

Welcome to the 86th Annual General Meeting of the Auckland Bridge Club.

It gives me great pleasure to present this record of the Auckland Bridge Club's activities and challenges over 2016/17 year, acknowledge the contributions of many, and outline the new five year Strategic vision developed for the Club.

Membership and Playing Statistics

Club membership continues to hover around 620 – nearly 300 have been members since 2000, 143 joined between 2000 and 2009, and 187 between 2010 to date. The trend is in the right direction, but we know that numbers playing bridge continue to decline across the country.

Membership is critical for our survival and everyone works hard to sign new members; so please welcome them and show tolerance as they develop their play. If you want free membership at 90, you need the younger ones coming through and staying – it's a bit like superannuation, someone has to pay!

Session play continues to remain steady with dips as expected in winter months, but it would be good to see some mixing up of established pairs, and Patrick has tried some individual sessions this past year – which everyone seemed to enjoy. Over half the club players are junior players – this doesn't necessarily mean they are beginners, but rather that their enjoyment of bridge comes from the club atmosphere, not from tournaments. We need to keep this in mind as we plan ahead.

Highlights of the Year

As with most reflections and reviews, it is when you take time to look back you realise how much has been achieved. Some of the highlights include:

- Our Beginners lessons and novice groups are doing well – but the challenge going forward will be to build on these and add more special interest classes, aim for more consistency in delivery, and make learning a natural and accessible part of being a member of the Club with more informal and formal teaching opportunities. Thank you to Douglas Russell, Janet Barnard, Julie Atkinson, Peter Hensman, Tracey Lewis and their loyal team of support teachers, mentors and helpers.
- The tablets have transformed the clubs play, proving easy to use and providing us with a lot of information in modern, updatable technology – why did it take us so long!! As well we have invested in improving the office equipment for our staff. Thank you to Mark Robertson and Sylvester Riddell for delivering a much needed revitalisation, and to all at the club for embracing change so enthusiastically.
- Our tournaments continue to be well attended and the Club gets high praise for their organisation, direction and delivery. They provide considerable revenue for the club, but also raise its profile and encourage participation in competition play for our own club members.
- Our building and grounds are maintained well and the place always looks neat and tidy but the building and the site are most certainly starting to look tired. We have had issues around a leaking roof and equipment requiring replacement. You are aware that the committee has spent some time reviewing options for the site and the Club, including earlier this year getting a rough indication of the impact of Unitary Plan zoning options on our corner site. However, we have done nothing further on this piece of work, but it must remain on the agenda of future committees for on-going consideration. The approach to any such review should continue to be one of consultation with membership through Property Meeting updates when there is anything significant to discuss.

The Committee and Staff

Your committee has found this a challenging year. All of us have had a number of other things happening outside of the bridge club including working full time, dealing with ill health and/or family challenges. It can be frustrating for us, and you, that we don't make more/faster progress on matters but we do the best we can with the time we have available. Like the hands we are dealt.

This has resulted in an acknowledgement by the Committee that they should be focused on strategic matters, allowing the employed staff and hands-on volunteers to get on with all things operational. We believe this is the correct way forward for the Club and will make it stronger and more resilient, and allow your elected Committees to more effectively focus on the future, and deal with the big issues, not the day to day. The changes proposed to The Constitution in the Special General Meeting this morning, are toward that end.

I thank the current committee for all they have contributed – every meeting attendance, every point of view, every debate - it all adds to the decision making process and moving the club forward. I acknowledge the retirement of Peter Hensman, Bianca van Rangelrooy, Mike Dunn and Nicole McGuiness, and in particular Allan Morris who has served 11 years on the committee – two as President. The Club is very grateful for the time he has given. His inclusive manner, his wise counsel and level headedness have been invaluable. Mark Robertson, Sharon Marryatt and Sue Reid are happy to remain on the committee. I thank them for you, for their time and commitment to the Club.

The Committee could not do its job without the team that is in place to pick up and deliver to the vision. Debbie, Ann, Barbara, Emma and of course Patrick are a key part of the club environment and its success. They, and those who volunteer across a range of services and support, work with pride, commitment and focus, and I am in awe of the huge range of behind-the-scenes work undertaken to keep everything running so smoothly, yet maintain the personal touch enjoyed by everyone.

Strategic Review

The Committee spent the bulk of one very wet Sunday earlier this year discussing what it meant to be the Auckland Bridge Club. We had been working with a Strategy that was coming to the end of its life, and we needed to review and re-articulate the vision for the club for the next five to 10 years so Committees could plan, resource and support activities toward that vision.

The Strategic Mission and Vision will be on-line as a reference document, and will form the basis of future planning and budgets.

“Auckland Bridge Club – the most highly regarded Bridge Club in Auckland. This will be achieved by providing an environment that gathers together a community of bridge players from the social to the competitive, from the beginner to the grand master, offering a range of lessons, sessions and tournaments that suit players of all abilities, in an attractive and functional premises, with excellent services and support. “

We all need to play a part in the delivery of this vision – as employees, as volunteers, as players - we need to remind ourselves why we are proud to be members here, and the legacy we want to leave.