

## Chief Executive's Report

October 2015

### **Executive Summary**

This was an inspiring year to serve in the English Chess Federation due to an improving public image, a new sponsor, expansion in schools and a modest share of international acclaim. My fellow directors' reports convey some of the accomplishments that they and more than 70 other ECF volunteers made for the benefit of others and chess itself.

The Board, however, was strained to the point of breaking. The strain was due to divergent views about standards and strategy, in both form and substance. The Board's decision to publish internal tensions was an exasperated plea for change made in the best interest of the Federation.<sup>1</sup> Council now has the opportunity to elect a set of directors who share enough commonality to accelerate change in one way or another. The President concluded his report with the crux of the matter, "...petty divisions and arguments within the ECF do nothing to help those of us who are attempting to persuade the government and sporting authorities that chess should be given enhanced status." Council's choice is as significant as the 2008 watershed. It will set the Federation's course for the better part of the next decade.

Despite the Board's dysfunction, we came together to create and foster positive publicity. We addressed fundamental issues with Parliamentarians (APPG for Chess), Government (DCMS consultation, *A New Strategy for Sport*) and the Courts (EBU's judicial review). We supported delivery of an independent review of the ECF's constitution and governance. Although the Federation can justifiably celebrate delivery of core business and some excellent highlights, most of our deliverables fell short of their potential and member expectations. Our internal dysfunction disrupted the Board's ability to plan, resource and deliver better events, services and community leadership.

### **Purpose of this Report**

This report addresses areas where the Federation needs to improve. In that respect, this report serves a different role than the other directors' positive reports. Moreover, this report is consistent with the Board's decision—made in the best interest of the Federation—to publish discussion minutes from the failed motion of no confidence. My observations are intended to enable Council to make more informed decisions at this AGM, to uphold the reputations of colleagues that are at significant risk of unfair damage, and to draw attention to the need for Council to hold its members accountable for publishing disputatious material.

In view of the extraordinary report from the Governance Committee Chairman, I address one distraction up front—appointments. The report continues with reflections on the Independent Constitutional and Governance Review Commission, the *Voluntary Code of Good Governance in the Sport and Recreation Sector* and the Strategy Statement. It finishes with an acknowledgment of David Anderton and a request for Council members to hold themselves to account.

## **Appointments**

The Strategic Advisor's post was identified in the Governance Committee Chairman's report as an example of misadministration. It was referenced in the Finance Committee Chairman's report and featured prominently in the Independent Commission's report. The last of these demonstrates that the Independent Commission listened to input. The standing committee reports should have presented balanced views.

- May 2014 – Strategic Advisor post was established at the 84th Board meeting to replace the Strategic Planning Officer, a post that was vacant for two years. The Board discussed the new role but did not approve a formal job description, which was an administrative deficiency common to many posts. The Board approved my nomination of Chris Fegan. I wrote to the Board stating my intention to resume the practice previously established for the SPO and include the Strategic Advisor in Board proceedings. Two directors objected. The Governance Committee Chairman argued persuasively to include the Strategic Advisor. Dissatisfied directors did not raise a Board motion to prevent resumption of the previous practice. Months later, one director stated to me his strong objections to the quality of the Strategic Advisor's advice, but the matter was not raised with the Board until mid 2015.
- November 2014 – Normal re-appointments were interrupted at the 91st Board meeting due to disagreement among directors about the suitability of a number of nominees (not the Strategic Advisor). The Company Secretary proposed an 'Appointments Framework' to aid this annual task, whereby all appointments would be classified into one of four levels. The Board agreed and asked for it to be presented at a future meeting. The Company Secretary developed the proposal in good time, but I intervened to add narrative descriptions to the four levels and an initial allocation among the levels for directors to consider. I then set the project aside to focus on more urgent matters.
- September 2015 - Prompted by the Independent Commission's draft report, I finished and circulated the draft Appointments Framework for discussion at the 96th Board meeting, where higher priority business prevented a discussion.

The Appointments Framework is on the Board's agenda its 97th meeting, giving plenty of time for directors to consider, discuss and improve it. The Board's action on the proposal will illustrate our willingness to equip our successor Board with a means for better administration. The proposal will be posted on the Forum, where comments are welcome.

The Board recently demonstrated its willingness to correct the record by re-appointing a list of re-appointments with effect from 11 October 2014. The list included the Strategic Advisor, the Legal Advisor, the Voting Register Officer, one of two

International Ratings Officers (discussed in detail below), approximately 20 other ECF officials and approximately 30 ECF committee members. The email vote (6 Yes, 2 No, 2 Not Voting) proceeded after discussion at the 96th Board meeting in which the most prominent rationale in opposition was, “*You had all year to re-appoint, so we are not going to act now*” (paraphrase). A second email vote on the Strategic Advisor’s job description was conducted. The proposal was consistent with Board discussions in May 2014: “The Strategic Advisor is appointed by the Chief Executive to advise the Board on strategic matters and the strategic planning process. The Strategic Advisor is invited to Board and Council meetings.” Although half of the directors voted in favour, the email vote failed (5 For, 4 Against, 1 Abstention). In view of majority support, it is on the agenda for the 97th meeting where a simple majority is required. A lesson from this episode is that lack of timely administration leaves the Board vulnerable to distraction.

I also conclude that discomfort with the Strategic Advisor’s role is more genuinely discomfort in the incumbent’s advice. Council should know that I approved of the Strategic Advisor’s contributions throughout the year. His delivery style was respectful but firm. He challenged and sometimes confronted the community and ECF establishment, including me. In the interest of transparency, I asked the Strategic Advisor for an assessment, with which I agree and is provided immediately prior to the Endnotes. Chris Fegan’s public writing since becoming a candidate for non-executive director is his alone.

The Governance Committee Chairman’s report raises questions about how the Governance Committee and the Board itself addressed Board cohesion over the past three years in which it was a chronic problem. The resolution proposed and seconded at the 95th meeting was a motion of no confidence: “That the Board instructs the Chief Executive to adopt a more conciliatory attitude and better management practices in his dealings with Board members who have been in post during his period as CEO.” cursory analysis shows this motion obscured an agenda.<sup>2</sup> Indeed, the discussion was reminiscent of the 81st Board meeting in which complaints were made and a response was given, but fact-based discussion was blocked.<sup>3</sup> The 95th meeting differed slightly. The no confidence motion was withdrawn after nearly two hours of a minority’s self-indulgent discourse and objections to resolving any substantive issue. Conventional practices in good governance would have resulted in immediate resignations.

