

# DEVON BRIDGE ASSOCIATION

**CONSTITUTION accepted at the AGM on 14 June 2009, being an amended version of the 2006 Constitution to take effect on 1 Apr 2010, approved by the EBU Board of Directors in July 2009.**

## **1) NAME**

The Association shall be called The Devon Bridge Association [the Association] and shall be a constituent member of The English Bridge Union (EBU).

## **2) COMMENCEMENT**

This document shall take effect from 1 April 2010 and shall supersede the Constitution and Rules promulgated in the name of the Devon County Contract Bridge Association.

## **3) OBJECTIVES OF THE ASSOCIATION**

- To promote and assist in the development of Contract Bridge in the County.
- To organise and / or manage all forms of bridge competition in the County.
- To promote participation in County bridge events.
- To be affiliated to the EBU and to encourage membership of the Association and EBU .
- To promote the affiliation of Clubs to the County Association and EBU.
- To maintain and enforce the decisions and rules of the EBU.
- To assist members / affiliated clubs in dealings with the EBU.
- To ensure that every member of the Association has equal access to the benefits of membership of the Association.

## **4) MEMBERSHIP**

- 4.1 All members of the Association must be Player Members of the EBU.
- 4.2 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.
- 4.3 A Player Member of the EBU whose primary allegiance is with another Association can become a member of the Association by meeting its terms and conditions in force at the time of the request for membership.
- 4.4 A member of the Association must be a paid up member for the relevant Membership Year in order to vote at its Annual General Meeting and to participate in its main competitions within that Membership Year.
- 4.5 The Membership Year shall run for the twelve month period from 1st April to 31st March.
- 4.6 A member of the Association becomes a paid up member through payment of any Association Pay to Play county component when participating in events at an affiliated Duplicate Bridge Club, and/or through payment of an annual subscription fee for their Association membership category.
- 4.7 If any Association member has not paid their annual subscription fee by 31<sup>st</sup> May then that Association member will not be able to vote at the following AGM as a paid up Association member.
- 4.8 An Association member ceases to be a paid up Association member on 31<sup>st</sup> May if at that date the Association member has not paid any outstanding annual subscription fee. That member can subsequently become a paid up Association member on payment of the current Membership Year's subscription fee, but this late payment shall not override clause 4.7 above.
- 4.9 For the avoidance of doubt, if an Association member is within a membership category that has a nil Association Pay to Play county component and a nil annual subscription fee for a Membership Year, then that member shall automatically become a paid up Association member for that Membership Year.
- 4.10 The Association Pay to Play county component and each of the Association member category's annual subscription fee, for the Membership Year starting in the following 1 April, shall be determined by a simple majority of the paid up members at the preceding Annual General Meeting.
- 4.11 The Association membership categories shall be as follows:
  - 4.11.1 Ordinary Association Member-a Player Member of the EBU who has their primary allegiance recorded with the Association on 1<sup>st</sup> April of the Membership Year. An Ordinary Association Member shall also be a new Player Member of the EBU whose EBU membership start date is within the Membership Year and that member's primary allegiance is recorded with the Association on their EBU membership start date.

4.11.2 Dual Member-a Player Member of the EBU who does not have their primary allegiance recorded with the Association by 1st April of the Membership Year.

4.12. Honorary Membership : Members who have given distinguished service to the Association may be elected Honorary Members for Life by the Association in General Meeting. Proposals to this effect must first be submitted to and endorsed by the Central Committee. An Honorary Life Member shall receive from the Association a voucher valid at County events to the value of the direct subscription to the EBU.

## **5) SUBSCRIPTIONS**

- Members and dual members shall pay a Pay-to-Play component to the Association for all sessions played at affiliated clubs in the county.
- Affiliated clubs shall pay a subscription to the Association and the levy imposed by the EBU on all members and clubs.
- The annual subscriptions to the Association and the Pay-to-Play component shall be determined by the Central Committee and subject to its approval at the Annual General Meeting of the Association shall take effect in the following year.
- Only members of affiliated clubs are eligible to play in County competitions.

## **6) ORGANISATION**

The Association shall be managed by a Central Committee assisted by committees elected for each of the Sections representing the North, East, South and West parts of Devon. The Central Committee may vary the geographical areas covered by the latter committees.

