

# Constitution of the London Business Houses Contract Bridge Association

## 1. NAME

The Association shall be called the London Business Houses Contract Bridge Association.

## 2. OBJECTS

The object of the Association shall be to promote the playing of Bridge by organising leagues and knock out competitions for teams of four, and occasional duplicate pairs and team events, as decided by the Committee of the Association ('Committee').

## 3. EBU LICENCE

The Association will be a Licenced Operator of the English Bridge Union.

## 4. MEMBERSHIP

- 4.1. Subject to Clause 4.7, membership shall be open to teams of four or more players, which are approved by the Committee, with a connection to the Greater London area.
- 4.2. Any team wishing to become a member of the Association shall apply for membership by completing and forwarding to the Secretary of the Association ('Secretary') such form as may be prescribed from time to time by the Committee.
- 4.3. Any team accepted by the Association shall be identified as 'Team' hereunder.
- 4.4. A Team-player ('Player') shall be identified as someone who has been nominated by the Team Captain and has been placed on the Team roster.
- 4.5. All Players are deemed to have accepted the regulations of this Constitution and the rules and codes of conduct adopted by the Association, including its Privacy Policy.
- 4.6. The Committee will keep a register of Teams and Players and will include contact details of the Team Captain and Vice-Captain.
- 4.7. A Team shall cease to be a member of the Association immediately, if expelled from the Association under the provisions of Clause 12, or if its resignation in writing is delivered to the Secretary.
- 4.8. A Player shall cease to play for that Team if expelled under the provision of Clause 12 or is expelled as a player by the Board of the English Bridge Union.
- 4.9. A Team whose subscription has not been paid shall cease to be a member of the Association on 30 September of the relevant year.
- 4.10. Players are subject to the EBU Board's right of refusal or expulsion pursuant to its Bye Laws and shall abide by its Bye Laws.
- 4.11. All correspondence from Teams to the Association is to be addressed for the attention of the Secretary.

## 5. OFFICERS

- 5.1. The Officers of the Association shall be the Chair, Secretary and Treasurer.
- 5.2. No Player shall simultaneously hold more than one Office of the Association.
- 5.3. Each of the Officers of the Association shall be elected at the Annual General Meeting of the Association '(AGM') and shall retire annually at the ensuing AGM, but shall be eligible for re-election.
- 5.4. In the event of a vacancy arising during the year in the office of any Officer of the Association, the Committee shall choose one of their number to fill such vacancy until the ensuing AGM.

## **6. COMMITTEE**

- 6.1. The Committee shall consist of the Officers of the Association, together with the Results Secretary and up to 5 other members, who shall be elected at the AGM, and shall retire annually at the ensuing AGM but shall be eligible for re-election.
- 6.2. The Committee may from time to time co-opt further Players to serve on the Committee until the ensuing AGM, whether to fill a vacancy arising, or as additional members, except that the total number of members of the Committee (including Officers) shall at no time exceed ten. Co-opted members shall be entitled to participate fully in the proceedings of the Committee.
- 6.3. A quorum at meetings of the Committee shall be three members of the Committee, including at least two of the Officers.
- 6.4. The Committee may from time to time appoint sub-committees to undertake on its behalf such aspects of the administration of the Association as it shall think fit, and members of such sub-committees may include Players who are not members of the Committee.
- 6.5. Proceedings of the Committee and of any sub-committees shall be regulated in such manner as the Committee may from time to time decide.
- 6.6. The Committee shall make a report to each AGM concerning the affairs of the Association since the previous AGM.

## **7. MANAGEMENT**

- 7.1. The affairs of the Association shall be managed by the Committee, and the Committee shall have power to determine any issue arising in connection with the affairs of the Association which is not specifically provided for in this Constitution.
- 7.2. The Committee may from time to time formulate and publish such rules as it thinks expedient for the efficient and harmonious running of the Association (but in the case of any conflict between such rules and this Constitution, the Constitution shall prevail).
- 7.3. Any issue of policy determined by the Committee, or any rules published by the Committee may be varied by a resolution of a Team Captain (or in case of his/her indisposition, the Vice-Captain or a formally appointed Player) at a General Meeting of the Association, provided that such resolution is not in conflict with this Constitution and is not retrospective in application.
- 7.4. In the event of such variation being made, the policy or rules (as the case may be) shall not be further varied by the Committee in a manner inconsistent with the resolution.

