

# Staffordshire & Shropshire Contract Bridge Association

## CONSTITUTION

### 1. TITLE AND CONSTITUENT MEMBERSHIP

1.1 The Staffordshire & Shropshire 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, Articles, Policies, Rules & Regulations. Hereinafter the English Bridge Union Ltd shall be referred to as the EBU.

### 2. OBJECTS OF THE ASSOCIATION

2.1 To promote Bridge in the Counties of Staffordshire & Shropshire 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:

Chairman (who acts as the chairman of the Executive Committee)

Secretary

Treasurer

Competitions Secretary

County Captain

Tournament Director

Membership Secretary

Webmaster

E.B.U. Representatives (2)

Regional Club Representative

and up to six other members of the Association, who together will form the Executive Committee. All Officers and other Executive Committee members must be elected annually at the Annual General Meeting by a simple majority of the paid up members of the Association.

3.2 The Executive Committee shall meet from time to time as it deems fit, but no fewer than three times within a calendar year. A quorum shall consist of five members and, in the event of a tie in the number of 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 subcommittees 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.

3.5 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 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 and certified by an independent examiner, for each Annual General Meeting. An Auditor shall be appointed at an Annual General Meeting. All payments over £500 should be agreed in writing or via email by one of the Officers of the Management Committee.

#### 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 his/her primary allegiance to the Association is recorded with the EBU.

4.3 A Player Member of the EBU whose primary allegiance is not with the Association can become a member of the Association by meeting its terms and conditions in force at the time of the request for membership, **by paying the County fee via the EBU or by being a paid-up playing member of an Affiliated Club. Such a player would not be eligible to represent the County in major EBU Competitions.**

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 **player-member** through payment of any Association Pay-to-Play county component when participating in events at an affiliated Bridge Club **or** through payment of an annual subscription **to the Association for their Association** membership category.

4.7 If any Association member has not paid his/her annual subscription by 31st August 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 August 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 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 a Life Member or 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:

4.11.1 Ordinary Association Member, a Player Member of the EBU who has his/her 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 his/her primary allegiance recorded with the Association by 1st April of the Membership Year, but who pays the Association's annual subscription (see 4.3 above). The annual subscription to be paid by dual members shall be determined in accordance with 4.10.

#### 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 the 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 MEMBERS**

6.1 There shall be an Annual General Meeting (AGM) to be held on or after 1st July and before 30th September of each calendar year.

6.2 The venue, date and time of the AGM shall be notified to members on the calendar distributed to Clubs and published on the website and again published at least six weeks before the AGM via emails to individuals and posters to clubs and on the website. The Agenda for the AGM will be sent to clubs and inserted on the website two 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 twenty current paid up members of the Association.

6.8 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.

6.9 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.

6.10 An AGM or an EGM shall be deemed to have been published three days after written details are posted (and this shall include email 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 email lists and the Association website if available.

6.11 The quorum for an AGM and EGM shall be **eight (8)** paid-up members.

6.12 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.

6.13 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 CLUB**

Any 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 members, the annual club affiliation subscription if any to be charged for the twelve-month period from the following 1<sup>st</sup> 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. REGIONAL CLUB COMMITTEE**

All affiliated clubs are entitled to propose and vote for a County Representative to sit on the Regional Club Committee. All nominations for this must be submitted to the County Secretary in writing (or email) at least 28 days prior to the AGM. In the event that there is more than one nomination for the post each affiliated club shall have one vote to be exercised (by letter or by email) to the County Secretary to arrive prior to the commencement of the AGM.

**11. 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 assets of the Association on dissolution shall be disposed of as decided by the paid up members attending the dissolution meeting.

**12. 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.

**13. DEFINITIONS**

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

**There follows the Schedule of Disciplinary Procedures & Complaints Process - page 5.**

**Amendments included in red in Clauses 3.1; 3.5; 4.3; 4.6; 6.11.  
Approved at AGM 1<sup>st</sup> September 2024 (& EGM 8<sup>th</sup> October 2024)**

## Schedule of Disciplinary Procedures

### 1. Requirements of the Schedule

This Schedule is referred to under clause 7.2 of the Constitution of the Staffordshire & Shropshire Contract Bridge Association (hereinafter referred to as the Association) 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 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.

### 3. Conduct Committee

3.1 The Executive Committee of the Association shall appoint a Conduct Committee through its powers to appoint sub committees under clause 3.4 of the Constitution. The Conduct Committee shall be responsible for investigating a complaint 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/her absence the Conduct 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

4.1 The Executive Committee of the Association shall appoint a Disciplinary Committee through its powers to appoint sub-committees under clause 3.4 of the Constitution. The Disciplinary Committee shall determine sanctions for any offence admitted by the defendant, hear charges of any offence and determine whether any such charge is proved and, if proved, to determine the sanction imposed.

4.2 The Disciplinary Committee shall consist of no fewer than three members of the Association and nor 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/her absence the Disciplinary Committee shall select to chair its 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 of the Conduct or Disciplinary Committees who is in any way personally involved in the allegations within the 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 the Disciplinary Committees.

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**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, the Committee 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 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 is of the opinion 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 caution is not accepted by the offending member or if the Conduct Committee does not feel a caution is appropriate, it shall refer the case for hearing by the Disciplinary Committee. The defendant shall be notified in writing within two weeks of this decision and of his/her 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/her 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 period as it shall determine.

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

Any sanction imposed by the Disciplinary Committee shall take effect as soon as time for appeal has elapsed except that if the Defendant has filed Notice of Appeal within the time allowed the sanction shall not take effect until such Appeal has been determined.

6.5 Appeal: Every defendant found guilty of an 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 defendant.

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

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