

**ENGLISH CHESS FEDERATION
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 11TH OCTOBER 2014**

C22.3

The Annual General Meeting of the Council was held at the Malmaison Hotel, 1 Wharfside St, Birmingham, West Midlands, B1 1RD on Saturday 11th October 2014 starting at 13.30.

Present:

David Anderton, Neville Belinfante, Francis Bowers, Gordon Christie, Julian Clissold (JC), Lawrence Cooper, Neill Cooper, Julie Denning, Nigel Dennis, Ben Edgell, Roger Edwards, Phil Ehr (PE), Keith Escott, David Eustace (DE), Andrew Farthing (AF), Chris Fegan, Scott Freeman, Angus French, David Gilbert, Simon Gilmore, Richard Haddrell, Malcolm Harding, Sean Hewitt (SH), Alex Holowczak (AH), Bob Kane (BK), Peter Lawrence, Andrew Leadbetter, Chris Majer (CEM), Alex McFarlane, Marcus Misson, David Openshaw (DO), Malcolm Pein (MP), John Philpott (JAP), Chris Priest, Robert Richmond, Stewart Reuben (SR), John Reyes, David Smith, David Thomas (DT), Rob Thompson, Mike Truran, Brian Valentine, John Wickham (JW) and Peter Wilson

In Attendance:

Lawrence Ball (LB), Lara Barnes, Andrew Davies, John Foley (JF), John Higgs, Dominic Lawson (DLA), David Levens (DLV), Mary McDermott, David Robertson, Gerry Walsh (GW) and Traci Whitfield (TW)

The minutes were taken by Rob Thompson.

1. Appointment of Chairman

In the absence of a serving President, Julie Denning was appointed as chair for the meeting

2. Location of Attendance, Apologies and Proxy Lists

John Philpott holds the attendance, apologies and proxy lists, and will make these available on request.

3. To note the Voting Register and any amendments thereto

The Voting Register as published on the ECF website reflects the intentions as to attendance advised prior to the start of the meeting. JAP will update this on the website to reflect who actually attended.

4. The appointment of Tellers

Chris Majer and Andrew Leadbetter were appointed as tellers

International Awards (additional item)

DO requested that members of Council noted the awards made to Stewart Reuben and Gerry Walsh at the Tromso Olympiad for services as International Arbiters. A presentation was made to GW, who had not been present in person at Tromso.

5. To approve the Minutes of the Finance Council Meeting of 12 April 2014

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved Nem Con

6. Matters arising from these minutes

6.1 Terms of reference of the Independent Constitutional and Governance Review Committee

Council was requested to note the Terms of Reference Paper presented by Phil Ehr

6.2 Relations with FIDE

Council was requested to note a paper that has been written and published since the FIDE elections, expressing Board policy towards FIDE. After comments from the meeting, PE explained that this paper is not designed to set out how that policy will be implemented, but is a framework for future decisions.

6.3 Charitable status

The process towards charitable status continues, and the new charity to be called “the Chess Trust” should be established soon.

6.4 Other items

There were no other matters arising.

7. To receive and approve the Reports:

Note: Reports marked * are published under Council Papers on the ECF website

7.1 Chief Executive’s Report - Phil Ehr *

PE acknowledged that the publication of minutes continues to be an issue, and it is being worked on.

The Board had resolved earlier in the day that the ECF Office would continue to be located in Battle.

The National Chess Library needs to move as its existing locations will cease to be available, and ideas towards this are being looked into, including possibly digitising it. The Library is rarely used, but would probably be used more if held with easy access. Straight mothballing of the library will cost £1,500 to £3,000 p.a.

The report approved with one against on a hand vote.

7.2 Director of Finance’s Report - David Eustace *

The report was approved nem con.

The accounts for the year ended 31 August 2014 will be presented to the April 2015 Finance Council meeting

7.3 To receive and approve Other Directors' Reports

7.3.1 Director of Home Chess - Alex Holowczak *

AH answered questions about his report, and praised Carl Portman for his work as Manager of Chess in Prisons.

The British Championships was budgeted to break even, so the fact that it made only a small surplus despite a grant for the Aberystwyth event from the Council was seen as a satisfactory outcome. A questionnaire found that the current format was more popular than a shorter ten day championship.

AH accepted that the report was in error regarding updates to the grading software. It is possible to turn ECF grading files into FIDE rating files, but AH accepted that there is a documentation gap informing graders of how to do this.

The report was accepted nem con.

7.3.2 Director of Junior Chess and Education - Lawrence Cooper *

The court case referred to in the report has subsequently been struck out on technical grounds, but it is possible that it may be brought again any time up to the limit of 6 years set by the statute of limitations. The report was accepted nem con.

7.3.3 Director of International Chess - David Openshaw *

DO accepted that not mentioning arbiters' work internationally in his report was an oversight. Chris Fegan praised the Director for organising two days' training for the Women's team at the RAC Club ahead of the Olympiad.

The report was accepted on a hand vote with one against.

