TOMAREE BRIDGE CLUB

MINUTES OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEEETING HELD ON 13 SEPTEMBER 2023

AT ELIZABETH WARING FUNCTION ROOM, NELSON BAY

PRESENT: 49 as per attendance book

APOLOGIES: 15 as per attendance book

MEETING OPENED: 11.30 am

President John McIlrath welcomed all present and thanked them for their attendance. He then referred to the minutes of the previous AGM held on 31 August 2022 which had been sent to members and were available for the meeting.

Moved: John McIlrath 'Minutes be accepted'. **Seconded**: Robyn Geale. **All in favour**: Motion carried.

President's Report:

As we come to end of my second year as your President, it is important to look back and reflect on what has and has not been achieved. There are some thimgs that were not achieved, but best not to dwell too long on those. That will be up to your new Committee.

What has been achieved, you may well ask?

1. We did get rid of the 2-board movements and installed movements based on 3-board x 11 rounds. This became our norm with 11 or more tables. It was more important to play ALL the boards rather than ALL the people.

2. We made good connections with local businesses following our joining the Business Port Stephens Organization, participating in their "Meet & Greet" events as well as their Business Breakfasts.

3. Getting the message out to attract new members, including demonstration days at the Salamander Shopping centre for which happened thanks to the volunteer helpers who assisted on those days. The local NOTA newspaper had been contacted about including an article on the Tomaree Bridge Congress and possibly competition results in the future.

3. Our social functions, thanks to Bev Lawler's organizational skills, were a huge success. A big thank you to Bev and all her helpers, especially Sandra McKenzie. We really appreciate everything you have done over the past two years for the Club. Christmas was in house this year and everyone raved about it.

4. Your committee has worked tirelessly during the year to try and maintain our friendly / happy environment. However, I would be suggesting for next year's committee that a "democratic" process be instituted to effect any change. I am sure we can all think about various matters that fall within this category.

A big thank you to the committee for their contributions:

- Robyn Geale for her work as Welfare Officer.
- Pat Pepper for her work as Masterpoint Secretary, a role she has held for a very long time
- Bill Forbes for his great work as Treasurer.
- Ian Stewart as Secretary and the challenges he faced in that role.
- Bev Lawler as the Vice President and the great work she did during the year.
- And a thank you to the committee members not here – Sue Grice, Dot Saxon Williams and Angela Tilling.

5. Relationships have been re-established with the other bridge club at Wests Diggers. They play a very important role in maintaining a good bridge presence in the Bay. It was good to publish a joint

timetable with them. This relationship needs to be maintained and enhanced wherever possible. Diggers Club is hosting a joint Picnic Day at 2:00 on 10 September at Bagnalls Beach and all members are welcome to attend.

6. The suggestion box was very poorly used. Rather than be a being a creative ideas platform, it tended to be a complaints section.

7. Our Club joined the "Be A Good Sport" Government program. Yes, Bridge is a sport – a mind games activity with many good health outcomes. Our behaviour at the table is very important and we need to help and not hinder others at the table, especially the beginners. Be proud to represent the club at other events and wear the club t-shirts to make a positive impact.

8. Our Club continues to be a VOLUNTARY – members based club. It needs all our support. Yes, there are a few that do a lot,. We could all pitch in and do our little bit and help out. Do not wait to be asked! A big thank you to all the volunteers.

9. We will all recall the upheaval when our clubroom was renovated, and we had to move across to Bruce Scott Pavilion for a couple of months. Thanks to all our members who assisted and rose to the many challenges. The improvements to the club rooms are most welcome, in particular the new big screen.

10. The Club held two very successful State events – State Veterans Championships and our Annual Tomaree Congress. Thanks to Kay Baguley & Sue Grice, respectively, for such great organization.

11. This year we had an excellent beginner retention rate, Our support play on a Monday morning has swelled to 4-tables. Thanks to Jenny Sykes, Pat Pepper and Trish McIlrath for helping out this special group of players. Remember, for our Club to survive,e we need beginners.

Moved: John McIlrath 'President's Report be accepted'. **Seconded**: Ian Stewart. **All in favour**: Motion carried.

Note: - the President's Report was sent to members and was available for the meeting

Questions arising from the Report.

- New Club T-Shirts
  - Christine Blackledge questioned that there was no mention to members where the new club T-shirts came from, whether they donated or paid for by the club
  - John McIlrath responded, advising that the T-shirts were donated and not a cost to the club.
  - Christine Blackledge said she was proud to be a member of the club and to wear the T-shirts.

