

THE CONSTITUTION OF THE BEDFORDSHIRE BRIDGE ASSOCIATION

1 TITLE AND CONSTITUENT MEMBERSHIP

- 1.1 Bedfordshire Bridge Association is an Association as defined in the Bye Laws of the English Bridge Union Ltd and shall be referred to as 'the Association' throughout this Constitution.
- 1.2 The Association is a Constituent Member of the English Bridge Union Ltd. It shall abide by its Bye Laws, Rules and Policies. Hereinafter the English Bridge Union Ltd shall be referred to as 'the EBU'.

2 OBJECTS OF THE ASSOCIATION

- 2.1 To promote the playing and teaching of Duplicate Bridge throughout the County of Bedfordshire and its environs, including Milton Keynes, and to encourage participation in inter-club, inter-county and national competitions.
- 2.2 To employ the funds of the Association in the best interests of the game of Duplicate Bridge, having regard to the fact that the Association is a non-profit making body.

3 MANAGEMENT OF THE ASSOCIATION

- 3.1 The management of the affairs of the Association shall be vested in the following Officers:

- (a) Chairman
- (b) Vice-Chairman
- (c) Secretary
- (d) Treasurer

and not more than five other members of the Association, who together will form the Management Committee. Except that, if one person fulfils the duties of two Officers, there shall be an additional "other member".

- 3.2 All Officers and other Management Committee members must be elected annually at the Annual General Meeting by a simple majority of the paid up members of the Association present at the AGM.
- 3.3 The Management Committee shall meet from time to time as it deems fit, but not fewer than three times within a calendar year. The Chairman, or in his absence, a deputy elected at the meeting, shall chair meetings of the Management Committee. A quorum shall consist of three members. In the event of a tie on votes cast, the chairman of the meeting shall have a second or casting vote.
- 3.4 The Management Committee shall have the power to co-opt and to fill any casual vacancies.
- 3.5 The Management Committee may from time to time appoint and disband sub-committees as may be deemed necessary, and may delegate to them such powers or duties as may be deemed to be expedient. Such sub-committees shall conduct their business as directed by the Management Committee.
- 3.6 The Management Committee shall appoint members to a joint sub-committee of the Association and the County Association of Northamptonshire to be known as the Bedford Congress Committee and whose constitution has been approved and any alteration to it shall be approved by the aforementioned County Associations.
- 3.7 The Management Committee is responsible for the control of all monies and assets of the Association, and for presentation of a report and statement of accounts duly audited, to

each Annual General Meeting. The signatures of two authorised members of the Management Committee shall be required for the payment of any monies out of the Association.

- 3.8 A President shall be elected at the Annual General Meeting and shall serve for a period of three years. The President shall be entitled to attend, but not vote at, meetings of the Management Committee.
- 3.9 EBU Shareholder representation will be fulfilled through the Management Committee. The designated representative[s] name and contact details will be publicised to members and advised formally to the EBU secretariat.

4 MEMBERSHIP

- 4.1 All members of the Association must be Player Members of the EBU.
- 4.2 A Player Member of the EBU shall become a member of the Association when their primary allegiance to the Association is recorded with the EBU and they are in good standing with the Association.
- 4.3 The Association will collect membership fees through the Association P2P county component which is collected on behalf of the Association by the EBU from clubs affiliated to the Association. The Association Pay to Play County component for the Membership Year starting in the following 1 April, shall be determined by a simple majority of the members present at the preceding Annual General Meeting.
- 4.4 Player Members of the EBU who are not members of a club affiliated to the Association may become Direct Members of the Association upon payment of an annual subscription.
- 4.5 A Player Member of the EBU whose primary allegiance is with another Association, but who is in good standing with this Association, can become a dual member of this Association by payment of an annual subscription. Such a dual member shall only have the right to participate in certain events organised by the Association.
- 4.6 The annual subscription payable by Dual Members and Direct Members will be determined by the Management Committee.
- 4.7 The Membership Year shall run for the twelve month period from 1st April to 31st March.

