

Once I was made aware of the vacancy for Junior Director it was a very easy decision for me to stand for election. I had made the decision some years ago never to stand whilst someone else was in post and seeking re-election and so I didn't need to think too long before volunteering when this opportunity arose. As a self-employed chess coach a large part of my life is already devoted to helping juniors both domestically and internationally but I also have plenty of time to devote to a new challenge.

If elected I am looking forward to helping continue the amazing work performed by Phil Ehr's team in the last two years. I know many of them already from junior events at home and abroad and it would be a pleasure to work with them. These are exciting times for English chess with the Chess in Schools and Communities project, the continuing success of the UK Schools Chess Challenge and the emergence of the National Schools Championship.

Anyone who has concerns that I intend to make sweeping changes need not worry. I am firmly in favour of sending large groups of players to the international events. I have had the honour of attending several of these events in the last four years as both a coach and Head of Delegation, mainly with England and more recently with Wales and they provide invaluable experience and an incentive to juniors playing domestically to perform well enough to qualify. I was also fortunate enough to organise English participation to the 2010 and 2012 World Junior Championships and so I have experience, albeit with a smaller group, of the organisation skills required. I am aware that many juniors don't get the opportunity to take their place because of the huge cost involved in these trips, this is something that I will be looking at as I don't want anyone to feel priced out of representing their country.

Domestically I organise junior teams in both the junior and adult 4NCL, I have a small number of students that I coach privately and I am also happy to give simultaneous displays and coach at local schools and junior groups. I am also very happy to provide support to parents and juniors and many see me as someone they can approach and ask for independent advice on what is best for their children in terms of coaching and playing.

Apart from working with juniors my other main focus is helping women players. At the moment this is currently limited to organising a women's event at the London Chess Classic and offering support to Sabrina Chevannes and Jovanka Houska (the ECF's joint Managers of Women's Chess). I am looking forward to, if elected, working with them in an official capacity, to help them with the many good ideas that they have to help English girls. It was a pleasure to accompany them to Bergen in February 2013 when they arranged for five English girls to play in the Norwegian girls championship and, more importantly, it was also great experience for the girls.

Initiatives that I have in mind include reinstating the National Girls event (including the regional qualifiers) that had previously been run by Sabrina Chevannes and closer links to the many English academies and other junior associations that exist in England. I would also like to increase publicity given to successful junior performances throughout the year and would like to publish regular summaries along the lines of my weekly international reports (from my time as International Director from 2009-2012). I want to create a feel good factor within junior chess and make players of all levels feel proud to be involved in playing the game. The most important thing is that I want everything I do to be for the benefit of English junior chess.

I am also keen to organise a FIDE rated English junior championship (possibly at Easter or the October half term subject to consultation) where the top juniors in the country would compete (this doesn't always happen at the British because juniors may elect to play in the championship or Major Open). It would also allow the less experienced players to get used to playing with an incremental time limit. I see this as an additional event to the British Junior Championships and am determined to maintain the importance of the British by ensuring that the winners of the British junior events have qualifying rights to the major championships.

This is a job that I have always wanted to do and I hope that Council will give me the opportunity. I already feel humbled by the support I have received from many juniors, parents, coaches and organisers who have wished me well. I hope I can repay your kind and positive words by helping English junior chess for many years to come.