

MANCHESTER COUNTY BRIDGE ASSOCIATION

CONSTITUTION

1 TITLE AND CONSTITUENT MEMBERSHIP

- 1.1 The Manchester County 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 the Constitution.
- 1.2 The Association is a Constituent Member of the English Bridge Union Ltd. It shall abide with 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 game of Bridge in the County of Manchester and its environs and the encouragement of inter-club, inter-county and national competitions.
- 2.2 To employ the funds of the Association in the best interests of the game of 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 (who acts as the Chairman of the Executive Committee)
 - (b) Vice Chairman
 - (c) Secretary
 - (d) Treasurer
 - (e) Tournament Secretary
 - (f) Membership Secretary
 - (g) League Secretary
 - (h) Green Point Events Secretary
 - (i) Chairman of Selectors
 - (j) Match Secretary
 - (k) Congress Secretary

who together will form the Executive Committee. All such Executive Committee members must be elected annually at the Annual General Meeting by a simple majority of the paid up members of the Association with the exception of the

Chairman of Selectors who is chosen at the first meeting of the Selection Committee after the AGM.

In addition to the above mentioned Officers there shall be elected annually at the Association's AGM a President of the Association.

- 3.2 The Executive Committee shall meet from time to time as it deems fit. A quorum shall consist of six members and, in the event of a tie on votes cast, the Chairman of the meeting shall have the casting vote.
- 3.3 The Executive Committee shall have the power to co-opt and to fill any casual vacancies.
- 3.4 The Executive 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 expedient. Such sub-committees shall conduct their business as directed by the Executive Committee.
- 3.5 There shall also be a Council of the Association membership of which shall include the above-mentioned Executive Officers, The President, any Life Members of the Association, the EBU Shareholders of the Association, the Press & Publicity Officer; the Schools, Youth & Teachers Liaison Officer; the Auditor, the Webmaster and the Selection Committee together with up to two delegates from each affiliated Bridge Club.

The Council shall meet a minimum of twice per year (usually in March and October/November) when it shall receive reports from all Executive Officers and shall consider and if necessary vote on any matters raised by any affiliated clubs.

A special meeting of the Council shall be held on written request to the MCBA Secretary signed by not fewer than 6 members of the Council, stating the purposes for which the said meeting is to be held. At such a meeting, which must be held within 30 days of the receipt of the request, no business shall be conducted except that specified in the notice convening the meeting.

Notice of any meeting of the Council and Agenda shall be sent to all Council members at least 14 days before the meeting.

The Chairman, or, in his/her absence, the Vice-Chairman of the MCBA shall take the chair at meetings of the Council. In their absence, the meeting shall elect a Chairman.

No business shall be transacted at any meeting of the Council unless a quorum of 8 members is present. If the meeting is inquorate then the meeting shall be postponed for not fewer than 14 days and not more than 28 days and then proceed whether quorate or not.

At every Council meeting, except special meetings, the minutes of the preceding meeting and any intervening special meetings shall be read and duly signed by the Chairman.

At any meeting of the Council a resolution shall be decided by a show of hands. The Chairman shall be entitled to vote and have a casting vote.

All members of the Council shall receive minutes of the AGM, of any EGM and of Council meetings.

- 3.6 The Executive Committee is responsible for the control of all monies and assets of the Association. The Treasurer shall be responsible for the collection of all monies due to the Association, payment of all accounts and for keeping the books of account. The Treasurer shall account to the Executive Committee for all financial transactions as and when required, and prepare a report and statement of accounts duly audited, for each Annual General Meeting. The signatures of the Treasurer and one other authorised member of the Executive Committee shall be required on the paperwork for the payment of monies out of the Association.

4 MEMBERSHIP

- 4.1 Individual 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.
- 4.3 A Direct Player Member of the EBU or one whose primary allegiance is with another Association can become a member of the Association by meeting its terms and conditions in force at the time of the request for membership.
- 4.4 A member of the Association must be a paid up member for the relevant Membership Year in order to vote at its Annual General Meeting and to participate in its main competitions within that Membership Year.
- 4.5 The Membership Year shall run for the twelve month period from 1st April to 31st March.
- 4.6 A member of the Association becomes a paid up member through payment of any Association Pay to Play county component when participating in events at an affiliated Bridge Club, and/or through payment of an annual subscription for their Association membership category.

