

Minutes of the 103rd Board Meeting of the English Chess Federation
Held at the British Film Institute, Stephen Street, London on Friday
4th March 2016.

Present: David Eustace (Director of Finance) (DE)
David Thomas (Director of Membership) (DT)
Malcolm Pein (Director of International Chess, FIDE Delegate) (MP) until
item 12
Julie Denning (Non-Executive Director) (JD)
Alex Holowczak (Director Home Chess) (AH)
Julian Clissold (Non-Executive Director) (JC) from 12:00
Mike Truran (Chief Executive) (MT)

In attendance: John Philpott (Company Secretary) (JP)
Gary Willson (Office Manager, minutes) (GW)
Robert Stern (Chair, Governance Committee) (RS)
Mark Jordan (Manager of Publicity) (MJ) for item 12
Andrew Walker (Webmaster) (AW) for item 12, via Skype.

Meeting began at 11:30 am.

1 Appointment of the Chair.

JD was appointed chair, until JC arrived during item 7.

2 Apologies for Absence

Apologies had been received from Dominic Lawson (DL) (MP to act as alternate), and Traci Whitfield (TW)

3 Approval of the Agenda

The agenda was approved.

4 Minutes of the 102nd Board Meeting & Matters Arising

The minutes had been published ahead of the meeting. It was generally thought the new process, in order to comply with the recommendation of the Governance Review, had worked well.

Phil Ehr and Mike Gunn have agreed to share their role as our representative on the Sports & Recreation Alliance.

5 To Note Email Votes Taken Since the Last Board Meeting.

The Board confirmed the appointment of Tim Herring as Chair of the Finance Committee.

6 Appointments

It was agreed nem con to appoint Christelle Hafstad as the Junior Directorate Finance Manager.

JP informed the Board of his intention to commence a phased step down from his different duties with the Federation, to end no later than the Finance Council meeting in 2017. These include Financial Controller, Company Secretary, and Voting Register Officer. The Board thanked John for his work for the Federation, and wished him well in his new found endeavours.

AP 103/1: DE and JP to identify all the roles JP has responsibility for and to draw up a proposed hand over schedule

AP 103/2 DE and JP to advertise for the role of Financial Controller & Company Secretary

7 Action Point Update

99/8: On-going

100/5&6: On-going. MP advised that because we are a small business, we would likely need to engage on a consultancy basis (fixed fee plus performance bonus)

100/11: On-going

101/2: Cleared

101/3&4: On-going

101/6: Cleared, on agenda

101/8: Cleared, though it was agreed that further work needs to be done on the Charity and Recognition sub-committee.

AP 103/3: MT to discuss with JF a role within the ECF concerning sports recognition and working with the EBU.

102/1&2: On-going

102/3: Cleared

102/4: Cleared, a proposal will be put to Council from MG.

AP 103/4: DE to contact MG concerning a paper to Council on an association with "British Go Association".

102/5: Cleared, on agenda

102/6: Cleared, on agenda

102/7: Cleared. It was agreed that the next step is to complete a full inventory of items within the library before reporting back. This may need the temporary hiring of further space at the store.

AP 103/5: GW to contact GJ, GW and AF concerning the itemising of stock within the library.

102/8: Cleared. DA has confirmed he has stood down. See AP above.
102/9: On-going

8 Appointment of Chairman for Council

JD will be recommended to chair the meeting.

9 Follow up to financial papers for Council (DE to lead)

a) Current Forecast and Budget

Figures had been produced and circulated ahead of the meeting. The surplus for the current year is better than planned, largely because membership was better than the projection made when the budget was prepared. This will give rise to a balance of £99K (virtually meeting the target as expressed to Finance Council 2015).

The British Championships plans to break-even but will find it difficult to do so. It was agreed that £5K for this year and next be channelled from the surplus to the British Championships.

AP 103/6: DE to contact the Finance Committee, to seek their agreement to channel £5K surplus funds to the 2016 British Championships.

MP believed that we need to send a team to either the Euro or World Seniors, incurring an extra cost of £1K. He also wishes to provide extra support to some up and coming younger players and GMs, to help them to a higher level and be part of the England teams of the future.

AP 103/7: DE and MP to agree International Directorate finance figures, ahead of Finance council

AP 103/8: MT & DE to arrange a half day Board meeting to discuss future finances and activity planning.

It is the intention to transfer a significant proportion of the PIF to the charity in order to attract tax relief. However, the PIF will need to remain open to some extent in order to have the option of funding professional players. It is also the intention to move surpluses to the charity, which we can then look at utilising more extensively.

Following the discussion, it was agreed to allow DE, MT and JP to adjust the figures presented, but to return to the Board if they believe it is necessary.

b) Impact of League Management Software

Tenders are being received. The software will need to last for at least 5 years when taking into account depreciation.

c) Board recommendations for Membership and Game Fee Rates

It was agreed nem con to recommend no change for the coming year, to be reviewed again for the following year.¹

10 Other Council Related Matters

a) Membership paper (DT)

The paper previously circulated was discussed. It was agreed that the figures presented to Council would be updated to include March subscriptions. It was also agreed to include the junior figures in the paper to Council. The Board agreed the paper.

AP 103/9: DT to update figures in his paper to Council, as discussed.

b) County Championship Rules

There was no objection to AH proposing to FIDE rate the Open and Minor Counties sections in the Final Stages of the County Championships.

c) Proposals Received from Requisitionists

No proposals had been received thus far.

d) Other

Matters relating to the presentation and make-up of the papers were discussed and agreed.

11 Revision of the Communications Strategy (as noted by Council at the 2015 AGM) (MJ)

The paper previously circulated was discussed. It was agreed that the paper be adopted.

