

ORGANISATIONAL GUIDELINES FOR CLUBS

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CLUB COMMITTEE & CONSTITUTION

<p>COMMITTEE MEMBERS</p> <p>CORE President Secretary Treasurer Committee Members (All of whom should have functions)</p>	<p>DISCRETIONARY / OPTIONAL President-Elect (Vice-President) Past President Tournament Director Development Officer Teaching Co-Ordinator Competitions Secretary Membership & Masterpoints Social Secretary Website Manager</p>	<p>CONSTITUTION A simple club Constitution keeps the awareness of the committee on what the general body of members has approved or needs.</p> <p>Sample Constitution – <i>see Appendix IV</i></p>
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FUNCTIONS OF CLUB COMMITTEE

<p>MEMBERSHIP</p> <p>CORE Update membership lists. Submit affiliation forms and fees.</p> <p>Prepare and record Masterpoints awards and return to CBAI at end of season.</p>	<p>Notes Update affiliation forms with new info, change of address, contact details, RIPs, new members, etc. Cross-check affiliation forms with membership lists.</p> <p>Distribute club calendar and regional calendar.</p> <p>Note that all events run by or under the auspices of the club between the beginning of September and the end of May need to be recorded, with particular inclusion of visitors or non-members.</p> <p>Communicate with members on club/general matters; pass on to members information about congresses and CBAI regional/national competitions.</p>	<p>Non-CORE Distribution of membership cards and newsletters.</p>
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FUNCTIONS OF CLUB COMMITTEE

FINANCE		
<p>CORE Set club subscription, table money and prize structure.</p>	<p>Notes Budget the annual expenses of the club for the year; assess the annual club subscription to ensure the income will cover the outgoings. Weekly table money needs to be reviewed in conjunction with the weekly prize structure to ensure the surplus is adequate to cover weekly costs. Prize structure needs to be established for the full range of expected table movements: eg. a 6 table Howell 1st prize €30, 2nd prize €20.</p>	<p>Non-CORE</p>
<p>Collect annual subscriptions and table money.</p>	<p>Arrange to collect annual subs, using CBAI membership cards as receipts or keep a receipt book.</p>	
<p>Lodge monies to club account.</p>	<p>Prepare weekly record sheet for summarising the club activity eg. total tables x table money = total income – prizes = weekly surplus, incl date of lodgement Appendix I.</p>	
<p>Arrange for payment of services.</p>	<p>Pay bills for the club. Pay annual affiliation fees to CBAI either via Regional Treasurer or directly to CBAI, - include honorary members on affiliation list.</p>	<p>Trophy engraving</p>
<p>Keep accounts and prepare annual accounts for AGM.</p>	<p>Summarise money activity; income and payments. Appendix II. Prepare annual accounts to show comparative figures year on year. Appendix III. Have finances checked annually/audited by club member independent of committee. This is a protection for the Treasurer and committee.</p>	
<p>Manage premises and ensure adequate Insurance cover is in place.</p>		



FUNCTIONS OF CLUB COMMITTEE

BRIDGE ACTIVITIES	Notes	Non-CORE
<p>CORE</p> <p>Prepare club calendar to include national (CBAI and IBU), and regional congresses and local events as well as club competitions and social events. Production of fixture list.</p> <p>Run ordinary club nights. Produce results – manually or by computer.</p> <p>Organise club stationery supplies & equipment, keeping equipment clean and in good condition. Keep up-to-date on current health regulations.</p> <p>Organise tournament directing for major competitions if external TD is required.</p> <p>Receive entries for competitions.</p> <p>Source prizes for major competitions.</p> <p>Keep a record of trophy locations.</p>	<p>When drawing up club fixture list take into account dates set for national and regional competitions and congresses. Confer with IBU and CBAI re Simultaneous Pairs competitions. Return results promptly when club participates.</p> <p>Nominate club members willing and able to run and score weekly club competitions. If necessary, arrange basic training in tournament directing and scoring. Make results, together with travelling/personal score sheets, available for agreed period of time.</p> <p>Be familiar with ‘the one stop bridge shop’ in CBAI HQ. A selection of bridge related goods as well as stationary supplies and equipment are always in stock.</p> <p>Draw up a list of available external tournament directors and their contact details. Engage TD(s) as soon as fixture list is finalised.</p> <p>Prepare list of players for TD.</p>	<p>Operation of handicap system</p> <p>Devise and apply a points system to facilitate nomination of ‘Player of The Year’. Maintenance of “Player of the Year” records.</p>



