



New Zealand Bridge

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF
NEW ZEALAND BRIDGE INCORPORATED
Held at 10 am on Saturday, 26 September 2009
In the Kingsgate Hotel Hamilton**

PRESENT **NZ Bridge Board** - Kay Nicholas (Chair), Alan Turner, Graham Wakefield, Murray Wiggins, Patsy Walters, Norm Silcock

Secretary of NZ Bridge – Alister Stuck

Bridge Development Officer – Richard Solomon

Auditor for NZ Bridge – David Macdonald FCA

Authorised Delegates

Tony Morcom (Akarana), Russell Watt (Auckland), Naomi Hannah-Brown (Christchurch), Trevor Robb (Franklin), Joan Egger (Hamilton), Gary Duncan (Hutt), Marilyn Jackson (Invercargill), Jim Jessep (Picton) Jim Murray, (Marlborough) Phil Rutherford (Westport), Steve Gray (Motueka, Golden Bay and Richmond), Evelyn Hurley (Palmerston North), Karen Martelletti (Tauranga), Keith Nicholas (Timaru), Tony Lenart Wellington), Neil Dravtzki (Rotorua), Murat Genc (Otago)

Observers – Trevor Robb, Noel Woodhall, Michael Gibson, John Patterson

WELCOME

The Chairperson, Kay Nicholas, welcomed all those present at the 2009 Annual General Meeting of New Zealand Bridge Incorporated, including the new Board members, authorised Club Delegates (or Alternates) and Observers. A roll call was taken of those present.

APOLOGIES

Thames Bridge Club, & Alan Joseph

Moved that the apologies be accepted

CARRIED

MINUTES of the 2008 AGM

Moved that the minutes as previously circulated be taken as read

CARRIED

ANNUAL REPORT for year ended 31 March 2009

The Chair indicated that as the Annual Report was lengthy she proposed it be taken as read so she would have time to speak to it and then invite discussion from the floor.

CARRIED

CHAIRPERSON'S COMMENTS LOOKING FORWARD FROM 31ST MARCH 2009

The Annual Report to the year ended 31st of March 2009 obviously does not cover approximately six months of 2009 which means that outcomes achieved from April to September theoretically do not get reported until next year's Annual Report.

Accordingly as an extension of the Annual Report I have prepared a "Looking Forward" commentary which details outcomes achieved since March 31st 2009 that are of major importance to our Organisation. Also included are Projects to be initiated and / or progressed in the coming months.

▪ Regional Conference

On Sunday, July 26th 2009 another very successful Regional Conference was held in Christchurch. This whole day Conference provided Regional Delegates with an opportunity for wide ranging dialogue and extensive information sharing and enabled them to learn first-hand just how other Regions function and what works for individual Regions. Those who attended were enthusiastic about continuing with the "whole day" Regional Conference philosophy.

To enable this "whole day" philosophy to continue it was indicated to the Delegates that the current Constitution would have to be amended to remove the requirement to hold one annual Regional Conference in conjunction with the National Congress. There was unanimous support for the change to be proposed and as you will be aware a Remit addressing this matter will be presented and voted on later in the meeting.

Future Regional Conferences will be held in alternating Regions to provide opportunity for a broader cross section of the NZ Bridge membership members to observe and / or participate.

Originally the 1st 2010 Regional Congress was scheduled to be held in Wellington in early February however the date chosen clashed with the World Sevens Tournament so the venue has been changed to Auckland.

- **New Masterpoint Programme Development**

John Kruiniger is managing this project on behalf of NZ Bridge. Treshna, the Christchurch based company engaged to develop this new Programme is currently in process of achieving the predetermined set of developmental milestones that collectively comprise the mandated Project.

- **7th Region of NZ Bridge**

The Board has approved establishment of this new Region as from 1st July 2010. I acknowledge the enthusiasm and commitment of the members of the following Clubs who have pursued and successfully achieved their goal of becoming the 7th Region of NZ Bridge.

