

SHEFFIELD BRIDGE CLUB

CONSTITUTION

As revised and approved by Members at an Annual General Meeting on 25 October 2021.

1. NAME AND LOCATION

- (a) The name of the Club shall be “Sheffield Bridge Club” (“the Club”).
- (b) The Club is located at 6, Thornsett Road, Sheffield S7 1NA. (“the Club Premises”).

2. DEFINITIONS

The following definitions apply throughout this Constitution:

The Committee = The Officers and the Ordinary Committee Members.

The Officers = The six Officers whose duties are described in Clause 4(a).

The Ordinary Committee Members = The members of the Committee excluding the Officers.

Members = Members of the Club.

A Visitor = A person visiting the Club not accompanied by a Member.

A Guest = A person visiting the Club accompanied by a Member.

Annual General Meeting = A Meeting for Members held each year for the purposes set out in Clause 8(a).

Extraordinary General Meeting = A Meeting for Members convened from time to time in addition to the Annual General Meetings as set out in Clause 8(c).

General Meeting = An Annual General Meeting or an Extraordinary General Meeting

The Regulations = Regulations passed by the Committee subject to and in accordance with the provisions of Clause 4 (m).

EBU = English Bridge Union.

YCBA = Yorkshire Contract Bridge Association.

3. OBJECTIVES

- (a) The objectives of the Club are
- to promote facilities for Members to play Duplicate and other forms of Contract Bridge;
 - to provide a pleasant social environment for Members; and
 - to provide facilities for beginners, improvers and less experienced players to learn, improve and play Contract Bridge in a friendly and supportive atmosphere.
- (b) The Club shall be affiliated to the YCBA and the EBU.

4. MANAGEMENT

(a) The Management of the Club shall be vested in a Committee of Members consisting of the Officers and up to six Ordinary Committee Members. The Officers shall be:

- Chairman – to co-ordinate the management of the Club for the benefit of its Members.
- Vice-Chairman – to assist and to deputise for the Chairman.
- Treasurer – to keep proper books and manage the finances of the Club for the benefit of Members.
- Secretary – to produce agendas and minutes of meetings, to maintain membership records and to co-ordinate Club documentation and communications.
- Chief Tournament Director – To plan and manage the programme of play and competitions and to oversee all tournament director functions.
- House Manager – To be responsible for the domestic arrangements of the Club except for aspects allocated to other Officers or Members.

(b) The Officers shall be elected and be eligible for re-election annually at the Annual General Meeting. No Member may simultaneously hold more than one office.

(c) All Ordinary Committee Members shall be elected and be eligible for re-election at the Annual General Meeting. Those with three years' consecutive elected service on the Committee shall be ineligible for re-election during the ensuing year (but shall be eligible to be co-opted in the event of a vacancy).

(d) Nominations for the election of Officers and Ordinary Committee Members must be made in writing and delivered to the Secretary for posting on the Club notice board at least 48 hours before the due start of the Annual General Meeting. The Secretary will post a pro-forma on the Club Premises notice board to facilitate this process. Valid nominations must be proposed by one Member, seconded by another Member and accompanied by the written consent of the nominee.

(e) The election or re-election of Officers and Ordinary Committee Members shall be by ballot and balloting lists shall be prepared containing the names of the candidates only and each Member shall be entitled to vote for any number of such candidates not exceeding the number of vacancies. Scrutineers shall be appointed by and from the Members present to count the votes and to certify to the Chairman the result of the ballot. If two or more candidates for the last remaining vacancy obtain an equal number of votes, a further ballot shall be taken to decide which of such candidates shall be elected. In the event of there not being enough candidates, the Committee shall have the power of co-option to fill the vacancies (see Clause 4(c) and (h)).

(f) Any Officer or Ordinary Committee Member wishing to resign from the Committee shall notify the Chairman or Secretary in writing, such resignation having effect from the date specified in the resignation, or, in the absence of such specification, with immediate effect.

(g) A Committee Member may be removed from office by a vote at a General Meeting.