5 HONORARY MEMBERS

- 5.1 In recognition of their service to the Association and on the recommendation of the Management Committee, Honorary members may be elected at any General Meeting of the Association. Honorary members may be elected for life or for such other period as a General Meeting shall deem expedient, and will automatically become a paid-up member of the Association for each Membership Year whilst they remain a Playing Member of the EBU. An Honorary Member shall be given free entry to all county competitions, except those run under a special licence.

6 MEETING OF THE ASSOCIATION MEMBERS

- 6.1 There shall be an Annual General Meeting (AGM) to be held on or after 1st May and before the 31st May of each calendar year.
- 6.2 The venue, date and time of the AGM shall be published at least six weeks before the date of the AGM.
- 6.3 A request for a Special Resolution from an Association member, which shall require a vote of the members at the AGM, must be sent in writing to the Secretary no later than four weeks before the date of the AGM. The request must be supported in writing by two other members of the Association.

- 6.4 The Secretary shall publish all Special Resolutions received for the AGM no later than two weeks before the date of the AGM.
- 6.5 A nomination for an Association member to serve on the Management Committee must be received in writing by the Secretary four weeks before the date of the AGM. The nomination must be proposed and seconded by members of the Association. Members nominated for election must confirm they are willing to stand.
- 6.6 The Secretary shall publish all nominations to serve on the Management Committee no later than two weeks before the AGM.
- 6.7 The President of the Association, if present, will chair the AGM. The following minimum business must be conducted at the AGM:
- approval of the minutes of the previous meeting
 - approval of the accounts for the past financial year
 - appointment of honorary auditor for the coming year
 - election of officers and Management committee members for the coming year

If there are unfilled places on the management committee, the AGM chairman will seek further nominations.

- 6.8 A request for an Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM) by an Association member must be sent in writing to the Secretary together with any Special Resolution(s) which require a vote of the members. The request must be supported in writing by at least twenty members of the Association.
- 6.9 The EGM shall be held no earlier than 28 days and no later than 42 days after the Secretary has received the written request. The Secretary must publish the date, venue and time of the EGM at least three weeks before the date of the EGM.
- 6.10 Only members present at an AGM or EGM are entitled to vote. Any vote at such a meetings which is tied, shall be split by the casting vote of the chairman.
- 6.11 Notice of an AGM shall be sent to each member of the Association in accordance with clause 6.2. Multiple copies of the agenda listing the ordinary and special business to be transacted shall be sent to each affiliated club in accordance with clauses 6.4 and 6.6. A notice convening an EGM together with either the motions or a statement of the matters to be discussed shall be sent to each affiliated club and directly to members who do not belong to affiliated clubs in accordance with clause 6.9. The Association shall also post such notices on the website of the Association.
- 6.12 The quorum for an AGM and EGM shall be thirty members.
- 6.13 The Secretary shall be required to arrange a further EGM, if an AGM or EGM respectively fails to reach a quorum. In both circumstances the additional EGM shall be scheduled to occur within the period of 28 days to 42 days after the aborted AGM or EGM. The Secretary shall publish the date, venue and time of the EGM at least three weeks before the date of the additional EGM.
- 6.14 If the additional EGM once again fails to reach a quorum, the Management Committee shall be able to take any decisions necessary so that it can continue to manage the affairs of the Association.

7 MEMBERS' BEHAVIOUR

- 7.1 Each member of the Association shall be required in connection with the game of Duplicate 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 The Association shall have the powers and the procedures for the enforcement of the requirement in clause 7.1. These are set out in the Schedule of the Constitution, and shall

stand as part of the Constitution and be subject to the same provisions as the Constitution for its amendment.

8 AFFILIATED DUPLICATE BRIDGE CLUB

- 8.1 Any Duplicate Bridge Club affiliated to the EBU may apply to affiliate to the Association. The Association has the right to determine at an Annual General Meeting through a simple majority of its members the annual club affiliation fee to be charged for the twelve month period from the following 1 April.