## **Independent Constitutional and Governance Review Commission**

The Independent Commission’s overarching recommendation was to correct the Board before adjusting the balance of decision-making power within the Council.<sup>4</sup> The key recommendations to correct the Board are to re-establish a Chairman and align responsibilities for the Chief Executive and other Directors as in similar sport and recreation bodies, and to lengthen their terms in office. When assessing the Independent Commission’s report, Council should bear in mind the professional expertise that Gareth Pearce, Roger Emerson and Suzzane Wood brought to bear. We want people of their calibre involved with the Federation. Council should ask all candidates whether the next Board should implement the recommendations promptly (and of course properly); or slowly, thus kicking reform into the tall grass. The

Governance Committee Chairman and I were united in our determination to drive implementation of all recommendations unless there is a compelling reason to the contrary.

## Good Governance

The Sport and Recreation Alliance helped their members develop seven principles of good governance in the *Voluntary Code of Good Governance for the Sport and Recreation Sector*. The Board signed up to the *Code*, which included three undertakings: (1) to examine what the principles mean in the ECF; (2) to include the *Code* in our strategic plan; and (3) to select an individual to take responsibility for the *Code*<sup>5</sup>. The Board subsequently decided to exclude the *Code* in the Strategy Statement, which raised doubts about the Board's commitment to the *Code's* seven principles. Nevertheless I am holding myself to these principles.

### 1. "Integrity: Acting as guardians of [chess]"

- a. The majority of chess players and organisers expect the Federation to act as a guardian of chess in all of its forms and purposes. This is a fundamental aspect of the Federation's *de facto* role as the national governing body. I was unable to advance these concepts; however, they should be included in the Articles of Association and the strategic plan with words such as:
  - Mission: *"To act as a guardian of chess in England; and to inspire, encourage and develop chess in sport, recreation, education, well being and culture."*<sup>6</sup>
  - Role: *"To operate as the national governing body for the English chess community in accordance with democratic norms."*<sup>7</sup>
- b. Another fundamental concept is the Federation's responsibility to uphold the FIDE Laws of Chess as appropriate to age and experience. This concept was agreed with the Chief Arbiter but rejected for the Strategy Statement.
- c. Council tasked the Board in 2013 to establish procedures for the imposition of sanctions in proven cases of cheating. This is a crucial issue due to frequent media attention and growing expectations in FIDE that national federations should act. The Board did not adequately prioritise this task, partly due to a perception that independent organisers do not trust the Federation with any authority to sanction players or to raise standards for graded tournaments.
- d. The integrity of British, National and English championship tournaments has been questioned. Examples raised in Director discussions this year:
  - British Championships – Recognition of chronic problems prompted the Strategy Statement initiative to review the British. Problems this year continued: a paucity of the top British internationals (men and women) and improving young players sought norm opportunities elsewhere. Although the British achieved a record number of entries this year, it had some significant execution shortfalls that the Board has yet to review. Among them was the extent of advertising free registration for females who qualified for the Championship.

- The British Championship webcast to an invited global Internet audience this year was damaged; and along with it, sponsorship prospects were set back. Although the Board identified and funded in November the requirement for webcast equipment, the Board did not ensure the allocated funds were applied. A decision to join Chess 24 exposed the webcast to a high risk of failure, which in fact occurred. The volunteer staff and paid commentators displayed enthusiasm and a good team spirit, but suffered from inadequate planning. The Board should review plans and consider re-allocating management responsibilities. The Board should also consider the negative effects of a large number of directors serving on the control team. This error indicates that they lost perspective by neglecting the commercial importance of the webcast.
  - English Seniors Championships – Although operating for only two years, the English Seniors has not yet attracted sufficient players to establish its credibility. Overstretched volunteers and inadequate project management were the likely causes. Board review is warranted.
  - English Girls’ Championships – Execution of this championship nearly collapsed due to the withdrawal of the principal organiser. The responsible director, two parents and a coach picked up the pieces to save the event. The Board should consider this experience for future appointments.
  - English Women’s Championships – This new championship tournament was cancelled due to low registration. This typifies the chronic underperformance of the women’s chess programme. Although overstretch was a factor, the lack of event promotion raises questions about the Board’s commitment to diversity.<sup>8</sup> The Board should re-examine its commitment in the Strategy Statement, review the purpose and allocated resources for this championship tournament, and potentially shift management responsibility.
  - National Clubs Championship – The open section suffers from weak teams relative to the national potential, low participation and no progression to the European Club Cup, which is reserved exclusively for three 4NCL teams. Three directors<sup>9</sup> raised questions with a view to strengthening this championship. The responsible director<sup>10</sup> did not entertain a discussion. The Board should therefore consider realigning responsibility for it.
  - British Rapidplay – The British Chess Federation asked the current organisers to run the British Rapidplay before the ECF was established. The event continued to occupy a prominent position on the ECF website more than a decade since devolution. The Board should review ECF support with a view to refreshing the legitimacy of this well-attended British championship.
- e. The integrity of the junior selection policy for the World and European Youth Championships was questioned in view of the UK Chess Academy sending its players, as it may do under new FIDE regulations. Indeed, the practice undermined the integrity of what the Federation strove to achieve—cohorts of mutually supporting juniors who earned the privilege to represent England based on objective merit. The new FIDE regulation appears to be at odds with the FIDE Statute that recognises national chess federations as having principal authority over chess activities in their own countries. The 2014 FIDE election, however, settled this disagreement.<sup>11</sup>

- f. The new Conflict of Interest policy and Register of Interest forms strengthened the Federation's integrity by guarding against hidden influence. It was standard in organisations seeking public finance and its introduction was overdue. Two previous attempts were made within the past four years. Credit extended beyond the Governance Committee who drafted it. The President, the FIDE Delegate, the Non-Executive Directors (NEDs) and the Director of Junior Chess and Education are among the Board members whose professional lives outside the ECF value disclosure. Council should scrutinise Register of Interest forms of all candidates as it elects the Board and Standing Committee members.

## 2. "Defining and evaluating the role of your board"

- a. Public comments by some Council members and the conduct of some directors indicated ignorance of various roles. Council elects a Board with a unitary legal identity. The Articles of Association specify distinct roles for the President, the Chief Executive, the Director of Finance and a minimum of two NEDs. The Board allocates portions of its responsibility to a flexible number of Executive Directors who remain responsible to the Board, not Council. The buck stops with the Board, not with any individual director for delivery, policy and operational matters. The buck stops with Council for constitutional matters and Board oversight. (See paragraph 4b below regarding an inclusive board.)
- b. Some directors did not accept the Board's collective responsibility and the Board's authority, if it saw fit, to take decisions that were normally delegated. Statements heard this year: *"Directors should get on with the job they were elected to do"* and *"This rule will not change while I am the director"* and *"It was in my election manifesto so I have a mandate"* and *"If you don't like it, stand against me"* and *"Stop interfering in my directorate"* and *"Fix your own programme before asking the Board to review my plans"*.<sup>12</sup>
- c. In theory, the Council should evaluate the Board as a whole. In practice, the Council attempts to discern individual performances within the Board and make election choices accordingly. The Independent Commission recommendations regarding evaluations of the Chief Executive and other Directors, if enacted, will foster a more unified Board and a more conventional Council-Board relationship. A strategic planning process that involves the membership and Council should also serve to steer the Board.