- 4.7 If any Association member has not paid their annual subscription by 31st May then that Association member will not be able to vote at the following AGM as a paid up Association member.
- 4.8 An Association member ceases to be a paid up Association member on 31st May if at that date the Association member has not paid any outstanding annual subscription. That member can subsequently become a paid up Association member on the payment of the current Membership Year's subscription, but this late payment shall not override clause 4.7 above.
- 4.9 For the avoidance of doubt, if an Association member is within a membership category that has a nil Association Pay to Play county component and a nil annual subscription for a Membership year, then that member shall automatically become a paid up Association member for that Membership Year.
- 4.10 The Association Pay to Play county component and each of the Association member category's annual subscription, for the Membership Year starting in the following 1st April shall be determined by a simple majority of the paid up members at the preceding Annual General Meeting.
- 4.11 The Association membership categories shall be as follows:

Ordinary Association Member

A Player Member of the EBU who has their primary allegiance recorded with the Association on 1st April of the Membership Year. An Ordinary Association Member shall also be a new Player Member of the EBU whose EBU membership start date is within the Membership Year and that member's primary allegiance is recorded with the Association on their EBU membership start date.

Dual Member

A Player Member of the EBU who does not have their primary allegiance recorded with the Association by 1st April of the Membership Year.

5 LIFE MEMBERS

The Executive Committee of the Association may honour long standing members for their service to the Association by electing them to life membership of the Association. A Life Member of the Association shall automatically become a paid up member of the Association for each Membership Year whilst they remain a Playing Member of the EBU and shall not be required to pay any annual subscription for their Association membership category.

6 MEETING OF THE ASSOCIATION MEMBERS

- 6.1 There shall be an Annual General Meeting (AGM) to be held on or after 1st April and before 31st May of each calendar year.
- 6.2 The venue, date and time of the AGM shall be published on the MCBA website at least 6 weeks beforehand and also notified by e-mail to the Secretaries of all affiliated clubs. It is then the responsibility of each club Secretary to make the members of that club aware of the location and timing of the AGM whether by distributing notice of the AGM at club duplicates or by e-mail circulation to those members who attend the club duplicates somewhat infrequently.
- 6.3 A request for a Special Resolution from a paid up Association member, which shall require a vote of the paid up members at the AGM, must be sent in writing to the Secretary no later than three 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 Executive Committee as Chairman, Secretary or Treasurer must be received in writing by the Secretary three weeks before the date of the AGM. The nomination must be from a paid up member of the Association and supported by another paid up member of the Association and the Nominee must have consented in writing to such nomination.
- 6.6 The Secretary shall publish nominations to serve on the Executive Committee no later than two weeks before the AGM.
- 6.7 In addition to the above-mentioned Officers, the EBU Shareholders of the Association, the members of the Selection Committee, Tournament Committee, Conduct Committee and Disciplinary Committee shall be elected at the AGM.
- 6.8 A request for an Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM) by a paid up Association member must be sent in writing to the Secretary together with the Special Resolution(s), which shall require a vote of the paid up members. The request must be supported in writing by at least twenty current paid up 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 Any vote at an AGM or an EGM, which is tied, shall be split by the casting vote of the Chairman of the AGM or EGM.

- 6.11 An AGM or an EGM shall be deemed to have been published three days after written details are posted (and this shall include e-mail posting) by the Secretary to the Secretaries of the Association affiliated clubs. The Secretary shall make every effort to widen the circulation using available individual member e-mail lists and the Association website if available.
- 6.12 The quorum for an AGM and EGM shall be twenty paid up 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 Executive 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 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. They are set out in the 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 AFFILIATED BRIDGE CLUBS

Any Bridge Club affiliated to the EBU may affiliate to the Association and all such clubs affiliated to the Association shall also be affiliated to the EBU. The Association has the right to determine at an Annual General Meeting through a simple majority of its members, the annual club affiliation fee, if any, to be charged for the twelve month period from the following 1st April.

9 CONSTITUTION AMENDMENTS

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

10 DISSOLUTION OF THE ASSOCIATION

The Association can be dissolved at an EGM provided at least two thirds of the total paid up members present on the date of the EGM positively vote for its dissolution. The dispersal of the assets of the Association on a dissolution shall be decided by the paid up members attending the dissolution meeting.

11 INTERPRETATION

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

12 DEFINITIONS

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

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. The Association shall act through its Conduct & Disciplinary Committee 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

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.

The County Association will deal with any disciplinary allegations referred to it from its affiliated clubs using the Disciplinary Procedures set out in this constitution.

This may involve investigation, a hearing and an appeal, however if a proper hearing has already been held then the County Association should only convene an appeal hearing.

3 Conduct Committee

The AGM of the Association shall elect a Conduct Committee. 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.

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 its absence the 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 Committee

The AGM of the Association shall also elect a Disciplinary Committee. 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, to determine the sanction imposed.

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 & Disciplinary Committees

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

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 Chairman 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 both from within the Association and from the EBU Laws & 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 Executive Committee then in addition to any other sanctions applied, the Disciplinary Committee shall have the power to suspend such member from the Association's Executive 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.

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.

6.5 Appeal

Each member found guilty of a Disciplinary Offence by the Disciplinary Committee has the right to appeal to the EBU Laws & Ethics Committee. Appeals must be in writing and lodged with the Secretary of the EBU Laws & 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 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

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

This constitution was last updated in May 2012