

TOMAREE BRIDGE CLUB

MINUTES OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD ON 31 AUGUST 2022

AT ELIZABETH WARING FUNCTION ROOM, NELSON BAY

PRESENT: 43 as per attendance book

APOLOGIES: 14 as per attendance book

MEETING OPENED: 11.30 am

President John McIlrath welcomed all present and thanked them for their attendance. He then called on Secretary Sandra Robinson to read Minutes of previous AGM held on 28 July 2021.

Moved: Sandra Robinson 'Minutes be accepted'. **Seconded:** Lee Preston. **All in favour:** Motion carried.

President's Report:

Thank you to the members for allowing me to be your President in this last year.

Did you enjoy your bridge with us during this time? If yes, then tell your friends and invite them along the next time you come. If you answered, NO then something needs to be done and a review made of reasons and problems to be addressed and fixed.

Yes, this was my first year and yes, I am the new boy on the block, and this will always have its challenges – what does he know, for instance. Early in the piece, a Member Satisfaction Survey was distributed to see what needed to be done. We said we would report back to members the findings. Unfortunately, less than 10% of members replied. This meant that we, or I as the new President was flying blind on your needs. No feedback was given as there was nothing to tell you.

What was done however

1. The board movements were standardized so that where possible sessions were 33 boards with 11 x 3 board rounds. We had heard that members did not appreciate 2-board rounds. Our two problematic numbers are always 9-tables (27 boards) and 10-tables (30 boards).
2. We had more social functions, which members appeared to enjoy. These included the Christmas Party / Australia Day / President's Trophy / Mystery Teams / St Patrick's Day / Bastille Day and recently Horses Birthday & Wattle Day. The attendance was generally very good, and everyone pitched in for successful occasions.

My regrets included

1. The appearance of the Club' website. Would be great to find a member with the necessary expertise to make this site appealing / interesting as well as a source of information for members and the ability to sign up for special events.
2. Our inability to attract and maintain new players and provide them with a necessary transition session to improve on and learn more about this wonderful game of ours called BRIDGE. More time is needed to review what we can do in the future.
3. Not just Bridge Clubs have been affected by this Covid Pandemic, but looking at ourselves for a moment, members will be interested to know that our table numbers are down by about a third from July 2019 to June 2022. That means that a session then of 15 tables is now 10 tables. The burning question is "what can we do about this" or "how do we redress this problem"?

Tomaree Bridge Club, like many, is a member run club and lots and lots of volunteers are needed. I would like to thank you all for helping out in all those different ways. Yes, some have done more than others (but that is natural) but my thanks go to all members.

To start, I thank all your committee members for this year, whilst it was not always easy – but most of us were new to the role and needed each other's help. In general, meetings were held monthly with lots of agenda items. A precis of the minutes was regularly sent to members to keep them up

to date. A session will not run without Directors / Board dealers / Gofers – cleaning up etc. and so a huge thank you to you all – without you, the club is lost. Of course, there is one aspect of a session that never goes unnoticed – and that is the kitchen. We are so fortunate to have such wonderful people looking after us in this regard – thank you Sandra Mackenzie, and your helpers, for taking care of us.

As we all know, Bridge is an easy game to learn but difficult to master. This last year, Kerry Wright kindly conducted a 6-week beginners' lesson series. Thank you, Kerry, to you and your helpers. In addition, we were very fortunate to have Ian Spight run an Intermediate course which was very well attended with around 10 tables each week for 8 weeks. Ian, all your participant greatly appreciated these lessons, thank you for all your efforts here.

In closing, we have just completed our hosting of the NSW State Veterans Bridge Championships. We have a license for 3-years. Whilst we look on this as a success, there is much to build on for face-to-face bridge events to return to what used to be considered normal numbers. Thank you to your hard-working committee.

So now the choice is yours as to whom you wish as your President next year. I trust you have seen what I can do, and I can only promise the same and more for you and your enjoyment of this wonderful game.

Please see next page for other matters of interest for you our member of Tomaree Bridge Club

John McIlrath 8th August 2022

Other matters of interest

1. Annual Congress, 2021 – Sue Grice Convener - Unfortunately, due to Covid, we were unable to host our October face-to-face Tomaree Congress for the second year in a row. We decided instead to hold an online congress using RealBridge. This proved very successful and generated a profit of \$1700, without the extra work and expense involved with catering. We had 164 players entered as 38 pairs and 22 teams. Although many players were not local, we succeeded in introducing quite a few of our members to online bridge, which they continued to play during lockdown.

We are very excited to be holding our first face-to-face congress for three years on 29th/30th October 2022, Pairs Sat 29th and teams Sunday 30th. Please mark these dates in your diary as we need the support of as many of our members as possible.

2. Publicity – Bill Forbes - This year was limited to items in the local newspaper mentioning our own major competition but highlighting more our role as a community organization within Port Stephens and our contributions by way of supporting local charities and hosting events that bring visitors to the area.

3. Membership – Comparative numbers are: -

ABF Masterpoint Centre – Home club Registrations

March 2020 was 164 members

March 2022 was 131 members, being a decline of just over 20%

4. NSW Veterans Bridge Championships – Kay Baguley -The inaugural Veterans Pairs and Teams event was a most successful major Bridge Tournament opportunity for our Club. Feedback received was very positive. We hosted 32 pairs and 14 teams.

