

WELWYN GARDEN CITY BRIDGE CLUB: RULES AND PROCEDURES (September 2024)

1.	COMPETITIONS AND PROGRAMME
a)	Tournaments and other competitions shall be held at times appointed by the Committee who will decide upon the conditions and table money to be paid.
b)	A Club calendar shall be published online and updated periodically detailing the programme of events for the coming competition year. The Committee shall endeavour to include in the programme heats of national and county competitions where these seem relevant to members.
c)	The Committee may make alterations to the programme and will endeavour to give notice to members of changes by announcements, email and postings on the Club's website.
d)	Entry lists will be available for special competitions. Should there be insufficient entries the Tournament Secretary, after consultation with the Chair or another Committee member, may cancel a special event. The normal minimum for these events will be 24 participants (i.e., 6 teams or 12 pairs).
2.	ADMISSION
a)	The Club provides regular weekly sessions on various mornings, afternoons and evenings. In some of these sessions permissible conventions are limited so that players of limited or moderate experience can be catered for. Visitors are welcome at all sessions, but both members and visitors are expected to adhere to the rules of the session and to the Club's standards of behaviour. (See Section 3).
b)	Special Club Competitions as advertised on the Club's website.
c)	From time to time the Club may organise open events. These may be entered by members and visitors subject to any pre-entry requirements.
d)	Players must have a club number to play at the club. Normally members of the club are also members of the EBU but if a member does not wish to be a member of the EBU they must request this specifically.
3.	BEHAVIOUR
a)	All members and visitors are required to conform to the standards of fair play courtesy and deportment prescribed by the byelaws and regulations of the EBU. The Club has adopted the EBU's "Best Behaviour At Bridge" protocol and expects all members and visitors to follow this. Copies are available on the Club's website. The principals of the "Best Behaviour at Bridge" protocol shall also apply to all members both before and after a club bridge session on all club exchanges between members and/or officials, whether verbally or in writing (including emails).
b)	The Club has adopted powers and procedures for the enforcement of Rule 3a) above. They are set out in the Appendix 1: Disciplinary Procedures.
c)	All members must comply with the rules of any venue at which Club sessions are held.
d)	All Committee members are to comply with the provisions of Appendix 2: Code of Conduct for WGBC Committee Members.
5.	PLAY
	The rules and conditions of play of the English Bridge Union shall apply at all times and the presiding Tournament Director's decision regarding the commencement and duration of play, the movement, scoring and rulings shall be final subject to the appeals procedure outlined below.

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6.	APPEALS AGAINST TOURNAMENT DIRECTOR (TD) RULING
a)	Any appeal to a TD ruling, must be lodged, in writing (email will suffice) with the Chief TD within 24 hours from the published start time of the session.
b)	An appeal is a formal written request to the Chief TD to review the decision of the TD for that session. Both players in a pair must agree to lodge the appeal and the appellant's partner needs to agree within 48 hours from the published start time of the session.
c)	A written appeal will require the following information to be supplied: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Session date and time• The pair numbers involved• The board number• The Director's name• Description of the circumstances• The original ruling, including any adjustment given.• The reason/grounds for the appeal, if possible, citing any relevant rule to support the appeal.
d)	The appeal will be lodged with the Chief TD who will liaise with the session TD in the first instance. If this does not resolve the matter or the appeal is against a judgement ruling, then the process will move to the next stage. The Chief TD will provide a copy of the appeal to the non-appealing pair and will solicit from those involved such information as they deem necessary to assess the appeal.
e)	Where the appeal cannot be resolved following referral to the Chief TD and liaison with the session TD, the Chief TD will form a panel of three suitable players. This panel will convene within seven working days of the date of the receipt of the written appeal.
f)	The result of the appeal panel will be disclosed to the relevant pair(s) and session TD in writing within 24 hours of the panel's decision.
g)	If following the decision of the appeal panel the appealing pair, or the non-appealing pair, feel there are grounds to have the appeal panel's decision overturned, they can request a further appeal with the EBU's Laws and Ethics Panel within three days of the appeal panel's notification. A deposit of the amount stipulated by the EBU, must be provided to the Club before the matter is progressed to the EBU.
h)	Where the Chief TD is also the session TD the Chair will nominate an alternative independent experienced TD to act as per the Chief TD detailed above.
i)	For a team match the team captain will also need to agree to the appeal (within 48 hours) and be involved in the process from there on as regards communications.
j)	Any player involved in a pending appeal judgement shall not discuss (or seek guidance regarding the appeal) with EBU staff or in any EBU forum as this might prejudice any appeal that is subsequently lodged with the EBU's Laws and Ethics Panel; as a result the appeal may be declared void.
7.	PRIZES AND TROPHIES
a)	Prizes and trophies may be awarded from time to time for Club competitions as agreed by the Committee, for the annual results of each "ladder" for regular weekly events and the Teams' Leagues.
b)	Prize winners will be notified by email after the finalization of the scoring process and results will be published on the website and at the next AGM. Prize money will be paid into the winners Cashless Account.
c)	Trophies may be available for some competitions, but they must not be removed and will be retained by the club.

