



SURREY COUNTY BRIDGE ASSOCIATION CONSTITUTION



TITLE AND OBJECTS

1. The Association shall be called the Surrey County Bridge Association (hereafter referred to as "the Association") and shall be a constituent member of the English Bridge Union (hereafter referred to as "the EBU").
2. The object of the Association shall be the organisation, development and encouragement of Contract Bridge in and for the County of Surrey, and in such adjacent districts as come within the administrative area of the Association.

MEMBERSHIP

3. All players who are registered with the EBU as members of Surrey shall be members of the Association. For the purposes of competition entry and selection as representative players of the County, such members shall be known as primary members.
4. Any member of another County Association may, at the discretion of the Committee, and upon payment of such annual subscription as the Committee may from time to time decide, become an affiliated member of the Association. Affiliated members may participate in any County competition that is not restricted to primary members, but shall have no voting or other rights.
5. The members of the Association in General Meeting shall have the powers to elect, as a life member of the Association, any person who in the opinion of the meeting has rendered outstanding service to the Association. A life member shall not be liable for annual subscription.

AFFILIATED CLUBS

6. Subject to the approval of the Association's Committee, any Duplicate Bridge Club within the administrative area of the Association may affiliate to the Association and all such clubs shall be affiliated to the EBU.

MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION

7. The general management of the Association shall be vested in a Committee elected annually by the members of the Association. Such Committee members shall be members of the Association.
8. The Committee shall consist of a minimum of six and a maximum of sixteen people.

The Committee shall include the following Primary Officers:

- (a) a President,
- (b) a Chairman,
- (c) a Secretary,
- (d) a Treasurer

The Committee may assign to individual Committee members additional Officer roles including, but not limited to the following:

- (e) a Website/Membership Database Manager,
- (f) a Match Secretary,
- (g) a Competitions Secretary,
- (h) a Chief Tournament Director,
- (i) a Communications Officer.

As long as they are re-elected each year, there is no limitation on the length of time any individual may remain on the Committee, although the Chairman shall not hold this office for more than five consecutive years.

9. The Committee shall have the power to fill any vacancies that occur through resignation or otherwise and to co-opt members to the Committee; any such co-opted members shall retain this status until the next annual general meeting.

10. The Committee may appoint sub-committees as required; delegate to them such powers and duties as may be deemed expedient; and disband them if and when they have served their purpose. Sub-committee members must be members of the Association, but are not required to be members of the main Committee.

11. The President shall have the ex-officio right to:

- (a) attend all sub-committee meetings except those of the Conduct and Disciplinary sub-committees.
- (b) vote at all such meetings except on matters involving the selection of players to represent the County.

12. At Committee meetings six (or, if lower, two-thirds of the current number of Committee members rounded to the nearest integer) shall form a quorum. The meetings shall be chaired by the Chairman or in his absence the President. In the absence of both, the members present shall proceed to appoint one their number to act as chairman for the time being. At Committee meetings the chairman shall have an additional or casting vote in the event of equality of votes.

13. The Committee shall have the power to appoint Shareholders; organise matches, tournaments, competitions or the like; fix the charges for entrance fees; send representatives to tournaments and other competitions; and expend the funds of the Association for the purposes of defraying the expenses of and incidental to such activities as are consistent with the objects of the Association, including the provision of prizes.

14. The Laws of Duplicate Contract Bridge as established by the World Bridge Federation and in accordance with interpretations issued by the EBU as for the time being in force shall be applicable to tournaments and competitions organised by the Association.

15. The Committee shall have the powers to make bye-laws or rules for regulating the tournaments and competitions organised by the Association.

MEMBERS' BEHAVIOUR

16. Each member of the Association shall be required, in connection with the game of Duplicate 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.

17. The Association shall have the powers and procedures for the enforcement of the required standards of behaviour at tournaments, events and meetings organised by the Association. The Association's disciplinary powers and procedures are set out in Appendix 1 of this Constitution.

