

SUSSEX COUNTY CONTRACT BRIDGE ASSOCIATION

CONSTITUTION 2019

1. TITLE & CONSTITUENT MEMBERSHIP

1.1 Sussex County Contract Bridge Association is an Association as defined in the Bye-Laws of the English Bridge Union Ltd and shall be referred to as 'the Association' throughout this Constitution.

1.2 The Association is a Constituent Member of the English Bridge Union Ltd. It shall abide by its Bye-Laws, Rules and Policies. Hereinafter the English Bridge Union Ltd shall be referred to as 'the EBU'.

2. OBJECTS OF THE ASSOCIATION

2.1 To promote and foster the playing of duplicate bridge in Sussex.

2.2 To organise and manage all forms of duplicate bridge competitions.

2.3 To employ the funds of the Association in the best interests of members in furtherance of the objects of the Association, having regard to the fact that the Association is a non-profit making body.

3. MANAGEMENT

3.1 Officers & Management Committee

The affairs of the Association shall be governed by the following Officers:

- Chair
- Vice Chair
- Secretary
- Treasurer

and not more than ten other members of the Association, who together will form a Management Committee.

3.2 Election

All Officers and other Management Committee members must be elected annually at an Annual General Meeting (hereinafter referred to as 'the AGM') by a simple majority of members of the Association present and voting.

3.3 Meetings of the Management Committee

The Management Committee shall meet from time to time as it deems fit, but not fewer than three times within a calendar year. The Chair, or in their absence, a deputy elected at the meeting, shall chair the meetings of the Management Committee. Affiliated Clubs shall be given 14 days notice of the date of each Management Committee meeting and shall be entitled to add a matter to the agenda for discussion at the meeting and/or send a club delegate who can speak but not vote at the meeting.

3.4 Quorum

A quorum for all purposes of the Management Committee shall consist of half of its elected members. The President and Vice-Presidents (see clause 9.1 below) shall not form part of this quorum.

3.5 Co-option & Casual Vacancies

The Management Committee shall have the power to co-opt any Association member for any specific purpose or to fill any casual vacancies. All such appointments shall lapse at the next AGM but may be renewed by the Management Committee.

3.6 Sub-Committees

The Management Committee may from time to time appoint and disband sub-committees as may be deemed necessary and may delegate to them such powers or duties as may be deemed to be expedient. Such sub-committees shall conduct their business as directed by the Management Committee. The Chair and Vice-Chair shall be ex officio members of all the Association Committees with the exception of the Conduct & Disciplinary Committees; see clause 5 of Schedule A.

3.7 EBU Shareholders

The Management Committee shall appoint EBU Shareholders.

3.8 Monies and Assets

3.8.1 The Management Committee is responsible for the control of all monies and assets of the Association.

3.8.2 Accounts comprising a statement of income and expenditure and a balance sheet made respectively up to 31st December shall be approved by the Management Committee and certified by the independent examiner (see clause 7.4 below) and submitted to the following AGM.

4. AFFILIATED DUPLICATE BRIDGE CLUB

4.1 Any Duplicate Bridge Club (hereinafter called a 'club') may affiliate with the EBU and all EBU-affiliated clubs in Sussex shall be affiliated with the Association.

4.2 Affiliation to the EBU is achieved through an application process which requires applicants to agree to the EBU clubs terms of affiliation.

4.3 The application of any Association club affiliation fee shall be approved by the members present and voting at an Association general meeting.

4.4 If the Association receives evidence that an affiliated club might be in breach of the EBU clubs terms of affiliation, the Association shall report the matter to the EBU for consideration of action under the relevant clause of those terms of affiliation.

5. MEMBERSHIP

5.1 All members of the Association must be Player Members of the EBU and comply with the Association's terms and conditions.

5.2 A Player Member of the EBU shall become a member of the Association when their primary allegiance to the Association is recorded with the EBU.

5.3 Membership Fees

Any change in Subscriptions and the Association's Universal Membership Scheme (UMS) component for the year starting on the following 1st April shall be approved by a simple majority of members present and voting at the AGM.

5.4 Membership year

The membership year shall run from 1st April - 31st March.

5.5 Membership categories

5.5.1 Ordinary Member - a Player Member of the EBU as shown in paragraph 5.2

5.5.2 Dual Member - a Player Member of the EBU who has their primary allegiance recorded with another Association

5.5.3 Direct Member - a Direct Player Member of the EBU who at the time of the application does not have primary allegiance to any Association.

6. CONDUCT

6.1 Each member of the Association shall be required in connection with the game of duplicate bridge and variations thereof, to conform to the standards, including fair play, courtesy and personal deportment, prescribed in the Bye-Laws and Regulations, for the time being, of the EBU.