FUNCTIONS OF CLUB COMMITTEE

MEETINGS CORE	Notes	Non-CORE
Set dates and times.	To be successful a meeting requires a suitable venue which is quiet and comfortable.	
Prepare agenda (if necessary).	Prepare an agenda. The agenda is the plan of the meeting – a list of topics to be covered during the course of the meeting. Keep the number of items realistic.	
Conduct meeting	Good timing. Start the meeting on time. Agree a time frame for the meeting and stick to it. An effective chairperson is essential. This person's role is to control the meeting, keep it focused on agenda items, encourage participation, clarify points and summarise positions. 'Standing Orders' for the conduct and governance of meetings should be established. Appendix V	
Minutes. Circulate minutes promptly.	Minutes are a clear record of the meeting. They should include any decision taken, action required, who will take the action and a deadline. Actions to be taken should be highlighted. Write up the minutes soon after the meeting –within 24 hours if possible. Minutes should follow the agenda exactly with identical item headings. Appendix VI Retain minutes of meetings and make them available to members on request.	
Deal with correspondence. Attend club secretaries' meetings at regional level.		



FUNCTIONS OF CLUB COMMITTEE

PUBLIC RELATIONS	Notes	Non-CORE
<p>CORE Publicise days and times of bridge, together with contact details. Publicise lessons/workshops. Develop and maintain a website.</p> <p>Acknowledge members' success in national competitions/congresses/trials, wish members well in trials for international events. Encourage junior players.</p> <p>Provide photos and accounts of significant club events.</p> <p>Promote upcoming competitions in house, regional and national.</p> <p>Set up a club website to link in with regional & national websites.</p> <p>Update club website.</p> <p>Inform members about CBAI shop and materials to help improve their game.</p> <p>Establish contacts with local papers.</p>	<p>Use email, website, texts to assist. At workshops, lessons and seminars, request email addresses for future contact.</p> <p>Publicise in newsletters and on website. Place notices of such successes on club notice boards also.</p> <p>Put on club and regional website.</p> <p>Place publications of bridge matters on club notice board. Prepare monthly flyers for tables to promote all upcoming competitions. Use group texts, emails, sites such as 'my local news' or social networking sites such as "Twitter" and "Facebook" to promote competitions.</p> <p>Advise local newspapers of members playing in international events (or with other significant achievements) with accompanying photo if possible.</p>	<p>Advise regional committee of open events in club, such as open nights, charity events.</p> <p>Club presentation of membership cards and newsletter – a CBAI night where members are given a short talk on CBAI, congratulations to those upgraded, those who have won regional or national competitions and those who have played in international trials. Advise members of President's Award and ask for nominations. Advise members who their County Development officers are.</p>



Appendix II

Queen of Hearts Bridge Club

Sample Summary Sheet

Date	Net Table Money	Club	Other	Total	Cash	Catering	Other	Total	Lodged
		Subs	Other	Total	Expenses				
		Subs	Other	Total	Rent				
16.2.10	60.00	90.00	0.00	150.00	40.00	16.55	0.00	56.55	93.45
Total	60.00	90.00	0.00	150.00	40.00	16.55	0.00	56.55	93.45



Appendix III

THE QUEEN OF HEARTS BRIDGE CLUB SAMPLE ACCOUNTS

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE	ACCOUNT	2010	2009
INCOME	€	€	
Net Income from Classes	2320	2230	
Members Subscriptions	4560	2230	
Net Income from Bridge	6880	4460	
Rents from Premises	123	456	
Sundry Income			
TOTAL INCOME	7003	4916	
EXPENDITURE			
Rent	123	123	
Utilities	456	456	
Insurance	789	789	
Maintenance	123	123	
Catering	456	456	
Equipment/Stationery	789	789	
CBAI Affiliation Fees	123	123	
Cleaning	456	456	
Bank Interest/Charges	789	789	
Advertising	123	123	
Sundries	456	456	
Honoraria	789	789	
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	5472	5472	
Excess of Income over Expenditure			
	1531	-556	
BALANCE SHEET			
Stocks of stationery	554	340	
Debtors	250	160	
Prize Bonds	78	78	
Cash in Bank/on hands	1564	-98	
	2446	480	
Capital Account as at 1/06/09	140	696	
Excess of Income over Expenditure	1531	-556	
	1671	140	
Creditors	775	340	
	2446	480	

I have examined the books and records of the Queen of Hearts Bridge Club and have obtained all the information and explanations which I considered necessary. I confirm that the Income & Expenditure Account for the year ended 30 April 2009 and the Balance Sheet as at the 30 April 2009 are correct and in accordance therewith.

