



## **Report to the ECF Council**

**C23.9.4.6**

### **Report of the Non-Executive Directors**

#### **Council Meeting: October 2015**

#### **Major objectives**

The ECF Board has successfully undertaken and delivered its most important targets:

- The British Championship
- International open and women's Olympiad squads
- Junior participation in International Championships
- Establishment of the ECF Academy
- Membership scheme
- County Championships
- Financial security and budget planning
- Strategic planning first stages
- Governance review

This is a testimony to the work of the Board's major Directorships. It should also be the acid test for the assessment of the work of the board in 2014-2015.

It has also successfully run:

- National Club Championships
- English Seniors Championship
- Under 11 and Under 19 National Schools Championships
- Under 11 and Under 19 National Schools Girls' Championships

The Board has developed a good working relationship with partner organisations such as Chess in Schools and Communities and the 4NCL. Relationships with the UK Chess Challenge and the UK Chess Academy need to be improved but the ECF is working in this direction.

#### **Board Membership**

Following the membership turmoil during 2013/4, it is noteworthy that the Board membership has remained constant through 2014/15. There remain differences of outlook within the Board and with officers. However these have not led to the sort of damaging publicity that has characterised earlier boards. Both NED's have been involved in seeking to resolve issues, reduce tensions and bring about improved relationships between Board members.



It remains the case that the Board creates additional workload for itself because of the failure of the Board to act as a single, collaborative unit. This sometimes leads to heated email threads. Adherence to the new Code of Conduct prepared by the Governance Committee will be a helpful contribution to this situation. This should continue to be an objective for the new Board.

### **Strategic Planning and Governance**

These are both on-going and remain significant priorities for 2015/16. Both NED's have been involved with the CEO and the ECF Strategic Planning Officer to develop the ECF strategic planning. Currently this comprises a set of clear targets for the ECF. The Board is working towards a more extended document with a Vision statement and Objectives and underpinned by business plans for each directorate. A draft copy of the document is under consideration by the Board.

The Board commissioned a Review of Governance. The Review Committee, chaired by Gareth Pearce, is to be presented at the Council Meeting October 2015. Both NED's have provided written and oral evidence to the Review Commission.

### **Collaborations**

There have been various collaborations over the last twelve month of which the most significant has been that with the English Bridge Union regarding their claim to the High Court for a judicial review of the decision of the Sport England to deny sport status to Bridge and by implication mind sports such as Chess. The Board has taken legal advice in this matter. While the initial response from the ECF Board was to avoid early involvement, a subsequent re-appraisal and further legal advice has led to the submission of a detailed witness statement by one of the NED's on behalf of the ECF. The case is expected to be resolved later in the year.

### **Sponsorship**

The initiative with Tradewise has been the most significant development in respect of recent initiatives to encourage sponsorship. Also notable has been the ability of the ECF to secure funding for our International commitments.

Julian Clissold and John Foley

20<sup>th</sup> August 2015