6.2 The Association shall have the powers and the procedure for the enforcement of this requirement as set out in the Schedule A to this Constitution which shall stand as part of the Constitution and be subject to the same provisions as the Constitution for its amendment.

7. GENERAL MEETINGS

7.1 AGM

The AGM of the Association shall be held in April of each year or as soon as possible thereafter.

7.2 Publication and notification of the AGM

The place, time and date of the AGM shall be determined by the Management Committee and shall be published on the County Website and sent to affiliated clubs giving at least 40 days notice. The notice shall specify the closing date for:

- (a) nominations for Officers of the Association and Members of the Management Committee; and,
- (b) resolutions to be included in the agenda with names of the proposer and seconder.

7.3 Agenda

The agenda will be published on the County website. A copy of the agenda specifying the business of the meeting shall be sent to each affiliated club. Affiliated clubs will be requested to display a copy of the agenda and to have additional copies available for their members. The notification will be forwarded to clubs and posted on the website to allow 21 clear days notice of the business for the meeting.

7.4 AGM Business

The ordinary business of the meeting shall be:

- (a) submission of reports of the Management Committee;
- (b) to receive and if approved, to adopt a statement of the Association's accounts for the year ending the previous 31st December;
- (c) to elect Officers and other members of the Management Committee;
- (d) to appoint an independent examiner who can be an Association member;
- (e) to approve any changes in subscriptions, affiliation charges and UMS rates;
- (f) to approve any single item of capital expenditure in excess of the lower of £10,000 or 50% of the Associations Reserves as shown in the latest adopted accounts;
- (g) to consider proposals made by the Management Committee; and,
- (h) any other business.

Voting shall be by simple majority, by a show of hands or by ballot as directed by the chair of the meeting. The chair shall be permitted to exercise a casting vote. Proxy votes shall not be accepted. A formal vote will not be allowed in respect of items raised under clause 7.4(h).

7.5 Members' Resolutions to General Meetings

7.5.1 An Association member may forward a resolution to the Association Secretary by the date specified in the notice convening the meeting. The resolution must be signed by the proposer, seconder and 20 Association members.

7.5.2 Such resolution shall be included as an agenda item and a copy of the resolution will be attached to the agenda and displayed on the County website.

7.5.3 An application to amend a resolution shall be sent to the Secretary in time to allow members seven days notice of the proposed amendment. The Secretary will arrange for the proposed amendment to be displayed on the County website and sent to all affiliated clubs.

7.6 Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM)

7.6.1 An EGM shall be convened on the instructions of the Chair or on receipt of a requisition signed by not less than 30 Association members stating the purpose of the meeting.

7.6.2 A notice convening the meeting together with either the motions or a statement of the matters to be discussed shall be published on the County Website and sent to affiliated clubs at least 21 days before the meeting.

7.6.3 The meeting shall deal only with the published motions or matters.

7.7 Voting on resolutions under clause 7.5 and 7.6 shall be by show of hands or by ballot as directed by the chair of the meeting. Proxy votes shall not be accepted. A resolution shall be carried by 20 members or two-thirds of those present and voting, whichever is the greater.

7.8 Quorum

7.8.1 The quorum for the conduct of business at a general meeting shall be 10 members, except where an EGM is held following a failure to reach a quorum at an AGM or EGM – see clause 7.8.3.

7.8.2 The Secretary shall be required to arrange a further EGM, if an AGM or EGM fails to reach a quorum. In both circumstances the additional EGM with no change in the agenda shall be scheduled to occur within a period of 28 days after the aborted AGM or EGM. The Secretary shall publish on the County Website the date, venue and time of the additional EGM giving at least 7 days' notice.

7.8.3 The Members present at the additional EGM shall be the quorum.

8. ELECTIONS

8.1 Any two members of the Association may nominate a member to serve as an Officer or as a Management Committee member, having previously received the assent of such member.

8.2 Each such nomination will require a completed application form from the nominated person. Such application form will be as prescribed by the Management Committee and will be available for downloading from the County Website.

8.3 At each Election the retiring Officers and Management Committee members may offer themselves for re-election by submitting an application form, subject to clause 8.4.

8.4 The Chair may stand for re-election and if re-elected may serve as Chair for a continuous period of five years. Upon expiry of the maximum period of service the Chair shall not be permitted to stand for the Office of Chair again until the AGM the following year.

8.5 If insufficient nominations have been received in advance of the AGM, the Chair may accept nominations before the meeting.

9. OTHER APPOINTMENTS

9.1 President and Vice Presidents

9.1.1 The Association may appoint a President and not more than five Vice-Presidents.

9.1.2 Such appointments shall be made in recognition of long and valuable service to the Association.

9.1.3 The appointments shall be subject to the approval of a General Meeting.

9.1.4 The President and Vice-Presidents shall enjoy the full rights of ordinary members. They may also attend and speak in meetings of the Management Committee.