Hon Auditor



Appendix IV. Guidelines for Bridge Clubs organizing fundraising events

1. Appoint at least 2 people to be responsible for overseeing the finances raised.
2. Record all monies received – donations, table money, raffle.
3. As far as possible, the total sum raised should be announced to the participants at the close of the event.
4. Receipts should be sought and retained from the organisation that is being supported; invoices for expenses incurred and discharged should also be retained.
5. When arranging Public Liability Insurance cover for the season, it is important that events additional to the normal club nights, which may attract more visitors than usual, be specifically mentioned, eg. charity events, Christmas party, etc.

NOTES

The guidelines above are recommended as a protection for the club and for the personnel involved. Shared responsibility ensures that no one individual can be the subject of innuendo.

Appendix V.

Sample Constitution **XXXXXXX BRIDGE CLUB** **CONSTITUTION & RULES**

1. NAME

The Club shall be known as XXXXX Bridge Club.

2. OBJECTIVES

The objective of the club shall be the playing and promotion of Bridge under the rules, guidance and objectives of the CBAI and will be fully registered as a Club with the Contract Bridge Association of Ireland.

3. MEMBERSHIP

Each candidate for membership must be proposed and seconded by two members of the club and the nomination given in writing to the Hon. Secretary. The Committee, after considering objections, if any, by any member of the committee, to such candidate, may proceed with the election which must be by majority vote of the committee. Membership then becomes effective on payment of the Annual Subscription.

Members who have not paid their Annual Subscription by 1st December in any year will be deemed to have lapsed their membership and must re-apply for election. Lapsed members cannot play as guests within twelve months of lapsing their membership. Members re-accepted between the 1st Dec. and the 31st March will enjoy full membership benefits from date of re-acceptance if their annual subscription is paid.

Each member of the club is automatically a member of the CBAI and is subject to the Constitution of the CBAI.

The Club welcomes guests or visitors. Table money must be paid, but they are not eligible for prizes on competition nights listed on our calendar. Any person who is ineligible for prizes under these rules and



forms a partnership in pairs or team events will automatically disqualify the full partnership or teams from the prizewinners.

In the event of any member acting in such a manner as to bring the club into disrepute or to disrupt the smooth running of the club or the enjoyment of other members, the committee shall have the right to reprimand such a member, and to warn them as to their future conduct. This may be done verbally or in writing. If the said member should continue to so act, the committee, if they obtain the full majority approval of the Trustees, or the Trustees, if they obtain the approval of two of the Management Committee, shall cancel such person's membership and refund their Annual Subscription for that year.

4.

(A) ORGANISATION AND MANAGEMENT

The care of and responsibility for the proper administration of the xxxxxxxx Bridge Club shall be vested in five Trustees. They shall ensure that the Management Committee interpret and administer this Constitution and the playing rules of bridge as laid down by the CBAI. They must ensure that the Management Committee, does not act or allow members to act, in any manner which would militate against Beginner, Novice or Intermediate "B" grades, and that the Management Committee carries out the objectives of the club at all times. There shall be no restriction on Trustees holding any office in the Management Committee. Trustees shall be elected for a five-year period and may resign at any time. The remaining Trustees shall have the right to co-opt any member as a replacement. At the end of the five-year term a new election must take place.

