

Finance Committee

Terms of reference

Oxford Bridge Club CIO delegates some of its operations and decision-making to officers and (usually) committees. The chair of any committee is the accountable officer, who acts on behalf of the board of trustees. The chair is responsible for ensuring that the committee acts within club policies and Charity Commission guidance and fulfils the terms of reference set out below.

Role / Purpose

The purpose of the finance committee is to support the treasurer in the financial operations and management of the club. As OBC is a small organisation, much of the day-to-day work is done by the treasurer. As such, it may not be necessary to hold regular committee meetings, but only when circumstances dictate.

Other members of the finance committee provide advice to the treasurer on new or difficult issues and cover the areas of work shown in appendix A.

The treasurer, supported as appropriate by the committee, is responsible for the following:

1. Financial operations: ensuring that all income due to the club is collected and all bills are promptly paid (within a week of approval) and managing the club's bank accounts.
2. Financial reporting: annual accounts (target within 3 months of year-end) and quarterly reports to the trustees and Charity Bank (within a month of quarter end).
3. Financial strategy: annual budgets (to be agreed normally in March/April), longer-term strategy (to be agreed with trustees), and advice on specific issues.
4. Financial probity and control: probity is everyone's responsibility, but the treasurer has a role in ensuring that everyone knows what they are/aren't allowed to do and that control systems minimise the risk of fraud or errors.

Accountability

- The committee is accountable to the chair of the committee (the treasurer), who is accountable to the board of trustees.
- The committee is responsible for reporting to the board of trustees, normally quarterly. Minutes of all meetings must be available for trustees.
- The committee will review the relevance and value of its work, and how best to organize it, annually.
- Budget accountability is the responsibility of the treasurer (the accountable officer).
- The effectiveness of all committees should be kept under review by the board of trustees.

Membership

- The committee comprises a minimum of three and maximum of five members. Some members will have specific roles (set out in appendix A). All committees must have at least one trustee as a member.
- Membership of the committee is open to any club member with appropriate skills, interest and knowledge. Any member with a potential conflict of interest must declare it (a) before joining the committee and (b) when any relevant issue is being discussed.
- Members are usually appointed (or have their existing appointment confirmed) annually, at the first meeting of the board of trustees after the AGM. New members can join at any time by agreement with trustees.
- It is good practice to keep the normal period of membership at three years (as with trustees). This can be extended where people have valuable skills or knowledge.
- As with trustees, the head of the committee should aim to develop someone to take over when he or she resigns.

Roles and responsibilities

The role of the committee as a whole is set out above. Most committees will assign some specific responsibilities to some individual committee members (including someone to act as secretary at meetings). These are set out for this committee in appendix A.

Making decisions

Decisions will be made in one of five possible ways:

1. Individual committee members with specific roles can make their own decisions within the limits of their role. They must observe probity, value for money etc.
2. The larger committees such as bridge and education may set up small sub-groups to make decisions on specific points, e.g. implementing online bridge or setting up a new educational course.
3. Major decisions will be made by the committee as a whole. The quorum for any decision is two, which must include the treasurer (unless unwell). Such decisions are made on behalf of the board of trustees, and the committee should follow the same guidance as the board would. Such decisions must be minuted.
4. Exceptionally, on a really urgent matter, the chair of the committee can make the decision and inform the rest of the committee later.
5. The chair of the committee must use his or her judgement in assessing which issues should be referred to the board of trustees for a decision: if in any doubt, he/she should check with the club secretary or chairman. Anything involving a payment to a trustee, other than routine expenses, must be referred to the board.

Any potential payment which is material (over £250) and unbudgeted must be cleared with the treasurer before it is committed.

Sharing of information, liaison and communication

- The head of the committee is responsible for liaising with the heads of other committees on issues which may affect them (for instance the use of club space), and for referring any difficult issues to the board of trustees.
- The secretary of the committee is responsible for ensuring that due confidentiality is followed, that conflicts of interest are avoided, and that the minutes of all meetings are made available to trustees on the G drive.

Amendments / modifications to ToR

- These Terms of Reference may be amended, varied or modified in writing after consultation and agreement with the Board of Trustees.

Appendix A – Committee members and roles

Peter Schroeder, treasurer: Overall responsibility for all financial issues, and currently for most of the day-to-day work.

Howard Arnes, deputy treasurer: Responsible for general advice (especially on commercial and banking issues); leading the introduction and ongoing management of cashless payment for face-to-face bridge; and able to make payments when required (only holiday or sickness cover at present)

John Briggs: Responsible for general advice, especially on the law and accounting requirements of charities.

Appendix B: Key regular tasks (and whose responsibility they are)

This Appendix is for the committee's benefit: trustees do not need to see or approve it.

At present the key regular tasks performed by the treasurer, some of which could be delegated, are:

1. Making payments to suppliers as they come up
2. Invoicing for money due (room hire)
3. Ensuring that income from bridge and education each month is as expected.
4. Managing the bank accounts to ensure that the main account has enough funds and the balance is put on deposit
5. Checking the XERO accounts each month
6. Providing accruals at each quarter end
7. Quarterly reporting to the trustees and Charity Bank
8. Oversight (or some hands-on work) of the annual accounts

Howard Arnes has no regular tasks but is expected to cover payments if the treasurer is unavailable.

John Briggs has no regular tasks, but will advise on and check draft annual accounts.