



From the Chair



18 March 2022

Newsletter No: 2 for 2022

Hi Everyone

In the next few days our open team (Michael Cornell, Ashley Bach, Matthew Brown, Michael Whibley, GeO Tislevoll, and Nick Jacob) head for Salsomaggiore, Italy for the world championship. At one stage we doubted our ability to get the team there and back due to the Covid restrictions. Fortunately travel corridors have opened. We now hope the event will be Covid free and the players can focus on doing their best. We wish them every success. Throughout the event we will be following their progress and sharing hands of interest on this website." Of course, you can kibbitz by going onto the WBF website.

Over the last 3 weeks the world has been captivated by what is happening in Ukraine. The plight of millions of people is being affected every day. We shared our concerns with the WBF that participation by any Russian team in the upcoming world championship was inappropriate. The Russian team has now been excluded from the event. This was not a criticism of the players but of the regime.

Over the coming weeks the Auckland Bridge Club will be running a fundraiser for Ukraine. Details will be published shortly. We hope you will get behind this worthy cause. Keep an eye out for details.

On Tuesday we held our usual monthly board meeting. In early April we are taking timeout to consider that our strategic direction remains relevant or whether we need to amend things. One of the benefits of online bridge is that I receive regular comment about the activity of the Board. By and large the membership is expressing satisfaction with what we are doing.

Covid-19 has impacted our game in ways we didn't consider at the outset. Online bridge is now part of the fabric, and we need to think how face to face bridge and online bridge function in parallel. Now that we are approaching the peak of the Omicron outbreak and with a relaxation in the controls a return to club play seems more imminent. Club membership and participation has taken a hit with most clubs around the country having fewer members. We know club membership and participation drives much of what a club does. We need to develop assistance packages that help clubs get back on their feet. Over the last few months, we have been working with Fish Digital in developing a marketing plan, and expanding our social media footprint. You will have seen the work we have done attracting new players. If not, we recommend you have a look at www.playbridge.co.nz - this is our new site for new players.

It is clear we need strategies to ensure players are excited and that their ambitions are fulfilled. That means we find ways to help clubs grow and we find ways to help clubs develop their players. Notwithstanding taking a hit to our revenue over the last two years we have been fiscally responsible allowing us to build reserves. It is time we put some of those reserves to good use.

We will report back to you after our time away.

I am delighted to report that Anne Barrowclough has been re-elected to the Board. She brings a wealth of experience with not-for-profit organisations. She is a clear thinker, has a good understanding what is required from a membership-based organisation and has a vision for the future. Also joining us from the 1st of April is Kate Terry, president of the Tauranga Bridge Club. Another person who has a depth of experience, a person who understands the importance of meeting the needs and expectations of members, a qualified researcher and analyst.

As mentioned above we are fiscally travelling okay notwithstanding revenue from masterpoints being down ~\$62,000 for the year. As our international programme has been curtailed, we have been able to save cash. Last month we were all looking forward to playing Congress in Tauranga. The bridge gods got the better of us and we had to revert to an online event late in the piece. Reading the results of the post congress survey it is evident most people had an enjoyable week of bridge. Inevitably there are things we could do better. We are working on making changes to the programme to provide a fair structure and remove unnecessary volatility. I want to take the liberty of mentioning one adverse thing that happened at congress. We had situations of bullying which is totally unacceptable. Please think before you open your mouth. Please treat your opponents and your partner with respect. If you have got nothing nice to say shut up. Any future episodes of bullying will be referred to the recorder, it may also result in disciplinary action.

Financially we were just short of break even for Congress, in part to over 100 overseas players taking part. The focus now is on the 2022 Congress. Hopefully, the event will be played face to face. Planning is well underway. Again, keep an eye on the website for details.

In the coming weeks Alister will be taking some leave. You may see him driving an ambulance. Richard will provide a backup service but please be patient.

Regards

Allan