7.3.4 Director of Membership - David Thomas *

DT commented that the updated figures for membership are in line with last year. DT accepts that summer leagues will need consideration regarding the 30 June cut-off date for memberships.

The testimonial given for PaySubsOnline was accurate at the time it was made. Members commented that the renewals process was not working well. DT agreed to investigate improvements. **Action: DT**

The report was accepted on a hand vote with one against.

7.3.5 Commercial Director - Bob Kane *

Feedback from the meeting was that as the ECF Forum was not looked at much, it was not appropriate for announcements, and that the ECF website was better for this. **Action: BK**

The report was accepted nem con.

7.3.6 Non-Executive Directors:

The Board had wished to take the report of Sean Hewitt (who had resigned as a Director on 3 April 2014) first, but SH considered that his report should be taken third as this was the order on the agenda. The Board was given right of reply to anything that may be in SH's report.

7.3.6.1 Julian Clissold *

The report was approved on a hand vote with one against.

7.3.6.2 Angus French *

The was approved nem con.

7.3.6.3 Sean Hewitt

A report had not been published online, and instead SH delivered a verbal report to the meeting:

At the start of the year, Andrew Paulson (AP) had tried to run the Board, and hired a professional minute-taker at the cost of £30 per hour totalling approximately £500. Part of this cost was covered by AP. Production and publication of the minutes continues to be an issue.

The reason for SH's resignation was that in his view the compromise arrangement worked out to ensure AP's resignation had been misrepresented by PE; SH resigned so that he could ensure that the true position was accurately known and reported outside of the Board.

The Board replied to thank SH for his report.

The report was approved nem con.

7.4 To receive and approve Other Officers' Reports

7.4.1 FIDE Delegate - Nigel Short *

Stewart Reuben commented that there were omissions in the report, including the shambolic two days wasted at the FIDE General Assembly, and the position of David Jarrett standing for FIDE VP receiving no support from the FIDE Delegate. Also, part of the report talked about the FIDE delegate elections.

The report was accepted 17 – 10 on a hand vote.

7.4.2 Chairman of the Governance Committee - Chris Majer

In response to a question on the publication of election addresses at different times on the ECF website, JAP accepted that there is an issue that needs to be addressed. He regretted not having carried through his original intention to note on the website when the addresses appeared there. In future, it was considered that papers should be posted simultaneously. CEM agreed that he would take this up with the Board. **Action: CEM**

The report was accepted nem con.

7.4.3 Chairman of the Finance Committee - Mike Truran *

The report was approved nem con.

7.4.4 Sport and Recreation Alliance Representative - Mike Gunn *

The report was approved nem con.

8. To pass a vote of thanks to the outgoing Officers

This was passed nem con.

9. To note changes to Regulation No. 2 The Directors and Officers Responsibilities Regulations

The changes made by the Board which were summarised in the paper published on the website were noted.

10. Elections and Appointments

Note: * indicates that an election address was published under Council Papers on the ECF website

10.1 President

Dominic Lawson nominated by the Board and David Sedgwick (Chess in Schools and Communities) *

DLa expressed support for arbiters and organisers, and congratulated Julie Denning for her role as Chair.

In response to a question from Angus French, DLa confirmed that if elected he would not seek to involve Ray Keene in ECF affairs.

DLa was elected nem con.

10.2 Chief Executive

Phil Ehr standing for re-election *

PE commented that the Board has stayed together through a difficult year and continues to function.

Answering questions from the floor, PE stated that he had brought in the relevant directors to seek consent for positions taken, but not necessarily the entire Board.

Stewart Reuben questioned PE's decision to show partiality in the other elections in his election address. Chris Majer clarified that this was not against the Regulations, and PE reaffirmed his position that this was appropriate for the present elections.

David Openshaw and Chris Majer both made clear that it was important to have a Chief Executive.

PE was elected 176 – 59 on a card vote.

10.3 Director of Finance

David Eustace standing for re-election *

DE was elected nem con.

10.4 Two Non-Executive Directors

Laurence Ball nominated by Lawrence Cooper (Director) and Phil Ehr (Director) *

Julian Clissold standing for re-election *

John Foley nominated by Bob Kane (Director) and David Sedgwick (Chess in Schools and Communities) *

JC and JF were elected by card vote; JC – 191, JF – 156, LB – 93

10.6 Other Officers (this item was taken out of agenda sequence)

10.6.1 FIDE Delegate

Malcolm Pein nominated by Phil Ehr (Director) and Nigel Short (FIDE delegate) *

Stewart Reuben nominated by David Eustace (Director), Brian Smith (London Chess League), Peter Wilson (Direct Members' representative) and Adam Raoof (Bexhill Congresses, Golders Green Congresses, Hampstead Congresses, King's Place Chess Festival and Middlesex County Chess Association) *

MP stated that his experience running Chess in Schools and Communities and the London Chess Classic qualified him for the role, and that he was more diplomatic than Nigel Short. He will follow previous policy with regard to expenses, and aims to get more people on commissions, more people rated, and hold more seminars in England.