(h) The Committee shall have the power to co-opt Members to fill vacancies for Officers and Ordinary Committee Members that are created during the year. (Such co-opted Ordinary Committee Members are considered to be non-elected for the purpose of Clause 4(c).)

(i) At least seven days' notice shall be given of all Committee meetings (except in an emergency) and they shall be summoned:-

- on the instructions of the Chairman, or in his/her absence the Vice-Chairman.
- at the request of three or more members of the Committee for the discussion of a particular matter or of particular matters.

(j) The quorum for a meeting of the Committee shall be five including at least one Officer. In the event that it becomes impossible for the Committee to hold a quorate meeting because of the resignation or death of Committee members, the remaining members of the Committee or, if there are no remaining members of the Committee, any Member may call an Extraordinary General Meeting to elect members to fill the vacancies in the Committee at the earliest opportunity. Until that Extraordinary General Meeting is held, the remaining members of the Committee and the Chairman are authorised to take the decisions needed to continue the Club's weekly bridge sessions.

(k) The accounts and books kept by the Treasurer shall be subject to an annual Independent Examination. This will be conducted by a person who is not an Officer or Ordinary Committee Member.

(l) In the case of an equality of votes the Chairman of the Committee meeting shall be entitled to a further casting vote.

(m) The Committee may formulate and shall publish Regulations as it considers expedient for the efficient running of the Club, provided that such Regulations are supplementary to this Constitution and do not conflict with it. Changes to the Regulations during the course of a year must be put before the Members for approval at the next Annual General Meeting (or earlier at an Extraordinary General Meeting) and will cease to have effect if not approved.

(n) The Committee may appoint sub-committees to undertake, on its behalf, such aspects of the administration of the Club as it shall consider fit. Members of a sub-committee may include Members who are not members of the Committee.

5. TRUSTEES

(a) There shall be not less than two and not more than four Trustees of the Club Premises. Trustees must be Members.

(b) The Committee shall appoint the Trustees and the Club Premises shall be vested in the Trustees.

(c) The Trustees must deal with the Club Premises as directed by resolution of the Committee, and an entry in the Committee's minute book shall be conclusive evidence of such resolution.

(d) The Trustees shall be indemnified out of Club Funds and any applicable Club Policy of Insurance in respect of properly incurred expenses; and against any liability incurred in the proper performance of their duties.

(e) Where by reason of the death or resignation of a Trustee, or on removal of a Trustee by resolution of the Committee, a new Trustee needs to be appointed, or if the Committee deems it expedient to appoint an additional Trustee or Trustees, the Committee may by resolution nominate the person or persons to be appointed as the new Trustee or Trustees. To give effect to such nomination

- the Chairman (or failing him/her, the Vice-Chairman) is nominated as the person to appoint new Trustees within the meaning of Section 36 of the Trustee Act 1925 (as may be amended, replaced or supplemented from time to time).
- the Chairman (or Vice-Chairman) shall formally appoint the person or persons nominated by the Committee as the new Trustee or Trustees of the Club.
- the provisions of the Trustee Act 1925 (as may be amended, replaced or supplemented from time to time) shall apply to any appointment.

6. MEMBERSHIP AND ELECTION OF CLUB MEMBERS

(a) Membership will be open to all who share the objectives of the Club without regard to age, disability, race, gender, sexual orientation or religion. Subject to Clause 7(c), all categories of Members shall be entitled to all the rights, privileges and advantages of the Club.

(b) Every candidate for admission as a Member shall be proposed by one Member and seconded by another stating for how long they have known him/her and that the particulars on the application form are correct. The candidate shall be proposed by completing an application form, details from which will be displayed on the Club notice board for not less than 28 consecutive days. During the period the application is on the board, the candidate shall be entitled to the rights, privileges and advantages of the Club except that he/she may not attend General Meetings, vote on any issue, stand for election, propose candidates for election or membership, or sign in Guests or Visitors.

(c) The election of candidates for membership shall be vested in the Committee. A candidate for election who receives the vote of the majority of the Committee present and voting shall be declared elected.