9 CONSTITUTION AMENDMENTS

- 9.1 Alterations to the Constitution shall be made only at an AGM or EGM through the positive votes of at least two thirds of the members present.

10 DISSOLUTION OF THE ASSOCIATION

- 10.1 The Association can be dissolved at an EGM provided at least two thirds of the total members present on the date of the EGM vote for its dissolution.
- 10.2 If a resolution to dissolve the Association is passed, the Management Committee shall be responsible for winding up the affairs of the Association and shall be empowered to take whatever action may be required to realise the assets of the Association.
- 10.3 If the dissolution has been initiated with a view to amalgamating the Association with another EBU approved County Association any surplus assets and funds shall be transferred to such other Association. In any other case any surplus assets and funds shall be donated to a charity or charities decided by the members attending the dissolution meeting.

11 INTERPRETATION

- 11.1 On all questions of interpretation of the Constitution the decisions of the Management Committee shall be binding until or unless overturned at an AGM or EGM. The Management Committee shall determine any point or matter that is not covered by the Constitution.

12. DEFINITIONS

- 12.1 The terms Association, Constituent Member, Duplicate Bridge and Playing Member have the meanings set out in the Bye Laws of the EBU.

SCHEDULE 1: DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES

1. REQUIREMENTS OF THE SCHEDULE

- 1.1 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. The Association shall act through its Conduct and Disciplinary Committees for the enforcement of standards prescribed in clause 7.1 of the Constitution. The Association shall have additional powers as set out in the clauses below.

2. RECEIPT OF ALLEGATION

- 2.1 Any person making a complaint against one or more members of the Association, under the terms of clause 7.1 of the Constitution, must do so in writing to the Secretary or the Chairman of the Association.

3. CONDUCT COMMITTEE

- 3.1 The Management Committee of the Association shall appoint the Conduct Committee through its powers to appoint sub committees under clause 3.6 of the Constitution. The Conduct Committee shall be responsible for investigating complaints against the Association's members and to determine whether a Disciplinary Offence should be referred to the Association's Disciplinary Committee.
- 3.2 The Conduct Committee shall consist of no fewer than three members of the Association 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 Committee shall select to chair a meeting, shall have a second or casting vote in the event that there is parity voting.

4. DISCIPLINARY COMMITTEE

- 4.1 The Management Committee of the Association shall appoint the Disciplinary Committee through its powers to appoint sub committees under clause 3.6 of the Constitution.
- 4.2 The Disciplinary Committee shall determine sanctions for offences admitted by the defendant, hear charges of offences and determine whether those charges are proved, and if proved, determine the sanction imposed.
- 4.3 The Disciplinary Committee shall consist of no fewer than three members of the Association 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 member. It shall act by simple majority vote and its appointed chairman, or whomsoever in his absence the Disciplinary 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 COMMITTEES

- 5.1 Any member of either the Conduct Committee or Disciplinary 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.
- 5.2 A member of the Association cannot be a member of both the Conduct and Disciplinary 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 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 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 Committee shall also be entitled to make such further investigations and enquiries as it in its absolute discretion considers appropriate.

The Conduct Committee shall also be entitled to seek advice from within the Association 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 matter ended.

6.3 Complaint justified

If the Conduct 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 Committee decides a verbal caution is inappropriate, the Conduct Committee shall refer the case to a hearing by the Disciplinary 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 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 Committee shall give at least two weeks notice of the hearing to the Defendant.

6.4 Disciplinary Committee's Sanctions

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

- (a) Give a written reprimand to the offending member(s), or
- (b) Suspend the offending member(s) from all or some of the competitions sponsored or licensed by the Association for such period as it shall determine.

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

Any sanctions imposed by the Disciplinary 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.

No sanction shall come into effect until the time limit for an appeal has expired. If an appeal is made the sanction will not come into effect until the appeal has been determined, and will be modified or cancelled if that determination so requires.

6.6 Referral to the EBU Laws & Ethics Committee

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

7. DEFINITIONS

- 7.1 The terms Disciplinary Rules and Disciplinary Offence have the meanings set out in the Bye Laws of the EBU.