SR talked about the experience he's had within FIDE, and referred to Tallinn in particular.

MP was elected 154 – 86 on a card vote

10.5 Other Executive Directors:

10.5.1 Director of Home Chess

Alex Holowczak standing for re-election *

AH was elected nem con.

10.5.2 Director of Junior Chess & Education

David Levens nominated by Andrew Farthing (MCCU) and Simon Gilmore (Derbyshire Chess Association) *

Traci Whitfield nominated by Lawrence Cooper (Director), Phil Ehr (Director) and David Sedgwick (Chess in Schools and Communities) *

DLv proposed a national chess day, a new charity for junior chess, and to increase the number of qualified coaches. There is currently not enough support for a new Secondary Schools league. FIDE trainers were not appropriate for most schools. In order to combat attrition, DLv wants to raise the profile of chess.

TW has been waiting for her child to leave junior chess before standing for the role. She sees junior chess as something that should be self-supporting through sponsorship, and she has a particular focus on girls' chess. In order to combat attrition, chess needs to grow with the student. TW would have a recommended syllabus.

TW was elected on a card vote 197 to 53

10.5.3 Director of International Chess

David Openshaw standing for re-election *

DO was elected nem con.

10.5.4 Director of Membership

David Thomas standing for re-election

DT was elected nem con.

10.5.5 Commercial Director

Bob Kane standing for election to the post that the Board appointed him to fill *

BK wants to better the image of chess to bring in sponsorship. There is also going to be advertising on the website. The ECF Forum was needed to create an official channel of communication. All director communications should go first on the ECF Forum.

BK was elected nem con.

10.7 Standing Committees

10.7.1 Chairman of the Finance Committee

Mike Truran standing for re-election

10.7.2 Members of the Finance Committee

Ray Clark }
Ian Reynolds } nominated by Mike Truran (Chairman of a Standing Committee)

10.7.3 Chairman of the Governance Committee

Chris Majer standing for re-election

10.7.4 Members of the Governance Committee

Mike Gunn }
Richard Haddrell } nominated by Chris Majer (Chairman of a Standing Committee)
Andrew Leadbetter }
David Robertson nominated by Chris Majer (Chairman of a Standing Committee)
and Phil Ehr (Director) *

All those proposed under 10.7 were elected nem con.

10.8 To appoint the Auditor

Goatcher Chandler were reappointed nem con.

A procedural motion to extend the meeting to 18.30 was approved.

15. The dates and locations of General Meetings in 2015 [this item was taken out of agenda sequence]

The Procedural Bye Laws require the 2015 Finance Council Meeting to be held in Birmingham and the 2015 Annual Council Meeting to be held in London.

The Board proposed that Finance Council meeting be held on 18 April 2015, and the AGM on 17 October 2015. Both dates were approved with one against.

11. Awards

11.1 To approve Andrew Farthing and John Wickham as Honorary Life Vice-Presidents.

Approved nem con. Presentations were made to AF and JW.

11.2 To note other ECF awards for 2014

The following awards were noted:

- President's Award for Services to Chess – Lara Barnes, John Philpott, Peter Wilson and Roger Edwards (the last of these was an additional award decided on by the Board, not referred to in the paper on the website)
- Club of the Year – 3Cs
- Small Club of the Year – Penrith
- Website of the Year – Chess Devon
- Magazine of the Year – Chess Magazine

- Congress of the Year – Heywood
- Player of the Year – Keith Arkell

Plaques were presented to the recipients of the President's Award and to MP for the Magazine of the Year

13. Proposal by the Director of Home Chess (this item was taken out of agenda sequence)

“Competitions where adjudication is possible will not be ECF-graded from 1st July 2015”

The Board does not have a collective position on this item.

Stewart Reuben suggested that there should be a qualification to add “except in exceptional circumstances” to take account of disabled players.

Many representatives commented that there were so few adjudications anyway that this proposal was more trouble than it was worth, and there were fears that those who prefer adjudication would stop playing. Also, it was felt that it was wrong to use grading as a proxy for outlawing adjudication.

Comments were also made in defence of the proposal, saying that adjudication is unpopular, isn't chess, and there is no real risk of leagues disaffiliating because of this.

The proposal was rejected 138 to 85 on a card vote.

12. Papers from the Governance Committee on behalf of the Board

Council was asked to note, and provide feedback on, two proposed new Regulations

12.1 Codes of conduct

12.2 Complaints procedure

The proposed Regulations were noted

14. Game Fee

Discussion item requisitioned by the Devon County Chess Association, Bristol & District Chess League, Torbay Chess League, Royal Beacon Seniors Congress and Barnstaple Chess Club for members of Council to discuss how their groups use Game Fee to help the ECF identify any problems that might need to be resolved before Game Fee can be phased out in favour of a pure membership scheme

Due to the time constraints of the meeting, this item was pushed back to the next meeting.

16. Any other business as advised to the Chairman before the start of the meeting

There was no other business.

The meeting concluded at 18.21.