(d) In the event of a past Member seeking re-admission to the club, the Committee shall have the power to waive the procedure laid down in Clauses 6(b) and (c) and may accept the past Member forthwith.

(e) Upon the election of a Member, notice thereof shall be given to him/her and he/she shall be furnished with a copy of this Constitution and Club regulations unless these are available on the Internet; after which he/she shall be entitled to all the benefits and advantages of the Club (subject to compliance with Clause 7).

(f) The Committee shall have the power to defer the admission of new Members if in their opinion the Club membership is full.

7. SUBSCRIPTIONS.

(a) Subscriptions shall be due on 1st August in each year. The Committee will define subscription levels subject to a maximum level which may be changed only by a General Meeting.

(b) Where a Member, due to illness or to other circumstances which satisfy the Committee, is prevented from using the Club for a considerable length of time, the Committee may grant that Member a reduced membership fee or a rebate.

(c) Should any Member's subscription be more than one month in arrears (ie after 31st August), the Member shall be deemed to have discontinued their membership and at that point, the former Member therefore forfeits all privileges of membership. If the subscription that is in arrears is paid within the following month of September, re-application for membership will not be required. Any Member who is more than two months (i. e. after September 30th) in arrears will be required to make a re-application for membership. A list of lapsed members may be posted on the Club notice-board in order to facilitate the execution of the duties of the Tournament Director.

8. GENERAL MEETINGS

(a) The Annual General Meeting of the Club shall normally be held in October

- To receive annual reports from the Chairman, Treasurer and Chief Tournament Director
- to receive the annual accounts and the accompanying report of the Independent Examiner,
- to elect the Officers and Ordinary Committee Members,
- to consider any proposals to amend the Constitution,
- to consider any resolution which may be submitted by means of a note in writing to the Secretary not later than fourteen days before the meeting, and
- to consider any other business as determined by the Committee.

(b) At least twenty one days' notice shall be given of an Annual General Meeting.

(c) At least seven days' notice shall be given of any Extraordinary General Meeting which

- may be called by the Committee for special business.
- may be called pursuant to Clause 4(j).
- shall be called by the Chairman at the request of at least twenty Members. In such case, the Meeting will be held at a date no later than four weeks after the date of the request.

(d) Business conducted at an Extraordinary General Meeting will be confined to the business for which the meeting is called and which is stated in the notices calling that meeting.

(e) Only Members may attend or vote at a General Meeting. The quorum at a General Meeting shall be twenty Members. If no quorum is present after 15 minutes, the meeting shall be adjourned and 14 days notice given of the adjourned meeting. The quorum at a meeting adjourned for this reason shall be the number of Members actually present. General Meetings shall be chaired by the Chairman or, in his/her absence, the Vice-Chairman, or, in his/her absence, by a person elected for the purpose by the meeting.

(f) In the event of an equality of votes where a simple majority is required the Chairman of the Meeting shall be entitled to a casting vote.

(g) Members unable to attend a General Meeting of the Club may bring forward any proposal by proxy or in writing (subject to Clauses 4(d) and 8(h) on notice) but may not, unless a change of this Constitution is involved, register a vote unless present at the time of voting.

(h) No alterations of this Constitution shall be made except at a General Meeting and then shall be determined only by a vote of at least two thirds of those voting, being in favour of the motion. Spoilt ballot papers and abstentions will not count as votes cast.

Where a change of this Constitution is involved, the use of proxy votes is permitted. Proxy votes must be registered with the Chairman or Vice Chairman 24 hours before the meeting stating which vote is to be registered on which motion.

A proposed alteration to this Constitution must be posted on the Club notice board at least twenty-one clear days before a General Meeting.

(i) No winding up of the Club shall occur except following a resolution at a General Meeting, and then shall be determined only by a vote of at least two thirds of the number of Members entitled to attend and vote at the General Meeting at which the resolution is put. Spoilt ballot papers and abstentions will not count as votes cast.

The use of Proxy votes is permitted (See (8g)).

Such a resolution must be posted on the Club notice board at least twenty-one clear days before a General Meeting.

