

Candidate Statement for post of Director for Junior Chess and Education C21.10.5.2 Traci Whitfield

It is an honour to be nominated for the post of Director of Junior Chess and Education. I have chosen to stand as I believe that I have the skills, experience and motivation required to: lead junior chess along the developmental path on which it has already embarked under the direction of the previous post holders, build on existing initiatives and create new ones.

For those of you that don't know me, I have 35 years of professional employment in health, higher education and business along with almost 15 years' experience as a school governor. This has contributed to the development of the advanced skills I believe are essential for a post as important as this: proven leadership, strong management, strategic planning, financial planning, good understanding of educational programmes and safeguarding, effective collaborative working, very good organisation and time management.

I have a solid background in working for the chess community in both adult and junior chess including: I am an ECF accredited coach and have been teaching chess in a voluntary capacity in schools and clubs since 2000. Using close links with many organisations such as the EPSCA and NYCA I am able to help and advise juniors to play at the level that suits them both locally and nationally. I have been Secretary for Junior Chess for Staffordshire Junior Chess Association since 2007- organising both their junior and adult county congresses, developing and managing the junior teams and being joint webmaster for their popular junior website (www.sjca.org.uk). I also captained successful adult teams at both club and county level between 2005 and 2008.

I was Vice Chair (2 years) then Chair (2 years) of the English Primary Schools Chess Association (EPSCA) which organises national events for individuals, schools and counties/associations. EPSCA also holds England U11 Team trials each year. I have been involved in all these events for a number of years, in particular the EPSCA National Primary Schools Chess Championships. For the last 2 years my husband and I have been the organisers for this competition which attracts 350-400 teams of 5/6 players from schools around the UK and from as far away as Gibraltar. Last year it involved organising 26 events of which 2 were large residential events (each 1500-2000 people).

Junior chess players are the potential league, competition and titled players, arbiters, chess organisers, coaches and "chess parents" of the future. The experience they gain now as juniors will profoundly affect what they choose to do in the future and therefore the future chess community. Therefore **my broad aims** if elected are to: **promote a cohesive junior chess community; create good quality opportunities for player development at all levels; encourage chess playing into adulthood; ensure a successful structure and method of working within the junior directorate.**

My intention, if elected, is to achieve this by a policy of:

- **Working professionally and collaboratively with members of the ECF board** to develop clear direction and policy for the ECF as a whole and for junior chess in particular
- **Active promotion of collaborative working with other junior organisations** such as Chess in Schools, EPSCA, UK Chess Academy, NYCA, NCJS. The aim should be: to encourage participation of more juniors in chess at all levels; for organisations to work in harmony with each other and promote each other's activities; to value the contribution of each organisation towards chess as a whole; to encourage a positive image of playing chess in children and teenagers.
- **Implementation of a structure for player development.** This should include development of juniors at any age and level toward "elite" player status and support further development of current "elite" players.
- **Focus on increasing numbers of girls playing chess at all levels** through access to good quality championships and training. Supporting girls to achieve success nationally and internationally will strengthen women's chess in the short and long term future and attract potential internal and external funding.
- **Development of juniors in a wide range of areas** such as arbiting, coaching/support of younger or less experienced players, chess organisation and reporting chess in the media.
- **Maintenance of current successful areas within the junior directorate** such as the structure of the business management team, the selection policy and the English Youth Grand Prix.
- **General review of workload within the junior directorate** to ensure reasonable and appropriate role remit in areas of: business, fundraising, player development, schools chess, coaches, international activity. Examination of support required for these roles to be successful and in particular introduce administrative support.
- **Development of sponsorship and other methods of income** to support the work of the junior directorate.
- **Review of the development and accreditation of coaches** by the ECF

I would ask that you consider carefully both the long and short term future of the ECF and the junior directorate in particular before voting on the position of Junior Director. I sincerely hope that you will allow me the opportunity to begin to achieve the above aims and to work with the committed volunteers who already support junior chess in the ECF.