

I would like to propose Seaton Chess Club for the award ECF Small Club of the Year.



Seaton is a small coastal town in East Devon nestled between the cliffs of the beautiful Jurassic Coast. While the local towns of Lyme Regis, Beer and Sidmouth attract most of the tourist trade, Seaton is nevertheless a vibrant town with a strong identity and sense of community.

Seaton Chess Club has been running for over 50 years but due to dwindling numbers and finances, there was a real possibility that the club could have folded at its last AGM. However, in the last year, the club has enjoyed something of a renaissance, reinvigorated by some of the younger members who have joined the club.

The club had 10 fee paying members last year and a few others came to try their hand on a trial basis. This actually represents an increase in numbers and is partly due to the website (www.seatonchessclub.co.uk) that was created by one of the members and is run on a voluntary basis. There is also a companion Facebook page (www.facebook.com/seatonchessclub). These have established a much more recognisable presence and brand for the club in the town and it is living up to its new Jurassic inspired motto: "Nondum Extincti" – Not extinct yet!

The club is remarkable in many ways:

Despite its size, 20% are female who are regular team members in the leagues that Seaton is involved in. This is a remarkable statistic given the size of the club and the usually male dominated demographic of the game.



The club welcomes and supports junior players when it can, and has supported 2 Duke of Edinburgh Award students in developing chess as a skill. Other juniors have also attended and experienced members take time out to help develop their chess abilities.



For such a small club, it has some strong players with 3 selected to play for Devon in the national county finals in May 2019. One of its members won best board for Devon last season.



This year it ran a series of blitz tournaments that attracted entrants from Sidmouth, Honiton and Exeter as well as the local area. These were well attended and hugely enjoyable to all who attended.

Members are also active in promoting chess and took part in an open session at Seaton Library during an event celebrating local communities and clubs.



Overall, the club has had a remarkable year, not only in reinvigorating itself but in continuing to promote the game both within the local community and supporting chess at county level in Devon. It therefore fully deserves the award of ECF Small Club of the Year.

Paul Hampton 13/05/2019