

**ENGLISH CHESS FEDERATION
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 13 OCTOBER 2012
DIRECTOR OF MARKETING'S REPORT**

C17.7.6.4

I'd like to open my report by thanking my fellow directors for their help over the last 12 months. As a new member of the board I had to negotiate a steep learning curve and this was made much easier thanks to their generous understanding and support. In particular I would like to name the outgoing chief executive Andrew Farthing for his incredible skill, patience and the sheer hard work he has put in during a momentous year of change. He has been an outstanding leader and will surely be a tough act to follow.

As marketing director of the ECF the first challenge is to be effective in the absence of a marketing budget. My key ambition, as outlined in my election address, was to develop the website and our social media outlets to create an integrated online presence which would form the basis of a powerful low-cost communications strategy.

For historical reasons the ECF's Twitter feed proved to be outside of the control of the marketing directorate and despite repeated efforts, this remained the case up until August this year. For future reference it should be noted that Twitter is central to all social media marketing and therefore should be under the full control of the marketing director. Failure to do this puts a serious constraint on communications.

The ECF's Facebook page was put into good order in September 2011 and remains a key information hub and communications channel for the Federation. This would be even more popular and successful if members of the ECF Board of Directors took a lead in using this platform. Unfortunately, a substantial amount of the ECF resources are instead expended on the EC Forum. The EC Forum is an excellent website for discussing English chess; however, it is not an appropriate arena for ECF board members to make public statements and I have attempted to promote the wisdom of this policy over the course of the year.

The third and perhaps most important aspect of our online presence is the website. The ECF website is a rich source of information and is incredibly well-maintained and updated. Website content however is quite a different thing to website design. I worked very hard to convince my fellow directors of the need to overhaul of the look and feel of the ECF's website. Due to a combination of factors, I was not successful and despite some navigational improvements the ECF's most visible public face remains, just as it is. In parting I will take this final opportunity to recommend a comprehensive redesign of the ECF website. For a forward-looking national federation, it really cannot happen soon enough.

Another aspect of the wide-ranging brief of the marketing director is Public Relations and this has been perhaps the most time consuming aspect of my job over the last 12 months. Some useful press coverage was achieved but from the outset the key theme of the year has been dealing with controversy. Some of the issues have been serious, while some could have been dealt with much more easily if the people concerned had adopted a more pragmatic attitude. Whether serious or trivial, rows and disagreements absorb a disproportionate amount of management time. This is an area where all members can take some responsibility for change by seeking a less divisive and more constructive atmosphere in which to develop ideas and make progress.

In conclusion, the year of marketing in English Chess has been a qualified success. No great leaps forward were taken, but on the other hand, some pitfalls have been avoided. Achievements were limited but much can be learned from this. In future, expectations should be more carefully managed, for as long as the ECF neglects its marketing budget, it neglects its marketing ambition.