



WARRINGTON BRIDGE CLUB CONSTITUTION

REVISED AFTER BALLOT OF MEMBERS

JUNE 2020



1. Introduction

The Club shall be known as the Warrington Bridge Club and shall be affiliated to The English Bridge Union and its Merseyside/Cheshire County Organisation.

The object of the Club shall be to promote Contract Bridge, for recreational, educational, and competitive purposes for its Members.

All Warrington Bridge Club play shall be governed by the Laws of Contract Bridge, English Bridge Union Directives and Licensed Conventions. Unless agreed by the Committee for a particular competition or session, conventions allowed in Club play, which may include both live face-to-face bridge and on-line or "virtual" bridge, will be restricted to EBU licensed systems (to level 4). All pairs must have completed a convention card; should a pair fail to comply with this rule, they must play a "Simple ACOL System".

2. Membership

Full membership shall be open to all persons who are bridge players of an acceptable basic level, and carries full voting rights, and the entitlement to enter and play in all Club events. Additional categories of membership may be created at the discretion of the Management Committee, for example for new or less experienced players, but such new categories of membership will not carry voting rights. The fees to be charged for such new categories of membership, how long an individual may remain in such new category before being required to apply for full membership, and the extent of entitlement to play in Club events, will be determined at the discretion of the Management Committee. Full Membership, or membership in any other category, is at all times at the discretion of the Management Committee. Any person wishing to become a member of the Club in any category shall apply for membership by completing and submitting to the Hon Secretary such form as may be prescribed from time to time by the Management Committee.

2.01 An application for membership must be made by completing the Club's Membership Application Form, and shall be approved by the Management Committee. Membership application forms are available on the Club website, and applicants are encouraged to submit by email, rather than by post, although paper copy is also acceptable. Applicants for membership must disclose on the application form any occasions when they have had disciplinary or conduct sanctions imposed by any bridge club. Application for full membership shall be subject to the applicant having first attended at least three playing sessions as a visitor; a visitors book will be maintained for this purpose. However, in special circumstances as described in Clause 10, the requirement to attend playing sessions as a visitor, and for a visitors book to be maintained, may be waived, at the discretion of the Management Committee.

2.02 Should an application for membership be declined, the Management Committee may give a reason but shall not be obliged to do so.

2.03 In considering applications for membership, the Management Committee shall have regard to the playing facilities available and may from time to time decide that the club shall be closed to new applications for membership for such period as it shall decide.

2.04 A member who is expelled from the club under the provisions of Clause 2.08, or who submits his/her resignation in writing to the Secretary, shall cease to be a member of the club immediately, and shall not thereafter be admitted as a visitor.

2.05 A member whose subscription has not been paid shall cease to be a member on the expiration of the period of 2 months from the date on which the subscription was due for payment. A member who has not paid his/her dues related to playing activities (eg table money, entry fees for events) shall cease to be a member on the expiration of a period of 2 months from the issue of the demand for payment. In either case, if extenuating circumstances apply, the period of grace may be extended beyond 2 months, at the discretion of the Management Committee.

2.06 A former member of the club, who wishes to re-join, may make a new formal application for membership unless the Management Committee decides otherwise. A member who has been expelled from the club under the provisions of Clause 2.08 may not reapply for membership.

2.07 Full members of the club are automatically enrolled as members of the English Bridge Union and shall abide by its Rules and Bye Laws. Whether members in any other category will be automatically enrolled as members of the EBU will be decided at the discretion of the Management Committee.

2.08 Any member of the Club who, in the opinion of the Management Committee, is guilty of
a) bringing the Club into disrepute by reasons of their actions, or
b) is in open breach of the Constitution and Rules, or
c) repeatedly displays poor conduct, rudeness, or unfriendly behaviour,
shall be asked to explain and, dependent upon the explanation received, such a member shall be liable to be reprimanded, suspended, or expelled, according to the decision of the Management Committee. The decision of the Management Committee is final.

2.09 Each member shall pay to the Treasurer, or to a person nominated by the Treasurer, or into a Club bank account as specified by the Treasurer, such payments as become due according to the Constitution and Rules in force at the time the payment becomes due.

