a pastime we enjoy, and let's continue to create ever more lasting memories.

That's what this Club is about.

Trevor Smith
President
Paraparaumu Bridge Club
November 2023