In the event of such a resolution being passed:

- Disposition of the premises and any other assets of the Club shall be resolved by a simple vote of the Members present at the General Meeting.
- The Committee will then be asked to oversee and carry out the dissolution of the Club in accordance with the law, ensuring that the Club fulfils to their satisfaction the payment of all debts and liabilities, and banks the net proceeds from the sale of the Club's assets to be equally distributed among the Members.

(j) The Members of the Club at General Meeting shall be deemed to be the final authority for the interpretation of this Constitution.

9. GUESTS AND VISITORS

(a) A Member may introduce a Guest or Guests into the Club Premises. The Member must enter his/her full name and that of his/her Guests in the Record of Guests and Visitors Book. The Member shall be responsible for his/her Guests while they are within the Club Premises.

(b) A Visitor, whether or not a member of a bridge club or the EBU, or playing in matches or competitions in the Club Premises, must enter his or her full name in the Record of Guests and Visitors Book, to be countersigned by a Member.

(c) The Committee may decide that a Guest or Visitor has been visiting the Club Premises more frequently than it considers it to be reasonable. In that case the Committee may preclude a Guest or Visitor from entering the Club Premises, either for a specific period or indefinitely.

10. MEMBERS' BEHAVIOUR AND CONDUCT

(a) Each Member shall conform with the standards of fair play, courtesy and personal deportment prescribed by the Bye Laws and regulations for the time being of the EBU and of the Club ("Disciplinary Rules"). These requirements include any Complaint relating to the conduct of a Member which is considered to be injurious to the character or interests of the Club or relate to any Member who has not adhered to the provisions of the Constitution. A "Complaint" may include or refer to any charges, allegations, offences and other similar expressions.

(b) The Committee shall act through its Conduct and Disciplinary Committees, particulars of which are set out in Clause 11, to maintain and enforce the standards set out in Clause 10(a).

11. DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES

(a) Conduct Committee

The Committee shall appoint its Conduct Committee through its powers to appoint sub committees pursuant to Clause 4(n) of the Constitution. It shall consist of no fewer than three Members 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/her 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.

The Conduct Committee shall investigate Complaints against Members and determine whether the Complaint constitutes a breach of Disciplinary Rules to be referred to the Disciplinary Committee. It shall carry out the investigation, and decide whether a breach has occurred, as speedily as possible.

(b) Disciplinary Committee

The Committee shall appoint its Disciplinary Committee through its powers to appoint sub committees pursuant to Clause 4(n) of the Constitution. The Disciplinary Committee shall consist of no fewer than three Members 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/her absence the Disciplinary Committee shall select to chair its meeting, shall have a second or casting vote in the event that there is a parity of voting.

The Disciplinary Committee shall determine sanctions for offences admitted by the Defendant, hear charges of offences, determine whether those charges are proved, and, if proved, determine the sanction to be imposed.

(c) 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.

If any of the Conduct Committee or Disciplinary Committee members considers that he is connected with the Complaint, he/she shall inform the Committee and request that appropriate amendments be made to the composition of that Committee.

A Member may not be a member of both the Conduct and the Disciplinary Committee.

(d) Making a Complaint

Any Member who makes a Complaint against one or more Members must do so in writing sent to the Secretary or to the Chairman. The Complaint should contain full particulars of the issue or issues and include details of any witnesses and of any wording or behaviour relating to the Complaint.

Save in the event of exceptional circumstances, of which the Conduct Committee shall be the sole judge, it will not consider a Complaint unless it has been submitted in writing within 14 days of the occurrence of the subject of the Complaint.

(e) Investigation by the Conduct Committee

When the Conduct Committee receives a written Complaint, it shall consider whether it falls within the scope of the Disciplinary Rules and whether further action is warranted. If it does so, the Conduct Committee shall write to the Defendant seeking his/her response to and comments on the Complaint. The Conduct Committee shall also provide him/her with full details of the information and particulars submitted to it.

