Andrew Paulson -- ECF Election Statement -- 16/9/2013

1. Leadership. From my biography you will know that I am attracted to challenges and that I particularly like to build things of honour, beauty and glory. An entrepreneur sees opportunities that others don't and makes them work. This is why I have been so drawn to chess in general over the last couple of years. I can see all the parts lying about on the ground for the ECF to become a brilliant success and I think I know how to pick them up and put them together. Beyond its day-to-day activities, the ECF needs a grand purpose; I propose that it become the moral vanguard of functional and honest chess administration, throwing up case studies in how to establish chess federations as professional organisations.

The ECF -- often engaging in undignified squabbles over minutiae -- suffers from the Narcissism of Minor Differences. I will make sure that henceforth we focus on the large areas about which which we agree, rather than be paralyzed by the details that hold us back.

After years of estrangement from and conflict with FIDE which has achieved nothing, the ECF should engage with FIDE and urge upon it a new tone of transparency and collegiality which will improve the commercial prospects of chess worldwide. My experience with FIDE should help us achieve this.

2. Innovation and Collaboration. UK chess is the perfect laboratory in which to fine-tune old institutions and test new ideas: our successes will show how organised chess everywhere should innovate. We must also study the solutions that our colleagues around the world are implementing for challenges they too are facing.

My first major initiative is a new business model to bring sponsorship revenue to all the ECF's interests, projects and affiliates, and to the ECF itself. The ECF will offer a consolidated asset (ALL of English chess, here and abroad, at every level, every event, any individual) for sponsorship and act as a central clearing house equitably to distribute this revenue to all participants. Interested members of the Executive Board and the Council will draft a proposal for control of the asset and allocation of revenue; a commercial director will be appointed or elected and paid to find the revenue and manage the sponsoring partners.

My second more long-term initiative will be to develop new event formats to make chess more of a spectator sport and chess events more festive. This will serve both to increase attendance and membership but also to establish a better commercial base for sponsorship.

3. Cohesion. The ECF lacks leadership as evidenced by its disunity; it has a negative reputation, especially among its own members, as a consequence. I have an exemplary track record of creating healthy corporate cultures in very difficult circumstances. I intend to repair the reputation, improve the efficiency and provide strong leadership of the ECF so as to encourage estranged actors in the UK chess world to return to its bosom. Too much talent has wandered off in too many opposing directions out of frustration.

My first concrete goal is to arrange for the Government to accord to chess the status of a sport. We will actively support Malcolm Pein in his creation of an All Parliamentary Group reviewing the matter. Separately, I will bring to bear the loud and committed voices of Peter Mandelson, Jeremy Hunt, Ed Vaizey and George Osborne on this issue. After years of dilly-dallying, we will find the right button and push it.

Second, I will begin to work closely with English chess' various independent entrepreneurs to better coordinate their activities with an ECF that supports rather than restrains.

4. My Interest. My personal interest -- other than simply seeing a problem and wanting to fix it -- derives from the legitimacy I will earn as a spokesman for chess in Africa and India (where I am working to develop projects similar to the ones I am proposing to initiate in England) if I succeed with the ECF. Therefore, success with the ECF is a precondition to satisfying my personal interests, not the other way around. Further, perhaps for good reason, I have found a general suspicion among chess players of businessmen whom they think are trying to make a money off their backs; ECF President is a role that let's me do good and give back. Finally, some have questioned how much time I will be able to dedicate to the ECF. My answer to this is that although not all my time will be devoted to the ECF, all of my time will be devoted to chess.