One of the messages I received was as follows. - "Good morning Kay hope you are having good cards today just wanted to say thank you so much for a wonderful couple of days the congress was run so well. Thanks to you and your team. The food was fantastic, and it didn't stop coming. The whole thing from start to finish was a huge success thanks again ❤️ Ronnie Antill & Marg Somers."

These numbers were not as big as hoped for, because of the ongoing woes of the Covid pandemic. We did have to field an extra 10 locals, complimentary, because of late withdrawals for this reason. Our subcommittee myself, Peta Grice, Trisha Burningham worked with President John Mc to organise the excellent and easily accessible Horizons venue.

We looked after the catering, setting up and decorating of the room, advertising, and event promotion to Bridge Clubs across the state. We organised publicity in the local papers and radio stations, signage, sponsorships, prizes and medallions, raffles for each of the events.

This event was an ambitious undertaking and I thank the hard-working subcommittee, and the willing standby players for helping put Port Stephen on the map with this prestigious Bridge event.

5. Tournament Committee report – Helen Baker / Helen Jones – Firstly a huge thank you to all those Directors who helped this last year. It was indeed quite a challenge with several either, no longer continuing, or else taking holidays. At times our computer skills tended to let us down which did lead to some tricky situations. Irrespective we still had our game of bridge – which is what it is all about. During the year Helen passed the baton on to Helen to look after the rostering. In itself, this is quite a challenge. In view of some of these issues, it has been raised with the committee that they investigate the possibility of employing a “permanent” non-playing Director. Congratulations to all our winners especially our Open Pairs Champions Kay & Bruce Baguley and our Intermediate Pairs Champions Sue Grice & Chris Ledingham. Unfortunately, our Novice Pairs Championship was cancelled due to insufficient numbers. To those players who represented Tomaree Bridge Club at the GNOT & Country Teams Regional Finals, well done to you all and thank you.

Remember members are always welcome to provide suggestions regarding any aspects of our sessions. This can be done either verbally, in person, or via the suggestion box.

You will have noticed that our face-to-face numbers are down compared to pre-covid days by over 30%. We are not alone in this regard. So thank you are our members who continue to attend on a regular basis. Without you, there would be no club!

Members who had passed away during the last year were then acknowledged with a moment of reflection.

Treasurer's Report:

Kerry Wright was an apology for the meeting. Questions from the floor:

1. Brian Hodges queried the non-payment of Insurance for this financial year. Sandra Robinson explained that the bill we received for general insurance (theft or loss of our property within the Elizabeth Waring Function Rooms) was almost \$900. At our Committee Meeting of 8 June 2022, a motion was carried that this insurance not be renewed.

2. Sue Grice questioned the amount of \$1066.15 listed as Gifts for this financial year, but nothing listed in the previous two years. John McIlrath indicated that gifts were probably included in previous years, but not necessarily listed separately as they now are.

Election of Office Bearers & Ordinary Member of Committee:

John McIlrath then vacated the Chair and requested Brian Hodges to read the Nominations for Committee.

The following nominations for office bearers have been received:

<u>Proposer/Seconder</u>		
President:	John McIlrath	T Fehily/B Forbes
Vice-President:	Bev Lawler	J McIlrath/T Cooper
Secretary:	Ian Stewart	T Grigson/JMcIlrath
Treasurer:	Ian Stewart	T Grigson/JMcIlrath
Masterpoint Secretary:	Pat Pepper	S Mackenzie/L Brown

Brian Hodges advised the Meeting of changes that had come to light since the close of nominations. These were that Ian Stewart would take the role of Secretary and Bill Forbes was prepared to take on the role of Treasurer.

The following nominations for general committee have been received:

Bill Forbes	J McIlrath/T Fehily
Sue Grice	J McIlrath/C Ledingham
Ian Stewart	T Grigson/JMcIlrath

Given the changes to Office Bearers announced by Brian, the general committee now had only Sue Grice as a nominee. Therefore, Brian called for nominations from the floor. The following people were nominated:

Robyn Geale	S Grice/J Sykes
Dot Saxon-Williams	J McIlrath/K Baguley

As there were no other nominations, Brian declared the formation of the Committee.

Appointment of Auditor:

John McIlrath took the Chair and announced that Ian Spight had accepted the role of the Club's auditor.

Appointment of Public Officer:

Brian Hodges had indicated he was happy to accept the ongoing role of Public Officer

General Business:

John McIlrath raised the point of retaining the mobility scooter (the Kevinator) as it is not used. It was pointed out that there are difficulties negotiating the turns on the ramp. Jenny Sykes suggested replacing it with a motorised wheel-chair which would be much more manoeuvrable. There was overall agreement that the scooter be sold (or traded) and replaced with a motorised wheel-chair.

Ian Spight raised the topic of our term deposit of \$100,000 and suggested we look for a platform that offered better returns than the CBA, but ensuring it was with a known, reputable organisation. Sandra Robinson advised that this money is not currently in a term deposit as when it last expired there was no advantage, interest-wise, in locking it into a further term. Sandra also advised that we do not need to have access to any of this money, as our daily working account has a balance in excess of \$15,000. Bill Forbes to investigate a more lucrative term deposit for this money.

Chris Ledingham advised members that Robyn Kennett is finally Covid-free after five months of fighting this virus.

John McIlrath thanked departing Committee members, Sandra Robinson, Tom Fehily and Carol Mottley.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 12.15pm.

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John McIlrath (President)