

**Minutes of the 131st Board Meeting of the English Chess Federation
12th July, 2019
11.30a.m. – 5.00p.m.**

Hotel du Vin, Church Street, Birmingham, B3 2NR, 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	Apologies	AE
Director of Membership, David Thomas		DT
Non-executive Chairman, Julian Clissold		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	Apologies	TH
Chairman, Governance Committee, Robert Stern		RS
Office Manager, Gary Willson	Apologies	GW
Meetings Secretary, Nigel Towers		NT

- 1. Apologies for Absence** - Absences were noted as above.

JC will write to AE to express the Board's condolences on his recent loss.

- 2. Appointments**

Julian Clissold was appointed as Chair. There were no alternate Director appointments

- 3. Approvals**

The agenda was agreed and the minutes of the 130th board meeting were approved.

- 4. Matters Arising from Minutes not on the Agenda** - There were no matters arising.

- 5. Review of Progress against Board Action Plan.**

The action plan was reviewed and updated.



6. Action Plan for Increasing Levels of Female Participation in Chess (CF)

CF/ SW had provided a paper with objectives and implementation plans in advance of the meeting. As context for the plan, CF summarised recent achievements in promoting female chess as follows:

- English Women's Championships – Entries are already in double figures and CF is hoping for a greater attendance than last year, when there were 30 entries;
- Women's Festival – The Festival will take place in Hull and will include the Women's championship and a simul along with coaching for juniors and beginners;
- Publicity - Chess Magazine will be publishing an edition with a number of articles on Women's Chess including Vera Menchik, the Teesside congress and Hammersmith Women's events.
- Conference – The ECF will be co-hosting the London International Chess Conference in December in partnership with FIDE, the ECU and CSC, the theme of which will be “Chess and Female Empowerment”. This will run alongside the London Chess Classic and will replace the ECF Women's Conference previously scheduled for October. Guest speakers are expected to include Jennifer Shahade, Jovanka Houska, and Judit Polgar.

CF went on to present the objectives and implementation plan paper. The paper was discussed in some detail focussing on the objectives of increasing female membership and obtaining sponsorship funding with points to note as follows.

Increasing Female Membership to 15% - CF explained that female membership is currently around 7% with the majority being juniors. It was agreed that there was an issue with female participation dropping off in particular from the age of 11-12 onwards. CF outlined proposed actions to increase female participation including active co-operation between the Director of Women's Chess and the Development Officer when appointed, encouraging parents of chess playing children to become ECF supporters, seeking expert marketing advice on making participation in the ECF more attractive to women, and encouraging and developing social chess.

Obtaining more funding for Women' Chess – CF explained that he would be looking at applying for National Lottery funding in due course. JD offered to research and report back on the process for funding applications.

The paper was agreed to be in the right direction but in need of more work to provide a more detailed action plan which MT suggested would emerge over time as more work was done.



An action was agreed for CF to present the document at the London Chess Conference in December, maybe using dedicated working groups to work up the actions required to deliver the plan, with the aim of presenting the paper at the April 2020 Finance Council meeting.

The paper was approved by the Board as a good basis for further development as above.

MT outlined the 4NCL's proposal to provide a Women's League which was welcomed by CF. MT asked the Board to consider the 4NCL's request to relax the requirement for Gold Membership for FIDE rated events as a condition for entry to the league while the league was establishing itself over the first couple of seasons. The request was approved by the Board.

7. Membership Statistics (DT)

DT presented the latest membership statistics which showed an ongoing increase of about 500 members per year. This meant that the target for increasing membership numbers was being delivered in line with the budget presented at last April's Council meeting. DT went on to explain the gender profile which showed 7.3% female membership overall with the figures being 19.5% female under 11 and 15% for the 11-17 age group, falling off significantly in adulthood.

8. Monthly Grading Update (DT)

DT explained that he was in the process of writing a detailed paper on areas where the new open source software system would need to be amended / upgraded. Key new features which would be required included:

- Handling of results files based on the current formats produced by graders;
- Changes for events registration;
- Development of an ECF specific rating calculation algorithm;
- Changes requested by UKCC, who have offered to part fund the development.

9. Hastings Congress (MT/ MP)

MT and MP explained that they had discussed required changes with the organisers as a basis for the ECF to commit funding to the Congress and that discussions were still in progress.

10. [Item 10 redacted]

11. Calendar for 2019/20 (JC)

An action was agreed for JC to update and reissue the 2019-20 calendar of future Board and Council meetings. The Board noted that Directors should make every effort to attend Board



meetings, and that meeting dates should be agreed well in advance to give Directors every chance to make this happen.

