

Constitution of the Oxfordshire Bridge Association - June 2018

Title

The Oxfordshire Bridge Association is an Association as defined in the Bye Laws of the English Bridge Union Ltd. It shall be referred to as the OBA throughout this constitution.

Constituent Membership

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.

Objects Of The OBA

- 3.1 To promote and assist in the development of duplicate contract bridge (hereinafter referred to as duplicate bridge) in the county of Oxfordshire as defined by the EBU (hereinafter referred to as Oxon).
- 3.2 To establish and organise competition duplicate bridge in Oxon, including competitive events of the EBU, and to encourage participation in both local and national competitions.
- 3.3 To license or organise congresses and other competitions within the jurisdiction of the OBA.
- 3.4 To select county teams to compete in national and inter-county competitions.
- 3.5 To employ the funds of the OBA in the best interests of duplicate bridge in Oxon, on a non-profit basis.
- 3.6 To deal with such matters as may be referred to the OBA by the EBU.

Membership

- 4.1 All members of OBA must be Player Members of the EBU or Bridge for All students registered with the EBU.
- 4.2 A Player Member of the EBU shall become a member of OBA when their primary allegiance to OBA is recorded with the EBU.
- 4.3 The OBA membership categories shall be as follows:
 - Ordinary Member/Junior Ordinary Member – an Ordinary Player Member of the EBU whose primary allegiance, as recorded with the EBU, is with the OBA.
 - Dual Member/Junior Dual Member – a Player Member of the EBU whose primary allegiance, as recorded with the EBU, is with another county association.
 - Direct Member/Junior Direct member – a Direct Player Member of the EBU who does not belong to an OBA Affiliated Club but whose primary allegiance to the OBA is recorded with the EBU.
 - Bridge for All member/Junior Bridge for All Member – BFA students whose primary allegiance, as recorded with the EBU, is with OBA.

4.4 Any club in the county of Oxon that holds regular duplicate bridge events and is affiliated to the EBU may become affiliated to the OBA. Any such club in a neighbouring county may apply to become affiliated to the OBA (with either primary or dual affiliation). Acceptance of such applications will be at the discretion of the Management Committee and a change of primary affiliation will also require EBU approval.

4.5 An Ordinary Member of the OBA becomes a paid up member through payment of any OBA Pay to Play county component when participating in events at an Affiliated Duplicate Bridge Club or on an OBA county night.

4.6 Dual Members and Direct Members become paid up members of the OBA through payment of the current membership subscription for the relevant category of membership. The membership subscription for Direct Members and for Dual Members together with the P2P County Subscription and Club Annual Affiliation Subscription shall be determined by the Management Committee and shall be approved by the members at the AGM, defined hereunder, to take effect the following year.

4.7 There is no subscription charge for Junior Membership of any category. Junior Membership is open to anybody who is under 25 on 1st January of the year in which they are applying for membership.

4.8 Bridge for All members are not required to pay a membership subscription.

4.9 A Player Member of the EBU whose primary allegiance is with another county association or who does not have primary allegiance to any county association but who is in good standing with the OBA, can become a member of the OBA. Such a Dual Member shall only have the right to participate in certain events organised by the OBA.

4.10 A member of OBA 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 during that year. The Management Committee have discretion to waive the above conditions for due cause e.g. illness or absence.

4.11 The membership year shall run for the twelve month period from 1st April to 31st March.

4.12 If any OBA member who is required to pay an annual subscription has not paid it by 31st May of the current membership year then that OBA member will not be able to vote at the AGM of the current membership year.

4.13 Every member of the OBA shall be required in connection with the game of Duplicate Bridge to conform to the standards of fair play, courtesy and personal deportment including those prescribed in the prevailing Bye Laws, Rules and Regulations of the EBU. The OBA shall have the powers and the procedures for the enforcement of this requirement. These powers are set out in Schedule A of this Constitution, which shall stand as part of this Constitution and shall be subject to the same provisions of the Constitution for its amendment.

4.14 The OBA Competition Bylaws define Members who are eligible to represent Oxon in inter-county competitions and to participate in competitions run by the OBA. Membership of the OBA is not, in itself, sufficient qualification.

5. Equal Opportunities

5.1 Membership shall be open to all persons who fulfil any of the conditions specified in clause 4 irrespective of their racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, gender, age, status, disability, or sexual orientation.

5.2 The OBA will take all such measures as are reasonable to promote and ensure the equal rights of persons considered to be at risk of discrimination or non-equal treatment on the grounds racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, gender, age, status, disability, or sexual orientation.

6. Management

6.1 There shall be the following Honorary Officers of the OBA who will also be members of the Management Committee: Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer & four Team Leaders namely Competitions Team Leader, Education Promotion and Social Team Leader, Youth Team Leader & Selection Team Leader.

6.2 The OBA shall be managed by a Management Committee. It is the duty of each member of the Management Committee to exercise his or her powers in such a way as would be most likely to achieve the Objects of the OBA.