## **8. GENERAL MEETINGS**

- 8.1. An AGM shall be held in each year no later than 30 December.
- 8.2. A Special General Meeting of the Association shall be convened by the Committee if a request for such a meeting signed by at least six Team Captains (or in case of his/her indisposition, the Vice-Captain or a formally appointed Player) is delivered to the Secretary, stating the reason for the meeting, and such meeting shall take place within one month of the receipt of such request by the Secretary.
- 8.3. A Special General Meeting of the Association may be convened by the Committee on its own initiative at any time.
- 8.4. All General Meetings of the Association shall be held at a venue decided by the Committee or else by video conference, open to all Teams, as decided by the Committee.
- 8.5. The Chair, if present, shall chair all General Meetings of the Association, or some other member of the Committee approved by a majority of those present at the Meeting shall chair the meeting.
- 8.6. Notice of all General Meetings of the Association shall be given by email to all Team Captains and Vice-Captains no later than three weeks prior to the date fixed for the meeting.

- 8.7. Notices of any other matters to be brought to the attention of Teams shall be made by email to the Team Captains and Vice-Captains for them to inform their Team members.
- 8.8. Any Team Captain (or in case of his/her indisposition, the Vice-Captain or a formally appointed Player) may propose a motion to be discussed at a General Meeting provided that written notice of the proposed motion is delivered to the Secretary no later than ten days prior to the date fixed for the meeting.
- 8.9. The chair of the meeting may permit discussion of other business at a General Meeting, if s/he thinks fit, but no vote may be taken on any matter that does not comply with Clause 8.8.
- 8.10. A quorum at General Meetings of the Association shall be ten Team representatives present.
- 8.11. If fifteen minutes after the time fixed for a General Meeting of the Association no quorum shall be present, the meeting shall be adjourned to a new date (of which the like notice shall be given to Teams as was required to be given for the meeting which has been adjourned), and in the case of a General Meeting which has been adjourned due to the lack of a quorum (but not of a meeting adjourned for any other reason) such number of members as are actually present at the adjourned meeting shall constitute a quorum.
- 8.12. Voting at General Meetings of the Association shall be by show of hands (one per Team being represented), and in the event of parity of voting the chair of the meeting shall have a second or casting vote.

## **9. NOMINATIONS**

- 9.1. Nominations for the posts of newly to be appointed Officers or Committee members shall be in writing and shall be signed by a proposer and a seconder, both of whom shall be Team Captains, and by the person nominated.
- 9.2. Nominations must reach the Secretary no later than ten days prior to the date fixed for the AGM.

## **10. SUBSCRIPTIONS and FEES**

- 10.1. Each Team shall pay an annual subscription, the basic amount of which for the time being shall be communicated at the AGM. Subscriptions shall be due for payment by 30 September in each year in respect of the current year.
- 10.2. The AGM may authorise the Committee to increase the basic amounts of subscriptions prior to the ensuing AGM.

## **11. ACCOUNTS**

- 11.1. The Committee shall arrange for accounts to be prepared and examined in respect of the financial affairs of the Association for each year ending on 31 July.
- 11.2. The accounts shall be audited by a suitably qualified person appointed by the Committee.
- 11.3. The accounts for each year shall be presented to the AGM for approval.
- 11.4. Any Team Captain may request from the Secretary a copy of the accounts.

## **12. MEMBERS' BEHAVIOUR**

- 12.1. Each person playing in a Team shall be required, whether at or away from the bridge table, to conform to the standards of fair play, courtesy and personal deportment, towards both own Players and those of the opposition, as prescribed by the Bye Laws and regulations for the time being of the EBU, including the fundamental principle set out in the EBU's "Best Behaviour at Bridge".
- 12.2. The Association shall have the powers and the procedures for the enforcement of the requirement in Clause 12.1. They are set out in the Schedule of Disciplinary Procedures and shall stand as part of the Constitution and be subject to the same provisions of the Constitution for its amendment.