## 3. "Setting vision, mission and purpose"

- a. The Board established a vision for three years in the Strategy Statement. See endnote 6.
- b. The Board declined to set a mission or purpose.<sup>13</sup> See a potential mission statement in paragraph 1a above. For expanded thoughts on the Federation's purpose and role, see Council paper C20.9, Chief Executive's Outline of a Strategy, and my Forum postings, "What is the ECF's purpose?" and "What is the ECF? The national governing body."

- c. In preparation for this AGM, the Board reaffirmed its intention to present Council with a linked set of documents—a strategic plan, a set of business plans and a budget.<sup>14</sup> The way forward to April 2016 should include a strategic planning process that more credibly engages the membership and Council and reviews the company objects found in the Articles of Association.
- d. The failed motion of no confidence stemmed in part from the Board’s inability to achieve consensus on the fundamentals of strategic planning. Although the Chief Executive’s role was to lead the delivery of a strategic plan, the Board was persuaded by the International Director’s advocacy to produce a document that I viewed as unrecognisable as a strategic plan.<sup>15</sup> The International Director ultimately served as one of two primary authors of the Strategic Statement, and in due course of other divergent views, proposed the failed motion of no confidence. See my reflections on the Strategy Statement below.

#### 4. “Objectivity: Balanced, inclusive and skilled board”

- a. From the beginning of my association with the Federation, I have been struck by the over-reliance on *who* favours a decision, rather than the merits of *what* is decided. Over-reliance on the other people’s opinions undermines the objectivity expected of an informed Council, Board or committee. Despite the Board’s documented dysfunction, some difficult decisions have been taken objectively, specifically rejections of my proposal last year to re-locate the office to the Clare Charity Centre<sup>16</sup>, and then to expand the present office to house the National Chess Library. Although I did not agree with former, I respect these decisions, because they were made democratically after objective consideration.
- b. Single director decisions this year drew dissent among fellow directors who attempted to integrate and question decisions, as one expects in a balanced and inclusive board. After months of working with NEDs to foster better relationships and Board integration, I proposed a change to the directors’ responsibilities that would have required director collaboration and increased the Chief Executive’s authority on matters that did not require the full Board. This so-called ‘Committee Structure’ would have also lightened the burden on executive directors by integrating the NEDs to support non-operational decisions. My proposal failed after much debate and an attempt by the Home Director to resign;<sup>17</sup> however, I have subsequently observed a modest increase in cross-director collaboration despite and the other the general dysfunction exhibited by the failed motion of no confidence.
- c. Earlier in the year, the Home Director objected when the Board began to review the chess aspect of a complaint from the 2014 British Under 8 Championship that alleged abuse by volunteer staff and impropriety from an unusual 1.5-point result for one game of chess.<sup>18</sup> A case was also filed with Hertfordshire County Court, which dismissed it. The plaintiff complained to the FIDE Ethics Commission, which dismissed the case but referred the 1.5-point game result to the FIDE Rules and Tournament Regulations Commission for its scrutiny.
- d. The role of NEDs is better understood now than the past when an NED might assert *greater* authority than executive directors, not *different* authority.

Although understanding was growing and our present NEDs were good, the Federation has not yet acquired independent NEDs—independence, meaning NEDs not involved in the chess community. The Board should propose ways to achieve NED independence.

- e. Specialist skills are assumed where required but they are not transparent. The Federation should publish, at a minimum, the qualifications of specialist incumbents, such as the Director of Finance, the Financial Controller, the Company Secretary and Finance Committee members.
- f. Although volunteer organisations should provide energetic volunteers with opportunities to excel, failing to adequately support such people does a disservice to everyone. In this regard, the Board’s management decisions did not adequately support programmes for women, disabled people and seniors. By contrast, Board decisions contributed greatly to the growth and quality of Federation programmes for schools and prisons. The Board should take a more skills-based approach to volunteer appointments bearing in mind that it is better to leave posts vacant and lower expectations than to perpetuate dissatisfaction.
- g. Board training has not occurred during my four years as a director. The Independent Commission recommended that the Board should receive training from the Sport and Recreation Alliance. Accordingly, training is arranged after the AGM and candidates have been informed. Council should ask all candidates—for directorships and standing committees—about their commitment to training in their fiduciary responsibilities, particularly regarding conflicts of interest and collective responsibility.

#### 5. “Standards, systems and controls”

- a. I join the Finance Committee Chairman’s concern that management accounts are not yet available. The Financial Controller continued to be over-burdened with many ECF roles. The new Office Manager assumed some of these roles. So, although prospects that management accounts will be available before the 2016 Finance Council meeting are good, the Board should consider recruiting volunteers to relieve the Financial Controller of other tasks that he may find burdensome. Delivery of management accounts will reduce the legal risks that Directors presently incur by their absence, improve cross-directorate working, accountability and trust within the Board.
- b. The Board identified a requirement to update the Financial Bye-law to address unbudgeted expenditures from donations, sponsorship and commercial income that was not previously budgeted. This review was prompted by several developments, one of which was my challenge of a unique spending arrangement of donated money that was accepted without the Board’s knowledge of information it should have known from the outset. My insistence for a collective Board decision regarding future donations under the unique arrangement was a factor in the failed motion of no confidence. I asked the Finance Committee Chairman and the Governance Committee Chairman to determine which committee, if any, should scrutinise the matter. The matter has yet to be resolved.



