

Constitution of the Oxfordshire Bridge Association

~~June 2009~~ June 2010

1 NAME

The Association shall be called the **OXFORDSHIRE BRIDGE ASSOCIATION** (Hereinafter referred to as OBA).

2 AFFILIATION

The Association shall be a constituent member of the English Bridge Union Limited (EBU) and shall adopt, maintain and enforce the Bye Laws and Rules of the EBU.

3 OBJECTS OF THE OBA

3.1 To promote and assist in the development of duplicate contract bridge (hereinafter referred to as duplicate bridge) in the county of Oxfordshire as defined by the EBU (hereinafter referred to as Oxon).

3.2 To establish and organise competition duplicate bridge in Oxon, including competitive events of the EBU, and to encourage participation in both local and national competitions.

3.3 To license or organise congresses and other competitions within the jurisdiction of the OBA.

3.4 To select county teams to compete in national and inter-county competitions.

3.5 To employ the funds of the OBA in the best interests of duplicate bridge in Oxon, on a non-profit basis.

3.6 To deal with such matters as may be referred to the OBA by the EBU.

4 MEMBERSHIP

4.1 Full Membership of the OBA shall be open to any bridge player who is a member of the EBU and fulfils any of the following conditions, namely he or she:

- a) resides or was born in the County of Oxon; or
- b) has a principal place of business in Oxon; or
- c) is a member of a bona fide bridge club in Oxon; or
- d) resides in a neighbouring county in respect of which there is no county bridge association; or
- e) has been a member of the OBA for the preceding two years, although not now otherwise qualifying.

- 4.2 Full members must have declared their primary county of allegiance to Oxon at the EBU. Only full members can represent Oxon in competitive competitions.
- 4.3 **Associate Membership of the OBA** shall be open to any member of the EBU who is also a member of another county association and who has declared his or her primary allegiance to that other county association, and to any member of the EBU who is not a member of another county association but does not fulfil any of the conditions outlined in 4.1 above. The OBA reserves the right to exclude associate members from such of its competitions as it may from time to time determine.

(Hereinafter, unless otherwise stated, the term 'member' shall include full members and associate members of the OBA.)

Affiliated Clubs: Any bona fide club in the county of Oxon which holds regular duplicate bridge events and is affiliated to the EBU may become affiliated to the OBA. Any such bona fide club in a neighbouring county may apply to become affiliated to the OBA (with either primary, or dual, affiliation). Acceptance of such applications will be at the discretion of the Management Committee and will also require EBU approval. All clubs affiliated to the OBA shall be affiliated to the EBU.

Subscriptions: Members and affiliated clubs shall pay appropriate dues to the EBU, plus any dues imposed by the OBA on its members and clubs. The county dues and the method by which they shall be paid shall be determined by the OBA Management Committee and shall be approved by the members at the AGM, defined hereunder, to take effect the following year.

- 4.6 **Conduct:** Every member of the OBA shall be required in connection with the game of duplicate bridge to conform to standards of fair play, courtesy and personal deportment including those prescribed in the prevailing Bye Laws, Rules and Regulations of the EBU. The OBA shall have the powers and the procedures for the enforcement of this requirement. These powers are set out in Schedule A of this Constitution, which shall stand as part of this Constitution.
- 4.7 **Exclusion:** Any person who is currently barred from membership of the EBU is automatically barred from membership of the OBA.

5 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

- 5.1 Membership shall be open to all persons who fulfil any of the conditions specified in clause 4 irrespective of their racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, gender, age, status, disability, or sexual orientation.
- 5.2 The OBA will take all such measures as are reasonable to promote and ensure the equal rights of persons considered to be at risk of discrimination or non-equal treatment on the grounds racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, gender, age, status, disability, or sexual orientation.

6 MANAGEMENT

- 6.1 **The President** of the Association shall be elected by the Management Committee and shall hold office for a period, which is renewable, of 5 years.

