**North Eastern Bridge Association**

**Constitution 2022**

# 1. NAME

The Association shall be called ‘THE NORTH EASTERN BRIDGE ASSOCIATION’ (NEBA)

# 2. OBJECTS

The aims and objectives of NEBA shall be:

2.1. To organise duplicate contract bridge matches and competitions (both face-to-face and online) and associated social gatherings in Northumberland, Tyne & Wear, County Durham, Tees Valley and that part of North Yorkshire delegated by the Yorkshire Bridge Association to remain part of NEBA.

2.2. To co-operate with similar Associations for the advancement of the game.

2.3. To support all the constituent Affiliated Clubs within NEBA.

2.4. To support the activities of the English Bridge Union Ltd. (EBU) and to be a constituent member of it and operate within its current Bye-Laws, Rules and Policies.

2.5. To employ the funds of NEBA in such a manner as its Council may deem to be in the best interests of the game.

2.6 To support clubs and individual NEBA members in developing the educational capacity in the region (including but not limited to the provision of teachers – both EBTA trained and otherwise; the provision of materials – both tangible and online; delivering classes and seminars – both face-to-face and online; supporting clubs to provide sessions suitable for improvers).

# 3. MANAGEMENT

3.1. The affairs of NEBA shall be vested in a Council which shall comprise the Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary, Treasurer, and Chief Tournament Secretary, all of whom shall be elected at the Annual General Meeting. The Chief Tournament Director and Congress Secretary, shall be co-opted by the Executive and permanently co-opted to the Council, together with one representative from each Club affiliated to NEBA who shall be elected by the Club which they are representing. Members co-opted to the Council shall be entitled to vote at its meetings. All members of the Council must be members of NEBA (see Section 5 below).

3.2. The day to day management of NEBA shall be deputed to an Executive Committee consisting of the Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary, Treasurer, Chief Tournament Secretary, Chief Tournament Director and Congress Secretary. This Executive Committee shall meet not less than three times in each year (face-to-face or virtual, as decided by the Executive Committee) and may co-opt any up to six NEBA members to its number. Any members co-opted to the Committee shall be entitled to vote at its meetings. A quorum shall be three members. 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 for 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 certified by an Independent Examiner (as set out in the Charity Commission publication accessible at: <http://www.charitycommission.gov.uk/publications/cc31.aspx#d>) for each Annual General Meeting.

3.3. The Executive Committee shall from time to time set up or disband such Sub-Committees as are thought proper, necessary or desirable for the conduct of the business of NEBA and shall delegate to such Sub-Committees such power and authority as may be considered desirable for the purpose for which they are formed. The terms of reference of such Sub-Committees should be laid down in the Minute of Appointment. The decisions of any such Sub-Committees shall be subject to the approval of the Executive Committee.

3.4. The Council may from time to time deem it necessary, and have the power, to co-opt any person to assist in the furtherance of NEBA, such persons to have such voting rights as the Council shall determine.

3.5. In the event of any vacancy amongst the Officers or otherwise on the Committee the Executive will invite nominations and may co-opt new members. Any persistent vacancy within the Executive shall, in the immediate short run and as necessary, be filled by the Vice-Chair (assuming the vacancy is not the Vice-Chair).

3.6. A Club representative who is absent from any Council meeting may send a substitute who may speak or vote in their place.

3.7. The quorum for a Council meeting shall be eight.

3.8. An Independent Examiner shall be elected at the Annual General Meeting to certify the NEBA accounts.

3.9. Nominations for Vice-Chair, Secretary, Chief Tournament Secretary and Treasurer for the ensuing year must be in writing and in the hands of the Secretary not later than 21 days before the Annual General Meeting, but in the absence of any such written nominations verbal nominations may be accepted at the meeting.

3.10. The Chairman may not serve in that capacity for more than 3 successive years, at the end of which period it is normal practice that the Vice-Chair shall be nominated as the incoming Chair.

3.11. The Council shall appoint shareholders to the EBU Shareholders in accordance with NEBA’s entitlement as defined by the EBU and such shareholders shall be co-opted to the Council, if not otherwise a member of the Council, with full voting rights.

3.12. The Council may appoint such person or persons to be Honorary President(s) or Honorary Vice-President(s) of NEBA as it shall determine who shall hold office until death or resignation or until removed from office by a resolution of the Council.

3.13. In the event of a tied vote at any meeting of the NEBA Council, its Executive or any Committee or Sub-Committee or at any General Meeting, the Chairman of that body’s meeting shall have a casting vote. The Chairman of the meeting shall not otherwise have a vote.

3.14. The Council will normally meet on not less than two occasions during each year for the purposes of determining NEBA policy and approving or disapproving so far as is necessary the actions of the Executive Committee. Meetings may be face-to-face or virtual, and this decision shall reside with the Executive Committee.

# 4. GENERAL MEETINGS

4.1 Notice of the Annual General Meeting shall be made public by such various means as the Executive determine at least 21 days prior to the date of the meeting. The Annual General Meeting may be held physically or virtually.