## **7) CENTRAL COMMITTEE**

- a) The Officers shall be a Chairman, Vice Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer.
- b) The Officers shall be elected by the members at the Annual General Meeting of the Association. Nominations for these posts must be proposed and seconded by members of the Association and submitted to the Secretary within the time specified on the notice of the annual general meeting or other meeting called to elect officers of the Committee. The Chairman and vice-Chairman shall be elected at the AGM for a maximum of 3 consecutive years, which can be extended if approved by three-quarters of those attending.
- d) The Secretary is responsible to the Committee for the day to day management of the Association and the Treasurer is similarly responsible for the sound management of the Association's financial affairs and the implementation of financial decisions of the Committee.
- e) The Committee shall comprise the Officers and two additional members from each of the Section committees nominated by those committees. Any such member who is unable to attend a particular meeting may appoint a deputy.
- f) The Committee shall from time to time set up such committees or sub-committees as are thought proper, necessary or desirable for the conduct of the business of the Association and shall delegate to such committees or 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 committees or sub-committees being laid down in their Minute of Appointment.
- g) The Committee may co-opt other members, as deemed appropriate from time to time, and shall have the power to fill any vacancies that arise from time to time to assist in the execution of its activities.
- h) A member of the Committee who has failed to attend three consecutive Committee meetings may be called upon by the Association to resign.
- i) The Committee, by a three-quarters majority of those present at any meeting, may suspend or dismiss any of its Officers, providing that the majority is more than half of the total number of the Committee.

## **8) SECTION COMMITTEES**

- a) The members of each Section shall at their AGM, which must be held between 1st of April and 31st May each year, elect a Committee to assist in the management of bridge in their area. Each Committee shall comprise a Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer plus such additional members as the Officers see fit.
- b) Sections shall formulate their own local rules and procedures where necessary, paying due regard to the overriding authorities of the Central Committee and the EBU.

## **9) SECTIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **a) Financial Planning**

- The annual accounts of each Section shall include a budget projection for the following fiscal year setting out its expected/estimated costs in covering running expenses (including replacement of equipment) and its plans to assist the Association in achieving the objectives set out in this constitution.
- Each section shall submit proposed budgets, in the first instance, to the Association Treasurer, for onward submission with recommendations to the Central Committee who will agree it or make amendments.
- Sections shall endeavour to self finance their approved budget but shall be funded to cover these estimated costs at the direction of the Central Committee when necessary.
- Sections shall transfer funds held in excess of budget to the Association's central account within one month of the date on which their budget was agreed.

### **b) General**

- A copy of the Minutes of all Section Committee meetings must be sent to the Association's Secretary.
- The annual accounts of the Sections shall be passed to the Association's Treasurer by 30 April. Each Section Treasurer or another representative is required to attend the Annual General Meeting of the Association

The Section Treasurer shall keep a record of all transactions and have these audited by an independent auditor approved by the sections' members at the section annual general meeting, at the year end. These audited accounts shall then be sent to the Association Treasurer for inclusion in the Association consolidated financial report

## **10) MEETINGS**

The following shall apply to all meetings of the Association.

Voting at meetings shall be conducted as follows:

- Items that are proposed and seconded shall be voted on by the members who shall have equal voting rights including the Chairman with the latter having an additional casting vote if there is parity.
- By a show of hands if the Chairman feels there is a consensus or more carefully by ballot if there does not appear to be a consensus or if there is a request from the floor for a ballot.
- A simple majority shall determine whether or not the item voted on is to be adopted.

### **a) Central Committee meetings**

- Quorum: The number of members to constitute a quorum shall be a chairman and four members.
- Meetings shall be held at least quarterly; the date, time and venue for meeting shall be notified to Committee members by the secretary together with any appropriate material for pre-read.
- The minutes of the meeting shall be documented and circulated by the secretary.
- The minutes of each meeting shall be agreed by the attendees and shall be retained by the secretary and shall be available for inspection at reasonable notice by any member.

### **b) Annual General Meeting**

- The Annual General Meeting shall be held by the 30th of June each year at a venue to be decided by the Central Committee. At least 28 days notice of the meeting must be given.
- A Balance Sheet and Statement of Accounts shall be submitted to the members for approval.
- Any resolution for submission to the A.G.M. must be proposed and seconded and sent in writing to the Association's Secretary at least fourteen days prior to the date of the A.G.M. Any resolutions shall be included in the agenda.
- A quorum shall not be less than 5% of the current full membership of the Association.

### **c) Extraordinary General Meetings**

- An extraordinary General Meeting shall be held within 28 days of a requisition calling for such a meeting, bearing the signatures of not less than 25 members, being presented to the Secretary. Such a requisition shall specify the business that shall be discussed at that meeting.
- A quorum shall not be less than 5% of the current full membership of the Association.

## **11) CONFORMANCE**

- The constitution of the Association shall apply to each section.
- The Central Committee is accountable to the members of the Association for achieving the objectives of the Association and presenting the consolidated audited accounts of the association's income and expenditure.
- Each Section is accountable to the members of the Association for the income and expenditure and care of the assets of the Association.

