

COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

INTRODUCTION

The English Chess Federation ECF sees the need to improve the quality of communication as part of its overall commitment to promote the sport and increase participation levels among all ages, sexes and abilities. This Communication Strategy will play a key role in meeting this objective by ensuring that the organisation's activities are communicated in a timely, open, reliable and responsible manner to all stakeholders.

OUR VISION

ECF will deliver an exceptional sport and community experience that is appealing, entertaining and accessible to all. Our key objectives are:

- To increase participation in chess
- To preserve the traditions of our sport
- To develop and strengthen County Associations, Clubs and members
- To nurture the international achievements of our national teams and competitions
- To provide strong leadership and direction that guides the sport towards our vision

THE COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

This strategy has been developed to help ECF to improve the quality of information that is conveyed within the sport to Members (County Associations), Associated Members (Clubs) and Affiliate Members (individuals) – herein referred to as 'Members'. It also identifies how we will improve links with external stakeholders, including the media, sponsors and partner organisations. The Strategy includes details on current practice and future developments in six key areas:

- Our Communication Aims
- Our Communication Principles
- Stakeholders
- External Communication
- Internal Communication
- Branding.

OUR COMMUNICATION AIMS

The Communications Strategy has been prepared in line with the following five aims:

- To increase understanding among Members of the services we provide, and therefore to improve satisfaction with these services.
- To ensure Members are aware of our plans for the future development of the sport.
- Through improved consultation and involvement, we will listen to the views of Members so we can continue to develop the services we provide.
- To maintain a positive profile for ECF and the sport of chess
- To promote, and defend, the reputation of chess by developing and maintaining a positive profile.

OUR COMMUNICATION PRINCIPLES

Communication will be undertaken through a variety of channels, but should always be in accordance with the following key principles:

- Communication will be honest, open and accurate.
- Communication will be accessible, and when necessary made available in alternative formats.
- Communication will be consistent, relevant and timely.
- Communication methods will be monitored and reviewed regularly.
- Communication will be cost effective and look to make effective use of new technology as appropriate.

STAKEHOLDERS

ECF will be responsible for developing effective communication links with Members and other key stakeholders. The target audience will vary dependent on the particular piece of information being communicated. Stakeholders include:

- Board and Council Members
- County Associations
- Clubs
- Individuals
- Sponsors and Donors
- Suppliers
- Partners
- Media (press, radio and television)
- ECF employees

EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION

A variety of methods will be used to meet the objectives of the Communications Strategy, We will develop a contacts Database to assist the promotion of Chess in the national and local media .ECF will produce a regular supply of news releases for distribution to national media and also targeted news releases for distribution to local media as appropriate. ECF will produce feature material for inclusion in specialist publications, for example the chess media and other magazines. Statements and Interviews Statements are mostly reactive and should be issued through the Chief Executive. The Chief Executive, or another ECF representative delegated by the Chief Executive, will also be responsible for any media interviews. The Publicity Officer will be responsible for liaising with the local and national media during the National Championships.

Member Communications

The Yearbook will continue to be produced digitally and made available on the website. A newsletter will be distributed on a regular basis by email.

E-Communication

A new website is being developed to replace the existing sites. The site will be regularly reviewed and updated, providing information about ECF and its services to Members. It will also include breaking news, details on all of the competitions organised by ECF and other providers together with a facility for online merchandising. Members and other Stakeholders will have the opportunity to register for a regular bulletin to be e-mailed to them. It is proposed this will be distributed bi-monthly.

Discussion Forum

We will move to a distinctive new forum package with enhanced features. Directors will be encouraged to post on a regular basis. The numbers of heading will be reduced to reflect the key activities of the ECF.

County News

County News will be produced three times a year to keep County Secretaries and Council Members informed of key decisions being taken at Board and home directorate level..

An annual conference is planned the Conference will be held annually in the spring and a series of regional road shows will also be organised. Both of these will encourage two-way communication between ECF and Members, and also give the ECF the opportunity to further promote the services that it provides to Sponsors, Investors, Suppliers and Partners. ECF will continue to develop its relationship with sponsors, investors and suppliers. This will include dedicated promotional activity and increased profile for sponsors during the national championships and at other events throughout the year. ECF will also look at the possible promotion of corporate days to generate income and further promote the sport to prospective new members . ECF will develop a library of high quality photographs that can be used for publicity and promotional purposes.

INTERNAL COMMUNICATION

ECF employees will be regularly kept informed about key issues through a variety of methods, including: • Team meetings and personal appraisals • E-mail bulletins

BRANDING

Consistent use of the ECF brand will help Members and Stakeholders to recognise the services we provide. Its success depends on: • Key messages being consistent and having a high profile. • All material, from publications to merchandise, should be easily recognisable as having been produced by ECF our logo should be used to reflect our identity and use by any third party should be approved by Commercial Director or another officer delegated by the Chief Executive in their absence.

ACHIEVING CONSISTENCY

To enable media queries to be dealt with effectively, the commercial director is the first point of contact for the media and will be responsible for the final distribution of all media releases. A suite of templates for publicity material including posters and briefings have also been produced which should be used at all times.

FACTORS CRITICAL TO OUR SUCCESS

Good communication and promotion of chess is the responsibility of everyone identified within the strategy – including players, officials and external stakeholders. The following factors are critical if we are to present a professional approach: • All communication must be delivered in a timely and consistent manner. • All communication must be adequately resourced and given a high priority. • The Commercial Director /Publicity Officer must be involved at the earliest opportunity of any promotional activities to ensure they are planned and resourced appropriately. .

WHAT THIS STRATEGY MEANS FOR MEMBERS AND STAKEHOLDERS

The ECF wants to communicate in the best way possible. Effective communication will ensure Members are aware of the services that we provide and help to improve their enjoyment of the sport. It will also help us to develop relationships with current and prospective sponsors of the sport.

Robert Kane

Commercial Director