

NORTH EASTERN BRIDGE ASSOCIATION CONSTITUTION

(To be Approved at 2011 AGM)

1. NAME

The Association shall be called 'THE NORTH EASTERN BRIDGE ASSOCIATION' (NEBA)

2. OBJECTS

The aims and objectives of NEBA shall be:

- 2.1. To organise duplicate contract bridge matches and competitions and associated social gatherings in Northumberland, Tyne & Wear, County Durham, Tees Valley and that part of North Yorkshire delegated by the Yorkshire Bridge Association to remain part of NEBA.
 - 2.2. To co-operate with similar Associations for the advancement of the game.
 - 2.3. To support the activities of the English Bridge Union Ltd. (EBU) and to be a constituent member of it and operate within its current Bye-Laws, Rules and Policies.
 - 2.4. To employ the funds of NEBA in such a manner as its Council may deem to be in the best interests of the game.
-

3. MANAGEMENT

- 3.1. The affairs of NEBA shall be vested in a Council which shall comprise the Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary, Treasurer, and Chief Tournament Secretary, all of whom shall be elected at the Annual General Meeting. The Chief Tournament Director, Congress Secretary, Tournament Secretaries, County Youth Officer, and Team Selectors shall be permanently co-opted to the Council, together with one representative from each Club affiliated to NEBA who shall be elected by the Club which they are representing. Members co-opted to the Council shall be entitled to vote at its meetings.
- 3.2. The day to day management of NEBA shall be deputed to an Executive Committee consisting of the Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary, Treasurer, Chief Tournament Secretary, Chief Tournament Director and Congress Secretary. This Executive Committee shall meet not less than three times in each year and may co-opt any NEBA member to its number. Any members co-opted to the Committee shall be entitled to vote at its meetings. A quorum shall be three members.
- 3.3. The Executive Committee shall from time to time set up or disband such Sub-Committees as are thought proper, necessary or desirable for the conduct of the business of NEBA and shall delegate to such Sub-Committees such power and authority as may be considered desirable for the purpose for which they are formed. The terms of reference of such Sub-Committees should be laid down in the Minute of Appointment. The decisions of any such Sub-Committees shall be subject to the approval of the Executive Committee.
- 3.4. The Council may from time to time deem it necessary and have the power to co-opt any person to assist in the furtherance of NEBA, such persons to have such voting rights as the Council shall determine.
- 3.5. Any vacancy amongst the officers may be filled by the Council until the next Annual General Meeting and any vacancy in the Club representatives shall be filled by that Club.
- 3.6. A Club representative who is absent from any Council meeting may send a substitute who may speak or vote in his/her place.
- 3.7. The quorum for a Council meeting shall be eight..
- 3.8. An Honorary Auditor shall be elected at the Annual General Meeting to audit NEBA accounts.
- 3.9. Nominations for Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary, Chief Tournament Secretary and Treasurer for the ensuing year must be in writing and in the hands of the Secretary not later than 21 days before

the Annual General Meeting, but in the absence of such written nominations verbal nominations may be accepted at the meeting.

3.10. The Chairman may not serve in that capacity for more than 3 successive years.

3.11. The Council shall appoint shareholders to the EBU Shareholders in accordance with NEBA's entitlement as defined by the Bye-Laws of the EBU and such shareholders shall be co-opted to the Council, if not otherwise a member of the Council, with full voting rights.

3.12. The Council may appoint such person or persons to be Honorary President(s) or Honorary Vice-President(s) of NEBA as it shall determine who shall hold office until death or resignation or until removed from office by a resolution of the Council.

3.13. In the event of parity of voting at any meeting of the NEBA Council or any Committee or Sub-Committee or at any General Meeting, the Chairman shall have a second or casting vote.

3.14. The Council will meet on not less than two occasions during each year for the purposes of determining NEBA policy and approving or disapproving so far as is necessary the actions of the Executive Committee.

4. GENERAL MEETINGS

4.1 Notice of the Annual General Meeting shall be given to members at least 21 days prior to the date of the meeting unless the date shall have been published in the annual Programme, and the time, place and business notified to the Clubs which are affiliated to NEBA. This information shall also be prominently displayed on the NEBA website at least 21 days prior to the date of the meeting.

4.2. Any matters or substantive issues that a member wants raised at the Annual General Meeting must be sent to the Secretary no later than 21 days before the date of the Annual General Meeting so that they can be placed on the agenda for the meeting.

4.3. Only members of NEBA shall have the right to vote at General Meetings.

4.4. The Annual General Meeting shall be held by May 31st in any year or as otherwise determined by Council.

4.5. A statement of Accounts, duly audited up to the 31st March, shall be submitted by the Treasurer for the Annual General Meeting.

