

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Report from Chairman of the Governance Committee

1. A year ago, I identified areas where I felt the Board was not operating as effectively as it could. I have repeated these below and highlighted progress *in italics*.

a. The Board was failing to avail itself of the opportunity to do routine business by email; instead trying to do everything in the Board meetings. *There has been greater use of email to progress business, but this hasn't seemed to have been in a managed fashion.*

b. The publication of redacted minutes as opposed to a summary report of Board meetings. This change came from a commendable aspiration for greater openness. However, instead of a summary report, generated by the Chairman, appearing a few days after a Board meeting; a full set of minutes and a redacted copy were produced which required endorsement by the Board at the next meeting before anything could be published. There had also been a lack of clarity as to what should, should not, appear on the redacted minutes. *Here a bad situation has got worse! Minutes have been failing to appear or appeared late, which has been a source of friction within the Board. The Board needs to get back to the basis of producing timely minutes and tracking that actions are being done.*

c. The Board imposed on itself a seven-day notice period for "non-urgent" business to be included on the Board agenda. I didn't think this worked well. *This year's Board has continued the practice, I would once again urge them to drop it.*

d. A failure to focus on matters (often minor) that the Board ought to be dealing with in a timely fashion. *Alas, here again I feel that things have got worse! There has been a failure to allocate responsibility for actions to a single person and instead there have been interminable, often acrimonious, email debates without resolution.*

e. The dropping of the strategic planning documents. While I would agree that these documents could be streamlined (given that the ECF no longer needs to make a submission to the DCMS); I feel that the lack of even a summary business plan is a retrograde step. *No progress here.*

f. Late production of papers for Council (for which I am also guilty). It is still to be hoped that the Board will improve on the lamentable performance of previous years. *At the time of writing I am expecting that this has been achieved.*

I would now add the following areas where things could be better:

g. Board members not operating as a team and even seemingly feuding (this has of course occurred before).

h. The events, or perhaps the process, associated with the February Board meeting and Andrew Paulson's subsequent resignation. All of which has done nothing to enhance the reputation of the ECF.

I Confusion about dates of Board meetings linked to late notification of meeting and agenda.

i. Delays in making necessary appointments (e.g. NED).

j. My own failure to progress a set of Board Operating Procedures. (These have been outstanding since 2004.)

I'll finish this part of the report with a positive note. The ECF has signed up to the Voluntary Code of Good Governance for the Sport and Recreation Sector (for details see ECF Forum <http://www.englishchess.org.uk/Forum/viewtopic.php?f=4&t=189>). This is a commitment to continuous improvement.

2. I had intended that the Governance Committee would look at redrafting of the Bye-laws. This activity is now overtaken by events given the establishment of the Independent Constitutional and Governance Review Commission (see ECF Forum <http://www.englishchess.org.uk/Forum/viewtopic.php?f=4&t=190>) which I will keep an eye on.

3. At last year's AGM, the Board was *instructed to* establish procedures for the imposition of sanctions in proven cases of cheating. Subsequently, FIDE commenced working along the same lines and it was decided to build on their work. Unfortunately, the work of the FIDE/ACP Anti-Cheating Committee (http://www.fide.com/images/stories/NEWS_2014/FIDE_news/2014_GA_Agenda_Annexes/Annex_34.pdf) was not ratified in August and so we must await this before enacting something ourselves.

4. Finally my thanks to my fellow members of the Governance Committee and to John Philpott for their support during the year. It is a matter of regret to me that David Sedgwick is unable to assist us in the coming year.

Chris Majer Chairman of the Governance Committee