

Presidents report to the Annual General Meeting Te Awamutu Bridge Club 25th November 2022

It is with pleasure that I present the following report.

Membership Firstly we acknowledge with sadness the passing of Alix Haywood, a past President and life member, Betty Bourne, Russell Thompson and recent members Shirley Paine and Olwyn Falwell. Our condolences go to their families. As with clubs of all sorts NZ wide, we struggle with declining numbers. Presently we have 67 full members and 9 as members with us as their second club. While our weekly table numbers have dropped from 16-18 in July– October to 13-15 recently, we are doing as well as many clubs with much higher numbers. What is concerning is the number of members who, while being paid up, have not played this year. We hope to see you soon, but if you are thinking of not renewing please let us know, as we have to pay national levies based on our membership as at 31st January next year. Thanks go to John Mills for running the lessons this year, but unfortunately only two members went on to join although we also welcome Pam Simmons and Glen Rossiter (already registered players) and Brett McCardle. We continue to lose more members each year than we gain, and we should look at having a major membership drive next year.

Tournaments. We have managed to achieve something not many clubs of our size do, and that is to run 4 successful tournaments this year, which is not just good for player development, but also is very much needed for club finances. It is also very pleasing to see an increasing number entering other clubs' tournaments, something that was lacking a few years ago. This is a great way to improve your bridge and widen your experience in this addictive game.

Thanks There are so many who have helped in all sorts of ways over these difficult times. These go to the directors, Sheila, Anne, recently Marie-Anne, (and I guess me too!). Wonderful proactive work was done by our partnership stewards Noeline and Vikki with Cherrie filling in as needed, and without whom we would struggle to get a decent turnout. Thanks to Nick Saunders for co-ordinating (and feeding!) the practice night sessions on Monday evenings. Sheila has done a great job with the raffles for the tournaments which has further boosted our tournament profits. Thanks also to our Almoner, Cherrie, who has kept me up to date with members health issues. Anne, as always, has done a great job as computer manager, but we really need a second back up person to learn the technology which is so important. I worry what would happen if Anne suffered the same fate as the ancient Greek playwright Aeschylus who died when a passing eagle dropped a tortoise on his head!! Many have worked tirelessly behind the scenes looking after the kitchen, washing table cloths, dealing the cards for each session etc and Bruce Mandeno has always been available to help with maintenance. My deepest appreciation goes to the wonderful committee of dedicated people who have been so supportive of my presidency. All have done their bit, and many have, I am sure, learnt a lot about the wider bridge world, and that bodes well for the coming year. If I have overlooked anyone my deepest apologies – put it down to brain cells disappearing at 127 per hour.

Club Sessions. The beginning of the year saw an overwhelming view that we stop vax pass requirements and happily bridge returned to near normality. We managed to run a small teams session on Wednesday but could only muster 4 teams and had to find substitutes on most

nights. The reaction from players who had not experienced teams before, was a little mixed, but I am sure we will try again and maybe get another couple of teams going. NZ Bridge has advised that the gradings will remain unchanged for the next year. The match committee will need to review handicaps as we have seen considerable advances in some members' achievements, which is very gratifying. I once again strongly recommend to those up and coming players to learn the intricacies of scoring e.g. which is a better score for you – making a non vul game or taking the vulnerable opponents two away doubled. This could best be done if you kept a personal scoresheet as well as the bridgemates being used. That is the way we all learnt, and it will improve your concepts of when to sacrifice or not.

Clubrooms. The incoming committee is aware that there are areas of concern, such as our sign on the building, some ageing kitchen equipment etc and it will be a challenge to balance these needs with financial resources.

Sponsorship Special thanks go to our sponsors, and our members have been very active in securing a significant amount for next year. Please remember to thank those from whom you may purchase something as it is nice for a sponsor to know they are appreciated.

Finally, thanks to all who have supported me in a job I had not expected to be doing. I did agree to it, as we needed a little time for newer committee members to gain experience and rebuild after the trauma of Covid. This has now happened and I will now ride off onto relative obscurity, and in so doing, maybe, as it was with Sidney Carton in *A Tale of Two Cities*, "It is a far, far better thing that I do, than I have ever done".

Very best wishes to you all for the Christmas season and New Year
Bruce Owen
President