

John Foley

Candidate for Home Director

I am currently a Non-Executive Director and wish to bring maturity and sound judgement to the role of Home Director. My objectives are to increase participation in chess events, to bring more revenues into chess, to consult widely within the chess community, to work more closely with chess organisers and to promote English Chess to the wider public. I prefer to work as part of a team of Directors all committed to a shared common purpose for the good of English chess.

I strongly believe we need to modernise and repackage our traditional heritage events to make them more attractive to players and to maximise their sponsorship potential. I am confident that, working with commercial and fundraising colleagues, I can help attract sponsors to key ECF chess events. These events will of course need to be project-managed in a professional way. I welcome offers of assistance from those with specific skills that can contribute to our programme of activities.

I will lead a review of the British Chess Championships to restore its prestige, generate publicity and attract our top players. Attention will be given to the broadcasting of game commentary to ensure a professional standard of delivery. Adequate resources will be devoted to technical solutions. The quality of our presentation to the outside world is an vital factor by which we are judged by present and future sponsors. I would like to introduce electronic pairing systems according to international practice. The reputation of the Major Open should be re-established as a championship qualifier. Entries from more women players will be an important focus. I will place strong emphasis on encouraging girls and women.

The National Club tournament has benefitted from the single weekend format but the Open section needs to be revitalised by monetary prizes and increased participation. County chess is undergoing resurgence but needs to be further encouraged and the rules applied with clarity and discretion. The Grand Prix has become neglected and needs to be revitalised. We should also encourage and recognise players whose gradings have improved most significantly. All potential championship niches need to be examined to find improvements e.g. the English Women's and Senior Championships.

ECF will consult more with the membership through social media and online surveys. One consultation will be on the future of the rating system to make it suitable for the needs of the current generation of chess players. The centralised collection of game results is essential and I would seek to achieve this for all major leagues by September 2017 in the for the start of the season. Continually-updated ratings would be available for tournament organisers and team captains. Clubs would be able to integrate match results into their

websites which would be a popular feature. I want the ECF to assist clubs by providing a website template. Any IT systems required by ECF would be subject to a proper tendering process.

Supporting chess entrepreneurs is vital if we are to continue growing the participation of chess. Enterprises such as 4NCL, ChessEngland, CSC, e2e4, CCF etc. need to be encouraged to take on greater challenges and the ECF should co-operate whenever possible.

Having a pool of qualified and experienced arbiters is essential for the smooth running of chess events and I will work closely with their Association to ensure that adequate training programmes are available and that there are sufficient development opportunities.

I have been leading on behalf of ECF in the judicial review to have chess and bridge recognised as a sport, which, if successful, would transform our finances by opening doors to more potential funding and enabling favourable VAT treatment. I want us to be prepared for that possibility.

I bring a strategic perspective to the role of Home Director based upon my experience as Kingston Chess Club chairman for a decade, captain of several 4NCL teams over the past few seasons, member of the European Chess Union Education Commission, Training Director for Chess in Schools and Communities and participant in tournaments in UK and abroad. I take a wider perspective on the role of chess. The theme of the CSC London Chess Conference in December, of which I am Conference Director, is Chess and Society, which recognises the positive impact chess can have in prisons, libraries, for the elderly, etc.

I bring a modern, professional approach to managing chess to improve the experience of players. We should never forget that most players are amateurs who play for the love of the game.