- 6.2 The OBA shall be managed by a **Management Committee** comprising the Honorary Offices of Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer, Publicity Officer, Membership Secretary, Chief Tournament Director, and other Honorary Officers as shall be determined from time to time, together with members elected by the Oxon clubs as described below. All Honorary Officers will be elected each year by the members at the AGM, defined hereunder.
- 6.3 Each affiliated club with primary affiliation to the OBA shall be entitled to appoint-elect one delegate for every thirty (30) or part of thirty OBA members providing it has a minimum of twelve (12) current OBA members. Clubs with dual affiliation to the OBA shall be entitled to elect one delegate per club, providing they have a minimum of twelve (12) current OBA members.
- 6.4 The Management Committee shall have the power to create Temporary Honorary Officers from the elected members, as it thinks necessary. (Temporary shall mean until the following AGM.)
- 6.5 **Other appointments:** The ~~Management Committee~~OBA will appoint shareholders to the EBU. This will be achieved by ~~co-option or by~~ election at the AGM, from amongst the full members of the OBA. Those ~~appointed~~appointed will become full members of the Management Committee. In addition, the Management Committee may co-opt additional members as it sees fit, to serve until the next AGM. Such persons shall have such voting rights as the Management Committee shall determine.
- 6.6 **Meetings:** The Management Committee shall meet at such times and places and on such dates as it shall determine, but at least three times per calendar year.
- 6.7 **Chair:** The Chairman shall take the Chair when present, otherwise the meeting shall appoint another honorary officer to take the Chair.
- 6.8 **Notice of meetings:** All committee members shall be given at least fourteen days notice of any proposed meeting.
- 6.9 **Quorum:** Five members shall form a quorum. Each member of the Management Committee present shall have one vote. In the event of a tie in any votes cast, the presiding Chair shall have an additional or casting vote.
- 6.10 **Minutes of meetings:** Minutes of the proceedings of meetings shall be kept by the Secretary and signed by the presiding Chairman. Minutes shall be circulated to members of the Management Committee and made available to any member of the OBA.
- 6.11 **Sub-committees and working groups:** The Management Committee may from time to time set up such sub-committees or working groups it considers necessary or desirable for the running of the OBA and may delegate to such sub-committees or working groups the necessary authority to conduct the business for which they are formed. One such committee shall be a selection committee which will consist of at least three persons, selected by the Management Committee from nominations by clubs. The selection committee shall nominate a county captain, for formal appointment by the Management Committee. The Captain will then join the selection committee if not already a member.
- 6.12 **Absences:** Any committee member not nominated by a club who is absent from three consecutive meetings, without acceptable reason, may be suspended by the Management Committee from all OBA committees

7 FINANCIAL RECORDS

- 7.1 Bank Account:** The Treasurer shall open and maintain a bank account in the name of the OBA. The signatures of the Treasurer and one other authorised person shall be required for payment of monies out of the Association. The other authorised persons are the Chairman and Secretary.
- 7.2 Financial Records:** The Treasurer shall keep proper financial records and produce annual accounts which will be presented [for approval by the members](#) at the AGM.
- 7.3 Reimbursement of costs:** The Treasurer shall reimburse, from the property of the OBA, any expenses properly incurred on behalf of the OBA.
- 7.4 Submission of Accounts:** The Treasurer shall submit the accounts for audit at or soon after the end of the OBA financial year. The OBA accounting year shall end on the 31st March.
- 7.5 Audit of the Accounts:** An Honorary Auditor, elected at the preceding Annual General Meeting, shall audit the accounts.

8 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING (AGM)

- 8.1 Purpose and timing:** The AGM of the OBA shall be held in Oxon in the first three months of the OBA financial year. The ordinary business of the AGM shall be to receive the report of the Honorary Officers, the Treasurer's Statement of Accounts for the past year, and to elect the officers, [EBU shareholders](#) and members of committee for the current year.
- 8.2** At the AGM, the President shall take the Chair when present for the election of the Honorary Officers [and EBU Shareholders](#) by a vote of the members and otherwise another officer shall take the chair save that no individual can chair any election in which they are a candidate. When there has been more than one nomination, a secret ballot will be held. Single Transferable Vote (STV) will be used if appropriate.
- 8.3 Voting:** Except for the election of Officers, every question at the AGM shall be decided by a show of hands, unless a secret ballot is either directed by the Chair or demanded by not less than ten persons present and entitled to vote. In the case of an equality of votes, the Chair shall have a second or casting vote.
- 8.4 Notice** of the AGM and Agenda and nomination forms shall be sent to all members of the OBA [in written or \(where possible\) electronic form](#) at least twenty-one days prior to the date fixed for such meetings. Nomination forms should be returned to the Honorary Secretary not less than 7 days before the meeting.
- 8.5 Admission** to the AGM shall be open to all current members of the OBA, who as such are entitled to vote when present. A quorum shall be 10 full members.
- 8.6 Nominations** of persons for the office of Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer, or for any other offices currently in force, or as members of the Management Committee may be made by any member. Exceptionally, should there be insufficient prior nominations for the existing vacancies, additional nominations can be proposed and seconded from the floor at the AGM.
- 8.7** Any Member or Affiliated Club may bring forward a resolution or motion at the AGM, provided that not less than twenty eight days notice in writing is given to the Secretary.

