ECB Accreditation Update

Practical guidance for recreational cricket clubs and sections within multi-sport organisations.

Prepared by the Devon Cricket Foundation • 28 October 2026

The position for existing clubs

Existing incorporated clubs do not need to replace their Articles of Association with the ECB Template Articles. The ECB will assess what the club's governing documents achieve together. Formally adopted Club Rules can meet the ECB's requirements where the Articles do not contradict them. Equivalent wording is acceptable under that clarification.

If these conditions are met, the club may incorporate the relevant provisions into its Articles when they are next amended for another purpose. There is no requirement to make a standalone amendment solely to replicate the template provisions. **However, any existing provision that conflicts with an ECB requirement must be amended to ensure compliance.**

These requirements relate to ECB Accredited status, and don't affect a club's affiliation or insurance cover. Affiliation is based on the annual Terms and Conditions of Affiliation.

What this guidance covers

This guidance is based on updated ECB guidance and revised Club Constitution Checklist (October 2026) provided to Devon Cricket Foundation. It is intended for companies limited by guarantee, charitable companies, and cricket sections that form part of wider organisations, including Charitable Incorporated Organisations (CIOs).

The ECB update directly addresses existing incorporated clubs with Articles and Club Rules. The checklist separately addresses multi-sport structures. The CIO and multi-sport guidance below applies those principles to different arrangements; it does not imply that the ECB has approved every possible structure.

Identify the structure before reviewing the rules.

Organisation	Main governing document	Governing body
Company limited by guarantee	Articles of Association	Board of Directors
Charitable company limited by guarantee	Articles of Association	Directors who are also charity trustees
Charitable Incorporated Organisation	CIO constitution	Charity trustees
Separate cricket club within a wider sports arrangement	Cricket club's own constitution or Articles, plus relevant agreements	Cricket club committee or Board

A CIO is not a company and does not use Articles of Association. Establish whether the wider organisation actually operates the cricket section, or simply owns facilities used by a separate cricket club. The organisation's name alone does not answer this question.

What clubs must put in place?

The Accreditation requirements remain in force. The ECB clarification changes how existing clubs can demonstrate compliance and when their Articles need updating. References below are to the October 2026 checklist.

Requirement	Practical approach for an existing club
Affiliation and annual acceptance **Refs 1 and 2**	Record affiliation to the relevant RCB, participation in the ECB-regulated community and annual acceptance of the ECB Terms and Conditions. These can be covered by adopted Club Rules where the Articles do not conflict.
ECB regulations and Safe Hands **Refs 3 and 4**	Adopt, implement and comply with the Laws of Cricket and the specified ECB conduct, anti-discrimination and safeguarding regulations, together with Safe Hands. Equivalent wording must have the same substantive effect; do not omit an obligation.
Separate safeguarding statement **Ref 4**	Adopt and implement a separate Club Safeguarding Policy Statement. Use the ECB Safeguarding Kit bag template. A reference in the Club Rules alone does not replace this document.
Club purposes and winding up **Refs 5 and 21**	Check the main governing document's purposes and destination of assets on winding up. The email does not expressly waive these checklist requirements. Preserve charity and CASC provisions; refer uncertain cases to DCF before changing them.
Open membership **Ref 6**	Adopt an open membership provision with the required substantive effect. Membership applications must not depend on proposers, seconders or blackballing. Check the main document as well as the Club Rules.
Fair pricing **Ref 7**	Maintain a fair, non-discriminatory pricing policy with subscriptions that do not create a significant obstacle to participation.
CSO on the governing body **Ref 9**	For a company operating the cricket club, appoint the Club Safeguarding Officer as a Director using the permitted process. Club Rules alone do not complete the appointment. See the structure-specific guidance on page 3.
Board composition **Refs 10 and 11**	At least three members must be unrelated and not cohabiting, using the checklist's Connected Persons definition. Have regard to the skills, experience and diversity needed to govern effectively.
Meetings and conflicts **Refs 12 and 13**	Hold at least four governing-body meetings a year. Require conflicts to be declared, managed through withdrawal from discussions and voting, and recorded in the minutes.
Financial authorisation **Ref 16**	Implement two-person authorisation by people authorised by the governing body, including at least one committee member or Director. Clubs should set a threshold for transactions requiring two signatures. Cover electronic payments as well as cheques.
Discipline and appeal **Ref 20**	Provide a clear and reasonable process for members, guests and volunteers, including appeals against refusal or removal of membership heard by different people from the original decision-makers.

Refs 7, 10–13 and 16 are "Required in general" and can be met through rules, policies or practice. The checklist also recommends clear appointment, meeting, delegation and amendment arrangements. These recommendations should not be presented as additional compulsory accreditation conditions.

Cricket within a wider organisation

One legal organisation operating several sports.

Start with the main Articles or CIO constitution. Read these alongside the cricket section rules, policies and any scheme of delegation. The checklist allows cricket-specific provisions to sit in separate section rules where this works better, provided they do not conflict with the main constitution.

The body authorised by the main governing document should adopt or approve the section rules. Record who operates the cricket activity, who is responsible for ECB affiliation, who appoints the CSO, and who can admit, discipline or remove cricket members. A section committee cannot assume powers reserved to the parent Board, trustees or members.

Map the open membership requirement to access to cricket. Distinguish cricket participation membership from company or charity voting membership, and ensure any parent membership needed to play cricket does not introduce a prohibited admission barrier. Ask DCF to review any uncertain interaction.

A separate cricket club using a parent organisation's facilities

Where the cricket club is a separate organisation with its own constitution and management body, assess that club's governing documents. Check leases, affiliation agreements and shared policies for conflicts or gaps. A landlord or facilities charity is not automatically the cricket club's governing body, and its entire trustee Board does not automatically become the cricket committee.

