



5 November 2020

Newsletter No: 8 for 2020

It is great to be back at the bridge table and to observe the support for tournaments.

Even though we went through a period of limited bridge but for BBO we are very lucky when you consider what is happening in the UK, Europe, and the United States.

We tried very hard to make Congress happen but alas not. You now know we have a new venue (Baypark) for 2021 Congress. This is a purpose-built event centre which we are confident will deliver up to our expectation.

It is hard to believe we are less than 2 months from Christmas and only 3 weeks to the Interprovincials' in Wellington.

We had 2 meetings in October. Our usual monthly board meeting which took place on the 24th and the organisation's AGM on the 14th. We want to thank those who joined us for the AGM. A little different this year as we had to hold the event virtually on zoom. Draft minutes of the AGM have been circulated to the clubs and regional committees.

We covered a range of items at the board meeting, which are summarized below.

Financial Statements

Financially we are in a sound position largely due to the fact we have had no international events this year. We will incur a small loss for Congress, but this was forecast. We were fortunate to receive a small wage subsidy from Government. Historically the Board invests surplus funds with banks. As we know the returns are very low. We are investigating the use of a longer-term investment strategy. We are conscious of the need to be conservative as we are only custodians.

Ratings Points for 2021

Each year rating points are depreciated by 20% before adding points earned in the current year. With no or very limited bridge in 2020 we have decided it would be unfair and act as a disincentive if we discounted the rating points for 2020. This year there will be no discount.



Tournament Grading Bands for 2021

We know the subject of tournament grading has been on the table for a number of years.

We equally know that the present grading system operates as a disincentive for those players who have recently achieved open status. Many players feel they are out of their depth and are reluctant to participate in open fields. We have therefore amended open status which will be effective when a player achieves provincial master status (100 masterpoints of which 50A points are required). The change does not prohibit players from participating in an open event. We very much encourage participation.

Tournament Offerings 2021

Because we have missed so much bridge this year and because of major events in Australia being cancelled in the early part of 2021 we are offering flexibility to upgrade mini congresses from 10A to 15A events and to extend the length of the event. This should provide some exciting opportunities.

Membership Trends 2020

Not surprisingly home club numbers are down by 872 for the year ending September. With no bridge we have not had the usual intake. With overseas travel being up in the air for some time it would be good if players could encourage their family and friends to learn the game and join their nearest bridge club.

Regional Committees

We have had a committee for the last 12 months review the future structure of the regional committees. The committee comprised membership from the regional committees, board and an independent. The terms of the committee were to review the function and relevance of the regional committee structure.

It was recognized by the review committee that: -

- Much of what the Regional Committees do can be done centrally.
- Challenges in marketing, in order to grow the sport, and the increasing complex needs of clubs and their representatives, and the development of more effective club communication are better served by a nationally coordinated position.
- There is considerable local knowledge held in regional committees which should be preserved.
- Volunteer positions in committees are getting harder to fill.

The Board has approved the recommendation that we work toward the dissolution of the Regional Committees with the following points being factored: -

- Skills to deliver replacement services need to be well resourced, managed and viewed as long term positions to engender confidence that the best interests of players and clubs is being considered.
- That we don't lose sight of local opportunities.

- That transition be carefully managed and that there is an orderly process for knowledge sharing.
- That local resources, knowledge, and experience be used to assist with running of local events
- Any wind up needs to be planned and gradual.

The Board acknowledged the excellent work done by the regions and is conscious it does not want to lose the knowledge held within the regions. We have decided to run a pilot in Auckland/Northland. The pilot will provide a great deal of information, give us experience and knowledge of what works and what we need to modify so we continue a quality service to Clubs and Players. All other regions will continue to operate as in the past. We will share the results of the pilot.

We want to thank those players who have recently been elected to their local regional committee.

New Zealand Bridge Foundation

The Board approved changes to the trust deed so appointment of trustees would be in line with appointments to the board.

World Bridge Federation

We as an NBO have exercised our voting rights in the upcoming *General Meeting* of the Federation.

Australian Bridge Federation

We meet every three of four months to consider matters of common interest and collaboration. The ABF has established an online event recorder and review panel. They asked if we would nominate senior players to sit on the review panel.

Honorary Auditor

At the AGM members delegated the appointment of an honorary auditor to the board. We are delighted that Paul Hangartner has accepted the invitation. Paul is already involved with auditing of the Congress accounts. Welcome aboard.

Youth Congress

Each year, normally in January, we send a contingent to the youth week in Canberra. With Canberra not taking place the Board received a request from Sam Coutts and Paul Coleman to run a youth week in the January holidays. The Board was delighted to support this initiative.

Club Director Exams

Club level examinations will be held 14th and 15th November. This year the examination will comprise 2 online sessions covering firstly laws and regulations and secondly scoring and movements.

Recently we shared with the membership the determination of the Conduct Complaints and Discipline Committee. This related to a complaint we referred to the Committee.

Over the recent weeks there has been quite a bit of traffic on social media. We want to share with you the role of the Conduct Complaints and Discipline Committee.

We have a number of standing committees, one of which is the Conduct, Complaints and Discipline Committee. This committee is independently constituted and is chaired by a barrister. The committee follows an established process ensuring natural justice is correctly followed.

From time to time the committee is called upon to rule on a matter. As a general rule the board will uphold the findings of the committee. Whilst the board has the power to rule differently it would need to undertake a fresh hearing into the malfeasance or issue. We will not politicise or personalise these matters.

As mentioned above we recently reported on a case. Some in the bridge community do not agree with the findings. This is their prerogative. Some have asserted that the decision taken by the committee is due to the fact it involves a senior person in the organisation. I want to dispel any thought that the person is a senior member of the organisation. Nothing could be further from the truth.

The board's position is it will not comment on individual cases.

Wishing you well

Cheers Allan