9 EXTRAORDINARY GENERAL MEETING

- 9.1** An Extraordinary General Meeting may be convened by the Management Committee at any time, or on receipt of a requisition signed by not less than twenty members must be convened stating the purpose for which the meeting is to be called.
- 9.2** The Secretary shall issue notice of the meeting, which will contain either the resolution or resolutions to be considered or the general purport of matters to be discussed.
- 9.3** A quorum at the meeting shall comprise 5% of the OBA membership.
- 9.4** The Chair shall be the President or Chairman or, if both be absent, whomsoever the majority of members present shall elect to chair the meeting.
- 9.5** Clauses **8.3**, **8.4** and **8.5** for the AGM also apply to extraordinary general meetings.

10. ALTERATIONS TO THIS CONSTITUTION

No repeal or amendment shall be made to this Constitution, or any schedules of this Constitution, except at an AGM or at an Extraordinary General Meeting by a resolution carried by at least two-thirds of the votes of those present and entitled to vote at the meeting. Notice of any resolutions to be proposed must be sent in writing to the Secretary, so that they can be circulated with the notice of the meeting.

11. DISSOLUTION

- 11.1** The OBA may only be dissolved at an Extraordinary General Meeting called for that purpose.
- 11.2** Notice of the meeting must be sent to all members of the OBA at least twenty-one days prior to the date of the meeting.
- 11.3** A proposal shall take effect only if agreed by 75% of the members. Members may vote at the meeting or register a vote in writing with the Honorary Secretary, prior to the meeting.
- 11.4** If members so resolve to dissolve the OBA, then the Management Committee must collect in all assets, pay all liabilities and apply the remainder directly either for:
 - a. the objectives of the OBA; or
 - b. to a registered charity, to be chosen by the Management Committee in its absolute discretion

Schedule A: Disciplinary Procedures

1. Requirements of the Schedule

This Schedule is referred to under clause 4.6 of the Constitution of the Oxfordshire Bridge Association (hereafter referred to as the OBA) 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 OBA shall act through its Conduct and Disciplinary Committees for the enforcement of standards prescribed in clause 4.6 of the Constitution. The OBA 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 OBA under the terms of clause 4.6 of its Constitution, must do so in writing to the Secretary or the Chairman of the OBA.

3. Conduct Committee

The Management Committee of the OBA shall appoint its Conduct Committee through its powers to appoint sub committees under clause 6.11 of the Constitution. The Conduct Committee shall be responsible for investigating complaints against the OBA's members and will determine whether a disciplinary offence should be referred to the OBA's Disciplinary Committee.

The Conduct Committee shall consist of no fewer than three members of the OBA 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 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.

4. Disciplinary Committee.

The Management Committee of the OBA shall appoint the Disciplinary Committee through its powers to appoint sub committees under clause 6.11 of the Constitution. 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 OBA 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 its 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 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 OBA 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 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 OBA 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 offending member, which if accepted, ends the matter.

If the caution is not accepted by the offending member, or the Conduct Committee does not feel a caution is appropriate, it 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 is upheld, 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 OBA for such period as it shall determine.

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 OBA'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 offending member(s) in writing within twenty one days of the hearing. Any sanction imposed by the Disciplinary Committee shall take effect as soon as time for appeal has elapsed except that if the Defendant has filed Notice of Appeal within the time allowed (see below), the sanction shall not take effect until such appeal has been determined.

6.5. Appeal

Every Defendant found guilty of an 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 Defendant.

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.

Notes on amendments to OBA Constitution, June 2010

3.1, 3.2 Change requested by EBU to clarify that we do not seek to regulate rubber bridge (which might bring us into the ambit of the Gaming Act).

4.3 Change requested by EBU to allow direct members from outside Oxon to be able to join as associate members.

4.4 Partly requested by EBU to clarify that, under P2P, clubs cannot be affiliated to a County Association without being affiliated to the EBU; partly inserted by us to cover affiliation of clubs from neighbouring counties, which was an omission in the previous version.

4.5 Reference to method of payment inserted to cover the change to collecting county dues via P2P. Explicit reference to approval of dues at AGM requested by EBU.

6.2 Clarifies that OBA officers are elected at the AGM (as per section 8).

6.3 In the interests of democracy, asks clubs to “elect” rather than “appoint” their Management Committee delegates. Also introduces a limitation on the number of delegates from clubs with secondary affiliation.

6.5 Change requested by EBU to ensure Shareholders are elected by all members rather than appointed by the Management Committee (see also 8.1 and 8.2).

7.2 Change requested by EBU - members must approve annual accounts at AGM.

8.4 This change allows us to send out formal notification of the AGM by email to those members who supply email addresses, thereby reducing costs of sending material through the post and/or individually labelling it (AGM notification is currently included in the County Prospectus which is sent out individually labelled by Royal Mail).