Treasurer's Report:

Thank you to Angela, Dot and Sue for filling in for me to collect the money in my absence, much appreciated.

Thanks to Ian Spight's help getting me on track, lots to learn and have nearly got the processes right now. Thank you, Ian.

Thanks to Sandra McKenzie for having the absolute best biscuits of any bridge club, and to Bev Lawler for the great social events that we all appreciate. Despite all these extravagances the club has managed to live within its means and has a surplus of $13k.

The $100k term deposit matures 15 September 2023. This was invested at 3% which we thought was a good rate at the time, but will get a much better rate going forward.

Moved: Bill Forbes 'Treasurer's Report be accepted'. **Seconded**: Robyn Geale. **All in favour**: Motion carried.

Note: - the Treasurer's Report was sent to members and was available for the meeting

<u>Questions arising from the Treasurer's Report</u>

- Table fees overstated
  - Sue McMahon queried that the table fees shown seems to be overstated
  - Ian Spight advised that this is due to the accounting for outstanding tokens.
- Rent Understated
  - Sue McMahon queried that the rent shown seems understated.
  - Ian Spight and Bill Forbes advised that we pay the rent invoices when and if they are received. The Sports Council is not prompt in issuing rent invoices.
  - Trish Thatcher commented that delays in rent invoices for clubs is not uncommon.
- No Insurance
  - Trish Thatcher queried why insurance was not shown in the accounts
  - John McIlrath advised that we used to pay insurance of about $800 p.a. for the clubs assets but was thought this was not good value when the value of the assets were considered, so it was discontinued. The chairs, tables etc are not owned by the club. Public Liability Insurance is covered by the ABF, which we pay for via the capitation fees we pay them.

<u>Constitution Changes:</u>

Three resolutions to change the Clubs Constitution are to be put to the members present. 75% of members present plus proxies are required to pass a resolution. The voting is to be conducted by secret ballot. Ian Spight is to be the returning officer who shall hand out and collect your votes.

Resolution 1 – Amend clause 8 to delete the specified amounts for joining fees and annual subscriptions.

John McIlrath explained that when fees are changed the Club has had to make submission to NSW Fair Trading. By removing the actual amounts from the constitution changes can be made by recommendation of the committee subject to approval of members at an AGM or special meeting, without having to make submissions to NSW Fair Trading. Sometimes there is a need to increase fees such as when the ABF increases their capitation fees. The club gets very little out of the annual fees as most of this goes to the ABF for home members, but we get more from the non-home club members. The cost of the badge ($15) is included in the joining fee. John asked members to vote for the proposed change.

- Members were asked if anyone wished to speak against the proposed change.
- There was no one wishing to speak against the resolution.

Moved by John McIlrath, **Seconded** by Ian Stewart.

Members were asked to record their votes on the ballot sheet provided.

Resolution 2 – Amend clause 13(d) to delete reference to 'registered Director with the NSW Bridge Federation'.

John McIlrath explained that there is no longer a Register of Directors held by the NSWBFA so the requirement is meaningless and should be deleted.

- Members were asked if anyone wished to speak against the proposed change.
- There was no one wishing to speak against the resolution.

Moved by John McIlrath, **Seconded** by Ian Stewart.

Members were asked to record their votes on the ballot sheet provided.

Resolution 3 – Amend clause 6(d) to delete limitations on the term of office of President.

John McIlrath spoke for the resolution, saying I don't know why this is in the constitution. I have been in bridge administration for over 30 years in paid positions and now as a volunteer, I have not seen such a limitation in other clubs. Previously Amber Noonan was our President and when she moved north, Jenny Sykes filled in as no one wanted to be President so I nominated and was happy to do the three years. If we do not change the constitution I will not be permitted to continue or even be on the committee, the way the constitution currently reads. Barbara Hunter has been the President of Muswellbrook Bridge Club for 23 years and other clubs have long serving presidents. Look who wants to be your next president, we can't operate without one.

- Phillip Carter spoke against the resolution advising that change in leadership is healthy for growth and development. There can be serious problems with long standing leadership such as in the case of Qantas.
- Terry Cooper spoke for the resolution advising that while 3 years is a good term for the President, we're all getting older and no one is really interested in being the President, so this should be changed. Probus had trouble getting a president and as a result the club closed.
- Tom Flynn spoke against the resolution advising that the original limitation in the constitution was there for a reason and should stand.
- Bruce Baguley responded by advising that the clause came from the amalgamation of the two clubs' constitutions. There was no reason for it being there as it stopped a good president continuing on or even being on the committee.