2.10 The size of the club membership shall be at the discretion of the Management Committee.

3. Management Committee

The affairs of the Club shall be conducted by the Management Committee.

The Management Committee shall consist of the following members:-

The Club President/Vice President (ex officio and discretionary appointments)

The Club Chairman

The Honorary Secretary

The Honorary Treasurer

Plus up to 6 Ordinary Committee Members

3.01 Members of the Management Committee shall be elected each year at the AGM. In the event that an AGM cannot be held in a timely manner because of circumstances as described in Clause 10, the period between AGM's may be longer than 1 year. If an AGM is delayed because of such circumstances, then as soon as practicable thereafter, an AGM will be arranged.

3.02 A list shall be placed on the Club notice board at least 28 days before the AGM of the current officers who are prepared to stand for re-election together with those members of the club who are prepared to serve and have been appropriately nominated. If special circumstances such as described in Clause 10 prevent the Club from posting information on a Club notice board, the Management Committee will make best endeavours to make members aware of the relevant information. This may include, but is not limited to, posting information on the Club website, emailing members, or writing to members. Members wishing to propose or second another member for election to the Committee and/or a particular post, should obtain the agreement of the member concerned and place his/her name on the list. In the event of more than one applicant for any post or the seats on the Management Committee, an open vote will be taken.

The proposer, seconder and the member should all sign the sheet. Such nominations for the Committee shall be considered at the AGM.

3.03 There shall normally be up to an additional 6 'ordinary' members of the Management Committee. It is from among these members that specific tasks *may* be allocated. Members who are not Committee members may also have jobs allocated as required, eg for computer duties.

3.04 The Management Committee shall meet at least three times per year. Meetings will normally be face-to-face, but in the event that special circumstances apply such as described in Clause 10, virtual meetings may be held using telephone or video conferencing facilities. The Management Committee shall have the power to co-opt up to an additional 3 members. Co-opted members of the Committee are non-voting, but may be considered for election at the next AGM. A quorum at meetings of the committee shall be 4 voting members of the Committee, including at least one of the officers. Proceedings of the Management Committee and of any Sub-Committee (see 3.07), shall be regulated in such manner as the Management Committee may from time to time decide.

3.05 Meetings of the Management Committee will be chaired by the Club Chairman. However, it is considered appropriate to elect a Vice Chairman who would take the chair in the absence of the Club Chairman and also on general matters when the Club Chairman is absent. The Vice Chairman shall be elected by the Management Committee from its membership.

3.06 A list of the Management Committee together with the names of the co-opted members and their preferred contact details, shall appear on the Club Notice Board. If special circumstances such as described in Clause 10 prevent the Club from posting information on a Club notice board, the Management Committee will make other arrangements to allow members to access the relevant information. This will typically be by posting information on the Club website.

3.07 From time to time it may be considered appropriate to establish Sub-Committees to consider specific matters. These can either be drawn from the existing Management Committee or ordinary club members.

Sub-Committees shall report back to the Management Committee with their report and recommendation, and in the case of such a committee being drawn from the ordinary members then one member of the Management Committee shall be nominated to serve on the Sub-Committee and would be the person charged with reporting back to the Management Committee.

3.08 The Management Committee shall manage the affairs of the club, and the Management Committee shall have power to determine any issue arising in connection with the affairs of the club which is not specifically provided for in this Constitution.

3.09 The Management Committee may from time to time formulate and publish such rules as it thinks expedient for the efficient and harmonious running of the club, but in the case of any conflict between such rules and the Constitution, the Constitution shall prevail.

3.10 Any issue of policy determined by the Management Committee or any rules published by the Management Committee may be varied by a resolution of members at a General Meeting of the club, provided that such resolution is not in conflict with this Constitution and is not retrospective in application.

3.11 In the event of such variation being made to Club policy or to Club rules, it shall not be further varied by the Management Committee in a manner inconsistent with the resolution.

3.12 Decisions at meetings shall be by majority vote, except that no member of the Management Committee shall vote on any matter in which he/she has a personal pecuniary interest. In the case of tied votes, the Club Chairman will have a casting vote.

