

Election Address of Stephen V Woodhouse
For Non-Executive Director Position

Background

I have played chess competitively from the age of 11, but with a break from 1997 until 2016 due to professional and personal commitments. I now play correspondence chess and over the board competitive chess for Worcestershire, occasionally in the 4NCL with Midlands Monarchs and this year for the first time in 20 years, in one of the tournaments at the British.

I am a qualified solicitor, training and qualifying at Slaughter and May and spending two years with Norton Rose. I left the legal profession in 1995 and became a partner at Deloitte from 1999 through to 2013, at which point I returned to the law with Pett Franklin.

I started playing chess again after retiring from Deloitte, in part through encouraging my children to take up the game. My chess playing skills are moderate (circa 160 ECF) but I would be looking to bring to the non-executive role the benefit of my professional skills and experience rather than chess playing prowess.

Experience

My experience includes:

- 15 years' commercial and tax experience as a Deloitte partner.
- Within that, extensive tax knowledge including negotiations with HMRC.
- Management experience:
 - leading a tax group within Deloitte (running a Midlands employment tax practice);
 - HR partner role within Deloitte;
 - Broad ranging management role within Pett Franklin;
 - Driving revenue and profit growth;
 - Conflict resolution.
- Joint authorship of a tax textbook and regular contributor to the Tax Press.

Skills

Key skills and attributes include:

- Management of meetings and dispute resolution;
- Building rapport and trust;

- Employee leadership and development;
- Communication;
- Problem solving for clients and within organisations;
- A calm approach to conflict management;
- Innovative and creative development.

Non-executive Roles

I already have experience of non-executive roles:

- Chairman of LHW Properties Ltd – chairing a family property investment company following an initial period as a non-executive director, during which time:
 - I worked with the executives to dispose of a significant property asset;
 - Managed shareholder disputes;
 - Effected the transition following the managed cessation of the executives.
- Executive committee member of the British Correspondence Chess Association.

ECF Contribution

As a non-executive director of the ECF, I would seek to add value through:

- Constructively and independently challenging and questioning ECF board matters and issues;
- Offering support in dispute resolution if relevant;
- Providing potential links with external organisations;
- Raising awareness of the ECF in the wider business community and through that acting as an informal ECF advocate;
- Support communication of ECF activities and objectives;
- Applying my professional knowledge where relevant;
- Assisting with developing strategic thinking and ideas;

- Through the combination of playing chess over an extended period but with a long break, offering an external perspective but with a sound chess knowledge base.

ECF – Looking to the Future

The ECF gives the impression of a vibrant and energetic organisation, albeit one which has suffered internal tensions. It covers an extended range of chess activities from running the international teams through the continually impressive organisation each year of the British to the support of junior chess (in particular the ECF Academy) and the regular panoply of local leagues and congresses, all of which demonstrates the vital role that the ECF has and which it embraces through the energy of its officers and other volunteers. It is central to chess in England and through that position has an important and beneficial contribution to make to the lives of many chess players from juniors starting out to seasoned GMs.

I believe that chess has a valuable role to play in the wider communities offering education, discipline, rigorous but creative thinking as well as social support (e.g. through Chess in Prisons). It is one of the few activities where one tournament hall will see seven year olds sitting a few seats away from pensioners both engaging in and benefitting from one activity.

The ECF plays a vital role in nurturing and developing the Royal Game for all ages and backgrounds. As a non-executive director, I would relish the opportunity to contribute to the development and growth of the organisation and to see it continue to flourish.

Stephen V Woodhouse
4th September 2016