**PRESIDENT’S REPORT 2019**

Kia Ora. 2019 has been another full and interesting year at the bridge club.

Improver lessons started in February, with Clare and Kate once again giving up their valuable time to teach us many new ideas, to help us all with our bridge.

In March we had a very enjoyable afternoon at Sue and Tim Aitken’s home for bridge in the garden. Thank you both for lending us your garden, and for all the preparation tasks, and the work on the day. We are very fortunate to be able to go back there next year for 2020’s bridge in the gardens. If you missed it this year, don’t miss out next year!

Beginner lessons also started in March with Kim and Karen initiating another bunch of newbies into the intricacies of our beautiful game.

We would like to acknowledge these teaching contributions to our club. Clare and Kate ensure that our existing club members remain challenged and interested in their bridge, and Kim and Karen ensure that we have new members to keep our club growing and vibrant. We would also like to acknowledge and thank Jane who has continued her work with ESOL students this year on a Friday morning. Clare, Kate, Kim and Karen can you please come forward.

In March we continued our rivalry with Te Awamutu in our battle for the Fairlands shield. As you can see, we retained it and we look forward to hosting the occasion again next year.

Our junior tournament was once again a successful event, where we were once again complimented on our hospitality and our food. It was lovely to see Hennie and Chris come second at this event.

In July Clare ran a Junior restricted fun afternoon, which is always enjoyed and appreciated by Junior players.

August of course is our sixes month. The seventh year of this event. This was well supported, with 42 teams taking part from all over the North island. The costumes were a highlight, along with the fact that it was Cambridge’s first time with a team in the top six, The deck raters, Michael and Don, Karen and Margaret, Hennie and Chris.

There are many people to thank for the sixes. Clare, Deb and Bill, Michael, Jan, Di, Vanessa, the set-up crew and pack up crew, the kitchen crew and the caddies. Again, a huge thank you to club members who contributed generously with the food and raffles. Not only to this tournament but to all our tournaments. This helps us to subsidize our dinner tonight.

We also had our annual Boat race, with the Tauranga bridge club in August on Wednesday nights. A close competition resulted in a small win to Tauranga. Next year may be our year!

Our intermediate tournament was in October, and was well supported and successful as was the NZ wide pairs in November.

The newest innovation for our club this year, was our introduction to Hello club, presented to us by Michael and then the details worked out by Michael, Kevin, Vicki and Liz. I love coming to bridge with nothing in my hand, knowing that my table money will be taken out of my account. This year your next year’s subs can also be paid by Hello club. We look forward to 2020 and finding out what else Hello club can do for us.

Clare and Jane have both supported our club on the NZ Bridge board again this year as have Michael, Jan, and Anna on the Waikato regional committee. We thank them for all they do.

Our wonderful club captain Clare initiated two new innovations this year, reviewing interesting boards from the Monday night progressive pairs, and also giving tips on a Wednesday night before the bridge session, after the newbies have entered the club. I know the members who participated in these sessions were very grateful and found them informative and helpful.

Our Monday Day Session continued to be managed by Inge, and has continued to grow in numbers. We recognize that this is due to her dedication to this day. Thank you, Inge. We look forward to this session being recognized next year with all the benefits of our other sessions.

Our Friday session is still a well-supported and well-liked session for many. Ayako, Doug, Melanie and Vicki give of their time and knowledge to help others to practice their bridge.

To all who deal cards, score and direct, the club can’t survive without you! To Michael, Karen, Liz and Allison who organize the rosters, and to all who deal, direct or score and sometimes do all three, we thank you. Allison, Anna, Ayako, Barb, Bill, Bob, Calum, Carol, Christine, Clare, Don, Jan, Jenny, Karen, Kevin, Kim, Liz, Margreet, Michael and Vicki.

Our partnership stewards do a big job sourcing partners and keeping track of who may be available when you are short of a partner. A big thank you to Inge, Di, Margaret Oliver and Beth. Margaret retires this year as Partnership steward after doing the job since 2011. 9 years! A special thank you Margaret.