(B) MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

- (i) A Management Committee, elected each year at the Annual General Meeting, which shall be held in xxxxxxxx, shall control the club.
- (ii) The Committee shall put into effect all Resolutions passed at the Annual General Meeting and shall make such Regulations as they shall from time to time see fit, provided that such Regulations shall not alter, amend or repeal any Regulations embodied in this Constitution.
- (iii) The committee shall consist of the President, Vice-President, Hon. Secretary, Hon. Treasurer, P.R.O. and 6 committee members.
- (iv) The Vice-President of the previous year shall be installed as President and shall nominate the new Vice-President at the A.G.M. each year. The election of Officers remains unchanged. No member of the Committee may serve for a period of more than five consecutive years. All Committee members must be elected by ballot each year. In the event of insufficient nominations being posted, to create a vote, the committee must put forward extra nominations to create a ballot. All ballots are by simple majority and the President shall have a casting vote. The A.G.M. shall elect the Trustees quinquennially and the remaining officers and committee annually.
- (v) Two nominated members of the club, who shall be appointed by the committee, shall carry out the Annual Audit of the Accounts. *Annual accounts shall be kept and made available to the Revenue Commissioners on request.*
- (vi) The President shall be an Honorary Member during his/her year of office. The out-going President shall automatically become ex-officio a member of the incoming Committee if he/she so wishes.
- (vii) The committee have the right to co-opt any member should a vacancy occur.
- (viii) For any valid meeting of the above committee, there shall be at least (five) persons present.



- (ix) The committee shall have the power to appoint sub-committees where necessary. The President shall ex-officio be a member of every committee.
- (x) All decisions reached at meetings of the club shall be by simple majority and the Chair shall have a casting vote in the event of a deadlock.

(C) OFFICES

- (a) The President shall preside over all affairs of the club and shall at all times be afforded the courtesy that the office demands. The President may preside over all or particular meetings of the club by expressing such a wish.
- (b) The Vice-President will substitute for the President.
- (c) The Honorary Secretary and Honorary Treasurer shall administer the affairs of the club as laid down at the Annual General Meeting and shall furnish all reports to the Annual General Meeting.
- (d) Tournament Directors shall be appointed by the committee and shall run Competitions as laid down by the C.B.A.I.

(D) INCOME AND PROPERTY

The income and property of the club shall be applied solely towards the promotion of its main objective as set forth in this Constitution. No portion of the club's income and property shall be paid or transferred directly or indirectly by way of dividend, bonus or otherwise howsoever by way of profit, to the members of the club. No Officer shall be appointed to any office of the club paid by salary or fees, or receive any remuneration or any other benefit in money or money's worth from the club in respect of such office.

However, nothing shall prevent any payment in good faith by the club of:

- (i) Reasonable and proper remuneration to any member or Officer of the club for any services rendered to the club (other than as an Officer)*
- (ii) Interest at a rate not exceeding 5% per annum on money lent by Officers or other members of the club to the club*
- (iii) Reasonable and proper rent for premises demised and let by any member of the club (including any Officer) to the club*
- (iv) Reasonable and proper out-of-pocket expenses incurred by any Officer in connection with their attendance to any matter affecting the club*
- (v) Fees, remuneration or other benefit in money or money's worth to any Company of which an Officer may be a member holding not more than one hundredth part of the issued capital of such Company.*

(E) EXTRAORDINARY GENERAL MEETINGS

The committee may call an Extraordinary General Meeting at any time and must call one at the request, in writing, of one-third of the members of the club.

(F) CHANGE TO THE CONSTITUTION

- (i) Alterations, amendments or changes to the Constitution shall be made only at a General Meeting of the members and shall require a two-third majority vote of the members present and voting at the meeting.



- (ii) No addition, alteration or amendment shall be made to the main objectives and/or the income and property clauses in this Constitution for the time being in force, unless the same shall have been previously approved in writing by the Revenue Commissioners.

(G) ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Notice of the date fixed for the meeting shall be displayed on the Club Notice Board for two weeks preceding the Annual General Meeting. Nominations and Resolutions must be displayed on the Notice Board before the start of the AGM. A quorum of at least 30% of members must be present at any AGM or EGM.

5. WINDING-UP

If upon the winding up or dissolution of the club there remains, after the satisfaction of all its debts and liabilities, any property whatsoever, it shall not be paid to or distributed among the members of the club. Instead, such property shall be given or transferred to some other institution or institutions having main objectives similar to the main objects of the club. The institution or institutions to which the property is to be given or transferred shall prohibit the distribution of its or their income and property among its or their members to an extent at least as great as is imposed on the club under or by virtue of Clause 4 (D) above. Members of the club shall select the relevant institution or institutions at or before the time of dissolution, and if and so far as effect cannot be given to such provisions, then the property shall be given or transferred to some charitable object.