4.6. An Extraordinary General Meeting of Members must be called upon the instruction of the Council, or upon the receipt by the Secretary of a written requisition signed by at least 25 members, and stating the nature of the business to be discussed. In the latter case, the Extraordinary General Meeting must be held not less than 21 days and not more than 28 days after the receipt of the written requisition by the Secretary. Notice of the Extraordinary General Meeting shall be given to affiliated Clubs not less than 14 days before agreed meeting.

4.7. A quorum for a General Meeting shall be 30 members.

5. MEMBERSHIP

5.1. All members of NEBA must be Player Members of the EBU.

5.2. A Player Member of the EBU shall become a NEBA member when their primary allegiance to NEBA is recorded with the EBU.

5.3. A Player Member of the EBU whose primary allegiance is with another Association, or does not have primary allegiance to any Association, can become a NEBA member by meeting its terms and conditions in force at the time of the request for membership.

5.4. The Membership Year shall run for the twelve month period from 1st April to 31st March.

5.5. A NEBA member becomes a paid up member in that Membership Year through payments of any NEBA Pay to Play county component when participating in events at a NEBA affiliated Duplicate Bridge Club.

5.6. If a NEBA member is within a membership category that has a nil Pay to Play county component for a Membership Year, then that member shall automatically become a paid up NEBA member for that Membership Year.

5.7. Only NEBA members may vote at its Annual General Meeting and participate in its main competitions in that Membership Year.

5.8. The NEBA membership categories shall be as follows:

5.8.1. Ordinary Member – a Player Member of the EBU who has their primary allegiance recorded with NEBA.

5.8.2. Dual Member – a Player Member of the EBU who does not have their primary allegiance recorded with NEBA.

5.8.3. Direct Member – a Direct Player Member of the EBU who does not have primary allegiance to any other Association.

5.8.4. Life Member – the NEBA Council may honour long standing members for their service by electing them to life membership of NEBA. A Life Member of NEBA shall automatically become a paid up member of NEBA for each Membership Year whilst they remain a Playing Member of the EBU. In addition, a NEBA Life Member shall not be required to pay the entrance fee to any of its county competitions.

6. AFFILIATED CLUBS

6.1. Any bridge playing organisation in the area covered by NEBA may become affiliated to NEBA, subject to the approval of the NEBA Council, which shall not be unreasonably withheld and all such clubs shall be affiliated to the EBU.

6.2. Affiliated Clubs are obliged to abide by the rulings and decisions of the Council in order to retain affiliation privileges, provided that such rulings are within the terms of the EBU Bye-Laws.

6.3. Any affiliated Club is responsible for paying any affiliation fees required by the EBU direct to the EBU, but which will not include any annual fee, if charged, by NEBA.

6.4. NEBA shall not be responsible for the liabilities of affiliated Clubs.

7. CONDUCT OF MEMBERS

7.1. Each member of NEBA shall be required in connection with the game of Duplicate Aggregate and Contract Bridge, to conform to the standards of fair play, courtesy and personal deportment prescribed by the Bye Laws and regulations for the time being of the EBU.

7.2. NEBA shall have the powers and the procedures for the enforcement of the requirement in clause 7.1. They are set out in the Disciplinary Schedule of the Constitution, and shall stand as part of the Constitution and be subject to the same provisions of the Constitution for its amendment.

8. COMPETITIONS

In determining conditions for Competitions, the Council shall be empowered to restrict entry to NEBA members and to authorise the charging of higher fees to non-members if otherwise eligible to play.

9. DISSOLUTION OF NEBA

NEBA can be dissolved at a General Meeting, provided at least two-thirds of the NEBA members present vote positively for its dissolution. The assets of NEBA shall then be split amongst other Bridge Organisations or donated to a charity or charities as decided by those present at the meeting.

10. ALTERATION OF THIS CONSTITUTION

10.1. The NEBA Constitution shall be amended only at an Annual General Meeting of members or at an Extraordinary General Meeting called for the purpose.

10.2. Particulars of proposed alterations to the Constitution shall be enclosed in the Notice of the General Meeting.

10.3. Any alterations to the Constitution will be made only if supported by at least two thirds of those present and entitled to vote.

SCHEDULE OF DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES

1. Requirements of the Schedule

This Schedule is referred to under clause 7.2 of the Constitution and prescribes the powers and procedures for enforcement. It will comply with and follows the EBU disciplinary procedures and any variations thereof that are made from time to time. NEBA shall act through its Conduct and Disciplinary Sub-Committees for the enforcement of standards prescribed in clause 7.1 of the Constitution. NEBA shall have additional powers as set out in the clauses below.

2. Receipt of allegation

Any person making a complaint against one or more members of NEBA, under the terms of clause 7 of the Constitution, must do so in writing to the NEBA Secretary or Chairman.