- c. The Board did not review plans for the Federation’s championship tournaments that underperformed (above, para 1d), although the British Championships benefited from several directors’ personal involvement in the control team. Project management at the Board level is needed for the core events, as well as the initiatives agreed in the Strategy Statement. Establishing a Board project calendar for the championship tournaments and preparation for the international teams would be a positive step.
- d. The span of control for some of the Executive Directors is too large. The Board should re-balance responsibilities taking into consideration concepts in my Transformation White Paper (C20.16).
- e. The need for more effective control of ECF official comment is apparent due to various criticisms of the Board on the Forum and other social media. Forum moderation practices are part of the post-AGM review described in the Commercial Director’s Communication Strategy paper (C23.16). Council should reflect on the comments posted by Federation officials (managers, directors, standing committee members) and assess whether they were made in the best interest of the Federation or some other priority.
- f. Recent letters to a national broadsheet newspaper illustrated the need for greater control of official comment. *The Times* published a letter from an Honorary Life Vice-president that identified the author as “Vice-president, English Chess Federation”. The letter praised the Federation’s encouragement of women in chess. It used the adjective ‘consolation’ to describe the women’s prize at the British Championship, which drew a negative reply from an ECF member that *The Times* also published.<sup>19</sup> The Board should establish guidelines for authors and speakers who use the Federation’s persona in the media, social media and other public places.
- g. A regulation on Standards of Conduct for ECF Officials was adopted after years of opposition and avoidance. Approval of the regulation was a step toward a more professional organisation that should be aiming to display maturity, goodwill and effective communication in everything it does. The importance of good conduct cannot be overstated, because it affects the abilities to function properly, build respect, foster growth and propagate values.
- h. The new Complaints Procedure regulation was one authority under which ECF officials were to have been held to account. The first complaint made under the new regulation was from the Commercial Director alleging the Home Director breached three provisions of the Standards of Conduct. I investigated and ruled on the case as required by the regulation. I received interpretive advice from the Governance Committee Chairman but the findings, mitigation factors and rulings were mine alone. Both parties appealed. Although the Board acted with what would normally be regarded as inadequate recusals, it nevertheless upheld one appeal and rightly identified that the regulation needed amendment. I respectfully submit that outside observers cannot credibly assess the case or the proceedings without reading my ruling letter, the two appeal papers, reactions to the President’s intervention and minutes of the appeal proceedings. I sympathise

with Council members who may wish full transparency. Council members also appreciate the need to handle personnel matters with due regard for privacy and the professional reputations of all concerned. The point in re-establishing a complaints procedure was to uphold standards in administration, which include administrators' conduct. Those who oppose accountability of directors under the Complaints Procedure should reflect on two points: (1) the previous practice to dismiss complaints for alleged rudeness served to perpetuate negative relationships and substandard conduct; and (2) a board is not able to discipline itself when its directors are not committed to collective responsibility, accountability and other common principles of good governance.

- i. In three unrelated incidents in the past few weeks, ECF members showed their lack of confidence in the Board to handle complaints properly. Instead, they (1) complained on social media about the way the ECF mistreated them; (2) wrote to FIDE about their dissatisfaction of an ECF-run tournament; and (3) threatened to sue the Board and an individual director. None initiated the Complaints Procedure. The Federation needs to build credibility in handling complaints. Several months ago, Julie Denning, an NED candidate, and I exchanged views on the Forum. She raised the prospect of independent complaints resolution. I note that ECF members who are qualified in the law and corporate governance in the non-profit sector also support independence in resolving complaints.
- j. The Board is aware of the need to update the Federation's Child Protection Policy. The Director of Junior Chess and Education recently briefed the Board on a draft that should soon be approved. It is being written with the Federation's club insurance policy in mind.

## 6. "Accountability and transparency"

- a. Antidotes to Corruption. To assume there is no corruption in chess is like saying there is no bullying in schools. Corruption exists whenever illicit gains in money or status occur. The appearance of the AGON Memorandum raised ethical questions about the top of international chess. The following practices raised concerns about the appearance of corrupt practices at the top of national chess, all of which could be corrected by applying this principle.
- b. International Ratings Officer. The International Director's resistance to transparency regarding the IRO function is further context for his failed motion of no confidence. The IRO is a privileged position that fulfills a core ECF function.<sup>20</sup> Designation as IRO confers status in the eyes of FIDE officials and title-seeking players who become grateful for the IRO's assistance. A knowledgeable volunteer/former director was given access to the ECF email system to help the designated IRO and, under the International Director's authority, was representing himself as the IRO solving issues on behalf of the ECF. The International Director, however, did not comply with my guidance to follow standard appointment practice, which would have required the volunteer/former director's name to be published as an ECF official. The International Director did not wish to publish the volunteer/former director's name as an ECF official nor did the International Director wish to end the volunteer/former director's assistance when his services were no longer

required.<sup>21</sup> The International Director disagreed with my position that for the sake of transparency and accountability, the former director should be appointed as IRO, or that his formal assistance and access to ECF email system should end. At least three multi-hour private meetings between the International Director and me were devoted to several issues associated with the volunteer/former director without resolution of this IRO issue. One meeting required mediation by an NED. When our direct and mediated discussions failed to resolve the matter, the International Director opposed my attempts to resolve the matter with the Board. This was minor matter in application of a fundamental principle. It should not have been necessary to bring it to the Board.<sup>22</sup>

c. The transparency of international selection was questioned in Board proceedings:

- Reluctance to publish the ECF practice of allocating all three of England's places in the European Club Cup to 4NCL teams dissuaded open debate regarding the lack of a place for the National Club Champions.<sup>23</sup>
- ECF criteria for many other FIDE championships were not published and therefore not clear. In practice, almost any member was eligible for the World and European Amateur Championships. Many members are not aware of this and other representational opportunities.
- By contrast, ECF selection criteria for the FIDE youth championships were published. Although elements were challenged, transparency built understanding, confidence and commitment.

d. Transparency of opportunities to participate in FIDE and ECU commissions, and the potential for financial support, was lacking.

## 7. "Understanding and engaging the sporting landscape"

- a. The Federation continued to access FIDE's infrastructure for the community—ratings, qualifications, access to international tournaments and championships. See the FIDE Delegate's report, bearing in mind that the ECF's role in providing access to the FIDE infrastructure is sometimes under-appreciated. Additional infrastructure appeared to be forming this year with the European Chess Union establishing its own commissions, the Kasparov Foundation sponsoring a youth tournament in Europe, and the London Chess Classic joining a network of well-funded professional tournaments. The Federation should remain aware and engaged.
- b. The Chess Arbiters Association asked to be more involved with ECF arbiter training. Responsibility within the Board for arbiter development should be allocated to a director who is willing to work closely with the Chess Arbiters Association.
- c. I enjoyed and learned much from meeting with several regional unions and the Chess Arbiters Association. Meetings and frequent interaction with the major independent tournament providers (4NCL, Chess England, EPSCA, London Classic, Hastings) were mutually beneficial. Most of the topics dealt with FIDE

and ECF services.<sup>24</sup> Conversations with Hastings focused on sponsorship from Tradewise. Interaction with EPSCA was simply that two ECF directors also served on the EPSCA Council, which served as a ready means of mutual support and collaboration. Bearing in mind constraints of time, the Board should consider how consultation and collaboration should develop with independent congresses, county associations, leagues and clubs. The Board should consider when it may be appropriate to rely upon the regional unions and county associations to organise more grass-roots consultation from within their respective areas.