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8.	FOOD AND DRINK
	Members may bring food and non-alcoholic drinks into the Club in accordance with the rules of the venue in which a session is taking place and if so permitted, they must be consumed within the Club rooms. Members are not permitted to bring alcohol to Club sessions.
9.	PAYMENT OF SUBSCRIPTIONS
a)	Subscriptions to be paid annually by all members will be decided by the members at the AGM each year. Subscriptions are due for payment on the first day of the subscription year as defined in the constitution.
b)	A member whose subscription has not been paid shall cease to be a member on the expiration of the period of 3 months from the date on which the subscription was due for payment. From that date, table money will be charged at the rate applicable to visitors until their subscription has been paid in full.
d)	Each member of the Club, and each guest and visitor, shall pay table money on each occasion when they play at the Club, the basic amounts of which for the time being shall be decided by the Committee.
e)	Each successful applicant for membership of the Club may be required to pay a joining fee, the amount (if any) of which for the time being shall be decided at the Annual General Meeting of the Club.
10.	REPRESENTATION
	The Committee shall nominate a member or members to represent the Club as required.
11.	TERM
	The Club competition year is 1st September to 31 st August for special and cumulative Club competition.
12	PUBLICATION
	These Rules and Procedures have been developed by the Committee in accordance with Article 8 of Club the Constitution. They will be posted on the Club's website and amendments made from time to time by the Committee will be noted in the minutes of the relevant Committee meeting.

	APPENDIX 1: DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES
1.	<p>Requirements of the Schedule</p> <p>This Schedule is referred to under clause 8 of the Constitution of the Welwyn Garden City Bridge Club (hereafter referred to as the Club) 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 Club shall act through its Conduct and Disciplinary Committees for the enforcement of standards prescribed in clause 8 of the Constitution. The Club shall have additional powers as set out in the clauses below.</p> <p>The Club provides over 1,000 hours of bridge for its members annually and almost all of this time is spent in a spirit of friendly competition and good fellowship. The aim of this schedule is to reinforce that spirit.</p> <p>From time-to-time incidents may occur which cause someone to feel aggrieved at the actions or behaviour of another. In such a case the Club requests players to refer such incidents to the presiding Tournament Director. Ideally this should take place immediately as this will permit the facts to be gathered whilst they are still fresh and may lead to a speedy resolution. If this is not possible a report should be made before the session closes.</p> <p>This procedure applies to both face-to-face sessions and online bridge sessions. If a player takes offence at “written chat” exchanged in an online session it is recommended that they make a screen shot of the chat to support any complaint that might ensue.</p>
2.	<p>Receipt of allegation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any person making a complaint against one or more members of the Club under the terms of clause 8 of the Constitution, must do so in writing to the Secretary of the Club. The Secretary will forward such a written complaint to the Chair of the Conduct Committee. The Chair of the Conduct Committee will, where appropriate, try to resolve the issue informally between the relevant parties. If 3 above is not possible or appropriate, then a Conduct Committee will be formed.
3.	<p>Conduct Committee</p> <p>The Committee of the Club shall appoint a Chair of its Conduct Committee through its powers to appoint sub committees under clauses 7 & 8 of the Constitution. The Conduct Committee shall be responsible for investigating complaints against the Club’s members and to determine whether a disciplinary offence should be referred to the Club’s Disciplinary Committee.</p> <p>The Conduct Committee shall consist of no fewer than three members of the Club 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 Chair, or whomsoever in their 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.</p>
4.	Disciplinary Committee
	<p>The Committee of the Club shall appoint the Disciplinary Committee through its powers to appoint Sub-Committees under clauses 7 & 8 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.</p> <p>The Disciplinary Committee shall consist of no fewer than three members of the Club and no more than five. At least three of its members must be present when it makes a decision to uphold a</p>