4. General Meetings (other than AGM)

4.01 Notice of all General Meetings shall be posted on the Club's notice board not less than 21 days before the date of such a meeting. The intention to hold a General Meeting shall also be announced at all bridge sessions preceding the General Meeting. General Meetings may be called by the Committee or by not fewer than ten members of the Club, who make application to the Secretary in writing. However, if special circumstances apply, such as described in Clause 10, even if it is foreseen to be possible to set a date and venue for a future General meeting, use of a Club notice board might not be possible, and there might be no face-to-face bridge sessions at which to announce the intention to hold the General Meeting. In such a case the Management Committee will make best endeavours to make members aware of the relevant information. This may include, but is not limited to, posting information on the Club website, emailing members, or writing to members.

4.02 The meeting must be held within 42 days of the Secretary receiving a VALID request. If special circumstances apply, such as described in Clause 10, which prevent the meeting being held within 42 days of the valid request, then the Management Committee will meet, online if necessary, within 42 days of receiving the valid request, to address the matter(s) raised as far as is possible. If the matter(s) raised have still not been resolved to the satisfaction of those making the request, a meeting will be arranged to take place within 42 days of those special circumstances ceasing to apply.

4.03 The reason for the meeting must be stated on the notice.

4.04 Any decisions taken shall be decided by a majority of two-thirds of members present.

4.05 Any material change to this Constitution shall be made by formal motion at a General Meeting. Such changes shall be subject to approval by a majority of two-thirds of members attending the meeting. If special circumstances apply, such as described in Clause 10, which necessitate material changes to this Constitution being made to allow the Club to satisfy its obligations under the Constitution, or to allow the operation of the Club during these special circumstances, and those special circumstances make it not possible to hold a General Meeting, then the Management Committee will make a written proposal of such material changes, and seek approval from the membership for making those changes. The Management Committee will make best endeavours to notify all members of the proposal, provide suitable arrangements for members to respond, and to record their responses. In such circumstances, the timescale set for members to respond shall be set at not less than 21 days. The method of communicating with members may include, but is not limited to, email and written information by post. A majority of 2/3 of members responding will be required, and a response level equivalent to the quorum for a General Meeting (ie at least 1/5 of the total number of full members of the Club) shall be required for the proposal to be implemented.

4.06 If fifteen minutes after the time fixed for a General Meeting of the club no quorum shall be present, (see 5.01) the meeting shall be adjourned to a new date (of which the like notice shall be given to members as was required to be given for the meeting which has been adjourned), and in the case of a General Meeting which has been reconvened due to the lack of a quorum (but not of a meeting adjourned for any other reason), the number of members as are actually present at the reconvened meeting shall constitute a quorum.

4.07 Voting at General Meetings of the club shall be by show of hands. If special circumstances such as described in Clause 10 prevent the Club from holding a General Meeting, and in the opinion the Management Committee Club business requires to be decided in the meantime which would normally be the subject of a General Meeting, a ballot of members by email and /or post may be conducted.

5. Annual General Meeting

5.01 The Secretary shall give at least 28 days' notice of the meeting by placing a Notice on the Club Notice Board, showing the date, time, and place. The meeting will take place in March each year. A quorum will consist of not less than 1/5 of the membership for both the AGM and General Meetings. However, if special circumstances apply, such as described in Clause 10, it might be necessary to delay holding the AGM. In such circumstances, the AGM will be held as soon as is practicable after those circumstances cease to apply. If such an eventuality arises, once it is foreseen to be possible to set a date and venue for the AGM, use of a Club notice board might nevertheless not be possible, for example because we do not have access to Club premises. In such a case the Management Committee will make best endeavours to make members aware of the date, time, and venue of the AGM. This may include, but is not limited to, posting information on the Club website, emailing members, or writing to members.

5.02 The following matters will form the agenda at the A.G.M.

- Chairman's Report
- Treasurer's Report & Financial Statement
- Appointment of the Auditor
- Membership Secretary's Report
- Competition's Secretary's Report
- The setting of Club fees
- Election of the New Management Committee
- Any other business notified to the Secretary at least 14 days in advance.

