

Minutes of the 129th Board Meeting of the English Chess Federation
April 27th 2019
11.30 a.m. – 1.30 p.m.
Ibis Hotel, Ladywell Walk, Birmingham

Members:

President, Dominic Lawson	Apologies	DL
Chief Executive, Mike Truran		MT
Director of Finance, David Eustace		DE
Director of Junior Chess, Alex Holowczak	Apologies	AH
Director of International Chess, Malcolm Pein		MP
Director of Home Chess, Adrian Elwin		AE
Director of Membership, Dave Thomas		DT
Non-executive Chairman, Julian Clissold	Apologies	JC
Non-executive Director, Julie Denning		JD
Non-Executive Director, Stephen Woodhouse		SW
Director of Women's Chess, Chris Fegan		CF

Invited: Observers and Guests

Chairman, Finance Committee, Tim Herring	TH
Chairman, Governance Committee, Robert Stern	RS
Office Manager, Gary Willson	GW
Secretary to the Board, Nigel Towers	NT
Mike Gunn, Chair of Council	MG

1. **Apologies for Absence** - As above.
2. **Appointment of Chair** - Julie Denning was appointed as chair.
3. **Appointment of Alternate Directors** – The following were appointed as alternates:
 - Malcolm Pein for Dominic Lawson
 - Mike Truran for Alex Holowczak
4. **Approval of the Agenda** – The agenda was agreed.
5. **Minutes of 127th Board Meeting** - Julie Denning pointed out two minor errors in the published minutes which were approved subject to these amendments.
6. **Matters Arising from Minutes not on the Agenda** – Due to limited time, the review of outstanding actions was restricted to those that had been notified as closed.



7. Preparations for April Finance Council Meeting (MG)

There was a brief discussion of the areas which were to be covered at the Council meeting.

It was noted that comments had been made on the English Chess Forum in relation to membership growth being overestimated for the next two years' budgets' and it was expected that this would be raised at the meeting. DE and DT clarified that the estimated membership baseline in the budgets was based on a previous forecast which has proved to be too high compared with current figures, but that the trajectory was much as expected with year on year targets being met. It was agreed that the plans to grow the membership base should be seen as a shared initiative, and not merely the responsibility of the ECF Board, and Council members would be encouraged to provide their continued support in attracting new members.

8. Marketing of Supporter Category - Update (CF) Held Over from 128th Board Meeting.

CF reported that the Supporters flier was now ready for production and that a draft would be circulated to the Board for review.

It was agreed that the flier should be published with a link to the Membership Benefits page on the ECF website. The initial print run will be for 5,000 copies which it is intended will be distributed at congresses, libraries and other venues. A pdf version will also be prepared and made available on the ECF site.

9. Monthly Grading Update (DT) Report on Consultation with Organisers and Graders.

DT reported that the organisers' consultation is in progress. There has been a reasonable number of responses to date with a deadline of 10th May, after which a further consultation will be organised with graders once more details of the new system are available.

JD pointed out that there is no funding shown for the new system in the budget spreadsheets. DT noted that the preferred software is under MIT licence with no licensing costs to the ECF and MT said that the ECF would probably approach the Chess Trust for funding support for any further implementation costs from Chess Trust payments as a strategic development. DT agreed with JD that there must be good ongoing support for whatever software solution was adopted.

DT confirmed that the current target date for implementation is still end of 2019 and that he would report back on this at the next board meeting.

10. Directors' Reports against Action Plans

- a. Membership (DT) - DT had nothing to add to his previous report.



- b. Home Chess (AE) – AE reported that his anti-cheating paper has now been circulated to organisers and that the County Championships national stage had now started with some matches being defaulted. The venue for the 2020 British Championships is still under review.
- c. Junior Chess (AH) – AH did not attend the meeting and there was no junior chess report.
- d. International (MP) – MP noted that he has distributed his KPI document with the Council papers and that there two English players had become new International Masters – James Jackson and Matthew Wadsworth.
- e. Women's Chess (CF) – CF reported that he felt he had made progress in promoting women's chess but that there was a general structural problem with women's representation in many English chess organisations. He indicated that he was planning to hold a Women's Conference to gather feedback on what needed to be changed to attract more females to play chess. He also reported good progress with plans for the Women's Chess Festival in Hull which will include a civic reception, coaching and the Women's' Championship. He was seeking additional support from the John Robinson Youth Trust to fund this event in September.

CF asked that the Board note with thanks the invaluable contribution of Stephen Greep and his Hull colleagues to the Women's Chess Festival.

11. AOB. advised to Chair:

Strategy Planning/ Havas follow up meeting (CF) – The board noted the kind offer from Tracey Barber (Marketing Director of Havas) to facilitate a follow-on planning meeting. CF said that he had emailed the Board again with his request for input to such a meeting and had received feedback on areas to cover at the meeting from MT and MP. MP said that he was looking to write to Tracey on Monday. MT reinforced to the Board that it was very important that Directors reply to CF with their thoughts as soon as possible, as this was a highly important strategic piece of work for the Board and the offer from such a prestigious person in her field to facilitate a planning meeting should be taken advantage of.

12. Date and time of next Board Meeting: Friday 7th June 2019 London

There being no other business the meeting closed at 12.45 pm.

