

# NORTHAMPTONSHIRE CONTRACT BRIDGE ASSOCIATION CONSTITUTION

## 1 TITLE AND CONSTITUENT MEMBERSHIP

1.1 The Northamptonshire Contract 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 Duplicate Contract Bridge in the County of Northamptonshire 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 Duplicate Contract Bridge, regard being given 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:-

- (1)
  - (a) Chairperson (who acts as the chairperson of the Executive Committee)
  - (b) Vice Chairperson
  - (c) Secretary
  - (d) Treasurer
  - (e) League Secretary
  - (f) Match Secretary
  - (g) Tournament Secretary
  - (h) Membership Secretary
  - (i) Selector
  - (j) EBU Shareholder(s)
- (2) up to three Association Members
- (3) Members nominated by clubs affiliated to the Association. Each club may nominate one person

who together will form the Executive Committee.

The Officers and other Executive Committee members indicated in (1) and (2) above shall be elected annually at the Annual General Meeting by a simple majority of the paid up members of the Association present at the AGM.

3.2 The Executive Committee shall meet from time to time as it deems fit, but not fewer than four times within a calendar year. Seven days' notice shall be given for a Committee meeting.

3.3 A quorum shall consist of six members and, in the event of a tie on votes cast, the chairperson of the meeting shall have an additional casting vote.

3.4 The Executive Committee shall have the power to co-opt and to fill any casual vacancies.

3.5 The Executive Committee may 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 Executive Committee. The Chairman and Secretary shall be ex-officio members of the sub-committees.

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.

#### 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.

4.3 A Player Member of the EBU whose primary allegiance is with another Association or who has no allegiance to any 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 1<sup>st</sup> April to 31<sup>st</sup> 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 Duplicate 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 31<sup>st</sup> 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 31<sup>st</sup> May if at that date the Association member has not paid any outstanding annual subscription. That member can become a paid up Association member subsequently on 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 become a paid up Association member for that Membership Year automatically.

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 1<sup>st</sup> 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:

4.11.1 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.

4.11.2 Dual Member –

a Player Member of the EBU who does not have their primary allegiance recorded with the Association by 1<sup>st</sup> April of the Membership Year.

4.11.3 Direct Member–

a Player member of the EBU who has no allegiance to any Association.

## 5 LIFE MEMBERS

5.1 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 become a paid up member of the Association for each Membership Year automatically whilst they remain a Playing Member of the EBU and shall not be required to pay any annual subscription for their Association membership category. In addition, a Life Member of the Association shall not be required to pay the entrance fee to any of its county competitions.

## 6 MEETING OF THE ASSOCIATION'S MEMBERS

6.1 There shall be an Annual General Meeting (AGM) held in April.

6.2 The venue, date and time of the AGM shall be published at least three weeks before the date of the AGM.

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 paid up 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 a paid up Association member to serve on the Executive Committee 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.

6.6 The Secretary shall publish all nominations to serve on the Executive Committee no later than two weeks before the AGM.

6.7 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 ten paid up members of the Association.

6.8 The EGM shall be held no earlier than four weeks and no later than six weeks 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.

6.9 At all meetings, voting shall be by a show of hands, unless a poll is required by at least five members. All elections shall be by secret ballot. Proxy and postal voting is not permitted.

6.10 At an AGM or an EGM, any vote which is tied shall be split by an additional casting vote of the chairperson of the AGM or EGM.

6.11 No person may chair a vote in which they are a candidate.

6.12 Details of or notice of 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's affiliated clubs. Notice of the AGM and EGM and agendas shall be sent to all members of the Association at least twenty one days prior to the date fixed for such meetings. Members of affiliated clubs will have notification sent to them via their clubs or directly by post or e-mail and Dual and Direct Members will be sent notification directly by post or e-mail. Notification may also be made via the county column in English Bridge magazine and the county website. Other methods may be used when available.

6.13 The quorum for an AGM and EGM shall be twelve paid up members.

6.14 The Secretary shall be required to arrange a further EGM if an AGM or EGM fails to reach a quorum. In both circumstances, the additional EGM shall be scheduled to occur within the period of four weeks to six weeks after the aborted AGM or EGM. The Secretary shall publish the date, venue and time of the additional EGM at least three weeks beforehand.

6.15 If the additional EGM 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 ACCOUNTS

7.1 The accounting period shall be from 1<sup>st</sup> April to the 31<sup>st</sup> March in each year and the accounts shall be prepared by the treasurer and certified by an independent examiner appointed at the preceding Annual General Meeting or at a subsequent General meeting convened for that purpose.

7.2 All money surplus to the Treasurer's immediate requirements shall be deposited in the Association's account with its Bankers.

7.3 Notice of withdrawal from the bank account shall be signed by the treasurer and one of two other authorised members of the Committee.

## 8 MEMBERS' BEHAVIOUR

8.1 In connection with the game of Duplicate Contract Bridge, each member of the Association shall be required 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.

8.2 The Association shall have the powers and the procedures for the enforcement of the requirement in clause 8.1. 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.

## 9 AFFILIATED DUPLICATE BRIDGE CLUB

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

## 10 CONSTITUTION AMENDMENTS

10.1 Amendments 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.

## 11 DISSOLUTION OF THE ASSOCIATION

11.1 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 vote positively for its dissolution. In the event of dissolution, the assets of the Association shall be donated to a charity or charities decided by the paid up members attending the dissolution meeting.

## 12 INTERPRETATION

12.1 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.

## 13 DEFINITIONS

13.1 The terms Association, Constituent Member, Duplicate Contract Bridge 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 8.2 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 8.1 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 8.1 of the Constitution must do so in writing to either the Secretary or the Chairperson of the Association.

### 3 Conduct Committee

The Executive Committee of the Association shall appoint its Conduct Committee through its powers to appoint sub committees under clause 3.5 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.

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 a tied vote.

### 4 Disciplinary Committee

The Executive Committee of the Association shall appoint the Disciplinary Committee through its powers to appoint sub committees under clause 3.5 of the Constitution. 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 a tied vote.

## 5 Conflicts of Interest and Independence of the Conduct and Disciplinary Committees

Any member of either the Conduct 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.

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 considers appropriate in its absolute discretion. The Conduct Committee shall also be entitled to seek advice both 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 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.

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

### 7 Definitions

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