Items of other business and recommendations of the Management Committee shall be displayed on the Club Notice Board for at least 7 days prior to the A.G.M. However, if special circumstances apply, such as described in Clause 10, use of a Club notice board might not be possible, for example because we do not have access to Club premises. In such a case the Management Committee will make best endeavours to make members aware of the items of other business and recommendations of the Management Committee. This may include, but is not limited to, posting information on the Club website, emailing members, or writing to members.

Recommendations of the Management Committee shall be voted upon as appropriate.

6. Management Committee Tasks/Role Definitions

The roles of the Officers of the club can be onerous and it makes a good deal of sense to allocate specific tasks to the 'ordinary' members of the Management Committee. This Constitution describes the duties of Officers and Specific roles to be allocated to 'ordinary' members of the Management Committee. It can be possible for one member to undertake more than one specific role.

Officers:

6.00 The **Club Chairman** will represent the club at both formal and informal occasions and will chair Management Committee and General Meetings.

6.01 The duties of the **Vice Chairman** are to act in lieu of the Chairman at any occasion where the Chairman cannot attend.

6.02 The duties of the **Honorary Secretary** are to take minutes of all committee and general meetings and produce copies of those minutes as necessary; prepare Agenda for such meetings by agreement with the Chairman; deal with correspondence; administer the decisions of the Committee and handle all matters relating to applications for membership, and when the club does not have a playing secretary, to order bridge stationery and equipment.

6.03 The duties of the **Honorary Treasurer** are to maintain membership records, supervise the collection of all monies due to the Club and the payment of such monies into the Club bank account, to settle all accounts, and to keep a record of such transactions. One or more bank accounts will be maintained in the name of the Club, withdrawals from which will require the signatures of two of the officers of the Club or their authorised deputies whose signatures will be registered at the bank, or in the case of online banking, a two-person authorisation process. Duly audited accounts will be prepared annually for approval at the AGM. If special circumstances arise, such as described in Clause 10, which cause delay in holding the AGM, annual audited accounts will still need to be prepared, and the most recent set(s) will be presented at the AGM when it occurs.

The financial year shall run from 1 January to 31 December.

6.04 Upon the recommendation of the Committee a member or members who have given outstanding service to the Club may be invited to become **President** or **Vice-Presidents** of the Club. Such position to continue until terminated by the Management Committee, The President and Vice-Presidents will be ex-officio members of the Management Committee, without voting rights. Such appointments will be for a maximum of three years.

Special Discretionary Appointments:

6.05 **Playing/Competition Secretary (when applicable)**

Responsible for all matters relating to Club bridge playing activities, or bridge playing by members representing the Club, including the appointment of Tournament Directors, and the ordering and maintenance of bridge supplies and equipment.

The Playing Secretary will also be responsible for arranging and managing matches with other clubs and the participation by the Club in events sponsored by the EBU, and other organisations. The Playing Secretary may appoint other officials as deemed necessary to carry out these duties.

6.06 **Social Secretary**

Responsible for organising and managing social events.

7. Club Sessions

7.01 Club sessions of face-to-face bridge shall be run by the Tournament Director assisted by other club members as required.

7.02 The Tournament Director (TD) shall be responsible for the movement and the enforcement of the Laws. The TD will arrange for the event to be scored and the results to be displayed on the Club's website.

The Tournament Director will assign the initial starting position for each pair/team. Members with disabilities may be allocated stationary seats, if they make such a request, and at the discretion of the TD.

7.03 Play will commence at a time to be published and evening sessions will normally be complete by 10.30pm. For face-to-face bridge sessions, players must arrive and be seated ready to play, and for virtual bridge sessions, players must be logged on and ready to play, in both cases at least 10 minutes before the scheduled start of play. Members who do not comply may be denied the opportunity to play.

7.04 Visitors to face-to-face bridge sessions will normally be admitted free of charge, subject to a maximum of three appearances, after which they will be asked to join the Club. Acceptance of visitors to play will be subject to the table limit for the session not being exceeded. In the event of excessive demand, priority to play shall be as follows:-

- a) A member wishing to play with a visitor and having made prior arrangements with the Secretary.
- b) A member wishing to play with a visitor.
- c) A visitor wishing to play with another visitor and having made prior arrangements with the Secretary.
- d) A visitor wishing to play with another visitor.

