



Constitution of the Northern Ireland Bridge Union. 2014

1 Name

The name of the organisation shall be the Northern Ireland Bridge Union (The 'Union')

2 Purpose

The purpose of the Union shall be to develop, encourage and control Duplicate Bridge in Northern Ireland.

3. Government

Government is vested in the NIBU Council subject to directives from general meetings of the Union

3.1 The Council

The Council consists of the Chairperson, the Officers comprising the Management Committee (See 3.2) and seven representatives of at least three affiliated clubs elected at the Union's Annual General Meeting (AGM).

- a) Council meetings will be summoned by the Secretary and will take place at least three times a year.
- b) Any member of the Union may attend a meeting of the Council as an observer and in a non-voting capacity. A member may only address the meeting at the invitation of the Chairperson.

- c) Any member may request the right to raise an item of business or address Council providing they have given at least 14 days' notice to the Secretary. Such requests will normally be considered as agenda items under 'Correspondence'.
- d) Any three or more Council members may require the Secretary to summon a meeting of the Council
- e) Seven members will constitute a quorum
- f) Council will be chaired by the Chairperson. In the absence of the Chairperson the Immediate-Past Chairperson or Chairperson-Elect will take the Chair.
- g) All matters shall be decided by vote – each member having one vote and no proxy voting shall be allowed. In the event of a tie, the Chairperson shall have a casting vote.
- h) Each meeting will consider verbal and/ or written reports from the Management Committee and from sub-committees.
- i) The agenda and accompanying papers of all Council, Management and Sub-Committee meetings will normally be posted on the website within seven days prior to any meeting. Minutes will normally be posted within seven days following any meeting.
- j) Council will appoint delegates to other associated bodies
- k) Council will consider all recommendations from clubs for vacancies on the Management and other Committees and on Council itself.
- l) Council will submit its recommendations for Council and Management Committee membership to members at the AGM. Any three clubs may propose an alternative candidate to that nominated by Council in which case an election shall take place.

3.1.1 Powers

Through its Council, the Union shall have the power to:

- a) promote, organise and manage bridge tournaments, congresses and matches in a range of formats
- b) determine rules and procedures governing all aspects of the Union's objectives and its relationship between the Union, affiliated clubs, members, management team and Council
- c) accept, reject, terminate or suspend the affiliation of any bridge club
- d) discipline any member of the Union and debar them from participation in Union events
- e) levy annual fees and subscriptions from affiliated clubs
- f) affiliate with national or international bridge organisations either directly or through its membership of the Irish Bridge Union.
- g) acquire and retain estate or property in pursuance of the Union's objectives and appoint trustees to manage the same.
- h) accept legacies or donations bequeathed to the Union
- i) manage or dispose of any property or asset belonging to the Union

3.2 The Management Committee

The routine business of the Union shall be dealt with by a Management Committee that shall be responsible and report to the Council. The Management Committee will be comprised of the following Officers of the Union:-

- The Chairperson
- The Immediate-Past Chairperson OR the Incoming Chairperson-Elect
- The Honorary Secretary
- The Honorary Treasurer
- The Honorary Master Points Secretary
- The Honorary Competitions Secretary

3.3 The Members

- a) Members are defined as those individuals who are registered members of an affiliated bridge club.
- b) All members of affiliated clubs are subject to NIBU rules and constitutional matters.
- c) There is no provision for individual membership of the NIBU. Membership is only via membership of an affiliated club.

3.3.1 Affiliation

- a) Any bridge club in Northern Ireland may apply to the Union Secretary for affiliation.
- b) Each affiliated club shall provide the Union Secretary with a list of its members and an affiliation fee on an annual basis
- c) Affiliated clubs shall have full powers to manage their own affairs and to benefit fully from the proceeds of internally organised competitions, congresses etc.
- d) Affiliated clubs shall be licensed to issue Master Points

3.3.2 Fees

- a) The minimum affiliation fee for any club is in respect of eight members
- b) The annual affiliation fee payable by any club is determined by the total number of members of the club i.e. $A \times B$ where A is the individual membership fee and B is the number of registered members of the club.
- c) The Council may levy a reduced fee in respect of any club in which at least 80% of the members are students
- d) Any change to the annual affiliation fee shall be agreed at the AGM of the Union.
- e) The annual affiliation fee is payable upon application for affiliation and subsequently on November 1st each year. A club will be deemed to be in arrears if the fee is outstanding on February 1st the following year and may be disaffiliated as a consequence.

