



Newsletter No: 2 for 2020

8th April 2020

We hope you are staying safe and well in your “bubble” and for those either playing a little or a lot of bridge online that it is enjoyable.

Our thanks extends to all those who have organised events to feed our addiction. In particular our thanks to the Auckland Bridge Club, Patrick Carter, Julie Atkinson, Sylvester Riddell and many other directors who have given their time freely. Regrettably BBO have limited the number of players per session and have now put a hold on us adding any further sessions.

Not surprisingly when you consider the number of people worldwide playing online in these most extraordinary times.

We know that sport has shut down. Where we differ is our ability to play online. We are working with our advisers to get this good news story into the media. A time to learn a new game, learn new skills. To help we are looking at how best we can deliver beginner lessons online. More to come on this in the next short while.

The Board is now meeting every two weeks to primarily check on the welfare of people and to consider how we can help Clubs.

We are confident there will, ultimately, be a renaissance of local sport, recreational and community clubs. Bridge Clubs will play an important part in their communities emerging from the lockdown. It is quite possible there will be a new norm, things will certainly be different. With that in mind it is important that clubs are ready as we merge from Covid 19.

We are concerned that some clubs will be facing financial difficulties in a time with no revenue coming in but overheads and operating costs to meet. On a positive note other clubs may be financially sound and require little or no assistance. The issue is that the Board doesn't know what the position is with clubs. So we can determine how we might be able to help we are reaching out to clubs for some core information. The challenge we know from past experience is our reach is limited and often patchy. The message often does not reach officials and/or members of a club. So we are asking for your help for you to check with your own club and encourage them to respond to the communicate they will receive in the next few days.



We have written to the Hon Grant Robertson, Minister of Sport, outlining that we represent 109 clubs and over 14,000 registered players. We are not like big sports that have the benefits of large sponsorships, television rights, or other third party revenue streams. We like many are reliant on membership levies and, club and tournament participation.

Undeniably in our opinion bridge clubs will play an important role as society reaches out for support as NZ seeks to return to normal. Over and above what the Government has already announced we need help. The Minister has referred us to Sport New Zealand. At the moment, Sport NZ is addressing urgent issues for sport and active recreation organisations in NZ. However we are advised there is work continuing on a financial package for sport, active recreation and play sector. We have written to Sport NZ outlining our position and that we represent a significant number and, that bridge involves both physical and mental effort. We will keep you posted.

In light of the lockdown and our focus being on the immediate future we have put the review of the Regional Committees on hold for 6 months.

There has been a lot of chatter about Congress 2020. When we exit the lockdown we know we will have a new norm. Travel could be restricted, particularly those coming in from overseas. We may still be constrained by the size of groups/gatherings. Nevertheless we believe if we can we should continue with Congress. We have decided to take a watching brief and will regularly review the situation. We have given ourselves until 30 June before we have to make a final decision.

One of the benefits of the lockdown has been that the team have nearly completed updating the manual.

I leave with my usual plea about being respectful and considerate. Whether you are playing at home, at a club or online play the game as it was intended.

Keep safe, keep well

Cheers Allan