12 ECF Forum and Alternatives (MJ)

The paper and each recommendation therein was discussed.

- a) The Board agreed to the closure of the Forum, subject to the successful implementation of the initiatives at b & c.
- b) The Board agreed to the implementation of a “Questions For Directors” facility on the website.
- c) The Board agreed to the instigation of an all member monthly email, providing news and updates on matter that may be of interest to our members. The first would be before the end of March.

¹ As a result of additional expenditure requests received, an additional Board meeting is being held on 31 March to revisit the budget and the recommendation on rates to be made to Council.

AP 103/10: All directors to feed material to MJ for the first all member e-mail by no later than Friday 18th March

- d) The Board agreed to the development and implementation of a new website. It agreed that should further reasonable financial support be necessary to achieve this, it would be given, including training and the purchasing of software.

AP 103/11: All directors to complete the questionnaire and where necessary discuss their requirements with the Webmaster by 4th April.

- e) The Board agreed to thoroughly investigate the inclusion of the grading database within the main site if at all possible. They also agreed to explore the inclusion of the League Management Software within future development.
- f) The Board agreed to discontinue Chess Moves, noting that the 8 members who subscribe to a paper copy would be contacted and alternative arrangements be made.
- g) The Board agreed to move the responsibility and management of Facebook, Twitter and other Social Media to the Publicity Manager.

AP 103/12: MP to contact Phil Makepeace concerning the management of the ECF's Twitter account.

- h) The Board agreed to the drawing up of procedures for dealing with the press, both in response to queries from them, and releases of information to them.

AP 103/13: MJ to draw up a set of procedures concerning liaison with the press, to be signed off by the Board.

- i) The Board agreed that the Financial Controller draw up a set of standard rates for advertising within the various mediums the Federation has at its disposal, or may develop in the future.
- j) The Board did not agree, on a vote of 2 for, 2 against, to recommend to Council to reintroduce the ECF Diary. The chair voted to maintain the status quo.
- k) The Board noted that Finance Council 2015 delayed the decision on the future of the Yearbook. The Board decided to ensure the new website would be able to capture and archive the historic information contained within the Yearbook, before revisiting the issue.

The Board thanked MJ, AW and GW for their hard work.

13 Governance Review

a Review of Progress (JD)

The sub-committee had met twice, the second meeting having been boosted by MT and RS following their appointments as CEO and Chair of Governance respectively. A number of matters involving tidying up of the website had been actioned. Other recommendations were

considered to be purely for the Board to attend to, such as those dealing with the conduct of Board meetings and on which JC had produced a paper to be discussed in this meeting. Of the other recommendations, we had prioritised those dealing with elections. The aim was to seek Council approval of the required documentary changes at the forthcoming Finance Council so that the recommendations could be implemented starting with the 2016 AGM elections. This involves the appointment of a Non-Executive Chairman of the Board, appointment of a Chairman of Council, the FIDE Delegate and 3-year terms of office.

b Progress Report on Articles (RS)

A full draft rewrite was previously circulated, which included the Non-Executive Chair of the Board, Chair of Council, a timetable/rota for 3 yearly elections and the FIDE Delegate. It was agreed nem con.

c Bye Law 4 (DE)

The draft paper previously circulated was discussed. In particular, the Finance Committee was to change to a more overseeing, reviewing role, rather than day to day observance of expenditure. The paper was agreed nem con.

d Board Standing Orders (JC)

The provisional paper previously circulated was discussed. It was agreed this is a Board issue, and not for Council to authorise. The issue would return to the Board for agreement after Council, and comments were invited.

AP 103/14: JP & GW to consider a register to manage the 3 yearly review of all documents.

14 Sport & Recreation Alliance

It was agreed to suggest to PE that he take a lead on the Mental Health Alliance.

AP 103/15: JC to write to PE, inviting him to take a lead on the Mental Health Alliance with SRA.

It was agreed that we would take the 2hr training offered by the SRA after Council, to coincide with the next London meeting.

AP 103/16: JD to contact PE concerning Governance and SRA.

15 ECF Legal Arrangements

With the change in the Federation's legal advisor, and a different climate in which legal advice is given by practitioners, we are having to implement a new, more formal system for obtaining legal advice. There need to be limits to the extent to which we seek advice, and we need to extend the panel of advisors. There has been a delay in being able to receive advice on the revised Safeguarding Policy.

AP 103/17: JC & MT to draft an advert for the Pro-Bono Legal Advisors Panel, to pass to RS before publication on the website.

AP 103/18: JC to contact TW, to authorise the publication of the revised Safeguarding Policy.

16 Update from the Home Directorate (AH)

The results of the Questionnaire were discussed: the wish to reduce the length of the Championships to 9 days (which could then be held of 1 week with 2 weekends); to keep costs to a minimum; to simplify the qualifying process.

AH wished to explore these conclusion further, before making formal recommendations.

AP 103/19: AH to discuss with MP and TW the conclusions of the questionnaire on the British Championships.

AP 103/20: TW to discuss with active parents moving the BCC to a 9 day tournament (2 weekends, 1 week)

The Tradewise Grand Prix is to be extended to include a girl's prize.

Chess 24 have agreed to broadcast a commentary, in addition to the BCC live game feed.

17 Date of the Next Meeting(s)

It was suggested that the Board should meet every 4-6 weeks, but have shorter meetings. Future dates were suggested: prior to Finance Council; week of the 6th May (Birmingham); week of 3rd June (London); week of 1st July (Birmingham); week of 9th September (London).

AP 103/21: GW to collect availability from attendees for the proposed Board Meetings

Meeting closed 17:10