12.3. The Committee shall appoint a Conduct Committee Chair at the first Committee meeting after the AGM. The Conduct Committee Chair (unless there is a conflict of interest, in which case the Committee Chair will take his/her place) will select members to hear and decide any conduct issues that arise.

### 13. ALTERATIONS TO THE CONSTITUTION

13.1. No alterations shall be made to this Constitution except at an AGM.

13.2. In order for a resolution to alter this Constitution to have effect at least two thirds of the votes cast on the resolution must be in favour.

### 14. WINDING-UP

14.1. For a resolution that the Association shall be wound up to have effect at least two-thirds of the Team representatives must be in favour of the resolution, and in addition the number of votes cast in favour of the resolution must exceed one-half of the number of Teams entitled to attend and vote at the General Meeting at which the resolution is put.

14.2. If a resolution that the Association shall be wound up is passed, the Committee shall be responsible for winding up the affairs of the Association and any surplus assets and funds shall be transferred to such of the organisations mentioned in Clause 14.3 as may be specified in the resolution initiating the winding up, and if no such organisation is so specified, to such of those organisations as the Committee may think fit.

14.3. The organisations referred to in Clause 14.2 are

- English Bridge Education and Development, registered charity 1153543
- A registered or recognised charitable body.

# Schedule of Disciplinary Procedures

## 1. Requirements of the Schedule

This Schedule is referred to under Clause 12 of the Constitution and prescribes the powers and procedures for enforcement. It will comply with and follow 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 12 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 Player(s) under the terms of Clause 12 of the Constitution, must do so in writing to the Secretary (or to the Chair, if there is a conflict of interest of the Secretary). Normally no action will be taken in respect of a complaint relating to an alleged offence which occurred three months or more prior to a formal complaint in writing made to the appropriate officer.

## 3. Conduct Committee

The Conduct Committee Chair shall appoint a sub committee to investigate complaints against the Player(s) 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 Players 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 Chair, or whomsoever in his/her absence the Conduct Committee shall select to chair its meeting, shall have a second, or casting vote if there is parity of voting.

## 4. Disciplinary Committee

The Committee shall appoint the Disciplinary Committee and the Disciplinary Committee Chair through its powers to appoint sub committees under Clause 6.4 of the Constitution. The Disciplinary Committee shall, determine sanctions for offences admitted by the alleged offender, 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 and no more than five members. At least three of its members must be present when it makes a decision to uphold a complaint and impose sanctions on the offending Player(s). It shall act by simple majority vote and the Disciplinary Committee Chair, 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

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 Player cannot be a member of both the Conduct and Disciplinary Committees.

## 6. The Complaints Process

### 6.1. Notice of Meetings

Subject to the provisions of Clause 2 hereof 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, a member of the Conduct Committee shall first write to the alleged offender(s), seeking 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 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 by email 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 Player(s), which if accepted, ends the matter.

If the caution is not accepted by the offending Player(s), or the Conduct Committee does not consider a caution is appropriate, it shall refer the matter to a hearing by the Disciplinary Committee. The alleged offender(s) shall be notified, in writing, within two weeks of this decision and of the right to make a written submission to the Disciplinary Committee and to attend the hearing. The alleged offender(s) shall have the right to be represented by legal counsel of their choice or may be accompanied by a person to speak on their behalf. The Disciplinary Committee shall give at least two weeks' notice of the hearing to the alleged offender(s).

6.4. Disciplinary Committee's Sanctions

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

Give a written reprimand to the offender(s) or

Suspend the offender(s) from all or some of the competitions sponsored or licensed by the Association for such period as it shall determine.

Forbid the offender(s) from playing in any future competitions of the Association.

If the complaint is against a member of the Committee, then in addition to any other sanctions applied, the Disciplinary Committee shall have the power to suspend such member from the Association's 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 offender(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 offender 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 offender found guilty of an offence by the Disciplinary Committee has the right to appeal to the EBU's 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 Association's Disciplinary Committee's decision to the offender(s).

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.