



Minutes of the 122nd Board Meeting of the English Chess Federation

Friday 20th July 2018, at 11.30

Thistle City Barbican Hotel, 120 Central Street, Clerkenwell, London, EC1V 8DS

Present:

Chief Executive, Mike Truran	MT
Director of Home Chess, Alex Holowczak	AH
Director of International Chess, Malcolm Pein	MP
Director of Finance, David Eustace	DE
Director of Membership, Dave Thomas	DT
Director of Women's Chess, Chris Fegan	CF
Non-executive Chairman, Julian Clissold	JC
Non-executive Director, Julie Denning	JD
Non-Executive Director, Stephen Woodhouse	SW
Chairman, Finance Committee, Tim Herring	TH
Nigel Short (for item 7)	NS

Apologies:

Chairman, Governance Committee, Robert Stern	RS
President, Dominic Lawson	DL
Director of Junior Chess, Traci Whitfield	TW

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were accepted. As Gary Willson (GW) was unavailable, it was agreed that JD would take the Minutes.

2. Approval of the Agenda

The agenda was approved.

3. Minutes of 121st Board Meeting

An amendment to item 8 by SW was agreed. Subject to this change, and replacement of the old ECF logo, the minutes as previously circulated were agreed.

AP 122/01 JD / GW to incorporate changes and publish.

4. Matters arising from Minutes

a. Action Point Update

113/13 & 113/15: Paper from MP on agenda (item 9). Cleared.

116/02 On-going. Support for Commonwealth Chess Association should also be considered.

117/07 On-going. Lead is DT, not AH/DT. Paper to be available for next meeting.

118/10 On-going.

119/03 On-going

121/01 Cleared

121/02 Cleared

121/03 Cleared

121/04 Cleared

121/05 Cleared

121/06 AH has sent wording to SW. Action on-going for SW to respond.

AP 122/02 DT/JC/GW Paper on grading matters to be provided, and included as agenda item, for next meeting. (AP 117/07 refers.)

5. New membership system update (DT).

DT reported that the new membership system had gone live for the office staff and himself to test. There had been some teething problems, but it was expected that the system would be able to go live to everyone on 23rd July.

GW had had the assistance of someone on work experience in the office and who had done an excellent job in preparing for the new system.

DT noted that it was not currently possible to view a spreadsheet of the complete membership list, as could be done under the old system. Others noted that they found this very useful. DT will investigate restoring this facility.

AP 122/03 DT. Investigate provision of complete membership list as a spreadsheet.

6. Review of Committees (SW).

SW proposed that a review was needed of the various Committees, at least some of which appeared moribund. Specific points included:

- The Personnel Committee had not met for some time and seemed unnecessary. Any points that arose could be dealt with directly by the DoF and CEO, or, if necessary, referred to the Chairman of the Board who would consider the matter in consultation with other Non-Executive Directors.
- The International Selection Committee was split into “Open” and “Women’s” sections, with identical membership except for the inclusion of Natasha Regan in the Women’s section. The Board considered the two sections should be merged, with appropriate membership.
- Membership of the various committees was overwhelmingly male.

Accordingly, the Board resolved that:

- The Personnel Committee be abolished
- The International Selection Committees be merged into one Committee to select both the Open and Women’s teams to include appropriate female representation in its membership

AP 122/04 MP to advise existing members of the two sections of the International Selection Committee about the merger.

AP 122/05 SW to review the need for the existing committees generally, and the wish to enhance the gender balance of their memberships.

AP 122/06 REDACTED

7. FIDE elections presentation by Nigel Short.

Using his campaign website (cleanhands4fide.org) as his text, NS described the background and attributes of the other members of his election ticket, and expanded on his core objectives should he be elected. He also responded to questions from the Board.

8. Development Officer (MP)

MP had prepared a lengthy paper on the need for, and roles of, a Development Officer. As the paper had only become available on the eve of the meeting, detailed discussion was postponed to the next meeting.

AP 122/07 All To review, and provide comments on, MP's paper.

AP 122/08 JC/GW To include as agenda item for next meeting.

MP considered that there would need to be an increase in future years from the current budget for marketing and publicity and that funds held by the Chess Trust in particular that were not otherwise ring-fenced might be used for this purpose with the agreement of the Trustees.

AP 122/09 MP To provide detailed budget proposals.

AP 122/10 DE Circulate to all Board members the PIF No. 1 Trust Deed.

9. Directors' reports including feedback on action plans.

(a) International. MP updated the Board on preparation for the Olympiad, including team composition.

