

Minutes of the 91st meeting of the ECF Board

Friday 7 November 2014, 19.00 to 22.10 by Skype



- Present: Phil Ehr (PE) – Chief Executive
Julian Clissold (JC) – Non-Executive Director
David Eustace (DW) – Director of Finance
John Foley (JF) – Non-Executive Director
Alex Holowczak (AH) – Director of Home Chess
Bob Kane (BK) – Commercial Director
Traci Whitfield (TW) – Director of Junior Chess & Education
- In attendance: Chris Majer (CEM) – Chairman of the Governance Committee
John Philpott (JAP) – Company Secretary
- Apologies: Dominic Lawson (President)
David Openshaw (Director of International Chess)
Dave Thomas (Director of Membership)

In the absence of the Minutes Secretary (Rob Thompson) it was agreed that JAP would take the minutes.

1. Minutes of previous meetings

Updated drafts of the minutes for the previous five Board meetings (highlighting the sections that it was proposed to redact) has been circulated by DE earlier in the day:

- (i) Board meeting 82 (7 March 2014)
- (ii) Board meeting 87 (12 June 2014)
- (iii) Board meeting 88 (15 July 2014)
- (iv) Board meeting 89 (9 September 2014)
- (v) Board meeting 90 (11 October 2014)

Each set of minutes was considered in turn, and after discussion and agreement of minor amendments, the adoption of each set and its redactions was proposed, seconded and approved nem con. DE will update the drafts and provide final versions for JAP to publish on the ECF website and included on the official minutes file. **Action DE and JAP**

The post of Minutes Secretary would need to be readvertised as Rob Thompson was unable to continue as a result of his other commitments. Given the radically different styles of recent minutes, it

was agreed that it was desirable for there to be formal guidance provided to the Minutes Secretary, which DE volunteered to draft and pass to PE. JC considered that the scope of the minutes should be reduced, and that the detail provided of discussions should be reduced to a minimum. He offered to provide a shorter template and provided a populated version of this for the present meeting so that the Board could compare this with the official minutes. **Action DE and JC**

2. Framework for appointments

JAP had circulated to the Board a proposed new framework for the approval of appointments. Currently the appointment of Managers and certain other officers (such as the Chief Arbiter) were reserved to the Board: all other appointments were made by the Director responsible, but had to be ratified by the Chief Executive and reported to the Board. Ahead of any changes that might arise from the Governance review, the ECF Rules required the Board to concern itself with minutiae and involve itself with decisions that could reasonably be left to individual directors. Since the Directors and Officers Responsibilities Regulations were the property of the Board, progress could be made in this area. JAP proposed four levels of Officer.

- (i) Level 1 – to be appointed by Council as prescribed by the Articles.
- (ii) Level 2 – to be appointed by the Board
- (iii) Level 3 – to be appointed by a Director but with the endorsement of another Senior Officer
- (iv) Level 4 – to be appointed exclusively by a Director.

The default position would be that an Officer would be regarded as level 4 unless there was a specific reason for classifying a position at a higher level. In particular, level 2 status would be determined by the significance and sensitivity of the functions being performed rather than the inclusion of the word “Manager” in the title.

There was general support for the framework, and JAP was asked to prepare for a future meeting a redraft of the Responsibilities Regulations reflecting this for the Board to consider. **Action JAP.** However, the proposed appointments under the next item on the agenda would be dealt with under the existing framework.

3. Appointments

The following appointments proposed by directors present of officers who had indicated their willingness to abide by the draft Code of Conduct (although David Welch had raised a number of points on the code which he wished to be considered) were approved nem con.