9.2 Honorary Members

9.2.1 Honorary members may be elected at any General Meeting of the Association in recognition of outstanding service to bridge at Club, County or National level.

9.2.2 Honorary members may be elected for life or for such other period as a General Meeting shall deem expedient and will automatically become paid-up members of the Association for each Membership Year whilst they remain Playing Members of the EBU.

9.2.3 An Honorary Member shall be given such concessions as the Management Committee shall determine.

10. AMENDMENT OF CONSTITUTION

This Constitution shall not be amended except at a general meeting of the Association. A notice of the proposed amendment shall be sent to members at least 21 days before the date of the AGM or EGM and no motion amending the Constitution shall be passed unless it is supported by 7 members or two-thirds of those present and voting, whichever is the greater, except where the EGM is held following a failure to reach a quorum at an AGM or EGM. Then the motion will be passed if two thirds of those present support it.

11. DISSOLUTION OF THE ASSOCIATION

11.1 The SCCBA can be dissolved at an EGM provided at least two-thirds of the player members attending the EGM positively vote for its dissolution.

11.2 On dissolution the assets of the SCCBA shall be donated to a charity or charities decided by player members attending the dissolution meeting.

Dated: 8 April 2019

SCCBA Constitution 2019

Schedule A: Disciplinary Procedures

1. Requirements of the Schedule

This Schedule is referred to under clause 6 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 6 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 members of the Association (hereinafter “the Defendant”), under the terms of clause 6 of the Constitution must do so in writing to the Association Chair or Secretary. The Association 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 County Association should only convene an appeal hearing.

3. Conduct Committee

3.1 The Management Committee of the Association shall appoint a Conduct Committee through its powers to appoint sub committees under clause 3.6 of the Constitution. The Conduct Committee shall be responsible for investigating complaints against the Association's members and to determine whether a Disciplinary Offence should be referred to the Association's Disciplinary Committee.

3.2 The Conduct Committee shall consist of no fewer than three members of the Association and no more than seven. 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 their absence the Conduct Committee shall select to chair a meeting, shall have a second, or casting vote in the event that there is parity of voting.

4. Disciplinary Committee

4.1 Where required to consider a case referred by the Conduct Committee, the Management Committee of the Association shall appoint a Disciplinary Committee through its powers to appoint sub committees under clause 3.6 of the Constitution. In order not to impede the progress of individual cases, the authority to make appointments to a Disciplinary Committee will be exercised by the Officers of the Association on behalf of the Management Committee, taking care to ensure the independence of the appointees. 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, determine the sanction to be imposed.

4.2 The Disciplinary Committee shall consist of no fewer than three members of the Association and no more than seven. 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 there shall be no abstentions.

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

6. 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, the Conduct Committee shall first consider whether such complaint or matter falls within the scope of the Disciplinary Rules and whether further action is warranted. 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. If it does take action 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 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 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 Defendant which will end the matter.

If the Defendant does not accept the verbal caution, or the Conduct Committee decides a verbal caution is inappropriate, the complaint shall be referred for a hearing by the Disciplinary Committee.

The Defendant shall:

(a) be notified, in writing, within two weeks of this decision and of their right to make a written submission to the Disciplinary Committee and to attend the hearing.

(b) have the right to be represented by legal counsel of their choice and at their own expense or may be accompanied by a person to speak on their behalf.

The Disciplinary Committee shall give at least two weeks, or such other period as maybe agreed, 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 impose one, or more, of the following Sanctions:

(a) Give a written reprimand to the Defendant.

(b) Suspend the Defendant from all or some of the competitions sponsored or licensed by the Association for such period or under such terms as it shall determine.

(c) Require the Defendant to repay the cost of repairing any physical damage caused by their action.

(d) Determine whether, and in what terms, any publicity should be given to the decision.

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 Association'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 Defendant in writing within twenty one days of the hearing.

No sanction shall come into effect until the time limit for an appeal has expired (see clause 6.5). If an appeal is made the sanction will not come into effect until the appeal has been determined and will be modified or cancelled if that determination so requires.

6.5 Appeal

6.5.1 From a decision of the Disciplinary Committee

Each member found guilty of a Disciplinary 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 offending member.

6.5.2 From a decision of an Affiliated Bridge Club

Each member found guilty of a Disciplinary Offence by a club disciplinary committee has the right to appeal to the County Association Conduct and Discipline Committees. Appeals must be in writing and lodged with the County Association Secretary within twenty one days of the written communication of the club disciplinary committee's decision to the offending member.

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.

8 April 2019