

Minutes of the 95th Board Meeting of the English Chess Federation
Friday 29th May 2015 at the Park Inn by Radisson, Northampton, starting at 11.00am

Present: Phil Ehr (Chief Executive) (PE)
David Eustace (Director of Finance) (DE)
Alex Holowczak (Director of Home Chess) (AH)
David Openshaw (Director of International Chess) (DO)
Julian Clissold (Non-Executive Director) (JC)
Bob Kane (Commercial Director) (BK)
John Foley (Non-Executive Director) (JF)

Also in attendance:

John Philpott (Company Secretary, via Skype) (JP)
Gary Willson (minutes) (GW)
Chris Fegan (Strategic Advisor) (CF)

Apologies:

Dominic Lawson (President)
Malcolm Pein (FIDE Delegate)
David Thomas (Director of Membership) (DT)
Traci Whitfield (Director of Junior Chess and Education) (TW)

1 Appointment of Chairman

At the suggestion of the CE that an alternative chairman should be chosen for the meeting, those present were reminded that the role of chairman of the Board was to be performed by the CE, and that individuals who sought election to offices should fulfil the duties of those offices. This arrangement may be changed by Council in the future. It was agreed that the CE should chair the meeting.

2 Moving of the Agenda

The Agenda was approved.

3 Approval of Minutes of Meeting 94

The minutes had previously been circulated. Some slight amendments were made following which a final version was agreed without redactions.

AP 95/1 GW and JF to investigate the use of electronic storage (eg "Dropbox") for Board papers

4 To note E-mail votes taken since the Meeting 94

There was one vote concerning the agreement of the BCF accounts that was agreed *nem con*.

5 Appointments made since the last Board Meeting

None.

6 Confirmation of GW as Office Manager

This was confirmed.

AP 95/2 PE to propose changes to GW's contract of employment to clarify supervisory responsibilities

AP 95/3 PE to draft and approve a refreshed job description for each of the 3 current office staff (including minute taking for GW); the Board to oversee.

AP 95/4 PE to oversee the creation of an "Employee's Handbook"

AP 95/5 To refresh membership and mission of the Personnel Committee to support the roles of the office staff and volunteers within the Federation

7 Applications for Membership

It was agreed *nem con* to allow the application for membership from the Hillingdon & District League

8 Consideration of Draft Council Minutes

Due to the need to ensure the minutes of Council were published on time, JP made the changes as directed by the Board. The final version was approved *nem con*.

AP 95/6 JP/GW/DE to ensure that donations received for the International Teams are accounted for separately

9 Strategy Statement

PE updated the Board on the current status of the different themes, goals and initiatives in the Strategy Statement, most of which were discussed.

AP 95/7 DT/DE/PE to lead a Board review of the membership structure, in particular to consider the advantages of long-term membership

AP 95/8 AH/TW to coordinate concerning the intended launch of the Academy at the British Championships

AP 95/9 TW to brief the Board on proposed key performance indicators for the Academy

10 Communication of changes to Membership and Game Fee rates

It was agreed there was an urgent need to inform congress organisers of Council's changes to the Game Fee.

AP 95/10 DT/JP/GW to urgently draft a note to be sent to all congress organisers concerning the fee increase for next year, to be issued via email

11 To consider the approach to English non-Gold members playing in FIDE standard play events

Council's decision (to discontinue de-listing players who play in FIDE rated events but are not Gold members) is problematic as it had not provided an alternative course of action for non-Gold members who play in FIDE-rated tournaments overseas.

AP 95/11 DT to pull together a working team, to draw up proposals to deal with Council's decision to withdraw "de-listing" as a policy

12 Working Party to consider the Phasing out of Game Fee

This item had dropped off the Agenda of the last two council meetings. Ben Edgell had declined DT's offer of taking part.

AP 95/12 DT to contact Angus French concerning setting up a working party to consider the phasing out of game fees

13 Communications

It was generally agreed that the different elements of the Federation's Communication Strategy were developing positively (the Forum, Twitter, the website, and direct member e-mail for marketing and political matters); and that directors and other officers should continue to post more content on the Forum.

AP 95/13 BK to draw up new categories with a view to re-launching the Forum using the new software.

