

Minutes of the 94th Board Meeting of the English Chess Federation
Saturday 18th April 2015 at the Ibis Hotel, Birmingham starting at 11.00 a.m.

Present: Phil Ehr (Chairman) (PE)
David Eustace (Director of Finance) (DE)
Alex Holowczak (Director of Home Chess) (AH)
David Openshaw (Director of International Chess) (DO)
Traci Whitfield (Director of Junior Chess) (TW)
David Thomas (Director of Membership) (DT)
Bob Kane (Commercial Director) (BK)
John Foley (Non-Executive Director) (JF)

Also in attendance:

John Philpott (Company Secretary) (JP)
Gary Willson (minutes) (GW)
Chris Fegan (Strategic Advisor) (CF)
Chris Majer (Chairman, Governance Committee)
Mike Truran (Chairman, Finance Committee)

Observed by:

Gareth Pearce

Apologies: Dominic Lawson (President)
Malcolm Pein (FIDE Delegate)
Julian Clissold (Non-Executive Director) (JC)

- 1 Approval of Agenda

It was agreed to remove item 10 concerning the Constitutional and Governance Review Committee

- 2 Approval of the Minutes of the 93rd Board Meeting held on 16th February 2015.

A few minor amendments were suggested. The minutes were agreed *nem con*.

AP 94/1: GW to make amendments to minutes and re-issue to members.

- 3 E-mail Votes taken since the last Board Meeting

None.

- 4 Appointments made since the last Board Meeting

Sean Marsh has been nominated to be on the Book of the Year Committee.

David Anderton has given notice of his intention to retire from all chess activity (including his duties as the Federation's *pro bono* legal advisor).

5 Future Dates

Following discussion, the dates of the 23rd October and the morning of 8th December were agreed. It was noted that not all members would be able to make these dates.

6 Appointment of Tellers

DT stated it is customary to have the chairmen of the two standing committees to act as tellers at a Council meeting. MT indicated that he was happy to stand aside in favour of Andrew Leadbetter. The Board therefore decided to propose Andrew Leadbetter and Chris Majer as tellers at the Finance Council meeting.

7 Amendments to Voting Register

JP stated all proxies received had been updated on the website. There were no amendments.

8 Proposal To Narrow the Gap between Silver and Bronze Subscription Rates

The proposal was received from Bill Armstrong. It is not expected to pass at Council, but the Board agreed not to oppose the motion and to allow the meeting to take its own view. Should it be passed, the Board's later proposal (to increase subscription rates) would be amended accordingly.

9 Approval of Budget (and other Council Items)

DE had produced a slide show (not part of the official papers), and papers and a spreadsheet to explain the budget. The talk would concentrate on the key points, with DE and JP answering any questions. Individual directors would be required to address any items specific to their directorate.

Individual directors were nominated and agreed to deliver the specific elements of the Council agenda. The sequence should be: strategy paper; budget; membership rates; game fee; adoption of the overall budget; Olympiad budget.

Some discussion was had concerning the yearbook. It was agreed that, should the motion be passed, all information currently included should be easily accessible via the website/internet.

Concerning item 21 on the Council Agenda concerning the proposal to help ease the phasing out of game fee, no paper had been produced. The Board were not convinced the Finance Council is the best place to discuss this, and agreed to suggest a committee to give proposals to the Board.

Matters for AOB were agreed (the passing of Colin Crouch, and David Anderton's retirement).

Should the issue of communications arise, this should be dealt with by BK and CF. The Board agreed to update the Forum as appropriate. JP sought clarification on whether he was allowed to post in the other Forum during the Council meeting. JF agreed that we do not communicate well enough; there should be no sense that we are barring anyone from publicising or informally reporting on the meeting.

10 (Struck from Agenda)

11 Updated Responsibilities Regulations

This item was skipped.

12 Voluntary Code of Good Governance in the Sports and Recreation Sector

This item was skipped due to lack of time.

13a Relationship with e2e4 (DO)

The Board felt that it is important for there to be regular high level FIDE-rated tournaments, as in the past. Sean Hewitt is in discussions with DO, and they are trying to identify a way forward. MT has agreed to try to put on more 4NCL events.

AP 94/1 DO to continue dialogue with PE and SH concerning FIDE events

PE suggested that in the past the Board had considered whether the ECF could itself arrange such events. Whilst it was noted it was not included specifically in our strategy statement, we do need to meet the requirements of our members.

13b Reducing the Cost of Collecting Subscriptions (DT)

DE and DT had had a long meeting with Dave Evans concerning PaySubsOnline. This is very much a work in progress. We will be continuing with PaySubs for now, but looking to improve its usage. There is a possibility of introducing a Direct Debit scheme, possibly by July

AP 94/2 DT to investigate the possibility of cost and ease of collecting membership fees

AP 94/3 DT to produce an "Idiot's Guide" for our members when re-enrolling on line.

14 Report on Managing the Office

PE invited a different director to undertake a review of the efficiency of the office, in an effort to reduce costs. It was noted that Andrew Farthing had performed a similar exercise years ago. Whilst it was generally thought the Office was doing a good job, it was commented that the costs were a high proportion of the Federation's costs, so the Board needs to have some idea what those costs entail. It was also noted that we are a small organisation, and that if we reduce the staffing levels (currently 2.4), undoubtedly some functions would need to go.

AP 94/4 PE to help the Board understand the functions and costs of the Office

15 Sponsorship Income

This is currently not being reported on.

AP 94/5 All directors to report on sponsorship, to circulate details ahead of the next Board meeting

16 Action Points

This item was skipped.

17 Finance Update

A paper produced by DE indicated the effect of the proposed changes to membership rates on the budgeted surplus.

18 Other Directors' updates

-PE has submitted a grant application to the Sport & Recreation Alliance to support the Independent Constitutional and Governance Review Commission.

- The agreement to implement the Code of Conduct implies agreement for a register of interests, which is included in the code, to enhance its transparency. CM believes it must be backed by the entire Board.

The meeting closed at 13.05.