Surrey Affiliated Clubs are responsible for the enforcement of the required standards of behaviour at their own events, but if the constitution of a Surrey Affiliated Club gives a member the right of appeal against a disciplinary decision of the Club to the Surrey County Disciplinary Committee and an appeal against a decision of the Club is lodged, the appeal procedures set out in Appendix 2 of this Constitution will apply.

GENERAL MEETINGS

18. The AGM of the Association shall be held not later than the end of July every year. It may be held at a physical meeting in Surrey, or via an appropriate electronic application such as video-conferencing or email. It shall be chaired by the Chairman and shall transact the following business:

- (a) To receive the Chairman's report of the activities of the Association.
- (b) To receive, and if approved, to adopt a statement of the Association's accounts for the year ending the previous 31st March.
- (c) To fix the annual subscription of members and affiliated clubs for the following financial year and to authorise any changes to the Pay-to-Pay County rate.
- (d) To appoint the auditor(s) who shall not be members of the Committee. In the absence of such an appointment, or if the office falls vacant for any reason, the Committee shall appoint an auditor to hold office until the next annual meeting.
- (e) To elect Officers and other members of the Committee.
- (f) To deal with any other matter which the Committee or any other member may desire to bring before the meeting.

19. Notice convening an Annual General Meeting shall be included in the County News section of the EBU magazine or any successor publication. The notice shall be given at least 28 days before the date of the Annual General Meeting and shall specify the date, time and venue.

Nominations for the Primary Officers of the Association and for resolutions to be included in the agenda with the names of the proposer and seconder should be sent to the Secretary at least 21 days before the date of the Annual General Meeting. The Committee shall ensure that the agenda, nominations for Primary Officers and the accounts for the most recent completed financial year are made available on its website at least 14 days before the date of the Annual General Meeting. Nominations for the other members of the Committee may additionally be made at the Annual General Meeting.

20. The chairman of a General Meeting may, at his discretion, admit a proposal notwithstanding that the same has not been forwarded to the Secretary in accordance with Paragraph 19 above. He will, however, have the power to defer confirmation of such a proposal until such time as the proposition has been put before a General Meeting in the manner set out in Paragraph 19 above.

21. A Special General Meeting may be convened at any time by the Committee and shall be convened and held within 30 days from the receipt of a request in writing signed by no fewer than 20 members specifying the object of the meeting. Not less than 7 days' notice of a Special General Meeting shall be given to members.

22. A member may appoint a proxy to vote on his/her behalf at any meeting. Proxy appointments are valid for one meeting only, but remain valid, unless cancelled by the member, for any adjourned meeting. A new appointment must be made for any subsequent meeting at which a member wishes to be represented by proxy.

23. An instrument appointing a proxy and specifying the meeting for which the appointment is valid must be delivered to the Chairman not later than 5 minutes before the published time for holding the specified meeting. Delivery after this time will render the instrument invalid.

24. Any decision at a General Meeting including any decision concerning the disposal of the Association's property shall be binding on all members of the Association. No decision at a General Meeting shall be binding unless the meeting is quorate. Thirty members personally present shall be a quorum.

ALTERATION OF THE CONSTITUTION

25. The Constitution of the Association can only be changed after due notice, at a General Meeting, and to carry through such alterations a two-thirds majority of those present in person or by proxy shall be necessary.

DISSOLUTION OF THE ASSOCIATION

26. The Association can only be dissolved after due notice at a General Meeting. To carry through such dissolution a two-thirds majority of those present and voting shall be necessary.

27. In the event that a motion to dissolve the Association shall be passed in accordance with the above requirements then the Committee of the Association at the time of dissolution shall realise all the assets of the Association, settle all its liabilities, and distribute any remaining funds in accordance with the instructions of members as expressed at the General Meeting. Such actions shall be a full discharge of the duties of the members of the Committee for the membership as a whole.

COMPETITIONS AND MATCHES

28. To be eligible to compete in any competition organised by the Association a player must be a member of the Association except that the Committee may invite entries from non-members for certain events as permitted by the English Bridge Union. It may also restrict entry for certain events to primary Surrey members only.

