



**Minutes of the 79<sup>th</sup> meeting of the English Chess Federation Board  
held on Monday 16 December 2013, at 1030 hours  
held at 3 Whitehall Court, London SW1 2EL**

**Present**

Andrew Paulson (AP): President  
Phil Ehr (PE): Chief Executive  
David Eustace (DE): Director of Finance  
Alex Holowczak (AH): Director of Home Chess (arriving an hour into the meeting)  
David Openshaw (DO): Director of International Chess  
David Thomas (DT): Director of Membership  
Julian Clissold (JC): Non Executive Director

**In attendance**

John Philpott (JP): Company Secretary  
Ian Reynolds (IR), part attendance

**Apologies**

Lawrence Cooper (LC): Director of Junior Chess and Education  
Sean Hewitt (SH): Non Executive Director  
Nigel Short (NS): FIDE Delegate  
Chris Majer (CM): Chairman, Governance Committee  
Mike Truran (MT): Chairman, Finance Committee

***Housekeeping***

**1. The Present Meeting**

- AP convened the Board meeting as the Chair. PE arrived 10 minutes later. Per updated advice from the Governance Committee, AP therefore continued to chair the meeting.

- The Board agreed to use the template agenda.
- Minutes for the 78<sup>th</sup> Board meeting (22 Nov) were not prepared. PE undertook to circulate them by email.
- The Board agreed that IR should attend the meeting for a presentation.
- The Board discussed the value and costs of convening face-to-face meetings (averaging £300-£350), implications for the budget, and the practicality of scheduling all Board meetings through October. After considering pros and cons, the Board agreed to the following future meetings: Sunday, 19 January at St Catherine's Bramley (noting a generous offer of hospitality and the opportunity to see a National Schools Girls' Championships semi-final); Friday, 7 March in the Midlands; and Saturday, 12 April in London immediately prior to the Council meeting.
- The Board acknowledged the ECF Handbook. JC offered thoughts that principles to foster a 'corporate culture' should be written into the Handbook. He reflected that the tenor of Board emails and discussions is due in part to tensions in the relationships among the Council, Board members' respective election platforms and a cohesive Board. He identified the need to clarify roles among Board members to achieve an effective corporate identity, to improve our brand image at the Board level and to recognise personal expectations resulting from serving on the Board. JC was tasked to write a paper for discussion at the next meeting.
- The need to complete the Board with a Commercial Director, perhaps with an interim, was highlighted and agreed.

### **News and Routine Reports**

#### **6. News.** Directors highlighted significant information.

- Congratulations to Malcolm Pein and the London Classic organisers for another excellent tournament, for convening the UK's first Chess in Education Conference and showcasing a new commercial partnership to benefit chess in schools, called 'Yes 2 Chess'.
- Congratulations to Hikaru Nakamura for winning the main event, and to Peter Batchelor and Charlie Nettleton for first equal in the English Junior Rapidplay. Peter Sowray earned an IM norm. Two other IM norms and one WGM norm were achieved by foreign players.
- Congratulations to the new English Girls' Champions: Navieinaah Haridas and Sophie Tjurina (U8), Susie Wang (U10), Elizaveta Sheremetyeva (U12), Naomi Wei and Carmel Barwick (U14), Becky Kerton (U16) and Shivi Ravi (U18). Thanks also to splendid teamwork in the Junior Directorate that resulted in a rewarding tournament for 70 players.

#### **7. Routine Business Reports**

- (a) President. AP reported:
- Potential sponsorship talks are underway with The Book Trust and another sponsor.
  - Puskin House in London intends to start a club and eventually propose a team for expat Russians.
- (b) Home Chess. AH reported:
- Exploring anti-cheating measures for the British Championships, and implications from new FIDE rules effective from July 2014.
  - AH was going to see a venue for the 2015 British Championships.
- (c) Finance. DE reported.
- The Financial Accounts and summarised the profit and loss position as good, partly due to savings from a gap of one employee. Staff bonuses were possible, as previously agreed.
  - Reminded the Board that the Charity and Recognition Committee is ready for instruction on the pathway to achieving charity status; and that the PIF charter expires in May 2014, requiring BCF action.
  - Nominated John Higgs for the Charity and Recognition Committee. The Board agreed.
  - Informed the Board that financial planning guidance would be presented at the next meeting.
- (d) Membership. DT reported a total of 8400 current members (as compared with 9500 at the end of the last membership year). As a result, the budget prediction rose from £101.5K to £120K. AP asked all directors to think about membership targets in preparation for a 'membership drive'.
- (e) Despite his absence, SH provided email input immediately before and during the meeting on various agenda items.

The Board accepted each of the routine business reports.

### **New Business**

#### **8. Elite Development Proposal by Ian Reynolds**

- IR presented his paper that estimated a need of £3 million over ten years was needed to develop a cadre of players over 2700. AP stated the ambition for 2700 players needed to remain a high priority; and that we should work to foster an environment where a career in chess was a viable for a range of able players, trainers, arbiters and organisers.
- DO reviewed the need and options for funding the Olympiad teams next year. He advocated for the international teams to be a budget priority, reminding the Board

of Council's April 2013 resolution on the subject, and discussed the need for the Board to agree relative priorities for his pending negotiations with players for the Opens and Women's teams.

## **9. UKSCC/UKCA Proposal**

- The Board continued consideration of UKSCC/UKCA's proposal. The Board reviewed discussions with UKSCC/UKCA by various parties, including AP, PE and DT (at the London Classic), as well as a detailed paper from Jim Wadsworth that was forwarded by LC. The Board debated various aspects (ECF branding and sponsorship rights; membership guarantees, discounts and royalties; selection rights; length of the proposal) and agreed to continue negotiations with a counter proposal. DE and PE recorded points from the discussion where AH and DT suggested points for improvement. The Board asked PE to draft the proposal and circulate it to the Board. The Board clarified its intention for LC to remain engaged in the negotiations and to lead on the issue with support from DT where possible. Due to LC's absence, AH communicated to him by Facebook indicating his view of satisfactory progress, to which LC replied with satisfaction.
- After reminding the Board of his interest in the English Primary Schools Chess Association, JC said that he would review with his EPSCA colleagues their relationship with the ECF with a view toward closer association and mutual support.

## **10. Arbiter Appointment**

The Board approved AH's nomination of Rod Middleton as an ECF arbiter.

## **Strategic Issues**

## **11. CHESS Magazine Proposal**

AP reviewed discussions with *British Chess Magazine* and *CHESS*. The Board agreed for him to proceed.

## **12. Sponsorship of ECF Assets**

AP emphasised the need to keep searching for a suitable Commercial Director and to organise English chess into a product to attract major sponsorship.

## **13. Membership Report and Plan**

DT presented a report of the membership review with the goal of providing Council with a full and clear review of membership statistics, parameters for modification, member communications and customer satisfaction.

***Matters Arising***

**The Chairman closed the meeting.**

**Signed as an accurate record:**

**Date:**