The Conduct Committee has the power to make such further investigations and enquiries with regard to the Complaint, including meetings with the parties involved, as in its absolute discretion it considers appropriate. However the Conduct Committee shall investigate only the Complaint and not any past offences relating to the Defendant. The Conduct Committee shall be entitled to seek advice with regard to the Complaint from within the Club and from the EBU Laws and Ethics Committee.

If a complaint includes an allegation of dishonest play, the Conduct Committee shall refer the complaint for resolution to the Laws and Ethics Committee of the EBU.

(f) Dismissal of Complaint

If the Conduct Committee decides that the Complaint is not justified, the parties involved shall be notified in writing and the Complaint will be dismissed.

(g) Valid Complaint

If the Conduct Committee decides that the Complaint is justified it may, in its absolute discretion, offer a verbal recorded caution to the Defendant, which, if accepted, concludes the matter. If the caution is not accepted by the Defendant, or the

Conduct Committee decides that a caution is inappropriate, it shall refer the matter to the Disciplinary Committee for a Hearing. It shall also pass on to the Disciplinary Committee its Report, if any, and all correspondence, statements and information it obtained during its investigation (“the Complaint Material”). It may also make any recommendations that it may see fit.

The Conduct Committee shall, within seven days of its referral decision, notify the Defendant in writing of his/her right to make a written submission to the Disciplinary Committee and to attend the Hearing at which the Defendant has the right to be represented by legal counsel of his/her choice, or be accompanied by a person to speak on his/her behalf.

(h) Hearing of the Disciplinary Committee

The Disciplinary Committee shall give the Defendant at least fourteen days’ notice of the Hearing Date. It shall objectively consider the Complaint Material and any submissions made by the Conduct Committee and the Defendant. The Disciplinary Committee shall weigh the facts impartially and fairly and reach a conclusion on the evidence submitted. Where the facts are in dispute a decision may be based on the balance of probabilities. The Committee in determining whether the Complaint has been established shall not refer to the disciplinary record of the Defendant, if any.

(i) Disciplinary Committees Sanctions

If after the Completion of the Hearing the Disciplinary Committee upholds the Complaint it will consider the appropriate Sanction or Sanctions to be imposed. It will have regard to the offence; any previous verbal or written Sanction imposed on the Defendant; any plea in mitigation from the Defendant and any other fact or matter which the Disciplinary Committee in its absolute discretion considers appropriate.

(j) The Disciplinary Committee’s Sanctions are as follows:

- (a) to issue a written reprimand to the Defendant;
- (b) to restrict the Defendant for a period not exceeding twelve months to participating only in those sessions of play at the club notified in writing to him/her by the Committee;
- (c) to suspend the Defendant for a period not exceeding four months. During such suspension the Defendant shall not be entitled either to enter the Club Premises without the written permission of the Committee or to participate in any competitions or matches as a Member;
- (d) to terminate the membership of the Defendant who shall not thereafter be entitled to admission to the Club Premises as a Guest or Visitor without the written permission of the Committee.

(k) Any Sanction imposed by the Disciplinary Committee shall be communicated to the Defendant in writing within fourteen days of the Hearing.

(l) Any Sanction imposed by the Disciplinary Committee shall take effect as soon as time for appeal has elapsed. If the Defendant has filed Notice of Appeal within the time allowed the Sanction shall not take effect until such Appeal has been determined, save that the Disciplinary Committee may if it considers it to be in the best interests of the Members, suspend the Defendant’s right to enter the Club Premises other than to attend and vote at General Meetings.

(m) Appeal

Every Defendant found guilty of an offence by the Disciplinary Committee has the right to appeal to YCBA. Appeals must be in writing and lodged with the Secretary of YCBA within twenty one days of the written communication of the Disciplinary Committee's decision to the Defendant.

(n) Referral to the EBU Laws and Ethics Committee

At any time YCBA may refer a complaint to the EBU Laws and Ethics Committee for its consideration. In doing so YCBA's Disciplinary Committee shall have fully discharged its responsibilities under the above Clauses.

(o) The Secretary will maintain a record of any sanction imposed under this Clause 11.