- Golden Bay ▪ Kaikoura ▪ Motueka ▪ Marlborough
- Nelson ▪ Picton ▪ Richmond ▪ Westport

- **NZ Bridge Foundation**

This very important Project has been completed thanks to Graham Wakefield's continuing commitment and the willingness of Jo Clark, Arleen Schwartz and Kris Wooles to serve as initial Trustees.

The Chair then invited Graham to address the meeting. He outlined the establishment of the Foundation and presented some ideas for fundraising that Clubs could consider to boost the fund. He also indicated that it is intended that both the Gifford Fund and the Helman Prize Fund be transferred to the Foundation.

A correction to the spelling of Foundation's Chairperson was noted. *"On page 18 of the Annual Report, Clarke should read (Clark)".*

- **Financial Management Package**

Very recently "Xero" an internet package has provided NZ Bridge with the ability to more effectively manage and track its financial transactions. In addition it is being used an in-house application which will reduce future operational costs.

- **Tournament Review / Administration & Operations Committee**

As Masterpoint Revenue represents approximately 50% of NZ Bridge Income it is timely to undertake a Review of the Tournament Schedule over the next six months. Input from Regions, Clubs and other significant stakeholders will be sought by the review working party.

- **Membership**

The issue of declining membership is a continuing challenge for NZ Bridge. While recruitment is an obvious goal, retention of new players is vital if we are to survive.

One of the keys to retention is acceptable player behaviour. Player behaviour which is rude, condescending, dismissive, gloating etc impacts negatively on both Organisational image and overall retention rates. Adoption of Zero Tolerance Standards by Club Committees is one way in which unacceptable Player behaviour can be addressed.

In conclusion I reiterate from the Annual Report
The French Novelist & Poet, Anatole France (1844-1924) observed:-
"To accomplish great things, we must not only act but also dream, not only plan but believe".

The NZ Bridge Board has on your behalf envisioned and acted, planned and believed.

NZ Bridge – Honorary Solicitor

This morning as Chairperson of NZ Bridge I received the very good news that Scott Smith, an Associate of Simpson Grierson, New Zealand's largest Law Firm, has agreed to become Honorary Solicitor of NZ Bridge.

Moved that the Annual Report be adopted

CARRIED

REMEMBRANCE – John Lenart

The Chair acknowledged the late John Lenart's commitment to NZ Bridge over a long period. The meeting observed a moment's silence in recognition of John's sad passing in February this year.

ANNUAL ACCOUNTS

Alan Turner led this segment of the Agenda and apologised to those present for the lack of Audited Financial Accounts for the year ended March 2009. An incomplete set of accounts had been distributed at the start of the meeting. Sadly a number of Items could not be verified and with several minor corrections pending the Auditor was unable to give sign off.

Alan summarised the key points from the Draft Accounts including the likely surplus in excess of \$200,000 for the year. Major contributors to the good result were a planned cut back to the International Budget for the year, and lower management costs as a result of a trimmed down Board.

Alan outlined some of the issues encountered by the Board with its current Financial Adviser and outlined some of the steps that have either recently been or are about to be implemented to correct the situation as soon as possible. These included new Banking arrangements with the BNZ, a new Accounting Package, and a new Accounting Firm, BDO Manawatu. The meeting was advised that the Board views the following tasks as high priority.

- Complete the March 2009 Accounts and achieve a satisfactory Audit
- Review the March 2009 GST return
- Initiate Monthly reporting for the Board and Regional Accounts
- Complete and maintain an up to date Asset Register.

Alan then presented the Budget for the March 2010 detailing a surplus in the vicinity of \$15,000 for the current year.

Jim Jessep congratulated the Finance Committee on its efforts with the 2010 Budget and was encouraged to see steps taken to manage the reporting going forward. In the absence of Audited Accounts it was moved that the financial information presented be received and that the Audited Accounts be circulated to all Clubs and Regional Committees as soon as possible.

CARRIED

REMIT

That the following remit be directed by the Board for consideration at the next New Zealand Bridge AGM on Saturday 26th September 2009, namely :-

That the Constitution of New Zealand Bridge Incorporated be amended as follows:-

(1) That the words "of Management" be deleted where the same appear in clause 8.1 and also where the same appears in the definition of "Board" in Clause 3.

and,

(2) That the words "(provided that one (1) such Conference in each year shall be held in conjunction with the National Bridge Congress)" be deleted where the same appear in Clause 17.1

Kay Nicholas spoke to the Remit and outlined the rationale behind the proposal.

