

Minutes of the 100th Board Meeting of the English Chess Federation  
Held at the Ibis Hotel, Birmingham, on Friday 20<sup>th</sup> November 2015.

Present: David Eustace (Director of Finance) (DE)  
Alex Holowczak (Director of Home Chess) (AH)  
David Thomas (Director of Memberships) (DT)  
Julian Clissold (Non-Executive Director) (JC)  
Malcolm Pein (Director of International Chess, FIDE Delegate) (MP)  
Julie Denning (Non-Executive Director) (JD)

In attendance: John Philpott (Company Secretary) (JP)  
Gary Willson (Office Manager, minutes) (GW)

## **1 Appointment of the Chair.**

. The Board agreed that JC would act as chair for the meeting.

## **2 Apologies For Absence**

Apologies were received from Dominic Lawson (President) (DL), Traci Whitfield (Director of Junior Chess) (TW) and Mike Turan (Chair, Finance Committee) (MT).

## **3 Approval of the Agenda**

The agenda was adjusted to suit the early departure of AH and MP.

## **4 Minutes of the 99<sup>th</sup> Board Meeting & Matters arising**

Some minor changes were made to the draft version previously circulated. It was agreed that members would have the weekend to consider redactions before publishing on Monday.

AP 100/1: All directors to consider the contents of the minutes of the 99<sup>th</sup> Board meeting, and feedback any redactions to JP by Monday am; JP to publish the minutes.

The Board confirmed that Mark Jordan would continue to report to MP.

## **5 To note Email Votes taken since the last Board Meeting.**

The Board noted the email vote agreeing to confirm Bob Kane's appointment as the Tradewise Liaison Manager, at the request of Tradewise.

## **6 Action Point Update**

The list is now posted, and can be updated by Board members individually. 95/7 is cleared; 95/18 is cleared as it will be subsumed within the Governance review.

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

JD led the Board through the work she had so far completed. It was agreed that a subcommittee of both NEDs, the Finance Director, the Company Secretary, and (when in post) the Chief Executive would be the basis of a working group to take the issues forward, as per JD's paper. It was agreed they would try to meet before Xmas, to provide an initial report at the next meeting.

It was decided that the Governance Committee is not resourced adequately at present to lead on this matter, but could be asked to help if required. The offer of legal help from the S&RA was noted.

AP 100/2: JD to contact PE, to ascertain the extent of the help that the S&RA will provide concerning the Governance review.

## **8 Chief Executive**

Two candidates had expressed an interest in taking up the post. Options ranged from moving to appoint one of them now, to waiting until Finance Council. As it was felt it would be too late, and the Board could not appoint until the next meeting in the New Year, it was agreed to publish an advert to invite expressions of interest with a deadline of 6<sup>th</sup> January; MP, DT & AH will sift the applications, and invite suitable applicants (including the two already submitted) to the next Board meeting where an appointment will be made.

AP 100/3: JP and JC to issue an advert for the vacancy of Chief Executive, including a reference to Reg. 2, with a deadline of 6<sup>th</sup> January.

## **9 Governance Committee**

Following the resignation of Chris Majer after the last Board meeting, it was agreed to advertise the post.

AP 100/4: JP and JC to issue an advert for the role of Chair of the Governance Committee

## **10 Commercial Manager**

It was proposed and agreed to create the role of Commercial Manager, principally to raise sponsorship money for the Federation. There was some discussion on whether the post should have a place on the Board, or report to a Board member.

AP 100/5: MP to discuss with DL the line management of the Commercial Manager

AP 100/6: MP and DL to scope the role and remuneration & incentivisation, to report to the Board.

Discussion was had over the outstanding amount due to Hastings. It was agreed that, following confirmation from BK, the payment should be made.

## **11 Home Chess**

The Board agreed to the promotion of Robert Tinton to a Level 2 Arbiter.

Consideration was given as to how, in the absence of a sponsor, we can strengthen the British Championships. Outside of the titled and norm-seeking players, we do not seem to be attracting players from the mid-rating band (2250+), the sort of players who regularly attend the 4NCL. Discussion was had on whether or not to reduce the number of qualifying events, and having the Championships over 9 days (or 1 week and two weekends). MP suggested asking the players who play in the 4NCL, but do not play in the Championship, to find out the reasons why. AH agreed to put out a questionnaire at the next 4NCL weekend, subject to getting approval from the 4NCL to do so.