NOTES

1. This is a suggested Constitution ONLY.
2. Where shown, numbers may be changed.
3. XXXXXX indicates local name.
4. Proposers of New Members can be 2 or more.
5. Number of Officers should suit local needs.
6. Trustees are desirable but not essential.
7. Dates for payment of subscriptions are changeable.
8. Clubs may adopt this Constitution in total or amend any parts to suit their particular needs.

THIS SAMPLE CONSTITUTION HAS WORKED EXTREMELY WELL IN A CLUB SITUATION FOR YEARS AND HAS PROTECTED THE RIGHTS OF ALL MEMBERS WITH EQUITY AND WITHOUT ACRIMONY OF ANY KIND.

The clauses above shown in italics are required to be included in the Constitution of the Club if the Club is seeking a Tax Exemption as a Games/Sports Body under the Provisions of Section 235, Taxes Consolidation Act, 1997.



Appendix VI.

MODEL STANDING ORDERS

1 Introduction

These Sample Standing Orders are provided as an example of Standing Orders for Club Meetings. The Orders are applicable to all general meetings and committee meetings of the Club and, as far as appropriate, to meetings of subcommittees, and shall be construed subject to the Club Constitution. A Glossary defines the meaning of various terms used in these Standing Orders, (see page 17).

2 Guiding Principles of Standing Orders

- Committee procedures should be fair and contribute to open, transparent and informed decision-making.
- Committee procedures should reflect levels of formality appropriate for the nature and scope of the responsibilities exercised at the meeting.
- Committee procedures should be sufficiently certain to give the membership and decision-makers confidence in the deliberations undertaken at the meeting.

3 Meetings

- A meeting schedule for the year should be set at the first Committee meeting of a new season. The Club constitution requires the club to hold an annual general meeting.
- Notice of Committee meetings shall be sent in writing to all members 7 days prior to the date of the meeting; notice of the Annual General Meeting shall be sent in writing to all Club Members 21 days prior to the date of the meeting.
- The Agenda for Committee and General meetings should be established by the Chairperson / President of the Club with the Secretary.
- Under the agenda item “any other business” at the meeting, members can seek to have additional items addressed at the meeting or be placed on the agenda to be dealt with at a later time.
- Meetings shall, subject to the presence of a quorum, start at the time set out in the notice of the meeting, and shall continue until all business on the agenda is disposed of.
- If there is no quorum present within 30 minutes of the starting time as set out in the notice of the meeting, the meeting will stand adjourned, until a date and time to be determined.
- The Committee will deal with the items of business set down for the meeting in the order in which they appear on the agenda unless otherwise determined by the chair.
- Attendance at Committee meetings by persons other than members of the Committee shall be by invitation of the Chairperson or resolution of the Committee.

4 Minutes

- Minutes are to be kept of all meetings. The minutes should be an accurate record of all decisions of the meeting.
- Minutes are a permanent record and a signed copy should be kept on file.
- All motions should be recorded and read back to ensure they are correct.



- The minutes must contain a list of those present, apologies, names of guests or observers, outcomes of business in the order it was dealt with, copies of reports and state the date and time of the next meeting.
- The minutes should not be a verbatim record of the meeting but should be sufficient to set out issues raised and the decisions taken.

5 Order

- The President or Chairperson of the Club shall chair Committee and General meetings.
- In the absence of the Chairperson, where there is a Deputy Chairperson, they shall chair the meeting. If there is no nominated deputy, the Committee members shall choose one of the members to chair the meeting.
- A person addressing the Committee shall be heard in silence unless a point of order is raised.
- The Chairperson shall maintain order and conduct the meeting in accordance with these standing orders.

6 Points of Order

- The Chairperson may call to order a member who is in breach of the constitution.
- A member may draw to the attention of the Chairperson a breach of the constitution, and must state briefly the nature of the alleged breach.
- A point of order takes precedence over all other business until it is resolved.
- The Chairperson will rule on the point of order.