- d. The English Bridge Union invited the Federation to join its judicial review challenge of the way that Sport England recognised sports. Sports recognition had been a Federation goal for decades. Unfortunately, when the opportunity arose, the Board did not respond decisively. After a period of debate in which ill-informed contrary views slowed the eventual decision, the Federation applied to join the EBU's case. The judge cited the lateness of our application as a factor in his rejected our application. The assembled array of *pro bono* (and semi-*pro bono*) legal support was not used as effectively as it should have been. The Board should review its decision process to ensure undue delay does not repeat. Our preparation nonetheless appeared to influence the oral arguments. We look forward to the Court's ruling.
- e. The Federation contributed to the Government consultation, *A New Strategy for Sport*. We collaborated with Bridge and Go and sent our own submission. Four of us participated in a Sport and Recreation Alliance workshop that informed its submission.
- f. Chess in Schools and Communities helped Members of Parliament organise two meetings of the All Party Parliamentary Group for Chess in which the Federation was represented. This work laid important foundation. There is no significant achievement to report at this time.
- g. Networking with other national governing bodies and the Sport and Recreation Alliance staff continued. This activity informed ECF officials of funding opportunities, policy support, opportunities to promote participation of females and disabled people, school sports, mental health in sport and more advanced membership management and communication services than the ECF currently uses. The SRA awarded the Federation a £5000 grant for specialised legal support to the Independent Review, which has yet to be used. The Board should consider how to best apply this support in light of AGM discussions. The Board should also consider a recent invitation to sign up to the SRA's Mental Health Charter, which involves a partnership with the charity, Mind.
- h. We were exploring ECF membership of the National Council for School Sports and the possibility of participating in an international multi-sport competition in July.
- i. The national media's coverage of chess and the Federation increased this year due to the President's private enterprise, the EBU's judicial review challenge (chess as a sport), the Eagle sister's progression in Labour Party; as well as

opportunities for official Federation comment on women in chess, cheating and chess on the Internet.

## Strategy Statement

The Governance Committee Chairman's report criticised the strategic planning process and the Strategy Statement. The process was indeed flawed; however, the Chairman's basis in governance and the extent of his participation in the November strategy weekend raise questions about his conclusions. The Board was united in its decision to begin a strategic planning process instead of updating the Long Term Strategic Plan 2007/2008 that had lost its relevance.

As stated above, divergent views on the fundamentals of strategic planning meant that the Board would produce something less than a strategic plan. The International Director's declaration during the strategy weekend illustrated the working atmosphere in November (paraphrased): *"I think it's important that we start with a blank sheet and not use the Chief Executive's words in the strategy. His words don't mean anything. I want the strategy to mean something."* It was clear that he and I held different expectations. Nonetheless, the designated strategy writing team—two NEDs, the Strategic Advisor and myself—was assembled. The International Director offered his notes with a reminder of his desire to use what he called *"normal English and not strategy speak or management speak"*. He became dissatisfied with progress and other participants' understandings of the strategy weekend outcomes. By February, he had persuaded the Board to abandon the path toward what I would recognise as a strategic plan and block consideration of strategy writing team papers, even though they contained the content he authored.<sup>25</sup> The final Strategy Statement, however incomplete, did contain a set of initiatives that accurately portrayed the direction in which the Board intended to proceed.

Vision: "The ECF will lead the development, organisation and running of chess in England. This will be achieved through a mixture of directly organised activities and through a wide range of third parties and international bodies such as FIDE and the European Chess Union. We will encourage, and work co-operatively with, all chess-related activity in England."

- a. As stated above, this is the vision for where the ECF needs to be in three years.
- b. The Board rejected my suggestion to add the final phrase, "...on the basis of mutual respect." I advocated for this to counter frequent criticism that a strong ECF would attempt to control independent organisers to unfair or illicit advantage; or indeed vice versa.<sup>26</sup>

Major Themes and Goals: "Seek to understand and meet the requirements of our members. Increase participation in chess and ECF membership for the long term. Increase the participation of women and juniors. Encourage third party chess organisations to develop chess in England. Re-establish the national status of chess with Government bodies."

- a. The Board should follow through with its intention to survey the membership to inform its priorities and develop a strategic plan.
- b. Greater junior participation was apparent in the Federation’s school programme (school team weekend rapidplays, the Team Chess Challenge and the National Schools Championships); as well from record tournament registrations, most recently in the British Championships, Chess England and CSC tournaments in which juniors competed.
- c. Some direct members and Council members expressed concern that the National Chess Library was no longer accessible, and that storage costs are already an unnecessary drain on Federation finances. The Board did not prioritise efforts to search for ways to restore the Library’s accessibility. The Board should therefore increase efforts to recruit volunteers to plan the Library’s re-birth.

Board Goals: “Work more collegially both within the Board and with all other chess organisations in England. Improve the effectiveness of the Board by working in small cross-Directorate groups. Do less better.”

- a. Discontinuation of the e2e4 tournaments prompted the Commercial Director to propose that the Federation organise FIDE-rated tournaments to fill the gap; however, the Board’s goal to “Do less better” prevailed and his proposal was rejected. The Board should encourage new entrepreneurs to join with the established organisers to provide more FIDE-rated tournaments in hotel venues.
  - International Director stated his opinion that resolution of unresolved issues with the former director who previously organised e2e4 tournaments might result in their resumption, and that my failure to resolve issues was contrary to the best interest of English chess.<sup>27</sup> The International Director and I met in no fewer than three multiple-hour meetings to resolve such issues.
  - The International Director identified the central issue as the historical narrative (my term) of the former president’s resignation in March 2014. He wanted me to withdraw the information paper I wrote for Council (ECU General Assembly, C20.17) and apologise to the former director for upsetting him.<sup>28</sup> Although I was inclined to let bygones be bygones, I was not prepared to erase the former director’s supportive role in the matter of the Board’s recommendation to Council regarding the ECU proxy. The International Director’s persistence and his failed motion of no confidence in July 2015 demonstrated that he was not content to move forward from events in early 2014 in which the former president and former director resigned.<sup>29, 30</sup>
  - The organisers and arbiters who produced the e2e4 tournaments, including the former director, should know that they were always welcome—and continue to be welcome—to resume their tournaments. They enriched English chess.
- b. On reflection of the impending AGM and elections, it is profoundly disappointing to read and write about discord and dysfunction. With few exceptions, we are dedicated volunteers who try our best to improve the Federation in the direction we think best. The principle reason I remain is to nudge the Federation in the direction of an exemplary model. That is the motivation behind me occasionally standing for principle where others would

opt for expediency. These decisions are matters of philosophy and judgment where people can reasonably disagree. The goal to work more congenially is a matter of respect for chess, each other and the democratic process. Individuals can do better, yet the constitution, bye-laws, regulations, policies and practices also let us down. Council and the Board can and should improve them.

Office Goals: “Manage the Office proactively at Chief Executive level. Review the Office’s effectiveness and value for money; identify improvements in the operation of the membership scheme.”

