

Minutes of the 98th Board Meeting of the English Chess Federation
Held at the Euston Square Hotel, London, on Saturday 17th October 2015

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)
Traci Whitfield (Director of Junior Chess) (TW)
David Thomas (Director of Memberships) (DT)
Bob Kane (Commercial Director) (BK)
Julian Clissold (Non-Executive Director) (JC)
John Foley (Non-Executive Director) (JF)

In attendance: Chris Majer (Chair, Governance Committee) (CM)
John Philpott (Company Secretary) (JP)
Gary Willson (Office Manager, minutes) (GW)
Andrew Walker (Webmaster)
Christine Carcas (Membership Secretary)
David Robertson (Governance Committee)
Andrew Davies (Manager of Coaches)
David Anderton (Legal Advisor, from item 8)

Apologies for Absence:

Dominic Lawson (President)
Malcolm Pein (FIDE Delegate)
Mike Truran (Chair, Finance Committee)
Chris Fegan (Strategic Advisor)

1 Apologies for Absence (JP)

Apologies for absence, noted above, were accepted.

2 Approval of the Agenda (PE)

The Agenda was approved without change.

3 Minutes of the 97th Board Meeting. (PE/JP)

The minutes were approved with some minor changes. There were no matters arising. The minutes were published on the website during the meeting.

4 To note Email Votes taken since the last Board Meeting.

The email vote concerning the role of the Strategic Advisor failed (5 to 4 with 1 abstention, when a majority of all current Directors is required).

The email vote proposed by the Commercial Director requesting the release to election candidates of email addresses of Council members failed (2 for, no other votes received).

5 Management of the AGM Agenda (JC)

The Board will recommend to Council for JC to take the chair.

Each Board member to be given a maximum of 10 minutes (including questions) to present their reports. More time will be given to PE, given the length of his report. Repetition in questions will be closed down.

Candidates will be given 5 minutes to address Council and answer questions. It was decided that candidates would not be asked to leave the room, unless Council requested them to do so. It was agreed that we should not wait for the election results before the presentation of the Governance Report.

6 Appointment of Tellers (PE)

The Board would recommend John Wickham and Andrew Leadbetter.

7 Applications for Membership and Changes to the Voting Register (JP)

JP confirmed (see meeting 97) that the Frodsham Congress met the independence criterion and had been included on the voting register. Since the last Board meeting, 3 non-contentious applications had been received from the Bradford & District Chess Association, the Bury & Rochdale League and the Exeter & District League. All were accepted nem con. The Rhyl Congress has decided to withdraw from Council.

8 Election Procedures (PE)

All items were covered under 5 above.

9 Proposed dates for Council Meetings (JP)

It was agreed to recommend to Council to hold the Finance Council in London on 16th April 2016, and the AGM in Birmingham on 15th October 2016.

10 Other

No other matters were discussed concerning the AGM.

11 Revision to the Child Protection Policy (TW)

Due to changes on the Clubs' Insurance, an urgent need had been identified to update and revise the ECF's Child Protection Policy. This is because of changes to Government guidance published in the summer. A draft version had been produced and previously circulated.

Key changes: a reduced requirement to undertake DBS checks; the need for organisations to appoint a safe-guarding officer; an increased use of risk assessment.

Annually, appointed people will need to be named and the policy signed off. Regulation No. 2 would need to be amended to reflect this, and signed off by the Chief Executive on behalf of the board.

AP 98/1 JP/CM to amend Regulation 2 to reflect changes in the Child Protection Policy.

AP 98/2 Consider review of appeals procedures to reflect changes in the Child Protection Policy.

It was agreed to subscribe to a company called SAFECIC, who provide a number of services that assist organisations, including review and update of policies, reduced rates on-line training and cheap DBS checks.

TW was commended for her excellent work. It was noted that some clubs may consider these changes too onerous; however, the changes were necessary to ensure children are safeguarded.

The paper was approved nem con. TW will now submit the policy to CIC for their oversight and consideration before publication. In the meantime, named officers will need to be identified for the various roles within the policy.

AP 98/3 TW to identify roles within the Child Protection, and provide a list of names to populate before publication.

12 Appointment of Pro Bono Legal Advisor

David Anderton will step down after the AGM. Melville Rodrigues has agreed to take up the role. This was approved nem con.

13 Amendment to Regulation No. 2 in relation to job description of the Strategic Advisor (PE)

Because the email vote produced a majority (but not enough for an email vote to succeed), PE requested that the Board vote at a meeting where a straight majority would be adequate.

After some discussion, the vote was carried (5 in favour, 4 against).

14 Appointments Framework (PE)

The paper had previously been circulated. It was agreed without formal objection to implement the framework, noting that it could be changed to reflect ease of use and custom in due course.

15 Direct Members Representatives to Council (JP)

David Smith and David Fryer had been elected to represent Platinum members. JP would be addressing concerns expressed by the unsuccessful candidate over the voting process.

16 Future Meetings

It was agreed to decide on future dates at the meeting due to be held on 23rd October.

17 Control of Donated Funds

This was noted.

18 AOB

Traci Whitfield provided the following statement

“In June 2015, 36 players who earlier in the year had told us that they wished to be selected for the World Youth and Cadets Chess Championships in Greece were invited to represent the ECF at the event. Shortly after 8 coaches who had expressed interest in attending the event were also invited with an expected ratio of 1 coach to 4 students.

A few weeks later Greece experienced a deterioration in their financial and political stability following a national poll. The ECF consulted its insurers and subsequently gave advice to potential members of its delegation. Following this, an unusually large number of players declined their places citing costs and fear of losing money due to the situation in Greece. We reluctantly had to reduce the number of coaches to 6 and based selection primarily on which coaches had been requested by the players who had accepted their places. The other two coaches were "stood down" from the event with profuse apologies.

Following this one of the stood down coaches notified us of an intention to instruct a solicitor to sue both the ECF and me personally for breach of contract. At that point I became aware that the ECF did not have liability insurance for its directors and consulted David Anderton for advice. As a result, the coach was offered and accepted the sum that would have been paid for coaching at the event - £1,200.

This money will be taken from the Junior Directorate budget and has been accommodated by cancelling activities not already advertised and by reallocating money from the U16 Olympiad (to which we did not send a team this year).

With regards to the issue of liability insurance for directors, I understand that this is now resolved and came into effect on 1st October 2015."

AP 98/4 JP and TW to liaise over junior funding, especially concerning the Girls' Schools Tournament

- We are not going to join the National Council for School Sports this year; the value of annual membership (£300) was not necessarily worthwhile.
- The Enhance Training Academy for disabled players has started. We did not fully support the application to FIDE. They have approached us to try to get a player to go to the World Youth Chess Championships, due to start in one week's time.
- DO read out a pre-prepared statement: "There has been public talk of plots and attempted coups from Chris Fegan. I want to state clearly that no-one else, other than myself was involved in a) deciding to put the motion at the Board meeting in July; and b) deciding on the wording of the motion."
- The future Board should consider joining Sports Minds (concerning the benefits of mental health in sport).

The meeting closed.