	complaint and impose sanctions on the offending member. It shall act by simple majority vote and its appointed Chair, or whomsoever in their 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
	<p>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.</p> <p>A member of the Club must not be a member of both the Conduct and Disciplinary Committees.</p>
6.	The Complaints Process
6.1	<p><u>Notice of Meetings</u></p> <p>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. Normally no action will be taken in respect of a complaint relating to an alleged offence which occurred three months or more prior to a formal complaint in writing made to the Club Secretary. If it does take action 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.</p> <p>The Conduct Committee shall also be entitled to seek advice both from within the Club and from the EBU Laws and Ethics Committee, and to obtain external legal advice.</p>
6.2	<p><u>Complaint not justified</u></p> <p>If the Conduct Committee decides that the complaint is not justified, all parties shall be notified and the matter ended.</p>
6.3	<p><u>Complaint justified</u></p> <p>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.</p> <p>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 their 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 their choice or may be accompanied by a person to speak on their behalf. The Disciplinary Committee shall give at least two weeks' notice of the hearing to the Defendant.</p>
6.4	<p><u>Disciplinary Committee's Sanctions</u></p> <p>If after the hearing the complaint is upheld, the Disciplinary Committee may in its absolute discretion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (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 Club for such period as it shall determine, OR (c) Suspend the offending member(s) from attending the club for such period as it shall determine, OR

	<p>(d) Expel the offending member(s) from the Club.</p> <p>If the complaint is against a member of the Committee, then in addition to any other sanctions applied, the Disciplinary Committee shall have the power to suspend such member from the Club's Committee and any of its Sub-Committees for such a period that it shall determine.</p> <p>Any sanctions imposed by the Disciplinary Committee must be communicated to the offending member(s) in writing within twenty-one days of the hearing.</p> <p>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 the Sanction shall not take effect until such Appeal has been determined.</p>
6.5	<p><u>Appeal</u></p> <p>Every Defendant found guilty of an offence by the Club Disciplinary Committee has the right to appeal to the County Disciplinary Committee. Appeals must be in writing and lodged with the Secretary of the Association within twenty-one days of the written communication of the Club's Disciplinary Committee's decision to the Defendant. A copy of the appeal must be sent to the Secretary of the Club.</p> <p>Every Defendant found guilty of a Disciplinary Offence by the County 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 County Disciplinary Committee's decision to the offending member. A copy of the appeal must be sent to the Secretary of the Club.</p> <p>At any time, the County Disciplinary Committee may refer a complaint to the EBU Laws & Ethics Committee for its consideration. In doing so the County Disciplinary Committee shall have fully discharged its responsibilities under this Schedule.</p>
7	WhatsApp Groups
	<p>Where the Conduct Chair investigates a complaint regarding inappropriate WhatsApp messages and holds a conduct and/or disciplinary hearing, one of the possible sanctions is to suspend the participant from WhatsApp for a period of time as determined by the Conduct Committee and/or Disciplinary Committee. Should the suspended member wish be reinstated on the group(s) at the end of the suspension period they will need to request to be reinstated. It will be the suspended members responsibility to make this request to the WhatsApp group admin and no reminders will be sent to the member by the club.</p>