6.3 The Management Committee shall be comprised of the seven Honorary Officers of the OBA, plus five elected paid up members of the OBA (Member Representatives).

6.4 Where a vacancy arises on the Management Committee, the committee members may appoint a new member from amongst the paid up members of the OBA.

6.5 The OBA will appoint shareholders to the EBU. This will be achieved by election at the AGM, from amongst the paid up members of the OBA. Shareholders will receive Management Committee agendas and minutes to assist in their role.

6.6 The Management Committee shall meet at such times and places and on such dates as it shall determine, but at least three times per calendar year. Any OBA member may attend to observe.

6.7 The Association Chairman shall take the Chair when present; otherwise the committee members present shall appoint one of their number to chair that meeting.

6.8 Notice of meetings: All committee members shall be given at least fourteen days' notice of any proposed meeting.

6.9 No business may be transacted at a meeting of the Management Committee unless a quorum is present when the meeting starts. A quorum shall be 6 members of whom at least two shall be Honorary Officers and at least two shall be Member Representatives.

6.10 If a quorum is not present within 15 minutes of the starting time specified in the notice of the meeting, the chair must adjourn the meeting. The date, time and place at which the meeting will resume must be notified to the committee members at least seven days before the date on which it will resume.

6.11 If a quorum is not present within 15 minutes of the start time of the adjourned meeting, the members present at the meeting constitute a quorum.

6.12 Each member present shall have one vote. In the event of a tie in any votes cast, the presiding Chair shall have an additional or casting vote.

6.13 Minutes of meetings: Minutes of the proceedings of meetings shall be kept by the Secretary and signed by the presiding Chairman. Minutes shall, within 14 days after the meeting, be circulated to members of the Management Committee, to the secretary of all OBA affiliated clubs, and posted to the OBA website.

6.14 Sub-committees and working groups: The Management Committee may from time to time set up such sub-committees or working groups it considers necessary or desirable for the running of the OBA and may delegate to such sub-committees or working groups the necessary authority to conduct the business for which they are formed. One such committee shall be a selection committee which will consist of at least three persons, selected by the Management Committee from nominations by clubs. The selection committee shall nominate a county captain, for formal appointment by the Management Committee. The Captain will then join the selection committee if not already a member.

6.15 Absences: Any member of the Management Committee who is absent from three consecutive meetings without permission, may be removed from the committee and any sub-committee if the remaining committee members so resolve.”

7 Financial Records

7.1 **Bank Account:** The Treasurer shall open and maintain a bank account in the name of the OBA. The signatures of the Treasurer and one other authorised person shall be required for payment of monies out of the Association, with the exception of amounts under £100 for which the signature of the Treasurer alone shall be sufficient. The other authorised persons are the Chairman and Secretary.

7.2 **Financial Records:** The Treasurer shall keep proper financial records and produce annual accounts which will be presented for approval by the members at the AGM.

7.3 **Reimbursement of costs:** The Treasurer shall reimburse, from the property of the OBA, any expenses properly incurred on behalf of the OBA.

7.4 **Submission of Accounts:** The Treasurer shall submit the accounts for audit at or soon after the end of the OBA financial year. The OBA accounting year shall end on the 31st March.

7.5 **Independent Examination of the Accounts:** An Honorary Independent Examiner, elected at the preceding Annual General Meeting, shall examine and report on the accounts.

Annual General Meeting (AGM)

8.1 Purpose and timing: The AGM of the OBA shall be held in Oxon in the first three months of the OBA financial year. The ordinary business of the AGM shall be to receive the report of the Honorary Officers, the Treasurer's Statement of Accounts for the past year, and to elect the Honorary Officers, Member Representatives, the Honorary Independent Examiner of the accounts and EBU shareholders for the current year.

8.2 Notice of the AGM and Agenda and nomination forms shall be sent to all paid up members of the OBA in written or (where possible) electronic form at least twenty-one days prior to the date fixed for such meetings. Nomination forms (for the election of Honorary Officers and Members' Representatives) should be returned to the Honorary Secretary not less than 7 days before the meeting.

8.3 Admission to the AGM shall be open to all paid up members of the OBA, who as such are entitled to vote when present.

8.4 No business may be transacted at an AGM unless a quorum is present when the meeting starts. A quorum shall be ten paid up members.

8.5 If a quorum is not present within 15 minutes of the starting time specified in the notice of the meeting, the chair must adjourn the meeting. The date, time and place at which the meeting will resume must be notified to all paid up members of the OBA at least seven days before the date on which it will resume.

8.6 If a quorum is not present within 15 minutes of the start time of the adjourned meeting, the members present at the meeting constitute a quorum.

8.7 The Chairman shall take the Chair when present for the election of the Honorary Officers, Member Representatives, the Honorary Independent Examiner of accounts and EBU Shareholders by a vote of the members and otherwise another officer shall take the chair save that no individual can chair any election in which they are a candidate. When there has been more than one nomination, a secret ballot will be held.