29. Players selected to represent Surrey in any County Bridge Match must be primary members of the Association.

30. No member shall be eligible to represent Surrey in any County Bridge Match if he or she has during the current season represented some other County in a County Bridge Match.

SURREY COUNTY BRIDGE ASSOCIATION CONSTITUTION

APPENDIX 1 - DISCIPLINARY POWERS AND PROCEDURES

INTRODUCTION

1. This Appendix prescribes the powers and procedures of the Association for the enforcement of acceptable standards of behaviour at SCBA tournaments, events and meetings. The Association's jurisdiction does not extend to tournaments, events or meetings organised by clubs or other bodies within the County. The process described complies with EBU disciplinary procedures and will incorporate any variations thereof that may be made from time to time.

DEFINITIONS

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

DELIVERY OF ALLEGATION

3. Any person making a complaint against one or more members of the Association, alleging failure to comply with paragraph 16 of this Constitution, must do so in writing to the Secretary or the Chairman of the Association.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DISCIPLINARY PROCESS

4. The Officer of the Association receiving the complaint shall request the Committee to appoint a Conduct Sub-Committee to investigate the allegation and a Disciplinary Sub-Committee to apply disciplinary sanctions, if any are required. Each Sub-Committee shall be appointed for the purpose of dealing only with the specific complaint, and shall be disbanded when the disciplinary process relating to that complaint is finalised. Whilst in being, the composition of each Sub-Committee shall not be changed.

5. No member of the Association who is in any way involved in the incident that led to the complaint, nor the Officer of the Association who receives the complaint, may serve as a member of either Sub-Committee. Additionally, no member of the Association may serve on the two Sub-Committees simultaneously.

6. Each Sub-Committee shall comprise four members of the Association, who need not necessarily be members of the Committee. The quorum for any meeting or hearing shall be three members. Each Sub-Committee shall act by simple majority vote and its appointed chairman, or whomsoever in his/her absence the Sub-Committee shall select to chair a meeting, shall have a second or casting vote in the event that there is parity of voting.

INVESTIGATING THE COMPLAINT

7. The Conduct and Disciplinary Sub-Committees may at any time refer a complaint to the EBU Laws & Ethics Committee for its consideration. If this occurs, the two Sub-Committees shall have fully discharged their responsibilities under this Constitution. Otherwise the following procedure is to be implemented.

8. The Conduct Sub-Committee shall first consider whether the complaint falls within the scope of the Disciplinary Rules and whether further action is warranted. If further action is considered necessary, the Conduct Sub-Committee shall write to the Defendant,

seeking the Defendant's comments on the substance of the complaint that has been raised. The Conduct Sub-Committee may also:

- Make such further investigations and enquiries as it considers appropriate.
- Seek advice from within the Association and from the EBU Laws and Ethics Committee, and obtain external legal advice.

ASSESSMENT OF THE COMPLAINT

9. If the Conduct Sub-Committee decides that the complaint is not justified, all parties shall be notified and the matter ended.

10. 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.

REFERRAL TO THE DISCIPLINARY SUB-COMMITTEE

11. If the Defendant does not accept the verbal caution, or the Conduct Sub-Committee decides that a verbal caution is insufficient sanction, 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 advised of his/her right:

To make a written submission to the Disciplinary Sub-Committee.

To attend the hearing.

To be represented by legal counsel of his/her choice or to be accompanied by a person to speak on his/her behalf.

12. The Disciplinary Sub-Committee shall give at least two weeks' notice of the hearing to the Defendant.

DISCIPLINARY SANCTIONS

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

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

Suspend the offending member(s) from all or some of the tournaments or events organised by the Association for such period as it shall determine.

14. Any sanctions imposed by the Disciplinary Sub-Committee shall be communicated to the offending member in writing within 21 days of the hearing.

ADDITIONAL SANCTIONS

15. If a complaint is upheld against a member of the Committee, the Committee shall have the additional power to suspend such member from the Committee and from any of its sub-committees for such period as the Committee shall determine. This power shall apply whether the complaint has been dealt with by the Disciplinary Sub-Committee, or by the Laws and Ethics Committee of the EBU.