General discussion followed – Bowling clubs have a 3 year rule. If they don't want someone they can be voted out and a different president installed. Clarification was sought if the clause was a hard limitation (it is). AGM voting for the president is for a 1 year term, not three year term.

Moved John McIlrath, **Seconded** by Ian Stewart.

The members were asked to record their votes on the ballot sheet provided.

<u>The Ballot</u>

The returning officers (Ian Spight & Jenny Sykes) collected the votes from the members, and members were advised to have a lunch break (sandwiches etc provided) while the votes were counted. Will have to delay the start of the game to get this finished.

Following the break John McIlrath announced the results of the Ballot:

Resolution #1 – (For = 61 Against 2 Informal = 0) 96% - Passed

Resolution #2 – (For = 62 Against 1 Informal = 0) 98% - Passed

Resolution #3 – (For = 51 Against 11 Informal = 1) 81% - Passed

Note: the above ballot included 49 votes from members present and 14 proxies.

Great applause.

Moved John McIlrath that the voting slips and ballot documentation be destroyed after 1 week. **Seconded** Robyn Geale, **AIF** - motion carried.

Ian Spight advised to destroy ballot documentation after 1 week.

<u>Resolution 4 – setting of fees.</u>

New members fee - $20 (including badge)

Annual Subscription - $30

Moved John McIlrath, **Seconded** Ian Stewart, **AIF** – motion carried

<u>Appointment of Officers:</u>

In the absence of the Public Officer, Ian Spight agreed to conduct this part of the meeting.

There being two positions for which no nominations have been received, nominations for these positions were called from the floor.

President – John McIlrath Proposer – Kay Baguley, seconder Peta Grice

Secretary – Kay Baguley Proposer Bev Lawler, seconder Iris Moncrieff

There being no other nominations these positions were deemed filled.

Welcome Back John, loud applause.

The following nominations were received for the other positions:

Vice President – Bev Lawler Proposer Trish McIlrath, seconder Ian Stewart

Treasurer – Linda Butler Proposer Sue Grice, seconder Bev Lawler

Master Point Secretary - Pat Pepper Proposer Ian Stewart, seconder Trish McIlrath

Ordinary Members

Sue Grice Proposer Ann Spight, seconder Terry Cooper

Robyn Geale	Proposer Ian Stewart, seconder Trish McIlrath
Dot Saxon-Williams	Proposer Sue Grice, seconder Jane Lee
Tom Fehily	Proposer John McIlrath, seconder Bev Lawler

The committee being elected, thank you Ian Spight.

Appointment of Auditor:

John McIlrath took the chair and announced that Ian Spight had agreed to continue as Auditor.

Appointment of Public Officer:

Brian Hodges had agreed to continue on as Public Officer

General Business

1. Information from committee meetings
   - Jenny Sykes thanked the outgoing committee members and raised the issue that there was no clear link to information about committee meetings for members, which we have had in the past.
   - John McIlrath responded that historically this was done by some committees and not by others. Relevant information is provided to members via newsletter etc. It would be up to the new committee to consider this issue.

2. Public Officer
   - Trish Thatcher raised the issue of appointment of Public Officer and that this should have been included on the agenda.
   - John McIlrath responded that Brian Hodges has agreed to continue on as Public Officer and this does not need to be included in the agenda.

3. Rounds/Boards per session

   Bev Lawler stated that we currently play 33 boards per session and that we're getting late in finishing. There's the setting up, cleaning up and computer work to be dome which makes for a very long day for some. She then proposed the following changes be considered:

   - 27 boards per session, 3 boards per round, increasing the time per round from 19 mins to 20 mins, as new players are finding it difficult to finish in 19 mins, and more thought should be put into our game rather than rushing through each set.
   - Cut out afternoon tea, either come early or stay late to socialise. There has been considerable difficulty in getting members to resume play after the break, meaning we finish late,
   - 2 sets of boards can be used in each session to ensure we all get to play all the hands to make sure of an equitable competition.
   - Can we do a trial to see how this would work out, say for a month?

There were several voices from members who were not happy with what was being proposed.

John McIlrath advised that as this was general business, nothing was being put to the members to decide now. Any changes would be formally dealt with by the committee and put to the members in a democratic way.

4. Interclub Teams

Chris Ledingham proposed that the interclub team compitions be reinstated – as these were great events.

John McIlrath responded that while there were 23 clubs in the zone that could compete is such an event there were only 4 clubs represented at the zone final. While it would be good to have such events there is just not the interest from other clubs to make it viable.

Meeting closed: 12:50