There are many people who help our club in many ways. From those of you who help prepare for a session, help in the kitchen, run the vacuum around when necessary, and generally do something when you see it needs doing. Thank you. We all can help in many different ways, but importantly it is when we remember to be considerate, and understanding of the players we are playing with and against, that we contribute to the smooth running of our club. There is a wide range of abilities and experience within our membership and it is vital that we all enjoy our session of bridge. We want to go away from our bridge table remembering the companionship and support of fellow members. Many lifelong friends have been made at our club.

To all of you who have had success in a series at the club, or in tournaments, well done. While bridge is a competitive game, we also find success in the enjoyment of competing and in small milestones as we learn something new or enjoy the interaction with other members.

Thank you to our Almoner Di who makes and sends cards for us.

To Eunice, our Bridgemate for Waikato bays, thank you for keeping our website up to date and the publicity you do for our club.

To Gail who maintains our garden and Malcolm who is our honorary auditor.

To Ayako who was the N Z bridge volunteer of the month in October. She does so much in the club before you even know it needs doing

To all our committee who work together as a team and also perform their individual responsibilities so well.

Allison as vice president is always there to assist and took charge in July when I was away. This was much appreciated and done willingly and ably.

Jenny is bringing to an end an amazing 3 years as secretary. We will miss her input and her attention to detail. I feel that I have been incredibly fortunate to work with Jenny and have the advantage of her common sense and her good advice. She is also so reliable at completing all her secretarial tasks on time and efficiently.

Kevin who continues to manage our finances so well and organizes Hello club for us. Kevin displays great dedication to his job and uses the specialist knowledge he has, for all of our benefits.

Liz for her computer work and her work on the program book. Her job this year has been extensive and time consuming.

We are losing Peter who has done a fantastic job of keeping our building up to scratch. Love the new water cooler Peter. You will be missed as you have always been so prompt at fixing any problem we have had and so reliable to work with. Thank you!

Sue McKenzie our tournament secretary. Who also helps Louise (our kitchen organizer extraordinaire) and Lesley with the catering for events and keeps the kitchen and kitchen supplies up to date. We are sad to lose Lesley from the committee. Thank you, Lesley, for all you have done.

Helen who supervises our cleaner and with Callum helps in the many other ways that are asked of them. Helen has also done a lot of work with Clare organizing our prizegiving.

Mary who has looked after our library books and sponsors and has prepared the beautiful meal that you will be having tonight.

Vicki, our past president, has been a mentor to me, and when Allison and I were away in June, she took her old role back, leading and working hard, especially with the preparations for the sixes. She also supports Liz with the computer work and with the program book. It is time for Vicki to go off the committee after 8 years, but she is returning to her first original job as computer manager. Amazing years of service.

Michael has joined us on the playing committee and has continued to support and assist with computer and other duties when required. It is fantastic that Michael has just represented Waikato bays at the IP trials in Christchurch.

Many thanks to you all. It has been a pleasure to work with you all this year.

I would also like to acknowledge the partners who don’t play bridge, but support us at the club, and help with many bridge events.

Now last but certainly not least, Clare our Club Captain. After 7 years of being our club captain she is finally going to retire some of her role. She is going to keep on some of her teaching duties, and her outside the club roles, which we are grateful for. We know she will be a mentor to our new club captain next year. To sum up Clare’s contributions to our club would take more than a few sentences. It would take a book. Clare is passionate about bridge, our club and ensuring that all members have a happy experience here.

Last year Vicki said about Clare. “You give of your time and energy freely. You have a keen eye for detail with an amazing ability to steer us through any difficult situation and provide a rational and reasoned response.”

I will add that Clare is a giver not a taker. She is the best bridge role model you could ever have. We are so glad that you Clare will be still taking an active role in the club next year and we can’t thank her enough for all she has done over the last 7 years. Everyone here would be able to tell a story about how Clare has touched their life, and how she’s helped them. Clare we would like to honor you with a life membership, so that you will never leave us!

Thank you all for helping me, during my first year as President. I have enjoyed the challenge and look forward to working and interacting with you all next year. Hope you have a healthy and happy Christmas and travel safely throughout the holiday period.