APPEAL

16. Any member found guilty of a Disciplinary Offence by the Disciplinary Sub-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 21 days of the written communication of the Disciplinary Sub-Committee's decision to the offending member.

SURREY COUNTY BRIDGE ASSOCIATION CONSTITUTION
APPENDIX 2 - PROCEDURES FOR APPEALS FROM DECISIONS MADE BY
DISCIPLINARY COMMITTEES OF SURREY COUNTY AFFILIATED BRIDGE CLUBS
REFERRED TO THE COUNTY DISCIPLINARY COMMITTEE

1.1 This appendix applies where the constitution of a Surrey Affiliated Club gives a member the right of appeal against a disciplinary decision of the Club to the Surrey County Disciplinary Committee. It does not apply where the initial disciplinary case was within the jurisdiction of Surrey Contract Bridge Association.

1.2 When a valid appeal is referred to it, the County Disciplinary Committee shall have such of the following options as are consistent with the constitution of the Club concerned:

(a) to constitute itself or a subset of its members as an Appeals Committee to determine the appeal, provided that with such an Appeals Committee satisfies the conditions in paragraph 2.4 below.

(b) to appoint an Appeals Committee to determine the appeal. Such an Appeals Committee shall be constituted in accordance with paragraph 2.4 below.

(c) to refer the appeal to English Bridge Union Laws and Ethics Committee for consideration. If this option is selected the Laws and Ethics Committee will be responsible for determining the process of the appeal.

1.3 The Appeals Committee shall consider and enquire into the matter appealed in such manner as it shall see fit to determine the outcome of the appeal, and to confirm or vary the findings and decisions of the Club, but not so as to impose any penalty which is not within the powers of the Club. Alternatively, the Appeals Committee may decide that the matter shall be referred to the Laws and Ethics Committee as an allegation of an Offence under the English Bridge Union Disciplinary Rules (in which event the prior findings and decisions of the Association or Club in relation to the matter shall be nullified and the member so informed).

1.4 The powers and procedures of an Appeals Committee under this Appendix shall conform as nearly as possible to the powers and procedures of the Appeals Committee under Rule 10 of the Disciplinary Rules in the English Bridge Union Bye-Laws.

2.1 If the Club's constitution so allows, every Defendant found guilty of an offence under the Club's disciplinary procedures has the right to appeal the Club's decision to the County Disciplinary Committee. For an appeal to be considered, it must be lodged within the time limits prescribed in the Club's constitution. A deposit of £100 must be lodged with the Surrey Contract Bridge Association before the appeal is granted. This deposit will normally be returned only if the Appellant is considered by the Appeals Committee to have a strong basis of appeal.

2.2 The Club's Conduct Committee has the right to appeal a decision of the Club's Disciplinary Committee to the County Disciplinary Committee but the right of the Club's Conduct Committee to appeal the decision shall be limited to an appeal against the Sanction (if any) imposed by the Club's Disciplinary Committee. The Club's Conduct Committee shall not be entitled to request a *de novo* hearing.

2.3 In the remainder of this Rule, the party appealing the decision of the Disciplinary Committee shall be referred to as the "Appellant" and the other party as the "Respondent".

2.4 The Appeals Committee shall consist of no fewer than three nor more than five Affiliated Surrey Members, none of whom should have any close connection with either the appellant or the Club, but otherwise may include one or more members of the Surrey County Disciplinary Committee and/or the Surrey County Bridge Association Committee. The Appeals Committee members shall be appointed by the County Disciplinary Committee, or in its absence, the Chairman of the Association.

2.5 The Appeals Committee shall be constituted as an Arbitration Panel and these Disciplinary Rules shall constitute an agreement in writing with those persons set out in Rule 2.1 for the purposes of Section 5 of the Arbitration Act 1996.