The motion was then put.

CARRIED

GENERAL BUSINESS

▪ **Appointment of Auditor**

Moved that David Macdonald be appointed as Auditor for the 2009/10 year

CARRIED

▪ **Venue for PABF 2010**

Jim Jessep raised concerns about the suitability of the Hamilton area as a venue for the PABF in 2010. It was his view that Hamilton, but more specifically the Te Rapa suburb, would not showcase New Zealand like other more attractive/ Tourist orientated regions would.

This sparked hearty discussion which is summarised as follows:-

- Alan Turner advised that several locations/ venues were considered and that the Hamilton venue was by far the most cost effective site on offer. It was also proven as suitable for a large Bridge event.

- Evelyn Hurley suggested that there was a good opportunity to show the Overseas Players other parts of New Zealand either prior to or following the PABF. Evelyn also mentioned that some local players would be interested in assisting with Day Tours etc during the event
- Tony Lenart asked what had been done to date to secure a major sponsor for the Event
- Naomi Hannah-Brown raised some concerns about the state of the Hotel and asked if it was known if any refurbishment/ upgrade plans have been alluded to by the Hotel Management.

Richard Solomon a member of the PABF Organising Committee responded to a number of the points raised. Richard concluded with a strong statement that the venue for the PABF was firmly locked in and with the event a mere 7 months away he urged those present to support the project.

It was agreed that during the lead up to May 2010 Clubs would appreciate receiving information about this event which they could share with Club members. The Secretary is to contact the Sub Committee in this regard with the view to a regular Newsletter / Briefing Paper being available for distribution.

- **Pre-Alerting Regulations**

Neil Dravitzki questioned the current policy around "Pre-Alerting" and suggested that in practice the rules were not widely accepted and not widely adhered to especially at Club level and lower level Tournaments. Neil felt that the requirement to verbally pre-alert was tiresome and the use of a Pre-Alert Card would prove more acceptable to the Players.

Steve Gray commented that in his view the System Cards used in Australia made Pre-Alerting much easier. David Macdonald commented that he would prefer Pre-Alert Cards. Murat Genc felt that the players should be listened to and their views on the matter considered.

The discussion was concluded with a commitment from Murray Wiggins to table this matter at the next Regulations Committee Meeting.

- **Timetable for 7th Region**

Gary Duncan asked when the 7th Region would be established and if it was envisaged that this Region would contest the 2010 Interprovincials.

Kay Nicholas responded and advised that the new Region would come into being as at July 1st 2010 and would be entitled to contest the 2010 Interprovincials and the National Rubber Bridge Competition. Accordingly some preliminary work to ensure accommodation of this change would be required prior to July e.g. the Congress Committee would be asked to provide a revised format for the Interprovincial Competition to include the 7th Region.

It was noted at this stage there were no plans to relocate the Interprovincials.

General Discussion

A summary of the discussion is detailed below:-

- Naomi Hannah-Brown asked if there was a National Strategy for the retention of Players.

Kay Nicholas responded by:-

- Advising of a proposal that has been made to establish an Accreditation System for Bridge Teachers
- Indicating Clubs have a responsibility to drive initiatives at a local level rather than leaving it to the Bridge Development Officer who could not manage single-handedly
- Reminding the meeting that the Regional Committees were resourced and funded to assist with Recruitment & Retention initiatives for Clubs in their catchments

Richard Solomon outlined a few recent initiatives including the "Bridge for the Future Seminar" at Orewa and the "Bridge Promotion" in the Christchurch Shopping Malls. Richard also mentioned the upcoming promotion to be held in conjunction with the "50's Plus" Lifestyle Expo in Auckland.

There being no further business Kay Nicholas, thanked the Delegates for their contribution to the Formal Business of the meeting. Kay also thanked the other attendees for their input into the Informal Discussion that had followed the Formal Agenda of the meeting.

The Chair closed the meeting at 11.35 am