

Palmerston North Bridge Club
Annual Report 2023

It is my pleasure to present the Annual Report for 2023 our 77th as a Club and my 1st as President.

May I congratulate all Bridge event participants over the year. There have been some notable results which establish our club as being right up there. My hope is that the joy of this success is brought back to the club and the skill is passed on to all.

Whilst being a most competitive sport, bridge is also a social pastime, and the two can mix.

As president I wish to see the joy flourish.

Special congratulations to Bob Hurley 17th on the NZ list of A point earners. That's consistency!

Playing Programme

We have continued to offer five playing sessions a week. Two daytime ungraded sessions (on Monday and Friday), a "novice plus" session on Monday evening, an "Open" session on Tuesday evening and a handicapped, multigrade session on Thursday evening. We have four Club grades for players: Bronze, Silver, Gold and Platinum. Bronze and Silver graded events are played on Monday evening and Gold/Platinum events are held on Tuesday evening. This meant that Monday evenings had a wide range of players, from novices through to experienced intermediate players and that presents challenges for less experienced players trying to improve their rating with "C" points. The Committee took the decision late in 2023 to restrict partnerships to having at least one bronze or silver player and, where possible, to run the evening in two sessions: Bronze and Silver. The Championship event in November was held in two sessions and was welcomed by all.

The Thursday handicapped multigrade session continues to be our least popular session but it is pleasing to see many players from Monday evenings joining in for a second weekly evening of bridge. The atmosphere is very social and mixed grade, "mentoring" partnerships are encouraged.

Beginners' Lessons

Lessons started in early March. On Monday nights progress in the "Novice Plus" sessions by several graduates of the lessons was very pleasing – we have some future grandmasters in the room! Thanks to Anne Gordon and Bob Hurley for taking the lessons and to Maxine Key for administering and organising everyone.

Thank-you Alastair James for taking on the tutoring role for our lessons in 2024. We look forward to a good crop of players from 28 enrolments.

Tournaments

During the year, the Club held four very successful events - the Junior/Intermediate tournament in March, the Restricted Pairs tournament in June, the Open Swiss Pairs tournament in October and the Christmas Cheer tournament in December. We also held our second "Melbourne Cup (No Fear)" event in November. Many thanks to our sponsors for these tournaments: Peter Colville Real Estate, anonymous donor, Julia Wallace Village, Mitre 10 Mega and Tracey Dench Travel Broker respectively. We also hosted the National 15A Teams in July.

The annual accounts reflect a successful year of tournaments and events. Thanks are due to our tournament secretaries, Denise Servante and Liz Burrows, our catering team led by Gayle Leader and, of course our tournament Directors, Lorraine Stachurski, Bryan Green and Val Pain.

Finances

It is fantastic that this year we are returning a cash surplus, even accounting for depreciation and additional assets purchased. Our membership and table numbers have been stable but the surplus has been generated by a fantastic effort and outcome in our venue hire and fundraising/ sponsorship.

It was a pleasure to welcome Hokowhitu Bridge Club to use our rooms for their sessions and, this year, we have confirmed a three year agreement. In addition, the MASH Trust rented car parking spaces whilst their building was refurbished. This arrangement has now been extended indefinitely. These arrangements more or less guarantee this income until at least 2026. We are hugely indebted to Maxine Keay for her efforts in generating venue hire business. She has done a magnificent job.

Our fundraising has also been very successful. We received tournament sponsorship as outlined above and also generated \$800 in advertising to cover the printing costs of our playing programme. Successful applications were made to Central Energy Trust (to replace the strip lighting with LED lights), Eastern and Central Community Trust for funding (for operational and building maintenance expenses), NZ Bridge (for new tablets and coaching costs for lessons) and to the Lion Foundation (for stationery). My thanks to all these sponsors and agencies for their support, and also to members, Denise Servante and Maxine Keay, for completing and filing the applications.

A keen group of members has started monthly Housie sessions as a social fundraiser. This has already started to contribute to our coffers and the group hopes it will build up to be a very effective income stream for the Club. Thanks to Annette Scanlon, Maxine Keay, Gayle Leader, Sonia Smith and Glynis Penhale for their efforts in this area.

On the outgoing side, the Committee realised that it needed to slow down and reverse the runaway costs of directing our club sessions. It began a review of its structure and is in the process of negotiating changes which may affect the Chief Director position. Notwithstanding this, the Committee has agreed to use volunteers for directing wherever possible with a differential rate applied to qualified and unqualified volunteers. This has produced an immediate reduction in our cost centre for Directors. A structural review is never easy and it is a testament to the commitment and dedication of our staff that we have managed the process so smoothly and amicably.

Finally I would like to thank Alan Martin for again reviewing our accounts. Alan has indicated that he will be stepping down as our reviewer, having done 3 years worth.

Buiding maintenance and renewal

The work required to make the building watertight for many years to come has been completed. This was an area where I felt that I could contribute and I have had a blast working with many of you to achieve a fabulous outcome. Special thanks are due to Ian and Suzanne Carpenter who provided gear and expertise (on top of labour), Judy Jenkins, Dan Lynch, Tony Clear, Kate and Ryan Cliff, Sean Lynch, Craig Killington and Ken Bateman who has also initiated and arranged for the repainting of the carpark lines.

In addition, as mentioned above, we have replaced our strip lights with LED lighting and are already seeing the impact on a reduction in our power bills.

The Committee

The Committee has been a very active Committee and I have been so grateful for all their support and hard work.

Denise Servante has been an initiator and driver for four years as president and vice president. Along with Grant Elliot (treasurer), she has brought the club towards a more sustainable entity in a very professional manner. They both stand down this year. Denise stays on the committee -thank-you Denise-. We expect to see Grant again in the future. They both have earned my/our greatest respect and gratitude.

Gayle Leader will be stepping down after four years as Secretary. Her contribution matches her tirelessness as caterer and fundraiser through house. I am pleased that she has again put her name forward for the Committee.

We welcomed Jude Macmillan as our acting treasurer, coming to grips with a huge task, and Dianne Reilly as acting secretary. Both have already made a huge contribution and I am delighted that they have put themselves forward for election at the AGM.

Finally

There are always too many people to thank for their outstanding contribution but let's give it a go!

Of course, many thanks to the Room Reps and Hosts - you have made a real difference to how our sessions run for the enjoyment of everyone.

Special mentions, too, for Ray Kemp who has prepared our bi-monthly newsletters, to Jan Whyte who does our shopping to keep biscuit and milk supplies in stock, to Dianne Hunter who sends best wishes cards to our members who are indisposed, to Lynn Wilson, Glyn Robinson and Carolyn Brodie for dealing boards, to Carolyn Brodie for banking, to Michele Kay for maintaining the gardens and to Julie Bunnell, Val Pain, Laura Griffin, Denise Servante, Alistair James and Bryan Northcott for directing our playing sessions.

Many thanks to Lorraine Stachurski who yet again has supplied outstanding administration, direction, and expert advice – and cups of tea when needed.

As always, we are so grateful to all members who have supported the Club in so many ways throughout the year.

Martin Carryer

President

March 2024