- a. The Board perceived that the Chief Executive was not proactively managing the office.<sup>31</sup> The Board determined that the Chief Executive should investigate and report the cost of various administrative tasks and functions. Board meeting time was spent discussing office task management for the benefit of directors who had never, or rarely visited the office. Increasing the understanding of office tasks was not a good use of Board meeting time. Nonetheless, the office began a task sampling survey.
- b. The membership scheme management consumes a larger share of staff and volunteer time than is apparent to many. Dialogue and staff training by the software developer resulted in some improvements. Evaluation continues with a view to future ways of combining membership management with other functions, such as member communications and event registration.

Initiative 1. “Obtain sponsorship to support specific projects and activities. Ensure that the ECF has the right organisation structures and attitudes in place to attract sponsors. This work will be led by the Commercial Director supported primarily by the President, Chief Executive and International Director. Target to raise sponsorship for British Championships and support for the international activities. Support the ECF Elite Development Plan to produce Open and Women teams, with greatly improved chances of success - £3m over 10 years.”

- a. Developing the right ECF organisation and attitude was underway but slower than it should have been.
- b. The Board did not prioritise fundraising for the international teams ahead of other programmes that required funding and attention.
- c. The Commercial Director focused on sponsorship opportunities. He set out to improve the public presentation of the British Championships and the ECF in general while concurrently soliciting sponsors. A potential sponsor briefly toured the British Championships at the University of Warwick.
- d. The President and I focused on new sources of both sponsorship and donations. The President was successful by capturing Tradewise, which the Commercial Director carried to fruition.
- e. The International Director focused on donations from the cadre of established donors.

- The International Director also secured commitments from the Board and selected directors (including me) to raise funds from new sources. When the other directors, including myself, were not showing results or sufficient effort, the International Director admonished me for lack of leadership. In turn, I admonished the Board on several occasions. These admonishments were wasteful of time, coercive and ultimately counterproductive. The Board's reliance on unsecured funds from inexperienced and unproven fundraisers was unsound.
- In view of the shortfall in budgeted donations, the International Director sought my agreement to commit funds necessary to train the strongest teams in time for the European Team Championships in November 2015. A spirited series of discussions ensued regarding compliance with the Financial Bye-law restriction on unbudgeted expenditure, which was eventually resolved by committing the entire contingency fund to the international teams, thereby placing greater risk on other Federation programmes until projected donations were secured. As of this writing, other programmes (arguably higher priority programmes) are in grave danger due to unforeseen circumstances, no recourse to the contingency fund and reluctance to apply the reserves.<sup>32</sup>

The Board should review this new budgeting practice unique for the international teams with a view to committing fewer funds—and therefore not the strongest teams—unless and until external funding becomes successful or a more credible income forecast is provided.<sup>33</sup>

- f. The Board's first review of the spending to produce the Open (men's) and Women's teams occurred in final preparation for the Finance Council meeting where the figures were disclosed: £26,000 for Open (men) and £10,000 for Women. This difference, coupled with little Federation activity to develop female players at any level should raise concern.
- g. My occasional use of the term, "men's team" (as above), drew the International Director's steady criticism on grounds that the term was incorrect and damaging to women's chess. In view of the all-male composition of the open team, coupled with the absence of a credible programme to correct or even to address the gender gap, I respectfully conclude the term, "men's team" justifiably served to highlight our collective hypocrisy.<sup>34</sup>
- h. The chronic problem for the standing of chess in contemporary British society, however, is more fundamental. With notable exceptions,<sup>35</sup> the national chess community does not demonstrate that it values female participation.<sup>36</sup> This year, too few women participated in the British Championships, too few girls participated in the English Girls' Championships (December 2014) and the English Women's Championship was cancelled (or possibly postponed). The presence of a strategic goal to increase female participation, the British Championship free entry, the additional Tradewise Grand Prix prizes for women, the £10,000 to develop and send the Women's Team are not enough. The Board continued to retain volunteers in crucial posts whose efforts were either ineffective or negligent; and whose presence deterred the volunteer services of others. In these circumstances, it is difficult to project a positive public image or attract investment. Creativity and leadership are required. The Board should recruit and appoint accordingly. Council members should assist.



- i. One of our new sponsor's priorities is to increase female participation. Council and the Board should recognise the vision that Tradewise provides and act decisively.

Initiative 2. "Establish the ECF FIDE Academy to identify talented junior players capable and motivated to play at international levels in major youth world and continental events, and progress to achieve FIDE titles."

- a. As the Director of Junior Chess and Education reported, the ECF Academy launch was a major step toward focused training for promising players who show commitment. Organisation will not be sufficient, however. The Board should consider the appropriate balance of funding among various developmental programmes—the Academy, youth and adult international teams and the Elite Development Plan.
- b. The old balance between home and international no longer applies. The new balance should be among three: youth, home and the two top international teams—Open (Men's) and Women's. The John Robinson Youth Chess Trust was originally intended to *complement* Federation funding from principal revenue, not to serve as principal revenue. The Board progressed toward restoring that perspective as may be seen in the past two budgets.
- c. The Chess Trust met once this year. It will meet again soon after the AGM. Its trustees are the PIF trustees, plus the Chief Executive, Finance Director. Business relationships have yet to be discussed in operational detail. The Board should encourage the Chief Executive and Finance Director to develop a Board proposal for The Chess Trust to consider.

Initiative 3. "Improve the performance of our International Teams."

- a. This initiative may be clear to Council, but not to new readers. What was meant by the term, 'International Teams', should be clarified at the next opportunity. For instance, youth teams were occasionally formed for the World Youth U16 Chess Olympiad Federation and the European Youth U18 Team Chess Championships. Development of these youth teams—girls and boys—was not envisioned in this initiative, but should be.
- b. The International Director's report presented achievements this year under his leadership. Note the funding support from generous individual donors and the 4NCL. Membership fees remained the dominant source of income.

Initiative 4. "Support the Independent Constitutional and Governance Review Commission."

- a. Administrative support is complete. Council and Board should support of the Independent Commission's recommendations unless there is a compelling reason to the contrary.

Initiative 5. “Improve Customer Service and Public Relations, upgrade the Website and increase use of the ECF Forum and Social Media.”

- a. See the Commercial Director’s Communications Strategy (C23.16). The main idea is to improve the Federation’s image while expanding communications. The Board may not always get the details right, but it is difficult to argue against the vision, principles, initiatives for internal and external audiences, as well as the need for consistency. Progress is not possible without effectively integrating the commercial directorate team with teams in each of the other directorates.

Initiative 6. “Investigate enhancing the ECF grading system, increasing the frequency of publication and incorporating the most recent results.”

- a. The Grading Team produced a helpful information paper that will aid in any consultation.