7 Interruption of Meetings by Members

- A Committee member or Ordinary Member at a General Meeting, must not —
 - (a) behave in an improper or disorderly manner; or
 - (b) cause an interruption or interrupt another member who is speaking.
- The Chairperson will rule on any instances of interruptions by members. The Chairperson may seek an apology, have a short adjournment, ask the member to leave the meeting or adjourn the meeting until the next scheduled date. The Chairperson's ruling will be final.

8 Debate

- Any person wishing to speak shall seek permission from the Chairperson to speak to the meeting.
- The Chairperson should vacate the chair before entering any debate. The deputy Chairperson will take over the role of chair during this time. If there is no deputy, then the council members will appoint a member to chair during this time.
- Not more than half an hour shall be allowed for discussion of any subject unless time is extended by resolution of the meeting.

9 Motions

- A motion is required to have a proposer and a seconder, and it is put to the Committee or General meeting for consideration.
- A motion shall lapse if there is no seconder.



- No substantive motion or amendment may be proposed at a meeting which is in substance the same motion as has previously been proposed and dealt with in the same meeting.
- A Committee member (or Ordinary member at a General Meeting) may move an amendment/s to any substantive motion provided that, if the amendment is carried, the amended motion would not be contrary to the intention expressed by the original motion.

10 Voting

- The Chairperson shall read out the motion before a vote is taken.
- A motion shall be decided on a show of hands unless a secret ballot has been requested.
- At the request of any Committee member, a motion shall be decided by a secret ballot.
- The Chairperson has a deliberative vote only, therefore in the event of a tied vote, then the motion must be taken as defeated. The Chairperson does not have a casting vote.
- If a member abstains from voting, they have exercised their right to refrain from voting. A decision on the motion is arrived at by those persons present and voting. Abstaining does not count as voting and that member cannot be counted in relation to the total numbers for or against the motion.

11 Committees

- The Annual General Meeting will determine which committees will be formed to assist the council.
- Each committee is required to have terms of reference and membership which is approved by the Annual General Meeting and reviewed annually.
- Each committee is to report to the Governing Council at the next meeting and provide the minutes of its meeting (either confirmed or unconfirmed) for noting.

12 Amendments to Standing Orders

- Amendments to these Standing Orders shall be made only by resolution of which not less than 7 days' notice has been given.
- These Standing Orders may be amended by resolution carried by a majority of those present and voting.

GLOSSARY:

<i>Abstain</i>	Where a member is present but does not cast a vote for or against.
<i>Agenda</i>	The list of items of business before a meeting and the order in which it is proposed that the meeting should deal with them.
<i>Casting vote</i>	A second vote sometimes given to the chair of a meeting by the rules, exercisable only in the event of a tied vote, to break the tie.
<i>Committee</i>	A small group of people appointed to carry out a specific task.
<i>Constitution</i>	The rules made specific to the governing council.
<i>Deliberative vote</i>	The vote that expresses an individual's opinion on a matter for decision. All members attending any meeting have a deliberative vote.
<i>Executive</i>	This is made up of the office holders of council, usually the chair, treasurer,



	secretary and the principal.
<i>Minutes</i>	The formal brief summary of proceedings at meetings and especially of decisions.
<i>Motion</i>	A proposal made for the purpose of obtaining a decision and is read into the minutes for accuracy (eg. “That the school uniforms are purchased from....”).
<i>Point of Order</i>	Not a motion; it is an allowable interjection that directs the chair’s attention to an apparent or alleged breach of order (eg. absence of quorum, breach of standing order or introduction of subject matter not relevant to the motion).
<i>Proposer</i>	The person who proposes the motion and explains the motion.
<i>Quorum</i>	The minimum number of persons who need to be present to constitute a valid formal meeting.
<i>Secunder</i>	The person who supports the motion and assists in discussion in relation to the motion.
<i>Standing Orders</i>	The permanent rules for the regulation of the business and proceedings at an organisation’s meetings.
<i>Substantive motion</i>	A self-contained motion; it is not dependent on any other motion. It is a motion ordering something to be done or authorised (eg. “That the secretary sends a letter to...”)
<i>Vacate</i>	If the chair feels sufficiently strong enough about a matter, then they should vacate (leave) the chair temporarily to participate in the debate.
<i>Verbatim</i>	In exactly the same words, word for word.