Where the safeguarding officer should sit

For a company which operates the cricket club, the ECB's practical direction is to appoint the CSO as a Director. Check the Articles for eligibility, appointment powers and any maximum number of Directors; complete the appointment properly and make the required filings. Attendance as an observer, or membership only of an operational committee, does not by itself meet that direction.

For a CIO which directly operates the cricket section, the equivalent highest governing body is the trustee Board. The practical starting point is to explore appointing the cricket CSO as a trustee under the CIO constitution, subject to eligibility and the appointment process. This is an application of the safeguarding principle, rather than an express CIO ruling from the ECB checklist. Confirm the arrangement with DCF, which can refer it to the ECB if needed.

If the cricket club is separately constituted, the CSO should sit on its own governing committee or Board. For any more complex arrangement, provide DCF with the structure and proposed safeguarding reporting route. Do not assume a general safeguarding trustee elsewhere in the organisation, or an invitation to attend meetings, automatically meets the cricket requirement.

Keep oversight and delegation clear.

A parent Board or trustee body can delegate appropriate operational tasks while retaining its governing responsibilities. Record the cricket committee's authority, spending limits, reporting duties and route for escalating safeguarding concerns. Where the parent body governs cricket, do not assume four cricket-section meetings substitute for four meetings of that governing body.

Adopting rules and resolving conflicts

Make the rules effective.

Check who has power to make and amend Club Rules. Follow the required notice, approval and voting arrangements, including member approval where required. Keep the approved version, adoption date and resolution with the club's records, and make the rules available to members. Informal practice can evidence some general requirements, but it cannot override a conflicting governing clause.

Distinguish a gap from a contradiction.

Situation	Action
Articles are silent about the listed ECB affiliation provisions; validly adopted rules cover them.	Apply the ECB clarification if there is no conflict. Record the provisions for inclusion when the Articles are next amended for another reason.
Articles say they prevail over Club Rules, but contain no incompatible provision.	This hierarchy clause is not itself an active conflict. Check the actual provisions and the authority to adopt the rules.
Articles require a proposer and seconder or allow blackballing.	Correct the conflicting provision. An open membership rule underneath it is insufficient.
Articles expressly exclude an appeal, or make refusal or removal final in a way that prevents an appeal.	Correct the conflict and provide an appeal heard by different people. Assess the complete disciplinary procedure.
Articles prevent the CSO from becoming a Director, including through an applicable eligibility restriction.	Resolve the obstruction through the proper process. A rule naming the CSO as a Board member cannot override it.
Parent rules and cricket rules give incompatible powers over discipline or membership.	Align the documents and decision-making powers. Refer uncertain cases to DCF rather than declaring compliance.

Use equivalent wording carefully.

The checklist retains “Required (precise text)” labels at refs 3, 4, 6 and 9. Jonaid’s final clarification accepts wording with the same effect for the matters he identifies. For new drafting, using the relevant current ECB template clauses is the clearest approach. Existing wording should be checked for full substantive coverage, rather than accepted because it sounds similar.

For ref 3, check the Laws of Cricket, Anti-Discrimination Regulations, General Conduct Regulations for Recreational Cricket, Recreational Conduct Regulations and Safeguarding Regulations. For ref 4, check both adoption and implementation of Safe Hands and the separate club policy statement. Retain the current clauses or policies used as evidence.

Deal with genuine conflicts now.

The option to wait for the next unrelated Articles amendment applies where compliant rules already work without contradiction. It does not permit an active conflict to remain. Agree the necessary action with DCF and follow the organisation’s proper amendment process; do not describe an unresolved conflict as compliant.

Review and action record

Use this sequence for an initial review and when the structure or governing documents change.

1 Identify the organisation

Record the affiliated cricket club, legal form, company or charity number where applicable, parent organisation and governing body. Explain whether the cricket club is a separate organisation or an internal section.

2 Assemble the documents

Collect current Articles or CIO constitution, Club Rules, section rules, delegation arrangements, membership and disciplinary policies, and the separate safeguarding statement.

3 Map every checklist requirement

For each reference, record the document and clause, relevant operational evidence, and any gap or conflict. Use the full October 2026 checklist, not only the matters discussed in the email.

4 Complete the practical actions

Adopt missing rules and policies through the authorised process; complete the CSO appointment; implement meetings, conflicts and financial controls; record evidence of annual affiliation acceptance.

5 Resolve and record the outcome

Submit the document set and action record to DCF for review. Identify any point needing ECB confirmation, especially complex parent structures, CIO safeguarding arrangements or uncertain purposes and winding-up provisions.

6 Keep an amendment record

Where the ECB clarification permits deferred inclusion, list the provisions to add when the Articles are next amended for another reason. Review this record before any future amendment.

Evidence to retain

Keep dated rules and adoption minutes; the CSO appointment record and governing-body membership list; meeting minutes and conflict records; payment authorities and evidence of two-person approval; the safeguarding statement; the disciplinary and appeal procedure; and the requirement-by-requirement review. Record the owner and target date for each outstanding action.

When the main document needs changing

Use the procedure for the correct legal form. Companies must follow their Articles and company-law approval and filing requirements. CIOs follow their constitution and charity-law process. Charitable companies must also meet charity requirements. Certain charity changes, including purposes and winding-up provisions, need Charity Commission authority. Obtain advice on the specific amendment where necessary; ECB acceptance does not amend the governing document or displace legal duties.

Sources and use

ECB sources: Additional ECB guidance and updated Club Constitution Checklist — October 2026. This guide does not certify an individual club's compliance.

Legal structure references checked 28 October 2026

Charity Commission guidance for CIOs

Charity Commission guidance for charitable companies

Companies House guidance on changing Articles