(b) Home. Overall entries for the BCC Congress were down on the same point last year. This was expected due to the choice of venue. However, the average strength of entrants in both the Championship itself and the Major Open were up on previous years. This had been a major objective of the changes that had been made to the qualification rules to tackle the “weak tail” in the Championship.

Negotiations were well advanced for the 2019 BCC venue, but awaited final confirmation of availability on the dates required. This should be clarified by the end of July. Early stage negotiations are under way with potential venues for 2020.

The County Championship Finals had taken place on 7th July. There had been issues with the venue and an alternative may be sought for future years.

AH had secured venues for 8 qualifying tournaments for the UK Open Blitz 2018.

AH had been re-elected as DoHC at the 2017 AGM for a period of 3 years. However, he has announced his intention to stand down at this year’s AGM. He explained that his decision had been driven by the fact that his busiest period as DoHC (June / July) clashed with other work commitments that he had to prioritise over voluntary activities. Since the public announcement of his decision he had already been contacted by a number of people about standing as his replacement. He was asked whether he might reconsider if means could be found to provide additional support during busy periods. AH indicated this might be possible.

(c) Women’s. CF was welcomed to his first Board meeting as a Director.

CF reported that he had emailed all females with a contact address in the ECF database and that responses indicated clear support for his appointment. He intended appointing a Manager of Female Social Media and had identified a suitable person. The Board supported this, subject to the appointee liaising with the overall ECF Manager of Social Media, and confirmed that it also supported the principle of positive action for women’s chess in England.

Based on feedback he’d received so far, his initial plans included:

- Holding a women's reception at the BCC. (Subject to space, men would be welcome to attend!)
- Providing a creche at the English Women's Championship (EWC).
- Financing "conditions" payments to an increased number of female entrants to the BCC from his existing budget.

CF requested an additional £3k be added to his budget for the current financial year.

AP 122/11 DE to respond to request for additional funding.

CF enquired whether a BCC qualifying place might be awarded to the winner of the EWC. AH responded that this would need to be agreed with the BICC and that a similar right might need to be given to all the other BICC federations.

AP 122/12 AH/CF to consider awarding BCC qualification to the winner of the EWC.

Feedback to his initial consultation had included a report of harassment at a recent (non-ECF) event. The Board believe that such allegations should be referred, at least in the first instance, to the organisers of the event concerned. However, we should consider how to respond to any such allegation arising at an ECF event or otherwise elevated to us. RS had advised the Board that he had given consideration to what sanctions the ECF might be able to impose and that a review of the Direct Members Bye Laws (Bye Law No. 1) may be needed. For example, he believed that the ECF had the right to refuse an application for membership, but it was unclear whether we had the right to expel an existing member.

AP 122/13 RS to advise the Board on whether the ECF should adopt a policy on membership and our powers in this respect.

(d) Junior. TW had submitted a written report but discussion was deferred as TW had had to withdraw from the meeting at short notice.

10. Financial report and management accounts (DE). Management accounts had been produced for the period up to the end of June. Current indications were that there would be an overall loss for the year, but that this would be somewhat less than the figure of around £19k that had been budgeted for. All accounts and tax returns were now up to date.

There are frequent instances of balanced in and out payments to / from the ECF, such as when expenses for international events incurred by self-funded entrants are channelled through the ECF. Currently, such transactions are included in the main accounts so that they appear in actual, but not budget, figures. This can appear confusing and consideration should be given to presenting such transactions in some form of supplementary accounts.

AP 122/14 DE/TH To consider alternative presentation of balanced in / out financial transactions.

Transfer of PIF No. 2 (the John Robinson bequest ring-fenced to support the BCC) to the Chess Trust had been completed. Discussions were on-going with regard to transfer of PIF No. 1.

11. AOB. Congratulations.

The Board expressed their congratulations to:

- Jessica Mellor for winning the U11 girls section of the European Schools Chess Championships in Poland with a score of $7\frac{1}{2}$ out of 9.
- The England 1 team in the 50+ section of the World Seniors Team Championships who came 2nd, 2 places up on their initial seeding, and beaten only by top seeded USA, who they had beaten in their individual match. Keith Arkell won the individual gold medal with $6\frac{1}{2}/7$ on board 5.
- The England Women's team in the 50+ section of the World Seniors Team Championships who came 3rd, with Sheila Jackson winning the individual bronze medal with $4\frac{1}{2}/9$ on board 1 and Petra Fink-Nunn winning the individual silver medal with $6\frac{1}{2}/9$ on board 4.