Appendix VII. TAKING MINUTES

Why Meeting Minutes Matter

Meeting minutes are important. They capture the essential information of a meeting – decisions and assigned actions. They keep attendees on track by reminding them of their role in a project and clearly define what happened in a group session. How many times have your officers and committee members been confused or in disagreement about what happened in a meeting? With minutes to refer to, everyone is clear.

What most people don’t know is that **meeting minutes shouldn’t be an exact recording of everything that happened during a session.** Minutes are meant to record basic information such as the actions assigned and decisions made. Then, they can be saved and used for reference or background material for future meetings relating to the same topic. The following instructions will help you take useful and concise meeting minutes.

Before the Meeting

If you are recording the minutes, make sure you aren’t a major participant in the meeting. You can’t perform both tasks well. Create a template for recording your meeting minutes and make sure you leave some blank space to record your notes.



Include the following information:

- ▶ Date and time of the meeting
- ▶ Purpose of the meeting
- ▶ The Chairperson's name
- ▶ Assigned action items
- ▶ Decisions made.

Before the meeting, gather as much information as you can. Run through the Agenda Items and ensure you either have a list of those who should be attending the meeting or have an attendance list ready for circulation. This way you won't need to scramble to understand what's going on while you're recording notes. Decide how you want to record your notes. If you aren't comfortable relying on your pen and notepad, try using a tape recorder or, if you're a fast typist, take a laptop to the meeting.

During the Meeting

Ask the Chairperson to introduce any new or unfamiliar meeting attendees. This will be helpful later when you are recording assigned tasks or decisions.

Don't try to record notes verbatim – it's not necessary. Minutes are meant to give an outline of what happened in the meeting, not a record of who said what. Focus on understanding what's being discussed and on recording what's been assigned or decided on.

Record action items and decisions in your template as they happen – don't wait until after the meeting to pull them out of your notes or you could make a mistake. If you don't understand exactly what decision has been made or what action has been assigned, ask the Chairperson to clarify.

After the Meeting

Review the notes and add additional comments, or clarify what you didn't understand right after the meeting. Do this while the information is fresh in everyone's mind. Type your notes out in the template you created before the meeting. This will make the notes easier for everyone to read and use, and:

- ▶ Number the pages as you go along, so that you aren't confused later. Remember, though, that the minute-taker is responsible for providing good flow. Don't force yourself to write the minutes in the actual chronological order of the discussion - it may not work.
- ▶ Focus on action items, not discussion. The purpose of minutes is to define decisions made and to record what actions are to be taken, by whom and when.
- ▶ Be objective. Write in the same tense throughout and avoid using people's names except for recording those making proposals or seconding them. This is not a record of who said what.
- ▶ Avoid inflammatory or personal observations. The fewer adjectives or adverbs you use, the better. Dull writing is the key to appropriate minutes.
- ▶ If you need to refer to other documents, attach them in an appendix or indicate where they may be found. Don't rewrite their intent or try to summarize them.



When you finish typing the minutes, ask the Chairperson to review the document for errors. Send the final copy of the minutes to attendees as soon as possible. Keep a copy of the notes (and the template) for yourself in case someone wants to review them later.

Recording meeting minutes ensures that the decisions and actions resulting from a meeting aren't lost or forgotten. By taking the time to record proper meeting notes you'll make sure the time and effort that goes into a meeting isn't wasted.

APPENDIX VIII. SUGGESTED HANDICAP SYSTEM FOR CLUBS

Introduction

In clubs with a single section, and where the standard is very mixed, a handicap system may be desirable, in the interests of equity, and providing all participants with a chance to win.

Balance & Seeding

The first and most obvious way to ensure equity, short of a full-blown handicap system, is to seed the competition carefully. This is not always possible on an ordinary club night, but can easily be implemented for major competitions, especially where pre-entry is required.

The seating arrangements should be prepared to ensure that pairs are stratified, and equally spread, throughout the competition. For example, the following categories might be created, using the players' grades as evidence of their ability:

Highest Tier – All Masters and Strong Intermediate As

Middle Tier – Remaining Intermediate As and Strong Intermediate Bs

Lowest Tier – Remaining Intermediate Bs and All Novices.

Every pair should meet an equal number of pairs from each of the above groups. In a single session event, for example, each pair might meet one-third of the highest tier, one-third of the medium tier, and one-third of the lowest tier pairings. In multi-session events, this can be repeated.