## **12) ACCOUNTS AND BALANCE SHEET**

- The consolidated Section and County Accounts and Balance Sheet shall be made up each year to the 31 of March and shall be submitted to the Annual General Meeting for ratification.
- The Auditors shall be appointed annually at the Annual General Meeting.

## **13) LICENCES**

- The eligibility to play in licensed events shall be governed by the rules of the EBU.
- The Devon Bridge Association shall be the appropriate authority for all Bridge events in Devon, except in respect of any event which by virtue of its character is not primarily local to the county.

## **14) CONDUCT OF MEMBERS**

Each member of the Association shall be required in connection with the game of Contract Bridge and variations thereof to conform to the standards of fair play, courtesy and personal deportment prescribed in the Bye -Laws for the time being of the EBU. The Association shall have the powers and procedures for the enforcement of this requirement which are set out in the Schedule of this Constitution (which shall stand part of the Constitution and be subject to the same provisions as the Constitution for its amendment).

## **15) VARIATION OF THIS CONSTITUTION**

This constitution may be revoked, varied or added to by a resolution passed by a two thirds majority of those voting at an Annual General Meeting or an Extraordinary General Meeting convened for the purpose. All such alterations shall be effective immediately when approved by the requisite majority and by the EBU

## **THE SCHEDULE**

1.This schedule is required by Section 14 of the Constitution of the Association and prescribes the procedures for enforcing it.

2. The Central Committee shall appoint a Conduct Committee and shall have the power from time to time as it may think fit to vary the composition of the Conduct Committee. The number of members of the said Conduct Committee shall not be fewer than three or more than seven. A *quorum* for any meeting of the Conduct Committee shall be three of its members for the time being. It shall act by simple majority vote and its appointed Chairman (or whomsoever in his absence the Committee shall select to chair its meeting) shall have a second casting vote in the event that there is parity of voting.

3. (i) The Association shall act by its Conduct Committee's decisions for the enforcement of the standards prescribed in the said section 14 of its Constitution.

(ii) The procedures of the said Committee shall conform *mutatis mutandis* to those prescribed in the Bye Laws of the EBU for enquiry by its Laws and Ethics Committee into allegations of misconduct by individual members. It shall have powers to make findings and decisions consequent thereon in respect of allegations brought to its attention: to be entertained and considered by the said Conduct Committee any allegation that an individual member of the Association has not conformed to the said standards in (i) above shall be made in writing, lodged with the Chairman, Vice Chairman, or Secretary of the Association and referred to its Conduct Committee.

(iii) At any time after it has duly received an allegation in the aforementioned manner the Conduct Committee shall have the power (whether it has commenced any procedure in respect thereof or not) to refer that allegation to the EBU for consideration of its Laws and Ethics Committee in the manner prescribed in the said Union's bye Laws, and in so doing it shall have fully discharged its responsibilities under this Schedule.

(iv) Where the Conduct Committee does not use its power in (iii) above and after it has duly enquired into an allegation concerning an individual member and has found him/her to be in default of the aforementioned standards, the Conduct Committee shall have powers to decide as it may think fit to select and give effect to one or more of the following provisions in relation thereto:

(a) that the said member shall be rebuked.

(b) that the said member shall be censured and admonished.

(c) that the said member shall be barred from all or such as it shall specify of the competitions sponsored or licensed by the Association for such period as it shall determine.

4. (i) The findings and decisions of the Conduct Committee under Section 3 above shall be delivered to the individual member in writing and shall have effect 21 days thereafter EXCEPT that the said member shall have the right to appeal the said findings and decisions other than the exercise of powers in 3 (iii) above within the said period of 21 days. Such appeal shall be put in writing and delivered to the Secretary of the association within the said period.

(ii) In the event of such appeal any decision to apply the foregoing sections (iv) (a) (b) (c) shall not take effect until the appeal has been determined.

(iii) Any such appeal shall be referred to an Appeal Committee to be appointed by the EBU acting by its Laws and Ethics Committee. The said Appeal Committee shall be fully empowered to consider and enquire into the matter appealed as it shall think fit to determine the outcome of the appeal and to confirm or vary the findings and decisions of the Conduct Committee in relation to the matter appealed, (but not to impose any penalty which was not within the power of the Conduct Committee to impose).

Alternatively, the Appeal Committee shall have the power to decide that the allegation is one that shall be referred to the said Laws and Ethics Committee as an allegation of misconduct under the Bye Laws of the Union relating to conduct whereupon such referral shall occur, the prior findings and decisions of the Conduct Committee in relation to the matter shall be nullified, and the individual member so informed.