- Financial Controller: John Philpott (DE)
- Finance and taxation consultant: Chris Mattos (DE)
- Social Media Manager: Phil Makepeace (BK)

- ECF Forum Moderator: Bill Phillips (BK)
- ECF Forum Moderator: Kay Joslin (BK)
- Controllers, English Youth Grand Prix: Charles & Christine Golding (TW)
- National Schools Under 19 Controller: Richard Haddrell (RJH)
- National Schools Under 11 Controller: Julian Clissold (TW)
- Manager of Women's Chess: Sabrina Chevannes (AH)
- Manager of Grading: Brian Valentine (AH)
- Manager of the 2015 British Championships: Kevin Staveley (AH)
- Manager of the National Club Championships: Guy Greenland (AH)
- Controller of the County Championships: Andrew Zigmond (AH)
- Manager of Arbiters (Home): Matthew Carr (AH)
- Chief Arbitrator: David Welch (AH)
- Manager of Prisons Chess: Carl Portman (AH)
- Manager of Chess for Disabled Players: Jack Rudd (AH)
- Curator of Equipment: David Welch (AH)
- Armed Forces and Veterans Liaison: John Higgs (AH)
- Controller of the Grand Prix: Colin Gardner (AH)
- Company Secretary: John Philpott (PE)
- Library Committee: David Anderton and Andrew Farthing (PE)

Other appointments will be dealt with at a future Board meeting, when the Directors responsible are present or after prospective Officers have been contacted by the Director concerned.

JAP will ensure that the Officers page on the website reflects these appointments. **Action JAP**

4. Code of conduct

It was agreed to defer a decision on the adoption of the Regulations relating to the Code of Conduct and Complaints Procedure and to take on board any further feedback received. These could be considered further at the planned business meeting if this took place at the end of the Strategy weekend.

5. Financial update and requests for additional funding

DE had circulated a brief financial update to the Board. The key points were.

- The papers for the April Finance Council meeting had forecast a surplus for 2013/14 of £21,324. Council had allocated additional support of up to £5,500 (£4,400 after tax) to the Olympiad, which would have reduced the anticipated surplus to £16,924. However, the actual International expenditure and other favourable expenditure meant that a surplus close to the original figure of £21,324 is now expected.

- As only just over two months of 2013/14 has elapsed, it is too early to make an overall forecast. However, the Office Manager's position remained unfilled, and this gave rise to a saving of approximately £2,000 per month. Assuming that an appointment was unlikely to be made before February, there was likely to be a saving of approximately £8,000 after tax as a result of this factor.
- A number of additional funding requests had been received which if approved would offset this saving.
- DE had made recommendations after discussion with JAP as Acting Office Manager in respect of staff bonuses and salary increases and forwarded these to PE for approval. **Action PE to approve and JAP to implement.**
- DE had prepared a vacancy notice agreed with JAP as Acting Office Manager for the recruitment of a permanent Office Manager. This has been forwarded to the Chief Executive for agreement. **Action PE to approve and JAP to implement.**

After discussion of the additional funding requests it was agreed nem con to approve the following.

- (i) Up to £5,750 equipment requested by AH to improve the presentation of the British Championships. This will be capitalised and depreciated over 5 years, producing an annual charge of just over £1,100.
- (ii) £500 requested for Home Chess by AH, intended to support the work of the Manager of Chess in Prisons.
- (iii) £1,194 excluding VAT requested by BK for software products / databases for fund raising purposes and for marketing to schools.

6. The National Chess Library

PE provided the Board with an update on the options for the relocation of the National Chess Library, which was necessary by the end of March 2015.

- (1) Take additional space in the Watch Oak in Battle, at the same time moving the Office upstairs. This was the most expensive approach to the ECF, and would cost an additional £7,000 p.a. in respect of rent.
- (2) Move to a Primary School in North London which was prepared to take on the collection with no cost to the ECF.
- (3) DL was seeking to fund a donor prepared to create a high profile chess centre in Central London where the library could be held.

There was a preference for option (2) provided that a suitable contract could be agreed within the next two weeks.

7. Any other business

Mike Truran had proposed that the ECF should work with the 4NCL to run a FIDE-rated Tournament near Birmingham Airport as a joint venture. The Board decided not to proceed with this idea.