AP 100/7: AH to put out a questionnaire at the next 4NCL weekend.

## **12 IRO**

The Board formally agreed that GW would be the Federation's International Ratings Officer.

AP 100/8: JP to update website and arrange for FIDE to be informed of the change in IRO.

## **13 Creation of post to support Women's chess**

MP stated that in his view, the promotion of women's chess was the biggest issue facing the ECF. As we currently do not have a Manager of Women's Chess, the board agreed it was a very important to identify the key person or people to take this forward. Consideration should also be given to the creation of directorship.

AP 100/9: All directors to consider the vacant role of Manager of Women's Chess

## **14 10<sup>th</sup> Directorship**

Discussion was had on the potential size and nature of any 10<sup>th</sup> directorship. It was agreed to keep the position under review.

## **15 Pro-Bono Legal Advisor**

JC has been working through the arrangements with Melville Rodrigues (MR). MR would like a single point of referral. It was agreed that this would normally be the Chief Executive, and that JC would cover the role until the post is filled.

## **16 Appointments Framework**

The table published in the Board Dropbox was noted, and would be updated as appointments were confirmed. The Armed Forces & Veterans Liaison post was to be removed on the recommendation of the former manager.

## **17 Update on the 2014/15 Financial Position**

Last year was very good with a projected £10K surplus. The Director of Finance reported an improving financial position.

MP asked why as a not-for-profit organisation we are paying Corporation Tax. DE said it was because we chose to create a surplus which we would use on chess activity.

We are likely to be £5K short on the International budget, and we have paid some compensation to a coach. We also had the outlay for the EBU court case. We therefore have to decide how to account for this.

MP said that given the surplus, we could just inform Council of the overall position. DE took a different view, that budgets should be adjusted to account for the shortfall.

It was noted that the compensation payment, the judicial review and the shortfall could in part be charged to the contingency fund. MP stated that he was against any adjustments to the budgets when we are in a surplus position, and we should not be cutting activity. MP had to leave the

meeting due to a prior engagement.

JD noted that Council had only marginally accepted the increase in membership fees for this year. DE noted that TW and MP would be better off under DE's proposals than if they had to adhere to the original budget.

The Board voted 3:2 to support the report as presented by the Director of Finance.

## **18 Preparation for Budget 2016/17**

DE proposed to use the same process as before (a set of objectives for each director, planned activity, and changes throughout the year). As most operational directors were absent, it was agreed the issue could not usefully be discussed.

AP 100/10 DE to contact operational directors concerning their budgetary plans for 2016/17.

## **19 Pensions**

No later than October 2016 the ECF must put in place an occupational pension scheme available to all employees. It was agreed that it would: cover all salary bands; contribute 4% from the start of the scheme; use the National earnings Savings Trust; all employees are to be invited. It was thought that it might take some time to put the mechanics in place.

AP 100/11: DE to take forward pension arrangements for all staff.

## **20 Staff Salaries**

The Board noted the advice on JP and DE on staff salaries and bonus. Staff will be advised.

AP 100/11: JP to advise office staff of decision on future pay and bonus.

## **21 Child Protection Policy**

The proposed version is revised following feedback from SafeCiC. Given its length, TW is drafting a short summary to guide clubs and organisations on the key points they need to adhere to. The Board noted suggested changes to the Regulations. These are to be brought forward to the next Board Meeting.

AP 100/12: JC to thank TW for her hard work in revising the Child Protection Policy

The Board noted the changes to the regulations that are required.

## **22 AGM Minutes**

A draft of these will be completed early next week.

AP 100/13: GW to complete the draft of the AGM minutes and forward to JC and JP by Monday evening; minutes to be circulated around the Board in order for the final version to be published by the end of the week.

It was agreed to consider alternative venues for the London meeting in April.

**23 Next Meeting**

The Board is of a mind to have the next meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> January in London.

**24 AOB**

Concerning AP 95/12, GW (in his role as IRO) agreed it was more appropriate for the office to take this forward in conjunction with MP.

AP 100/14: GW to consider the issue of delisting and make recommendations to the Board.