2.6 No one may sit on an Appeals Committee hearing a particular case who has had prior involvement with the case or has any relevant interest in the outcome of the case such as is considered a conflict of interest by the Chairman of Surrey Contract Bridge Association. Any person who is asked to sit and who may have grounds for thinking that such involvement or interest may exist shall notify the County Disciplinary Committee or the Chairman of the Association at the first available opportunity. Alternatively, any party to the Appeal Proceedings may raise the issue, at which point the Chairman of the Association shall decide whether or not the involvement or interest identified justifies the exclusion of that person from the Appeals Committee. In the event that a person is excluded, the Chairman of the Association shall nominate a replacement.

2.7 Any appeal must be filed by submitting a written Notice of Appeal, with copies of all documents relied on in support of the appeal, to the Secretary of Surrey County Bridge Association. The Notice of Appeal shall set out the decision appealed against, the grounds upon which it is submitted that the Club's Disciplinary Committee has erred, and (if applicable) the grounds for requesting a *de novo* hearing.

2.8 The Secretary of the Association shall send copies of the Notice of Appeal and of all relevant documents to the Respondent.

2.9 Failure to comply with the requirements of Rule 2.7 shall constitute grounds for summary dismissal of the Appeal by the Appeals Committee.

2.10 Within 21 days of receipt of the Notice of Appeal the Secretary of the Association shall request the Chairman of the Association to liaise with the County Disciplinary Committee convene an Appeals Committee. Within 14 days of receiving the response to such request the Secretary of the Association shall advise the parties to the appeal of the composition of the Appeals Committee and of the date, time and venue of the hearing of the Appeal.

2.11 If the Appellant requests a *de novo* hearing the Appeals Committee shall consider the application on the basis of written submissions alone.

2.12 If the Appellant can show good cause, the Appeals Committee shall order a *de novo* hearing, which shall follow as nearly as possible the procedures of the English Bridge Union Disciplinary Committee set out at Rules 8.7 to 8.15 inclusive of the English Bridge Union Bye-Laws. If the Appellant cannot show good cause, the burden of proof at the Appeal Hearing will be on the Appellant to prove, on the balance of probabilities, that the Club's Disciplinary Committee erred in finding the charge proved or imposed an inappropriate or excessive Sanction.

2.13 The Appeals Committee shall have broad discretion to regulate its own procedure. After its appointment it shall order such directions as it considers appropriate. Without prejudice to the generality of its powers it shall have the same powers as are given to the Club's Disciplinary Committee under the Club's Constitution. The provisions of Rules 8.4, 8.5, 8.6, 8.15, 8.16, 8.17, 8.18 and 8.22 of the English Bridge Union's Bye-Laws shall apply to the proceedings of the Appeals Committee as they apply to proceedings of the Club's Disciplinary Committee, with any necessary changes made *mutatis mutandis*.

2.14 The Appeals Committee shall have absolute discretion to admit or refuse any new evidence tendered by any party and also to adjourn the proceedings for the purpose of taking new evidence if it considers it appropriate.

2.15 Having considered all of the evidence presented to it, and having allowed the parties to the Appeal an opportunity to make submissions in all relevant matters the Appeals Committee will consider its decision in private.

2.16 For the avoidance of doubt, where the Appeals Committee decides to impose a Sanction upon the Defendant, it may impose any or all of the Sanctions set out in the Club's constitution and shall not be fettered in its choice of Sanction by the Sanction imposed by the Club's Disciplinary Committee.

2.17 When the Appeals Committee has made a decision, it shall be notified promptly to both the Appellant and the Respondent by the Secretary of the Association.

2.18 A decision of the Appeals Committee shall be deemed to be a decision of the Club and be final and binding and recognised by all Player Members, officers and officials of the Club.

2.19 The Appellant and the Respondent are responsible for paying their own costs. All parties should be encouraged to minimise these costs. The Club should provide the venue (either at its own premises or by arranging, and if necessary paying for, a suitable alternative within reasonable distance of where the Club normally meets. Surrey County Bridge Association will bear the reasonable travel costs of members of the Appeals Committee.

These procedures were agreed by the Committee of the Surrey County Bridge Association on 17th May 2024 and were formally approved by the membership at the 2024 AGM on 7th July 2024.