14 Update on progress of Action Points

Outstanding action points, previously circulated were discussed. 93/11, 94/1, 94/2, 94/3 are all on-going.

94/4: PE has circulated papers concerning the duties undertaken within the office. Some Board members wanted a clearer understanding.

AP 95/14 JF to contact PE and GW concerning activity sampling within the office; GW to report results to PE

94/5: BK informed the Board that he expected to sign a contract shortly with a significant long term sponsor. They are particularly keen to sponsor the Grand-Prix. It was agreed that, if the deal is successful, some funds would be allocated to the Hastings International Chess Congress. The Board congratulated BK on his successful negotiations.

AP 95/15 BK/DE to consider legal implications of the sponsorship, such as regulated insurance activity

AP 95/16 DO/TW/AH/BK to form a working party to produce a set of products/list that would constitute a list of sponsorship opportunities. BK to lead.

AP 95/17 DE, in coordination with the Finance Committee Chairman, to propose changes to the Financial Bye-law, specifically to clarify whether restrictions on unbudgeted expenditures apply to donations and sponsorship funds.

15 Proposed changes to Regulation 2

Four aspects of Regulation 2 were discussed. Action on an appointments framework was deferred. Discussion of differing opinions on the chief executive's role was inconclusive.

AP 95/18 PE to email the Board with suggested changes to the chief executive's role specified in Regulation 2

Directors discussed the CE's concept of Board level committees, and whether this was a more attractive way forward for managing the Board's business. Although some "committees" had been established the meeting expressed the view that they would wish to review how these were working before implementing the concept further. The CE was asked to explain how he saw the various components of the ECF Board's structure working within this new concept, there being four distinct bodies involved: the CE, executive directors, the Board, the committees.

It was agreed that the proposal that the CE could veto any decision be withdrawn.

AP 95/19 The CE undertook to develop the concept of a committee structure further.

16 Register of Interests

The proposal contained in the paper from the chair of the Governance Committee was discussed and it was agreed to delegate to the CE, NED's and chair of the Governance Committee the authority to implement the policy and schedule. The Board further agreed:

- That the definition of "conflict of interest" is best not proscribed in detail but left to each individual to decide whether they would personally benefit.
- That the register should be completed on taking up post, with an annual update thereafter.
- Individuals should update their register within 30 days of a change in their interests.

17 Potential bid for a European Chess Union Championships in 2017

The Board is warm to the idea of acting as a host for international events, but would need sight of some deeper financial analysis to minimize the risk of financial exposure.

AP 95/20 BK to further investigate a bid for the European Chess Union events in 2017; and if a satisfactory proposal is available, to present it to the Board.

18 To authorise the framework to implement Sponsorship arrangement

Because of the impending sponsorship agreement, the Board agreed to the formation of 2 sub-committees to organise and administer firstly the Grand Prix (TW, BK, AH and PE) and a FIDE-rated norm event (DO, BK and PE).

19 New Website

Following the impending migration of the website to our new host, it was agreed to commence building a new website. The Board noted that a notice on the website solicited member comments.

AP 95/21 All directors to discuss with and submit to Andrew Walker their wishes for functionality of a new website, by no later than 30th June

20 Finance Update

Some money from the current account had been put into 2 high interest savings accounts.

21 Other Directors Updates

TW asked the Board to be informed of 4 English players who had been registered to play in the European Schools Chess Tournament in Konya, Turkey by the UKCA. These registrations had not been made through the ECF as the regulations dictate. We are currently working with the organizing committee and the ECU, but so far had received no response from UKCA.

JF gave the Board an outline of the decision in respect of partnering the EBU in their Judicial Review challenge of Sport England's refusal to recognize them as a sport. The Board gave a vote of thanks to Steven Coles for his time and informal discussion on the matter.

AH informed the Board that 9 GMs had entered the British Championships this year, and that preparations are underway for the English Women's Championship being hosted in Coulsdon.

22 Future Board Meetings

The next meeting will be held on Monday 20th July in London. There will also be an orientation meeting on 23rd October, the week immediately after the AGM.

23 AOB

The Board expressed its disquiet at the lack of diversity in the shortlist for Player of the Year. Directors believed that on balance, it was better on this occasion to support the Awards Committee's process.

The meeting closed at 6.15pm