7.05 On arrival at a face-to-face bridge session, visitors are required to register with the Tournament Director and to sign the visitors' book

8. Ethics & Appeals

Any request for appeal on the rules of bridge will follow the Appeals Procedure. The Appeals Procedure may be found on the Club website, under the "TD Pages- "Director!" tab.

9. Members' Behaviour/Code of Conduct

9.01 Each member of the Club shall be required, in connection with the game of Contract Bridge, to conform to the EBU rules on player conduct at the bridge table. Players are expected to participate in club sessions in a pleasant, friendly & co-operative manner at all times & to support the TD & club officials where necessary.

9.02 Complaints about members' conduct may be raised by club members, event officials and also committee members, who should be perpetually vigilant of members' behaviour. Complaints are preferably made in writing, but they may be reported verbally to the TD or a committee member on the night who will pass on information about the incident to the committee. Complaints must be raised as soon as possible after the incident, preferably within a week. The offender will be informed as soon as possible that a complaint has arisen and that the committee will deal with it. If necessary, statements will be taken and evidence collected. The offender will be asked to explain their behaviour by the Chairman and one other committee member. The matter will be considered by the committee, who will decide on the appropriate action.

9.03 Any committee member who is personally involved in a dispute will normally be excluded from consideration of the matter. All committee members will decline to discuss with members any matters relating to member complaints, both during and after the complaint procedure, other than to collect evidence. Members of the Club are required by the committee to refrain from promoting their complaints with other members of the Club whilst the complaints procedure is in process, either in the Club or the County or EBU disciplinary bodies.

9.04 Paragraph 9.02 identifies the procedure for investigating complaints and identifies the committee as the appropriate body to rule on a complaint. If the complaint is substantiated, then

a) for lesser offences the Chairman, accompanied by one other committee member, will speak to the offender.

or

b) for a more serious offence, the committee may suspend the member from the club for a variable period or exclude him/her with immediate effect permanently.

The decision will be communicated in writing to the offender as soon as possible, preferably within one month.

9.05 All member complaints substantiated or not, will be formally recorded in the minutes of the committee meetings. However they will normally be excluded from the version published to members. Members should be told there has been a complaint and that they are dealing with it. Once the complaint has been dealt with, a summary should be kept on file for future reference.

9.06 Complaints and rulings involving the rules of Bridge may be referred to the EBU for advice, but members should note that their role is advisory, and final decisions are for the Club's Management committee. Matters involving players' conduct, behaviour or attitude are for the Management Committee to resolve, and their decision is final.

9.07 Even when a complaint is escalated, the committee remains at all times entirely responsible for the standing of members in the Club and there is no appeal against the Club's decision in regard to these matters.

10. Special Circumstances

Special circumstances might arise which are outside the Club's control, which render it not feasible to hold face-to-face bridge sessions, to hold meetings of members in person, or to display a physical notice board for members to view. An example of such special circumstances is a disease epidemic, which results in social distancing measures being imposed. In each clause where the provisions of this Constitution have been amended to allow for such special circumstances applying, reference is made to Clause 10.

11. Winding Up

11.01 In order for a resolution that the club shall be wound up to have effect, at least two thirds of the votes cast on the resolution must be in favour; this vote to be taken at the General Meeting at which the resolution is put.

11.02 If a resolution that the club shall be wound up is effectively passed, the committee shall be responsible for winding up the affairs of the club, and unless the winding up has been initiated with a view to amalgamating the club with some other club (in which case any surplus assets and funds may be transferred to such other club), any surplus assets and funds shall be either distributed amongst the existing members or transferred to such organisations as may be specified in the resolution initiating the winding up, and if no such organisation is so specified, to such organisations as the committee may think fit.

12. Revision of the Constitution

The procedure for amending this Constitution is set out in Clause 4.05

This Constitution

~~was approved by the membership at a General Meeting held on~~

was approved by consent of members obtained under the provisions of Clause 4.05, on 17th
June 2020

* delete as appropriate