12. Governance Matters including Standing Orders (RS)

RS had circulated the Board Standing Orders document in advance of the meeting. It was noted that the target date for distribution of Board papers had been changed from 1 week to 96 hours in advance of the meeting.

RS also noted that he had met with Michael Farthing to discuss a set of changes to the game fee bye laws and other areas of the Articles and Regulations.

It was agreed separately that a motion should be prepared for the October Council meeting to allow the Board discretion to offer promotional membership discounts for limited periods.

There was some discussion of the potential for changing the Supporter category to make Supporters members of the ECF. It was decided that this proposal should be revisited once Supporter category had increased to more significant levels.

13. ECF Support for FIDE Fees (MP)

MP proposed that as a matter of policy the ECF should pay title fees for new English GMs, IMs, WGMs and WIMs as a matter of course for players under 25, and at the International Director's discretion for those over 25. The policy was agreed by the Board.

MT also proposed that as a matter of policy the ECF should pay the standard FIDE transfer fees of 250 Euros for any player who is selected to play or likely to be selected for one of the full England international teams within the subsequent two years. This policy was also agreed by the Board.

14. Progress on Recruitment of Female Board Members (JC)

JC advised that he had spoken to the Institute of Directors and is planning to write a job/person specification designed to broaden the range of skills represented on the Board with a particular view to ensuring that positions are more attractive for female candidates. It was agreed that skills such as marketing and fund-raising expertise were more important to the good working of the Board than traditional chess organisational skills, which the Board already possessed.

JC also intended to talk to bodies such as the institute of Marketing and the Sports and Recreation Alliance. [Sentence redacted.] There was also discussion of consulting suitable recruitment specialists with an understanding of chess and the ECF. MP offered to work with JC in relation to this.



15. Directors' Reports against Action Plans

- (a) Membership (DT) – DT explained that the renewals process had now started. He had forgotten that members whose 3-year memberships had just expired might not be aware of the change from PaySubs to Azolve and that he needed to communicate them to explain this. Other members of the Board felt this was unnecessary. It was pointed out that renewal notices had been sent to direct debit payers along with other members and supporters. He agreed that a further email should be sent to the direct debit group to clarify that there was no need to renew over and above continuing with the direct debit payments. An action was agreed for DT to include details in the newsletter covering how to set up a direct debit, and to look at improving the wording in the Azolve GoMembership payments page to clarify the direct debit process.
- (b) Home Chess (AE) – There was no report from AE. MT said that the Devon team had withdrawn from the County Championship finals and defaulted their match on the basis that the central venue was too far for them to travel, and that it was possible that a formal complaint would be received. MT added that an action was needed for AE and Mark Murrell to review the rules for next season's event to reduce the risk of a recurrence.
- (c) Junior Chess (AH) – AH has submitted a written report which was noted. CF raised a concern over AH's proposal not to renew the FIDE Academy licence. It was agreed that as this was an operational rather than strategic issue it was appropriate for an individual Director rather than the Board as a whole to deal with it. The Board noted that the decision had been based on the cost saving of £500, the lack of benefits from FIDE licensing the event, and the constraining nature of the FIDE syllabus.
- (d) International (MP) – MP provided an update on the Falklands issue as discussed at the previous Board meeting. Following on from the FIDE decision to remove the



Argentinian tournaments from being rated, the Argentinian Federation had written to FIDE by way of the Swiss embassy citing UN resolutions in relation to the Falklands' status. As far as a MP was aware FIDE were not intending to change their original decision or take the matter any further. The Board agreed that the ECF should look to involve the newly formed Falklands Chess Club as much as possible in future events and activities.

(e) Women's Chess (CF) – There were no additions to CF's earlier report.

16. A.O.B. Advised to Chair:

- Relaxing of Rating Limitations for FIDE Rated Events (AH) – The Board noted that AH and Laurent Freyd of the French Chess Federation were intending to prepare a submission to FIDE recommending that all events with games lasting more than an hour be eligible for FIDE rating regardless of the rating of the players in those events.
- DM Reps Including outcome of Elections and Potential Appointment of Platinum Representative (JC/ NT) – NT explained that all DM representative positions had been filled by the normal process with the exception of one of the Platinum representative positions which was still open. John Wickham had offered to take on this position and John's appointment was approved by the Board subject to approval by the Council Chair. The Board noted that it was no longer a requirement for member representatives to have the same membership category as the category they were representing.

An action was agreed for NT to write to Mike Gunn to seek his approval for this appointment.

Date and Time of Next Board Meeting: 6th September 2019 London

There being no other business the meeting closed at 3.45 pm.