	APPENDIX 2: CODE OF CONDUCT FOR WGCBC COMMITTEE MEMBERS, SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS, RETIRED COMMITTEE MEMBERS AND RETIRED SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS															
1.	Introduction <ul style="list-style-type: none">• This Code applies to all Committee and Sub-Committee members• This Code cannot be exhaustive; it is important to apply the spirit of the key principles• Breaches of this code may result in disciplinary action, up to and including removal from the Committee															
2.	Equality and diversity statement <ul style="list-style-type: none">• This Code recognises that all organisations should follow principles and practices that fully recognise diversity in all its forms, including age, gender, faith, race, sexual orientation, disability, experience and thinking• Such principles do not feature separately as they are an integral part of good practice within all organisations															
3.	Key principles <table><tr><td>Selflessness</td><td>You should take decisions solely in terms of the club’s interest</td></tr><tr><td>Integrity</td><td>You should not behave in order to gain financial or other material benefits for yourself, your family, or your friends</td></tr><tr><td>Objectivity</td><td>You should not place yourself under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might, or might be perceived to, influence you</td></tr><tr><td>Accountability</td><td>You are accountable for your decisions and actions to the club membership</td></tr><tr><td>Openness</td><td>You should be as open as possible about the decisions and actions that you take</td></tr><tr><td>Honesty</td><td>You have a duty to declare any private interests relating to your club duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts</td></tr><tr><td>Leadership</td><td>You should promote and support these principles by leadership and example</td></tr></table> <p>These principles should inform your actions and decisions as a Committee member.</p>		Selflessness	You should take decisions solely in terms of the club’s interest	Integrity	You should not behave in order to gain financial or other material benefits for yourself, your family, or your friends	Objectivity	You should not place yourself under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might, or might be perceived to, influence you	Accountability	You are accountable for your decisions and actions to the club membership	Openness	You should be as open as possible about the decisions and actions that you take	Honesty	You have a duty to declare any private interests relating to your club duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts	Leadership	You should promote and support these principles by leadership and example
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4.	General conduct <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The club adheres to the English Bridge Unions (EBU) ‘Best Behaviour at Bridge’; this extends to Committee and Sub-Committee meetings• Committee members must carry out their financial obligations responsibly, avoiding waste and extravagance• Committee members must not disclose any information which is confidential in nature, or which is provided in confidence and this duty continues to apply after leaving the Committee• Committee members should take care to ensure that their presence on social media platforms is always appropriate to their role															
5.	Committee members’ interests <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Committee members must ensure that no conflict arises, or could reasonably be perceived to arise, between their duties as a Committee member and their private interests, financial or otherwise• Committee members need to declare publicly any private interests and will be required to remove themselves from the discussion or determination of matters in which they have an interest.															
6.	Role and responsibilities of the Chair <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Chair is elected annually by the Annual General Meeting (AGM)• The Chair is responsible for formulating the overall Committee strategy															

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Chair needs to ensure that decisions reached by the Committee take into account regional and national guidance and the Club's Constitution • The Chair needs to ensure that risks are appropriate • The Chair needs to promote the efficient and effective use of the Club's resources • The Chair needs to ensure the effective running of Committee meetings and the AGM
7.	<p>Roles and responsibilities of Committee members</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each Committee member has collective responsibility for the decisions that are reached and for carrying them out • Each Committee member should respect the principle of collective decision-making and responsibility; this means that once the Committee has made a decision, each Committee member should support that decision • Each Committee member will treat any member of the club or Committee member with courtesy and respect; it is expected that others will show the same consideration in return • Each Committee member should play a full and active role in the work of the Committee, preparing and attending meetings; apologies for non-attendance must be sent to the Secretary • Committee members must keep confidential information pertaining to matters dealt with by the Committee unless otherwise agreed upon by the Committee. This includes Committee meeting minutes, agendas, reports to the Committee both verbal and written, and associated documents, and information contained in those documents. To ensure transparency, information and documents should be available to members upon reasonable request. The obligation to maintain confidentiality continues to apply even after a person has left the Committee. • Each committee member, at the end of their term, must have a handover meeting with the chair or a representative appointed by the chair. The retiring committee member should, insofar as is feasible, disclose to the chair, or their appointed representative, all club documents relating to their time on the committee, including any emails and documents stored electronically. The chair or their representative shall inform the retiring committee member of the documents they require to be handed over. Once the required documents have been handed over, the retiring committee member should make reasonable endeavours to destroy all club documents relating to their time on the Committee in their possession, including those stored electronically on the personal devices or cloud-based storage services. Any documents remaining in the retired Committee member's member possession, must be kept securely and are confidential. Any breach in confidentiality by a Committee member or a retired Committee member might lead to implementation of the Club's Disciplinary Procedures. • If a member of the Committee wishes to propose a resolution at an AGM or SGM that is contrary to any decision made collectively by the Committee, they must first resign from the Committee
8.	<p>Delegation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Under the constitution, the management of the club shall be vested in the Committee which is elected annually at the AGM • The Committee (or any Committee member acting with the authority of the Committee) shall have licence to take any action it deems fit for the harmonious conduct and management of the club
9.	<p>Personal liability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The EBU has confirmed that it has Directors and Officers' insurance in place to give clubs legal cover for Management liability matters

