

MANCHESTER COUNTY BRIDGE ASSOCIATION

CONSTITUTION

1 TITLE AND CONSTITUENT MEMBERSHIP

- 1.1 The Manchester County 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 the Constitution.
- 1.2 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.
- 1.3 The terms Association, Member and Playing Member have the meanings set out in the Bye Laws of the EBU.

2 OBJECTS OF THE ASSOCIATION

- 2.1 To promote the game of Bridge in the County of Manchester and its environs; to support all bridge clubs in the County of Manchester and its environs; to run county events, including those that qualify for national county events; and the encouragement of inter-club, inter-county and national competitions.
- 2.2 To employ the funds of the Association in the best interests of the game of Bridge, having regard to the fact that the Association is a non-profit making body.

3 MEMBERSHIP

INDIVIDUAL MEMBERSHIP

- 3.1 Individual members of the Association must be Player Members of the EBU.
- 3.2 A Player Member of the EBU shall become a member of the Association when
 - 3.2.1 They are a member of the EBU through the EBU Play To Play (P2P) scheme and nominate Manchester as their county of primary or secondary allegiance.
 - 3.2.2 They become a direct member of the county under the EBU Direct Membership scheme.
 - 3.2.3 Any other method of membership which the EBU will in the future allow and which will allow membership of the Association.

- 3.3 In terms of attending meetings, voting, becoming an officer of the Association or a member of the Executive Committee, or any other business concerned with the Association, there will be no distinction between members who have primary allegiance to the Association and members who have secondary allegiance to the Association. The distinction will only be relevant to events in which the EBU, or the Association, specify that only members with primary allegiance can play. The Association should strain to have events restricted to members of primary allegiance only when these are prescribed by the EBU.
- 3.4 The Executive Committee of the Association may honour long standing members for their service to the Association by electing them to life membership of the Association. A Life Member of the Association shall automatically become a member of the Association for each Membership Year whilst they remain a Playing Member of the EBU and shall not be required to pay any annual subscription for their Association membership category.

AFFILIATED BRIDGE CLUBS

- 3.5 Any Bridge Club affiliated to the EBU may affiliate to the Association and all such clubs affiliated to the Association shall also be affiliated to the EBU. The Association has the right to determine at an Annual General Meeting through a simple majority of the members present, including the annual club affiliation fee, if any, to be charged for the twelve month period from the following 1st April.

4 MEETING OF THE ASSOCIATION MEMBERS

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

- 4.1 There shall be an Annual General Meeting (AGM) each calendar year, usually held in late May or June after the end of league season. Except in exceptional circumstances, the AGM must be held by the end of September in any calendar year.
- 4.2 The venue, date and time of the AGM shall be published on the MCBA websites at least 6 weeks beforehand and also notified by e-mail to the Secretaries of all affiliated clubs and, as far as reasonably practical, by e-mail to all members of the Association. It is then the responsibility of each club Secretary to make the members of that club aware of the location and timing of the AGM whether by distributing notice of the AGM at club duplicates or by e-mail circulation to those members who attend the club duplicates somewhat infrequently.
- 4.3 Unless specified by the previous AGM, any EGM that occurs after the previous AGM, or a decision by the Executive after the AGM or any EGM, the AGM will be held online, on a platform deemed suitable by the Executive, usually zoom.

- 4.4 A request for a Special Resolution from an Association member, which shall require a vote of members at the AGM, must be sent in writing to the Secretary no later than three weeks before the date of the AGM. The request must be proposed by the member and seconded by another member of the Association. The chair may choose to accept other resolutions, duly proposed and seconded, at the AGM, but is under no obligation to do so.
- 4.5 A nomination for an Association member to serve on the Executive Committee as Chair, Secretary or Treasurer must be received in writing by the Secretary three weeks before the date of the AGM. The nomination must be proposed and seconded by members of the Association and the Nominee must have consented in writing to such a nomination. The chair at the AGM can accept further nominations at the AGM, duly proposed and seconded, but is under no obligation to do so.
- 4.6 Nominations, duly proposed and seconded, for all other posts in the Association, can be received before the AGM or at the AGM. The chair is required to accept any nominations duly proposed and seconded, at the AGM for any other post.
- 4.7 In addition to the above-mentioned Officers, the other members of the Executive, the EBU Shareholders of the Association, the members of the Selection Committee, Conduct Committee, Disciplinary Committee, the President of the Association, and any other officers shall be elected at the AGM.
- 4.8 The Secretary shall circulate by e-mail to all affiliated clubs, as far as practical to all members by e-mail, and cause to be published on the Association websites, the Agenda, any reports from the officers of the Association, any special resolutions properly proposed and seconded, and any nominations for posts, duly proposed and seconded, no later than two weeks before the date of the AGM.
- 4.9 The quorum for an AGM shall be fifteen members of the Association.
- 4.10 The business of the AGM shall include, but may not be limited to:
- Approval of the minutes of the previous AGM and matters arising.
 - Reports from officers of the Executive. These should be published before the AGM and will be taken as tabled unless there are questions from members present at the AGM.
 - Election of all officers and posts to the Association. Any post or officer with only 1 candidate will be elected without a vote.
 - Any resolutions duly proposed and seconded within the timescales given in paragraph 4.4 above.

EXTRAORDINARY GENERAL MEETING

- 4.11 A request for an Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM) by an Association member must be sent in writing to the Secretary together with the Special Resolution(s), which shall require a vote of the Association members present at the EGM. The request must be supported in writing by at least fifteen members of the Association.
- 4.12 The EGM shall be held no earlier than 28 days and no later than 42 days after the Secretary has received the written request. The Secretary must publish the date, venue and time of the EGM at least three weeks before the date of the EGM.
- 4.13 The Executive will decide on the venue of the EGM, but it will usually be online on the zoom platform.
- 4.14 Unless the EGM has been called as the result of an AGM being inquorate, no business shall be transacted at an EGM except that specified in the special resolution(s) accompanying the request for the EGM.
- 4.15 The quorum for an EGM shall be fifteen members of the Association.