3. Conduct Sub-Committee

The NEBA Executive Committee shall appoint its Conduct Sub-Committee through its powers to appoint sub-committees under clause 3.3 of the Constitution. The Conduct Sub-Committee shall be responsible for investigating complaints against NEBA members and to determine whether a Disciplinary Offence should be referred to the NEBA's Disciplinary committee.

The Conduct Sub-Committee shall consist of no fewer than three NEBA members and no more than five. A quorum for any meeting shall be three of its members. It shall act by simple majority vote and its appointed chairman, or whomsoever in his absence the Conduct Sub-Committee shall select to chair a meeting, shall have a second, or casting vote in the event that there is parity of voting.

4. Disciplinary Sub-Committee

The NEBA Executive Committee shall appoint the Disciplinary Sub-Committee through its powers to appoint sub-committees under clause 3.3 of the Constitution. The Disciplinary Sub-Committee shall, determine sanctions for offences admitted by the defendant, hear charges of the offences and determine whether those charges are proved and if proved, to determine the sanction imposed.

The Disciplinary Sub-Committee shall consist of no fewer than three NEBA members and no more than five. At least three of its members must be present when it makes a decision to uphold a complaint and impose sanctions on the offending members. It shall act by simple majority vote and its appointed chairman, or whomsoever in his absence the Disciplinary Sub-Committee shall

select to chair a meeting, shall have a second, or casting vote in the event that there is parity of voting.

5. Conflicts of Interest and Independence of the Conduct and Disciplinary Sub-Committees

Any member of either the Conduct or Disciplinary Sub-Committee who is in any way personally involved in the allegations within a complaint will be disqualified from participating in either Committee's handling of the complaint.

A NEBA member cannot be a member of both the Conduct and Disciplinary Sub-Committees.

6. The Complaints Process

6.1. Notice of Meetings

Where a written complaint is made, or a matter otherwise comes to the attention of the Conduct Sub-Committee, it shall first consider whether such complaint or matter falls within the scope of the Disciplinary Rules and whether further action is warranted. If it does the Conduct Sub-Committee secretary shall first write to the Defendant, seeking the Defendant's comments on the substance of the complaint or matter that has been raised. The Conduct Sub-Committee shall also be entitled to make such further investigations and enquiries as it in its absolute discretion considers appropriate. The Conduct Sub-Committee shall also be entitled to seek advice both from within NEBA and from the EBU Laws and ethics Committee, and to obtain external legal advice.

6.2. Complaint not justified

If the Conduct Committee decides that the complaint is not justified, all parties shall be notified and the matters ended.

6.3. Complaint justified

If the Conduct Sub-Committee decides that the complaint is justified, it may, in its absolute discretion, offer a verbal caution to the offending member, which if accepted ends the matter.

If the Defendant does not accept the verbal caution, or the Conduct Sub-Committee decides a verbal caution is inappropriate, the Conduct Sub-Committee shall refer the case to a hearing by the Disciplinary Sub-Committee. The Defendant shall be notified, in writing, within two weeks of this decision and of his right to make a written submission to the Disciplinary Sub-Committee and to attend the hearing. The Defendant shall have the right to be represented by legal counsel of his choice or may be accompanied by a person to speak on his behalf. The Disciplinary Sub-Committee shall give at least two weeks' notice of the hearing to the Defendant.

6.4. Disciplinary Sub-Committee's Sanctions

If after the hearing the complaint is upheld, the Disciplinary Sub-Committee may in its absolute discretion:

6.4.1. Give a written reprimand to the offending member(s), or

6.4.2. Suspend the offending member(s) from all or some of the competitions sponsored or licensed by NEBA for such period as it shall determine.

If the complaint is against a member of the NEBA Council then in addition to any other sanctions applied, the Disciplinary Sub-Committee shall have the power to suspend such member from the NEBA's Council and any of its sub committees for such a period that it shall determine.

Any sanctions imposed by the Disciplinary Sub-Committee must be communicated to the offending member in writing within twenty one days of the hearing.

6.5. Appeal

Each member found guilty of a Disciplinary Offence by the Disciplinary Committee has the right to appeal to the EBU Laws and Ethics Committee. Appeals must be in writing and lodged with the Secretary of the EBU Laws and Ethics Committee within twenty one days of the written communication of the Disciplinary Committee's decision to the offending member.

6.6. Referral to the EBU Laws & Ethics Committee

At any time, the Disciplinary Sub-Committee may refer a complaint to the EBU Laws & Ethics Committee for its consideration. In doing so, the Disciplinary Sub-Committee shall have fully discharged its responsibilities under this Schedule.

7. Definitions

The terms Disciplinary Rules and Disciplinary Offence have the meaning set out by the Bye Laws of the EBU.