Initiative 7. “Survey products and services offered by other National Federations.”

- a. Postponed until after the AGM due to unanticipated work required for the EBU’s judicial review challenge, the NEDs’ diversion to address relational issues among the executive directors, and John Foley’s role with the ECU Educational Commission.

Initiative 8. “Undertake a review of the British Chess Championships 2016/17.”

- a. The Board should undertake this review immediately following its review of British Championships 2015. The Home Director and the Commercial Directors should work together, perhaps with other Board members, to support the Board in its role to take the major decisions.

Finance Initiative 1. “Improve financial position to enable development investments to have adequate financial support. Set the financial budget for an annual surplus of 5% to 10% of gross membership and game fee income over a 3-year cycle.”

Finance Initiative 2. “Over the next three years aim to increase the reserves of the ECF to £100,000. In the longer term, maintain reserves at two-thirds of annual membership and game fee income over a 3-year cycle. Continue with the 3-year budgeting process. Establish a 3-year planning process.”

- a. Even as membership and game fee income steadily improves the financial position, the Board and Council should reflect on ways to achieve durable development. When a good plan is agreed, the Board should have the confidence to keep financial targets in perspective, meaning subordinate to durable development.
- b. The mathematics equation from the Finance Initiative 2, second sentence, would result in only 33% of new membership income would be allocated to current projects. Expect the Board to correct this misstatement.

- c. The Board was particularly supportive of a three-year planning horizon with annual updates for the strategic plan, the budget and business plans. See Council paper C23.17, Strategic Planning. Council saw the three-year budget worksheets at previous Finance Council meetings.

**Finance Initiative 3. “Our major events to break even financially.”**

- a. This initiative needs development. The Board did not yet designate which events were major. One perspective is that any event in which National, English or British championship titles are awarded is major. International representation at the Olympiads and other FIDE championships are major financial events, whether resourced by parents or other sources. The working assumption was that minor events would also break even financially.

**Finance Initiative 4. “Consider charging for some services e.g. junior administration costs.”**

- a. Consideration was in progress; however, office support to each of the directorates increased after arrival of the new office manager. Junior administration was cited due to predictions that new office support to junior trips would consume the new office capacity. In the event charging for services arises, it should apply equitably for services in all directorates. There was an underlying notion that junior administration was not core ECF business. That view existed, but it was not agreed. In my view, youth chess in all its forms—representation at FIDE championships, schools chess and the Academy—was established as core ECF business.
- b. The entire office staff (two full time employees and one part time employee) demonstrated steadfast commitment and productivity through significant changes this year.

## **Council Members Behaviour on Social Media**

How we conduct ourselves on social media has a direct impact on what we are able to accomplish. Persistent gossip, innuendo and other disputatious behaviour from Council members demonstrate that credible representation of some organisations is lacking. It is very difficult to enthruse Government, corporations or donors to invest when we do not govern or present ourselves well. The Board has attempted to correct such behaviour by ECF managers and within itself. Success also requires better leadership from the Council. When positive encouragement is not effective, accountability should be forthcoming. An achievable step for Council members would be to hold each other to account for social media behaviour that would fall short of standards in their respective professions outside of chess. That’s where we seek greater respect.

## **David Anderton**

David Anderton agreed to advise the AGM's chairman. This will be his final act before retiring. The grace with which he has managed his departure is an example for all of us. I am pleased to report that his successor as the ECF's *pro bono* Legal Advisor will be nominated for appointment at pre-AGM Board meeting. The nominee is a partner in a City of London law firm and familiar with English chess. All being well, the new Legal Advisor will be introduced to Council and observe proceedings.

## **Conclusion**

Volunteers who found enjoyment and fulfilment in their service to chess are themselves inspirational. It is for their sake, and for the respect of chess, that Council should elect a Board and Standing Committees that will implement the Independent Review recommendations, work together on strategy, and accelerate progress toward the highest standards of public accountability in financial matters, business awards, overlapping personal interests and conduct.<sup>37</sup>

Phil Ehr  
Chief Executive

## **ECF Chief Executive Report 2015**

### **Strategic Adviser Contribution**

I have been asked by the CEO to write a few paragraphs covering the last year. I was appointed Strategic Adviser to the CEO and Board on 11th May 2014 with a very wide remit to advise the CEO and Board on Strategic matters. I attended my first Board meeting on 19th May and it was very clear within half an hour of observing the Board that they were seriously divided and dysfunctional, perhaps this was not surprising as they had just been through a period of internecine civil war which had resulted in the resignation of the President and a Non Executive Director. This division was reinforced to me when a vote to re-appoint the NED who had resigned was defeated by 4-3; a more divided vote can scarcely be more imaginable.

I gave a presentation to the Board in which we discussed strategic objectives going forward and I outlined a potential new membership communication and engagement strategy which was partly designed to get them focusing more outwards towards ECF members and less inwards on their internal battles. The ECF Forum emerged as part of this process. I was hoping that this would get the Board through to the 2014 AGM where the election process would clear the air and hopefully a new united Board would emerge.

Following the AGM most of the existing Board Directors were re-elected and I proposed a Strategic Weekend to discuss the emerging new ECF Strategic Direction, and also crucially to act as a bonding occasion to try and improve Board collegiate working. The weekend was partly successful in that the document that became the Strategic Statement which was put before Council in April 2015 started to emerge but the bonding hopes were not brought to fruition and it was evident that a small minority of the Board remained fundamentally opposed to the CEO and were determined to undermine him at every turn and even to remove him—this has been discussed elsewhere in the current Election statement material.

I am afraid that the Board has remained divided and dysfunctional to this day and a lot of the recent difficulties seen in regard to Code of Conduct disciplinary matters can be traced to this dysfunction. Despite all the above the following has been achieved:

- Improved Financial Position
- Independent Review Report
- New sponsorship
- Better member communications
- ECF Academy launch

Chris Fegan  
September 2015

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## **Endnotes**

<sup>1</sup> Minutes of the 95<sup>th</sup> Board meeting reported the International Director's failed motion of no confidence in my performance as Chief Executive, as well as tensions that

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existed among the directors. The decision to publish details of the tensions was made at the 96<sup>th</sup> Board meeting on a *nem con* basis, i.e., without dissent from any of the nine directors present. The decision departed from best practices for limited companies in England and Wales, which upheld confidentiality of contentious board proceedings. The Board's view in this instance was that the public interest benefit outweighed the benefit of maintaining confidentiality. This report follows by offering my perspective of the context ahead of elections at the annual general meeting.

<sup>2</sup> I served with three former directors, nine current directors and six other current and former Board colleagues during my service as Chief Executive; as well as ten other former directors and Board colleagues during my service as Director of Junior Chess and Education.