8.8 Voting: Except for the election of Honorary Officers, Member Representatives, the Honorary Independent examiner of the accounts and EBU Shareholders, every question at the AGM shall be decided by a show of hands, unless a secret ballot is either directed by the Chair or demanded by not less than ten persons present and entitled to vote. In the case of an equality of votes, the Chair shall have a second or casting vote.

8.9 Nominations of persons for seven Honorary Officers of the OBA, Member Representatives, the Honorary Independent examiner of the accounts and EBU Shareholders may be made by any paid up member. Exceptionally, should there be insufficient prior nominations for the existing vacancies, additional nominations can be proposed and seconded from the floor at the AGM.

8.10 Any paid up member or Affiliated Club may bring forward a resolution or motion at the AGM, provided that not less than twenty eight days' notice in writing is given to the Secretary.

9 Extraordinary General Meeting

9.1 An Extraordinary General Meeting may be called by the Management Committee at any time.

9.2 The Management Committee must, within 28 days, call an EGM if they receive a request to do so signed by not less than twenty paid up members and the request states the purpose for which the meeting is to be called.

9.3 The Secretary shall issue notice of the meeting, which will contain either the resolution or resolutions to be considered or the general purport of matters to be discussed.

9.4 The Chair shall be the Chairman or, if absent, whomsoever the majority of members present shall elect to chair the meeting.

9.5 Every question at an EGM shall be decided by a show of hands, unless a secret ballot is either directed by the Chair or demanded by not less than ten persons present and entitled to vote. In the case of an equality of votes, the Chair shall have a second or casting vote.

9.6 Clauses 8.2, 8.3, 8.4, 8.5, and 8.6 shall also apply to extraordinary general meetings.

10 Alterations To This Constitution

No repeal or amendment shall be made to this Constitution, or any schedules of this Constitution, except at an AGM or at an Extraordinary General Meeting by a resolution carried by at least two-thirds of the votes of those present and entitled to vote at the meeting. Notice of any resolutions to be proposed must be sent in writing to the Secretary, so that they can be circulated with the notice of the meeting.

11 Dissolution

11.1 The OBA may only be dissolved at an Extraordinary General Meeting called for that purpose.

11.2 Notice of the meeting must be sent to all members of the OBA at least twenty-one days prior to the date of the meeting.

A proposal shall take effect only if agreed by 75% of the members. Members may vote at the meeting or register a vote in writing with the Honorary Secretary, prior to the meeting.

11.3 If members so resolve to dissolve the OBA, then the Management Committee must collect in all assets, pay all liabilities and apply the remainder directly either for:

- a. the objectives of the OBA; or
- b. to a registered charity, to be chosen by the Management Committee in its absolute discretion.

12 Interpretation

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

Definitions

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

In Clauses 3.1 and 4.13 only, the reference to “duplicate contract bridge” shall be taken to include rubber bridge and any other form of non-competitive contract bridge, including but not limited to training events for Bridge for All and Junior Bridge for All members and other students of contract bridge.

Schedule A: Disciplinary Procedures

1. Requirements of the Schedule

This Schedule is referred to under clause 4.13 of the Constitution of the Oxfordshire Bridge Association (hereafter referred to as the OBA) 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 OBA shall act through its Conduct and Disciplinary Committees for the enforcement of standards prescribed in clause 4.13 of the Constitution. The OBA 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 OBA under the terms of clause 4.13 of its Constitution, must do so in writing to the Secretary or the Chairman of the OBA. The OBA 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 OBA should only convene an appeal hearing.

3. Conduct Committee

The Management Committee of the OBA shall appoint its Conduct Committee through its powers to appoint sub committees under clause 6.11 of the Constitution. The Conduct Committee shall be responsible for investigating complaints against the OBA's members and will determine whether a disciplinary offence should be referred to the OBA's Disciplinary Committee.

The Conduct Committee shall consist of no fewer than three members of the OBA 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 its meeting, shall have a second, or casting vote in the event that there is parity of voting.

4. Disciplinary Committee

The Management Committee of the OBA shall appoint the Disciplinary Committee through its powers to appoint sub committees under clause 6.11 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 OBA 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 its meeting, shall have a second, or casting vote in the event that there is parity of voting.

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

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 in its absolute discretion considers appropriate. The Conduct Committee shall also be entitled to seek advice both from within the OBA 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 caution is not accepted by the offending member, or the Conduct Committee does not feel a caution is appropriate, it 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 OBA for such period as it shall determine.
- If the complaint is against a member of the Management Committee then in addition to any other sanctions applied, the Disciplinary Committee shall have the power to suspend such member from the OBA's Management 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(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 (see below), the sanction shall not take effect until such appeal has been determined, and will be modified or cancelled if that determination so requires.

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 & 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.