Note that seeding does not require meeting all pairs, which may be impossible in a large field, but it will give balance within the competition.

Handicaps & the concept of Par

Where full-blown handicapping, as opposed to simply seeding, is required, the first concept that needs to be understood is that of Par.

The Par score is the average winning percentage score in the relevant club. Obviously, this will vary depending on the particular club. In the average club, it tends to be around the 62% mark.

The Par score will tend to be lower in very strong clubs where there is a majority of Master players, and will probably be higher in very mixed clubs containing some very strong pairs and a majority of novices or Intermediate Bs.

If a handicap system using a Par score is intended, each club must decide on the Par based on historical results within the club.



Calculating the Handicaps

Once the club Par has been established, each player's handicap is then determined by comparing their actual average gross score (ie. with no adjustments) against the club Par. For example, if a member has an average gross of 52% over the previous 8 weeks, 20 weeks, or year (based on how far back you wish to go), and the club's Par is 62%, then they would have a club handicap of +10%. If another player had an average gross score of 44%, they would get a handicap of +18%. If all players played precisely to their average performance on any given night, then their handicaps would bring everyone a net (ie. handicap-adjusted) score of 62%, though of course this would be very unlikely in practice, as some will perform better than normal and others play below their norm for various reasons.

This is why we frequently get net scores much higher than 62% in practice. Clearly a scratch pair (with no handicap adjustment, so by definition the strongest pair in the club) would have to perform better than their normal 62% if they were to win the net (handicap-adjusted) competition.

Where handicaps are being used, the main prizes should be awarded on the net (handicap-adjusted) basis – this is after all the purpose of using handicaps; the club may also choose to give a category prize to the pair or team with the best gross (unadjusted) score.

Sample Handicap System – Pairs Events

All handicaps are expressed as percentages. The minimum percentage shall be 0% and the maximum 22%. The handicap of a partnership shall be 50% of their combined handicap, eg. two 20 handicappers playing together would get 50% of 40, so 20%, and a partnership of an 8 handicap and a 14 handicap would get 50% of 22, or 11%.

The maximum score possible on the night is the "top" multiplied by the number of boards played. This total is calculated as follows (assuming an eleven-table Mitchell): $22 \times 10 = 220$.

This is the maximum score that would be possible if you scored an outright top on every board. This notional figure is multiplied by half of the combined handicap of the pair as outlined above, to give them the advantage of their handicap.

So, for example, John and Mary are partners. John's handicap is 14 and Mary's is 11. Their combined handicap is 25 and their applied handicap is thus 12.5%. If their gross (unadjusted) score on the night is 121 MPs out of 220 (55%), then their net (handicap-adjusted) percentage score would be $55\% + 12.5\%$, so 67.5%; or, in Matchpoint terms, 12.5% of 220 (so 27.5 MPs) would be added to their actual score of 121 MPs, to give a handicap-adjusted score of 148.5 MPs (or 67.5%).

For major competitions in the club calendar, clubs may find a big increase in attendance. This usually comes from the higher handicap category and it may therefore be advisable to use 33% of the combined handicaps rather than 50% as used on ordinary nights. This is a matter for the club to monitor and decide.

Sample Handicap System – Teams Events

For teams' events, handicaps might be applied as follows:

Calculate the total team handicap in Victory Points (VPs) on the following basis.

Masters	0 VPs
Intermediate As	0.5 VPs
High Intermediate Bs	1 VP
Low Intermediate Bs	1.5 VPs
Novices	2 VPs



For example, two low Intermediate B players and two Novice players form a team. The B pair would get 1.5 VPs each and the Novice pair would get 2 VPs each. If this team played a match against a team of Masters (who get no handicap benefit), then the team would add 6 VPs to the actual result achieved in the match. So, if the gross (actual) score in the match was a loss by 5/15, the net (handicap-adjusted) score would be 11/15. If their next match was against a team of exactly the same grades as themselves, then the handicaps will cancel out, and the result will be the actual score achieved in the match.

Each club can make adjustments to the scheme outlined above based on the general standard in their club. The rationale for handicaps within clubs of mixed ability is (a) fairness, and (b) that more players have the chance to win, which should result in higher playing numbers.