3.4 Finance

- a) The Management Committee will be responsible for the Union's Finances and will prepare an annual budget and business plan each March for Council approval.
- b) The financial year of the Union shall be from 1st April to 31st March
- c) The Treasurer shall keep proper books of account
- d) The Treasurer's accounts shall be prepared at the end of each financial year
- e) An auditor or independent accountant, neither of whom shall be an officer of the Union, hereinafter called the Examining Accountant, shall be appointed at the AGM
- f) The Examining Accountant shall examine the books and accounts of the Union then submit a report stating the extent and basis of the examination and the opinion formed as a result
- g) The Examining Accountant is entitled to receive notice of all members' general meetings, to attend the same and to address same.
- h) Should it be proposed that the Examining Accountant be changed from the previous Examining Accountant, the existing Examining Accountant is entitled to all rights set out in section 3.4g.
- i) Any two members of the Management Committee may act as signatories to Union cheques.

4 Meetings

4.1 Annual General Meeting

- a) The AGM of the Union shall be held in June each year
- b) The Secretary of the Union will email or write to the Secretary of each affiliated club at least two weeks prior to the meeting, supplying full details, agenda and accompanying papers in respect of business to be transacted at the AGM.
- c) Such details will also be posted on the NIBU website concurrently.
- d) All members of the Union are entitled to attend and address the AGM.
- e) Each member attending shall be entitled to one vote on any motion presented at the AGM
- f) The AGM is deemed to be quorate when 25 members or more attend.
- g) If the meeting is found to be inquorate, business will cease to be transacted. A second meeting will be called within one week at which a quorum will not be required to complete business.
- h) The business of the AGM shall include the:
 - approval of previous minutes, annual accounts and balance sheet
 - election in alternate years of the Chairperson for a term of two years with no immediate-re-election.
 - election in alternate years of the Chairperson-Elect for 1 year to precede a term of 2 years as Chairperson and 1 year as Immediate Past-Chairperson.
 - election of Honorary Secretary for 1 year, eligible for re-election
 - election of Honorary Treasurer for 1 year, eligible for re-election.

- election of Honorary Master Points Secretary for 1 year, eligible for re-election
 - election of Honorary Competitions Secretary for 1 year, eligible for re-election.
 - election of Council members and trustees
 - change to annual affiliation fees, if any
 - consideration of items submitted in advance to the Secretary by any two affiliated clubs.
- i) Any resolution to be moved at the AGM must be submitted in writing to the Secretary at least 14 days before the meeting and signed by the proposer, eight seconders and the secretaries of two affiliated clubs.

4.2 Extraordinary General Meeting

Such a meeting may be called by:

- a) the Council through the Chairperson.
 - or
 - b) notice from the secretaries of four or more affiliated clubs.
- Application from other than the Council must be made in writing or by email to the Secretary stating the purpose of the meeting.
 - The purpose of the meeting shall form the sole business to be transacted.

5 Sub- Committees

- a) Council will appoint members to a Selection Committee and to a Laws & Ethics Committee
- b) Council may appoint members to other committees with a functional role or may delegate authority to do so to the Management Committee.
- c) The quora and membership of all sub-committees will be determined by Council from time to time
- d) Council shall delegate to its Laws & Ethics sub-committee, the right to hear and rule on all appeals against any decision made by a Union competition Appeals Committee
- e) Council will have the final say on any appeals arising from judgments of the Laws & Ethics Committee

6. Constitution

- a) Council may propose to alter or amend the Constitution subject to c) below
- b) Members may propose changes to the Constitution providing details are submitted to the Secretary at least 28 days prior to the AGM and supported by the secretaries of at least four affiliated clubs.
- c) All proposed changes to the Constitution will only be implemented following a vote in agreement of at least two-thirds of members at the AGM.
- d) A copy of this Constitution will be posted on the Union website.

7. Suspension or expulsion of clubs and individual members from the Union

- a) Council may give an affiliated club notice of suspension or expulsion from the Union and will provide particulars of any complaint made against such a club.
- b) The club will have 21 days to respond to such a notice and may reserve the right to address a meeting of the Council verbally or in writing.
- c) The decision to suspend or expel any club will require a 60% majority vote amongst Council members attending
- d) Council may suspend an individual club member from participation in Union events should it be deemed desirable to do so

8. Voluntary Resignation and removal of Officers and members of Council

- An officer or Council member may resign by writing to the Secretary.
- Council may appoint replacement Officers or Council members on a temporary capacity pending the AGM.
- An officer or council member may be removed from office if, in the opinion of two-thirds of Council members, they have failed to carry out their duties in a satisfactory manner.

9. Winding up

If the Union is dissolved, any property remaining after settling debts and liabilities will be distributed among the affiliated clubs.