	APPENDIX 3: AGM PROCEDURES		
1.	Timetable		
	Day before AGM	Action	Comments
	35	Publish notice on website, send by email or by 2 nd class post.	Allows 7 days for postal delivery
	28	Notice deemed to have been received by all members	
	21	Nominations for Committee and resolutions proposed by members closes	Allows 7 days to review nominations for validity
	14	Agenda and Papers for all resolutions made available on website	
	3	Proxy Votes received by 12 noon	Gives time to summarise proxy votes
	1	Electronic and postal votes	
	Zero	Day of Meeting	Review attendees at start of meeting and cancel proxy votes for anyone attending
2.	Notice The notice must contain: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Date, time, and place of the meeting • Details of where and when agenda will be published • Permitted methods of voting available • Procedure for Nomination for Officers and Committee members 		
3.	Voting The methods are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By show of hands of those physically present • Electronically in attendance at remote meeting (e.g., on zoom) <p>Any member unable to attend the meeting in person (including online) may register their vote in advance of the meeting with the Club Secretary. They must do this in writing, which includes electronically or by post 24 hours before the meeting. In certain circumstances, the Committee may permit proxy votes, these need to be registered with the Club Secretary 3 days before the meeting.</p> <p>If the Committee considers it necessary, it will appoint an Independent Adjudicator. The methods of voting for a particular meeting will be agreed by the Committee and published in the notice of the meeting.</p> <p>Controls need to be in place to ensure only one vote per registered member is counted.</p>		
4.	Giving Notice Methods available: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On website • By email • By post <p>28 days' notice of the date, time and place for the General Meeting will be given by a notice posted on the Club's website and by email to all members. Notice of meetings will be sent by post to any member for whom the club has no email address.</p>		

	<p>It is the responsibility of any member who has provided the club with an email address to ensure it is kept up to date. Adequate notice of a meeting will be deemed to have been given when the email is sent. It is the responsibility of members to read emails from the club, take reasonable steps to ensure they are not treated as spam, or subject to any other delivery failure.</p> <p>Notice sent by post will be deemed to be given at the time it is posted by second class post, regardless of the eventual delivery date.</p> <p>Any failure by any members to read such notice shall not invalidate the Meeting.</p>
5.	<p>Normal Business of AGM</p> <p>The AGM must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Approve the minutes of the previous AGM• Receive the report of the Committee• Receive the report from the Independent Financial Examiner• Approve the financial statements for the preceding year• Approve the amount of the subscription due at the next renewal date• Elect the Independent Financial Examiner• Elect the Chair, Officers and the members of the Committee; all candidates shall be proposed and seconded 3 weeks prior to the meeting <p>Copies of documents in support of any agenda item should be made available on the website not later than 14 days before the meeting. Paper copies should also be made available at any meeting which members are able to attend in person.</p> <p>The meeting will be chaired by the retiring Chair if present, otherwise by any member of the club approved by a majority of those present at the meeting.</p>