4.2. Any agenda items submitted by a member must be sent to the Secretary no later than 7 days before the date of the Annual General Meeting.

4.3. Only members of NEBA shall have the right to vote at General Meetings.

4.4. The Annual General Meeting shall be held by May 31st in any year or as otherwise determined by Council.

4.5. A statement of Accounts, duly certified up to the 31st March, shall be submitted by the Treasurer for the Annual General Meeting.

4.6. An Extraordinary General Meeting of Members must be called upon the instruction of the Council, or upon the receipt by the Secretary of a written requisition signed by at least 25 members, and stating the nature of the business to be discussed. In the latter case, the Extraordinary General Meeting must be held not less than 21 days and not more than 28 days after the receipt of the written requisition by the Secretary. Notice of the Extraordinary General Meeting shall be given to affiliated Clubs not less than 14 days before agreed meeting. An Extraordinary General Meeting may be held physically or virtually.

4.7. A quorum for a General Meeting shall be 30 members.

4.8. If: (a) a quorum is not present at the time appointed for the meeting to start; or (b) a quorum ceases to be present during a meeting, the meeting may still come to indicative decisions on any matter, but those decisions must be ratified at a later General Meeting. The General Meeting must be re-convened and all members shall, via their Clubs, be invited with at least seven days’ notice.

4.9. If no quorum is present at the re-convened meeting at the time specified for the start of the meeting the members present at that time shall constitute the quorum for that meeting.

# 5. MEMBERSHIP

5.1. All members of NEBA must be Player Members of the EBU.

5.2. A Player Member of the EBU shall become an ordinary NEBA member when their primary allegiance to NEBA is recorded with the EBU.

5.3. A Player Member of the EBU whose primary allegiance is with another Association, or does not have primary allegiance to any Association, becomes a NEBA member once they have competed in 6 events forwhich NEBA County UMS is payable in that Membership Year. A player in the former group is a dual member; a player in the latter category is a direct member

5.4. The Membership Year runs from 1st April to 31st March.

5.5. Only NEBA members may vote at its Annual General Meeting and participate in any stages of its competitions in that Membership Year. For the avoidance of doubt, a non-member may play in a qualifying event for a later stage of a NEBA competition, but may not qualify (they are not participating in the ‘qualifying section’); only members may represent their Club in the InterClub competition; only members may represent NEBA in competitions; exceptionally, Council may lift these restrictions (see 8 below).

The Executive Committee is empowered to determine any contestable claims of membership.

5.8. The NEBA membership categories shall be as follows:

5.8.1. Ordinary Member

5.8.2. Dual Member

5.8.3. Direct Member

5.8.4. Life Member – the NEBA Council may honour members for their service by electing them to life membership of NEBA. A NEBA Life Member shall not be required to pay the entrance fee to any of its competitions.

# 6. AFFILIATED CLUBS

6.1. Any EBU affiliated bridge Club in the area covered by NEBA shall become affiliated to NEBA.

6.2. Affiliated Clubs are obliged to abide by the rulings and decisions of the Council in order to retain affiliation privileges, provided that such rulings are within the terms of the EBU Bye-Laws.

6.3. Any affiliated Club is responsible for paying any affiliation fees required by the EBU direct to the EBU, but which will not include any annual fee, if charged, by NEBA.

6.4. NEBA shall not be responsible for the liabilities of affiliated Clubs.

# 7. CONDUCT OF MEMBERS

7.1. Each member of NEBA shall be required whether at or away from the bridge table to conform to the standardsas prescribed by the Bye Laws and regulations of the EBU from time to time, and especially as set out in Best Behaviour at Bridge.

7.2. NEBA shall have the powers and the procedures for the enforcement of the requirement in clause 7.1. They are set out in the Disciplinary 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. COMPETITIONS

In determining conditions for NEBA Competitions, the Council normally restricts entry to NEBA members but may in exceptional circumstances (e.g. a player moves to the area within a Membership Year) allow non-members to play in NEBA competitions and may authorise the charging of higher fees to such non-members.

# 9. DISSOLUTION OF NEBA

NEBA can be dissolved at a General Meeting, provided at least two-thirds of the NEBA members present vote positively for its dissolution. The assets of NEBA shall then be split amongst other Bridge Organisations or donated to a charity or charities as decided by those present at the meeting.

# 10. ALTERATION OF THIS CONSTITUTION

10.1. The NEBA Constitution shall be amended only at a quorate Annual General Meeting (or a reconvened AGM) or at a quorate Extraordinary General Meeting (or at a reconvened EGM) called for the purpose. Quoracy is set out in 4.7, 4.8 and 4.9 above.

10.2. Particulars of proposed alterations to the Constitution shall be enclosed in the Notice of the General Meeting.

10.3. Any alterations to the Constitution will be made only if supported by at least two thirds of those present and entitled to vote.

July 2022