INQUORATE MEETINGS

- 4.16 The Secretary shall be required to arrange a further EGM, if an AGM or EGM respectively fails to reach a quorum. In both circumstances the additional EGM shall be scheduled to occur within the period of 28 days to 42 days after the aborted AGM or EGM. The Secretary shall publish the date, venue and time of the EGM at least three weeks before the date of the additional EGM. All arrangements will follow the same pattern as for the AGM or EGM.
- 4.17 If the additional EGM once again fails to reach a quorum, the Executive Committee shall be able to take any decisions necessary so that it can continue to manage the affairs of the Association.

5 VOTING

- 5.1 Each member of the Association present at an AGM or EGM shall be entitled to 1 vote on any resolution or any election to any post.
- 5.2 Any vote at an AGM or an EGM which is tied, shall be split by the casting vote of the Chair of the AGM or EGM.

6 MANAGEMENT OF THE ASSOCIATION

- 6.1 The management of the affairs of the Association shall be vested in the following Officers:-

- (a) Chair (who also acts as the Chair of the Executive Committee)
- (b) Vice Chair
- (c) Secretary
- (d) Treasurer
- (e) Tournament Secretary
- (f) Membership Secretary
- (g) League Secretary
- (h) Higson Cup & Plate Secretary
- (i) Goldstone Trophy Secretary
- (h) Green Point Events Secretary
- (i) Chair of Selectors (or if the chair of selectors is already a member of the Executive, then the secretary of the selectors)
- (j) Congress Secretary
- (k) Publicity Secretary

who together will form the Executive Committee.

- 6.2 All such Executive Committee members must be elected annually at the Annual General Meeting by a simple majority of the members of the Association present at the AGM with the exception of the Chair of Selectors who is chosen at the first meeting of the Selection Committee after the AGM.
- 6.3 The Executive Committee shall meet from time to time as it deems fit. A quorum shall consist of six members.
- 6.4 The Executive Committee should aim to reach consensus on issues, but in the event of a vote, each member of the Executive shall have 1 vote.
- 6.5 The Executive Committee shall have the power to co-opt and to fill any casual vacancies. Any co-options to fill any vacancy shall entitle that member to a vote on the Executive, However, co-options that do not fill vacancies do not entitle members to a vote on the Executive, and the chair may not grant such a vote.
- 6.6 The Executive 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 expedient. Such sub-committees shall conduct their business as directed by the Executive Committee.
- 6.7 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 audited, for each Annual General Meeting. The signatures of the Treasurer and one other authorised member of the Executive Committee shall be required on the paperwork for the payment of monies out of the Association.

7 MEMBERS' BEHAVIOUR

- 7.1 Each member of the Association shall be required, in connection with the game of Bridge, to conform to the standards of fair play, courtesy and personal deportment prescribed by the Bye Laws and regulations for the time being of the EBU. Specifically, members of the Association shall be required to abide by Best Behaviour in Bridge as defined by the EBU.
- 7.2 The Association shall have the powers and the procedures for the enforcement of the requirement in clause 7.1. They are set out in the 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 CONSTITUTION AMENDMENTS

- 8.1 Alterations to the Constitution shall be made only at an AGM or EGM through the positive votes of at least two thirds of the members present.

9 DISSOLUTION OF THE ASSOCIATION

- 9.1 The Association can be dissolved at an EGM provided at least two thirds of the total members present on the date of the EGM positively vote for its dissolution. The dispersal of the assets of the Association on a dissolution shall be decided by the members attending the dissolution meeting.

10 INTERPRETATION

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

Schedule of Disciplinary Procedures

1 Requirements of the Schedule

This Schedule is referred to under clause 7.2 of the Constitution and prescribes the powers and procedures for enforcement. It will comply with and follows the EBU disciplinary procedures and any variations thereof that are made from time to time. The Association shall act through its Conduct & Disciplinary Committee for the

enforcement of standards prescribed in clause 7.1 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, under the terms of clause 7.1 of the Constitution, must do so in writing to the Secretary or the Chairman of the Association.

The County 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

The AGM of the Association shall elect a Conduct Committee. 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.

The Conduct Committee shall consist of no fewer than three members of the Association 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 its absence the 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

The AGM of the Association shall also elect a Disciplinary Committee. 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 Association 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 a 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 & Disciplinary Committees

Any member of the Conduct Committee or Disciplinary Committee who is in any way 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, 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 Chairman 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 Conduct 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 Defendant does not accept the verbal caution, or the Conduct Committee decides a verbal caution is inappropriate, the Conduct Committee 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 it is upheld, then the Disciplinary Committee shall be made aware of any previous sanctions against the member(s), whether verbal cautions, written reprimands, or suspensions.

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 Association for such period as it shall determine.

If the complaint is against a member of the Executive Committee then in addition to any other sanctions applied, the Disciplinary Committee shall have the power to suspend such member from the Association's Executive 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 in writing within twenty one days of the hearing.

No sanction shall come into effect until the time limit for an appeal has expired. 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

Each member found guilty of a Disciplinary Offence by the Disciplinary Committee has the right to appeal to the EBU Conduct Committee. Appeals must be in writing and lodged with the Secretary of the EBU Conduct Committee within twenty one days of the written communication of the 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 Conduct 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.

This constitution was last updated in May 2026