

## **ADDENDUM TO OCTOBER 2024 COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES:**

### **Unsupervised / Unscored / Unstructured Bridge Sessions**

#### **Introduction:**

The committee received a terse email, from Robyn Davis, in respect of their decision to cease sessions on Thursday morning. Ms Davis also sent letters to NZ Bridge. The committee were not copied into the NZ Bridge emails. Although these emails were sent to several members' email addresses, the committee were not made aware of them until one month later. At that point, a heavily edited version was provided to the committee. It seems that this correspondence had then been discussed by the NZ Bridge Board. The Regional Committee Chair has also informed us that this was discussed with her at Congress. Given the misinformation circulating in respect of committee decisions and NZ Bridge's role/ support in this matter, full details are included in these minutes. Note that Ms Davis has combined the issues of Thursday morning and proposed Monday morning sessions in her correspondence with NZ Bridge.

#### **Events:**

##### **Motion to the Orewa Bridge Club 2024 AGM:**

To grant access to the Orewa Bridge Clubrooms on Monday mornings for the purpose of playing non-competitive Bridge.

All requests to the committee have related to a group of people wanting to use the club rooms for unsupervised, unscored bridge. The committee first denied a request in June 2024. The request now relates to 2 sessions: Monday and Thursday mornings.

This issue has been ongoing for some months despite the decision already having been communicated and the unanimous denial, by members, of the associated AGM motion. In addition, the committee received correspondence from a senior club member citing an email exchange she had seen; this suggested that NZ Bridge supported the formation of a group, as put forward in previous requests, and the AGM motion. The committee had not seen such supportive correspondence; however, they were presented with 2 versions of an email exchange with NZ Bridge. These had been forwarded to personal email addresses rather than the OBC address used by Ms Davis for this latest email in which she insists on a detailed response as to the denial of unsupervised sessions.

At the AGM, Janice Gillam spoke to the motion brought by the beginners for unsupervised non-competitive play, explained that this was only permitted, under Section E of the NZ Bridge Rule Book, as part of training, and that she would be exploring that option as part of the OBC development strategy. It seems that following the denial of the AGM motion on 21<sup>st</sup> September, Ms Davis wrote to NZ Bridge, on 23<sup>rd</sup>, asking for permission for Orewa Bridge Club (OBC) to set up a new learning group for 2 sessions a week, "rebranding" the sessions as development required to bridge the gap between the formal lessons and club play. NZ Bridge replied positively, saying that most clubs already do this and citing the

As self-starters, we are happy to organise ourselves & would not intend to put added pressure on the Committee for support.

We would, as members of the Orewa Bridge Club, prefer to play in our Clubrooms rather than continue to hire an outside facility.

developmental outline that is already in place at Orewa. NZ Bridge were not made aware that Orewa Bridge Club already follows all those practices, and more.



For the benefit of new committee members, and because Ms. Davis' email demanded full detail as to who by, how, and, why the decision was made to cease the Thursday sessions, the full history as to how the current unstructured Thursday session evolved was explained.

Historically OBC have offered 8-10 weeks transitional sessions after the 11 formal NZ Bridge lessons. These sessions were scored using travellers and helped 'transition' our learners to Tuesday night duplicates then to club play. These structured sessions 'disappeared' and were replaced by revision sessions outside of the club. On hearing of this, the committee brought them in house, however, the format had then evolved to a non-competitive, unscored session.

Experienced members have since invested substantial amounts of time, and worked hard to provide assisted card play at these sessions, since June. These were never permanent sessions. They were part of the pathway to club sessions. They ceased at the end of October. Since then, we have been pleased to welcome more junior members to regular sessions as expected.

The new committee voted unanimously to deny permanent unstructured, and unscored sessions. These are not considered developmental. Thursday mornings will be used for developmental play in the future, again on a transitional basis. It is also planned to offer development for our wider junior / intermediate population.

## Summary

The committee is saddened that behaviours of a few individuals have escalated a legitimate request, that was declined, into a major issue. Suggestions are welcomed; however, decisions are made in the context of many wider factors. They are not made lightly.

The behaviours exhibited at the AGM and manipulated / edited email exchanges with NZ Bridge were discussed and deemed unacceptable. The point was made that if NZ Bridge were genuinely supportive of the proposal made at the AGM for unsupervised / unstructured play then there would be no requirement to edit the emails and that they would have been immediately shared with the committee.

Aggressive and abusive language is not tolerated at our club, as detailed on our table cards. This applies to our AGM and sessions of play.

Members are reminded that the elected committee makes club decisions on their behalf and that only elected officers speak on behalf of Orewa Bridge Club.

These issues have highlighted the need for more specific explanation of expected behaviour and reminders as to governance processes. Much of this will feed into the

strategy work started by Paul Baldwin last year and changes will be made to our constitution to be more explicit in this respect.

The committee must be consulted / agreement should be sought in respect of any changes re training and development. A new learning and development sub-committee has been established to prevent ad hoc changes being made to the development plan, and to make recommendations as to development content / methodology. The sub-committee will look at development for all members, i.e. including our Junior / Intermediate players. Janice Gillam was asked to investigate and prepare letters to Ms Davis and club members that had been shown, or made privy to, the manipulated and edited email exchanges with NZ Bridge. The aim is for a final and consistent message to be communicated to members so that all of us can concentrate on playing competitive bridge in the friendly and social environment that we have enjoyed and expect.