

# North Shore Bridge Club



## President's Report 2025

**24 August 2025**

As my third year as President draws to a close, I can look back on the past twelve months with satisfaction, knowing that North Shore Bridge Club continues to thrive - its membership and its finances both healthy and its reputation for friendly hospitality intact.

I acknowledge that this happy state of affairs is due, firstly to your hard-working Executive, but just as importantly to the many individual members who contribute in so many ways, whether that be to the daily sessions - directing, dealing, preparing tablets, finding partners, recording session winners / trophy winners / grand slams / 70%+, updating the honours list, or whether that be in non-playing areas - teaching classes, encouraging beginners and less experienced players, looking after our downstairs rental, preparing applications for grants, providing jams, pickles etc. for sale (thank you Susan Kay), donating books to the library, ordering kitchen supplies, catering for tournaments and social days, volunteering kitchen time on these days, laundering tablecloths and tea towels, and other small but significant ways that contribute to the happy situation of NSBC.

Over the last twelve months the Club has seen a number of significant changes. In April the full introduction of bidding boxes after several months of trialling. Despite the initial apprehension of a number of players, it was a smooth transition and bidding boxes are now "old hat". Also in April, we changed to a different scoring system on the tablets. This too is now well embedded to the satisfaction of players and directors alike. A more recent addition is a new and more prominently displayed timer clock which assists directors in dissuading slow play.

In February we ran the first of the Teams events, re-introduced after an absence of 7 years. Many members had little or no experience of playing Teams but embraced the format enthusiastically - 10 teams for both the Tuesday and Friday series. The feedback has been very positive and it is highly likely Teams events will be included in next year's programme, possibly as 3 session series rather than the 2

sessions this year, and also possibly more than one series over the year. The topic of the future of Teams is due for discussion at the AGM.

Earlier I referred to the healthy state of the Club's membership. It remains steady at over 300, despite the inevitable loss or resignation of members. I acknowledge the deaths in the past 12 months of Philippa Lowe (November), Ian Handricks (July) and just recently of Trish Moore, who was President of the Club 2014-16. That the number of members remains steadily high is due almost entirely to the influx of new members joining from the beginners' course.

Here I want to acknowledge the tremendous work of Douglas Russell in teaching the beginners' course, and the organisation of these courses (including the Improvers' course and Supervised play) by Heather Richards and Lizzy Roe and their willing team of assistants who give their time on a Tuesday evening up to 30 times a year! This year a new initiative in this area was the introduction by Christine Wilson and Heather Richards, assisted by 3 or 4 more experienced players, of a 4-week course they called "Support for New Players". The programme was limited to 20 players and was very well received. There is a possibility it will be expanded and extended next year.

Yet, despite the healthy state of our membership, it remains a mystery and a worry that table numbers have declined noticeably for our two major competitive days - Tuesday and Friday. On the other hand, table numbers for the Monday day and Thursday evening sessions have increased and the Thursday morning session, once in danger of extinction, now attracts a regular average of 6 tables. It is very pleasing to note that Thursday morning is attracting a number of players from the Monday and Wednesday sessions. I would encourage more of you to follow in their footsteps. Small and friendly, room for more and great for your bridge!

Our clubrooms are nearly 50 years old and, as owners of aging properties will appreciate, in need of ongoing maintenance. This year we have, amongst minor repairs, replaced the two leaking skylights in the kitchen, had the council redesign the stormwater drain at the front entrance to be more pedestrian and vehicular friendly, installed new electric sockets in the office, including timers on the recharging tablets, repaired a leak in the water supply, and repaired another section of leaking roof. This latter was symptomatic of a greater issue - we need to replace the entire roof in the next 12 months. The matter is in hand. Look out your hard hats!

I have a plea in the interests of the Club's future. And this plea is to those members, particularly younger members, who might consider becoming a director and/or scorer. As you will appreciate, without a director no bridge can be played. Our current team of directors is about to be significantly reduced and next year we will have to call on the services of a director from outside the Club to fill in the gaps. While the director can score normal Club sessions, when it comes to tournaments a separate scorer is also required. Currently for our three tournaments we engage a scorer from outside the Club. It would be great if we could have a scorer from within the ranks of our own membership.

Both Gillian Trotman and Wayne Benefield will not be available to direct next year. I acknowledge the contribution both have made in the directing field. I want to thank Wayne in particular for his 14 years' service to the Club. In addition to directing Wayne has been involved in keeping a record of session winners, trophy winners, grand slams and 70+%, scored our tournaments, and always been willing to share his extensive knowledge of the game and his comprehensive understanding of the Compass system. Thank you, Wayne.

Our two tournaments this year have attracted capacity fields of 32 pairs. At the Open Tournament in April, players of International and National standard were present, so it was a great feather in the Club's cap that the winners were our own Christine Wilson and Douglas Russell. At the Restricted Tournament in July more than half of the pairs included an open player.

Last November we introduced a new competition, the Puriri Trophy, for Thursday night players who previously had no prizes to compete for. This competition, played over three consecutive sessions, parallels those played by the Monday (Jubilee Trophy) and Wednesday (Norah Hamblyn Trophy) sessions.

And now a word for our sponsors. NSBC is indeed fortunate to retain the support of a number of sponsors in this difficult economic climate. Although we lost a couple of sponsors this year, we did gain a new one - Move By Design. The sponsors' financial support of our Club is greatly appreciated and members can show this by supporting their enterprises. Our sponsors this year are Shore Travel, The Poynton, William Sanders Village, Lady Allum Village, Northbridge, Simply Fresh, Move By Design.



In conclusion, I wish to acknowledge the huge debt the Club in general, and this President in particular, owes to your Committee.

Jill Torrie, Treasurer for the past year, stepped into the role with great willingness and her expertise has greatly improved our financial operations. She will not be continuing in the near future but is already working to ensure the smooth passing of the baton to her successor.

Jenny Hemmings and Norman Moritz, Committee members for the past two years, have carried out their areas of responsibility with great diligence. Jenny has streamlined the catering and kitchen duties for our tournaments and social days. Norman has overseen the maintenance and repair of the Club's facilities. Norman is returning to the Committee for the coming year but Jenny will not.

Mike McLaughlin has served 3 years on the Committee and will be returning for the coming year. IT guru, keeper of the Compa\$\$ purse, programmer, Communications Manager, seeker of funding, writer of the new Club constitution, tablet manager and many other minor roles, Mike has given long hours of his time to the benefit of the Club.

Christine Wilson, Vice President, Tournament Secretary and Minutes Secretary for all of my 3 years in office (and before) will be returning to office. Her deep knowledge of the game, her expertise as a player and her many contacts in the NZ bridge community are all most valuable assets that NSBC is indeed fortunate to retain.

Heather Richards. The word "Secretary" does not do justice to the many ways Heather contributes to our Club. Multi-tasker par excellence, her many roles are too many to enumerate but I mention two in particular: Membership Secretary was

a position previously occupied outside the Committee but Heather incorporated it into her workload. It entails hours of work in its own right. In addition, Heather is Douglas's right hand in the organisation of the courses for beginners and improvers, and for supervised play.

Heather, I applaud your tireless service to NSBC. We are indeed fortunate to retain your services for another year.

Finally, I want to express my gratitude to all members for the privilege of being your President.

May all your slams be grand.

Richard