<sup>3</sup> In contrast with events surrounding the 81<sup>st</sup> meeting, Council will recall that I asked the President to resign the morning prior to the 81<sup>st</sup> meeting due to ethical questions arising from his private company's interaction with FIDE and considerations of Board cohesion.

<sup>4</sup> Council Resolution, October 2013: "The Board should investigate the appropriate balance of voting and decision making powers between direct members and affiliated organisations and report back accordingly to Council with 24 months". I will post on the Forum the OMOV proposal I provided to the Independent Commission.

<sup>5</sup> Governance Committee Chairman was designated at his request. The Board should review this designation.

<sup>6</sup> The former ECF mission statement expired with the Long Term Strategic Plan 2007/2008 and the Business Plans 2009/2010. The Board consciously chose a vision statement for the Strategy Statement, and not a mission statement. Note that Annex 1 to Council paper C23.17 incorrectly labels the approved vision as "vision/mission". C22.7 is the approved version. See my Forum posting, "What is the ECF's purpose?"

<sup>7</sup> See my Forum posting, "What is the ECF? The national governing body".

<sup>8</sup> The diversity problem is much larger. See remarks below in Strategic Initiative 1, page 16, paragraph h.

<sup>9</sup> Two of whom were players in the National Club Championship but not otherwise conflicted.

<sup>10</sup> Who was conflicted by a concurrent role as a director of the 4NCL.

<sup>11</sup> That Kirsan Ilyumzhinov, Berik Balbadaev and Sainbayar Tserendorj are said to have attended the university together raised the unfortunate prospect of an appearance of favouritism. I advised Berik Balbadaev to exercise meticulous care to protect FIDE operations in England from such appearance.

<sup>12</sup> Contributing factors related to the failed motion of no confidence.

<sup>13</sup> Effective strategic planning requires an appreciation of the distinctions between vision, mission and purpose. 'Purpose' in this context is the practical equivalent of 'role'.

<sup>14</sup> Strategic Planning paper (C23.17) and the Finance Director's report (C23.9.3).

<sup>15</sup> See the Sport and Recreation Alliance website for examples of strategic plans for similar national governing bodies.

<sup>16</sup> Credit to the Commercial Director who researched and championed the option.

<sup>17</sup> I was informed that the resignation was not properly executed, which allowed time for fellow directors (including me) to urge him to reconsider. My urging was criticized for lack of enthusiasm; however, I am not generally disposed to pleading with volunteers who wish to withdraw.

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<sup>18</sup> Factor in the Home Director's general dissatisfaction and the failed motion of no confidence.

<sup>19</sup> In my opinion, the ECF member's observations and conclusions were entirely justified. The International Director and at least one other executive director did not share my opinion, which illustrate continuing differences on accountability for action that represent the Federation and attitudes toward the strategic issue of women in chess.

<sup>20</sup> As such, the Board agreed more than a year ago to transfer the IRO function from a volunteer/former director who earned an honorarium to the office. This was partly accomplished with an IRO-designated employee who interfaced with tournament organisers and FIDE databases, while the volunteer/former director continued to assist at the FIDE policy level.

<sup>21</sup> The new Office Manager was hired on the basis that he would interact with FIDE on policy matters. After his on-the-job training, I determined that he was ready to interact at the FIDE policy level as the IRO, which would complete the transfer of the IRO function from volunteers to the office.

<sup>22</sup> The Board corrected one aspect of poor governance shown in this account in September 2015 when it re-appointed a long list of officials. Unlike the others, the volunteer/former director's appointment as IRO was a new appointment, retrospectively valid from 11 October 2014. The International Director did not support the Board's action. As of this writing, the International Director does not support publishing the volunteer/former director's name as an ECF IRO.

<sup>23</sup> Factor in the failed motion of no confidence.

<sup>24</sup> One topic was an emerging FIDE requirement that mandated the ECF to provide email addresses for all new players as a condition of issuing a FIDE Identification Number. This regulation was problematic given the UK and European Union data protection guidelines. Upon his consultation with the volunteer/former director IRO, the International Director recommended the potential solution to assign new players a unique email address solely for this purpose. I chose a different course of action, which may have contributed to his failed motion of no confidence.

<sup>25</sup> This was a major impediment in Board cohesion and a factor in the failed motion of no confidence. An NED subsequently informed me that at least one executive director refused to work with me to produce a business plan. The strategy writing team therefore agreed, with my support, a different way for the executive directors to produce business plans.

<sup>26</sup> Factor in the failed motion of no confidence.

<sup>27</sup> The International Director undertook at the strategy weekend in November to seek an amicable solution to a problem he and other directors perceived. I proposed that the International Director arrange direct meetings or mediation.

<sup>28</sup> The more likely rationale for an apology would be that which the former director circulated at the time of his resignation, specifically that I misrepresented him in C20.17. The paper presents the facts in an accurate portrayal of events that Council needed to know. Nevertheless, I proposed to the International Director an amendment to make C20.17 more palatable, but received no response from him other than I should remove the paper entirely.

<sup>29</sup> Regarding his failed motion of no confidence, the International Director cited as an example of my poor attitude, my occasional reminders that the former director had not withdrawn his discredited threat to sue the Federation and two directors for libel on behalf of a group assumed to include his e2e4 business associates.

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<sup>30</sup> Regarding his failed motion of no confidence, the International Director further cited as an example of my poor attitude, my occasional reminders that the former director used his votes at Council the previous year to force the Board and the Company Secretary to prepare for an EGM, only to withdraw his demand a day or two prior to the deadline required by Company Law.

<sup>31</sup> The Board was led to this perception by the International Director's observation that administrative costs were high and his suspicion that they could be cut significantly.

<sup>32</sup> The Board is not yet aware of programmes in danger and may therefore resolve the situation prior to the AGM.

<sup>33</sup> More credible forecasts may be possible with undertakings by proven fundraisers.

<sup>34</sup> I refer to lack of gap between the Federation's strategic goal to increase women's participation and the Board's leadership in that space. For example, vibrant programs for girls in all-girl and mixed gender events, run by EPSCA and the UK Schools Chess Challenge presented (and continue to present) teams of young and enthused girls up to age 11 or 12. This ready-made group has the potential to continue into advanced teenage years. Federation leaders have not attempted to develop that potential in a programmatic way. Disclosure: My two daughters drifted away from chess in a typical fashion when their social network in chess dissipated. They may return. The point is that the Federation missed the opportunity to foster social networks for girls.

<sup>35</sup> National organisations that effectively promote females include the 4NCL, EPSCA, the UK Schools Chess Challenge and the National Schools Girls' Championships. Many county associations participate in EPSCA competitions for girls.

<sup>36</sup> The problem is similar to the lack of businesswomen in corporate boardrooms many decades ago.

<sup>37</sup> From my 2013 election statement.