

ENGLISH CHESS FEDERATION

DRAFT STRATEGY AND BUSINESS PLAN

STRATEGY

Furthering the Cause of English Chess

The ECF will lead the development and organisation of chess for all players in England and our international teams. This will encompass:

- Extending the number of active competitive and social chess players.
- Increasing the number of juniors playing competitive chess and transitioning to becoming adult competitive players.
- Encouraging diversity of participation in chess.
- Increasing the awareness of chess and its wider social benefits outside the existing ECF membership.
- Building the financial strength of chess and chess organisations.
- Developing the number of elite players and individual players of exceptional talent.

Priority areas

- A Director for Women's Chess has been appointed to the Board. Our ambition is to increase participation in chess among women of all standards and to facilitate the transition from junior, to adult, to senior.
- We have already begun, and we will continue to develop and refine, programmes to encourage participation among junior players and to help them achieve their potential.
- We will continue, and improve, our support to English players taking part in international competitions, with the aspiration of re-establishing England as a force in the chess world.
- Our biggest asset is our membership. We will continue to improve the attractiveness of membership through good communication and membership services and offerings. We recognise that the ECF needs to grow its membership and improve the attractiveness of the game in order to sustain a viable future. The Board will continue to focus on these targets.
- We will keep the operation of the membership system under review, ensuring the system is well maintained, remains fit for purpose and provides additional benefits to members.
- We will continue to provide support to chess organisers and we will keep under continuous review all competitions organised for which we are responsible, including the British Championships, the UK Open Blitz Championships, the County Championships and the Women's English Championships.
- Commercial sponsorship generates additional income that can help us to make extra investment in areas such as junior and international chess. We will continue to seek out new

sponsorship opportunities and build on our relationship with existing sponsors, and support them to build their brands.

- We will actively engage with other chess organisations in England and elsewhere to improve coordination, efficiency and knowledge-sharing across English chess.
- We will develop a set of key performance indicators in order to be able to monitor our progress against our objectives.

Business Planning

The Board will produce an annual business plan. That will set out how we propose to deliver the priorities set out in this statement. As part of the business planning process we will refine our strategic intentions and financial planning in consultation with Council and in accordance with prevailing circumstances.

The Board

Directors will work collegiately both within the Board and with other chess organisations. We will encourage a culture where we actively invite comment and feedback. We will ensure our governance processes and constitutional structure are effective and fit for purpose.

Funding

Our core activities will continue to be funded through membership fees. We will use sponsorship and donations/bequests to support developmental projects and initiatives, ensuring that sponsors' own objectives are addressed, and not as a substitute for core activity funding.

Office

We are committed to maintaining the central functions of an ECF Office. The Office endeavours to provide a high quality and efficient service to ECF members and other chess organisations, and gives support to ECF directors and officials as required. Staff will be offered opportunities for professional development on an individual basis.

Communications

Initiatives such as the introduction of a monthly e-newsletter and press releases, an overhaul of the website and direct emailing of members and Council where required have helped to improve communication to members. We want stronger partnerships with chess players and chess organisations, and so will continue to develop communications across a range of platforms and seek greater engagement with members to help shape our policies and plans.

BUSINESS PLAN

Finance

Objective: Support the overall objectives of the English Chess Federation and the agreed plans of the Executive Directors.

- Grow income in such a way as to enable the Board's plans to be achieved, taking into account funds received from donations, sponsorship and other sources.
- Use membership income to fund ongoing operational expenditure, using sponsorship, bequests and donations for new initiatives and developments.
- Maintain a reserve of £100,000 over the five year planning cycle.
- Seek to achieve an annual break-even financial position over the five year planning cycle.
- Ensure that all finance activities are performed efficiently and effectively.
- Ensure accounting records and accounts are maintained in a timely manner.
- Simplify the overall financial structure consolidating funds into the ECF and the Chess Trust. This will remove the requirements for the active use of the BCF, Chess Centre Ltd and the Permanent Invested Fund.
- Introduce a direct debit facility for the membership scheme in 2018/19.
- Improve the presentation of finance information to directors and to members.

Governance

Objective: Ensure that the ECF's governance processes and constitutional structure are effective and fit for purpose.

- Continue to review compliance with most appropriate governance practice.
- Undertake a detailed review of the articles of association.

Junior

Objective: Improve participation levels in and the profile of junior chess in England and reverse the current rate of attrition in the transition to adulthood.

- Continue to develop the ECF Chess Academy as the development route of choice for our top juniors.
- Support the Chess Trust as it continues to develop its Accelerator Programme for our elite junior players.
- Encourage junior chess organisations' activities in England and promote the development of collaborative working.
- Understand why so many girls stop playing chess in school and put in place actions accordingly, liaising closely with the Director of Women's Chess and junior organisers.
- Address the core issues which make girls stop playing when they go to secondary school, liaising closely with the Director of Women's Chess and junior organisers.
- Identify and use sponsorship money to improve the quality of support to junior players.
- Develop competitive chess in schools with a particular emphasis on those pupils aged over 11.

- Develop chess playing opportunities that encourage girls to continue playing chess in adulthood.
- Encourage adult chess clubs and leagues to integrate, support and develop junior players.
- Review and improve junior financial management processes.
- Identify and work with top junior players to increase participation in non-ECF events such as FIDE tournaments.

Women

Objective: Improve participation levels in and the profile of women's chess in England.

- Increase participation in the English Women's Championship.
- Work with independent organisers to increase female participation in non-ECF events such as FIDE rated events.
- Increase the profile of women's chess so that girls/teenagers/women have something to aspire to.
- Reach out to non-chess women's organisations to encourage female take-up of and participation in chess.

Home

Objective: Support the Board in its goal of increasing the perceived added value that the ECF provides to its members.

- Continue the roll-out of the new League Management System.
- Keep the format of competitions organised by the ECF, in particular the British Chess Championships, the County Championships and the National Club Championships, under review.
- Develop official ECF internet events.
- Provide more effective support and advice from the ECF to independent event organisers.
- Upgrade the website and increase use of social media.

Membership

Objective: Oversee the operation of the membership system and ensure that it is maintained and improved as necessary.

- Improve communication to and facilities for consultation with corporate and individual members.
- Improve the documentation of the requirements for the administration of membership and of the operation of the new system.
- Identify selling points which might make membership attractive to individuals who are not themselves competitive players in order to increase the ECF's potential membership base.
- Move to monthly grading once the investigation into detailed requirements (currently in progress) is completed.

- Review junior membership arrangements with a view to improving publicity for our free first year membership offer and improving junior membership retention in subsequent years.
- Complete the move to a full membership organisation and phase out Game Fee and Pay-To-Play fees.
- Review the feasibility of a new casual/social chess player membership category.

International

Objective: Improve the performance of our international teams.

- Work with the Directors of Junior and Women's Chess to identify and nurture top talent.
- Identify and use sponsorship money to improve conditions, training etc for international players.
- Review how the ECF can better capture the views and insights of top players in England.
- Seek to foster an environment to support top chess players to maximise their potential while also developing a career outside chess.

Office

Objective: Continue to provide a high quality service to stakeholders.

- Complete the library relocation exercise, cataloguing and rationalising the various collections and providing good access opportunities for members.
- Implement the evolution of the year book from a paper-based directory to an annual news digest, transferring all information about clubs, leagues, associations etc onto the ECF website in an easily accessible and updatable format.