



**Minutes of the 132nd Board Meeting of the English Chess Federation
06th September, 2019
11.30a.m. – 5.00p.m.**

Hamilton House, Mabledon PI, London WC1H 9BD

Members:

President, Dominic Lawson		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, David Thomas	Apologies	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
Mike Gunn, Chair ECF Council		MG
Office Manager, Gary Willson		GW
Meetings Secretary, Nigel Towers		NT
Robert Willmoth, Barnet Knights and Chess Coaching		RW

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

2. **Appointments**

JC was appointed as Chair. There were no alternate Director appointments.

3. **[Item 3 redacted]**

4. **Approvals**

The agenda was agreed and the minutes of the 131st Board meeting were approved.

5. **Matters Arising and Review of Progress against Board Action Plan.**



It was noted that JD had provided a paper on Lottery funding.

The Board action plan was reviewed and updated.

A new action was agreed for RS to circulate the register of members' interests and ask for positive confirmation that all members' declarations were up to date.

A further action was agreed for the Awards Committee vacancy to be publicised in the next newsletter.

Board members were reminded the monthly newsletter was an important element of the Board's overall communication strategy, and that they should provide Mark Rivlin with timely updates for the newsletter to ensure that content was as comprehensive as possible.

6. Consideration of the Agenda for the Forthcoming Council Meeting (MG)

The draft agenda for Council was reviewed with some minor amendments agreed including reordering of agenda items to bring together the Board's report to Council and strategy/business plan paper. It was noted that the agenda and Council papers were due for distribution by 18th September at the latest.

JC was actioned to contact TH to ask him to prepare a report to Council as outgoing Chair of the Finance Committee.

7. Chair of Finance Post (MT)

It was noted that there was only one nominee to date for the Chair of the Finance Committee role. CF was asked to consider whether he wished to identify and put forward a female candidate for the role on behalf of the Board.

8. Strategy/ Business Plan and Board Report to Council (MT)

MT tabled the draft strategy/business plan report and Board report to Council and asked for comments from Board members.

9. Calendar for 2019/20 (JC)

JC's updated calendar of meetings was tabled for discussion. JC agreed to come back with a slightly revised calendar for the next Board meeting on 12th October. This is to include revisions to move the meeting on 4th September 2020 and to avoid clashes with 4NCL events. It was noted that it was more important to secure the attendance of as many Board members as possible than to hold Board meetings on the same weekday throughout the year.

10. Progress on Recruitment of Female Board Member (JC)



JC tabled a draft job specification for a new non-executive director position. JD and DE expressed concern that it might be better to look to females to take on existing roles rather than create a new role. RS suggested that a new non-executive director role might be more appropriate but should be focussed on broader non-chess related experience.

It was agreed that the job specification should not be progressed for the moment and instead CF with the Board's support should look to identify female candidates and roles at Board level and for some of the unfilled manager positions.

11. Update on Monthly Grading (DT) (Written Report)

MT and NT explained that a specification was being developed for the proposed new monthly grading system, taking as its base the work that had been done a year or so ago on the subject. The Welsh Chess Union were also intending to develop a new rating system, and a joint project team had been put together to develop an appropriate system based on an existing open source implementation.

12. Finance Report (DE)

DE tabled his finance report and accounts to date.

13. Report on British Chess Championships (AE)

AE reported that this year's British Championship went very well, and with no major problems.

Torquay was popular with the players and there were very few negatives.

Micky Adams won the Open championship, with 7.5/9. David Howell chased him the whole way and finished in 2nd on 7/9. The Women's Champion was Jovanka Houska, on 6/9 comfortably clear of Katarzyna Toma on 4.5/9.

It was agreed that the ECF should continue to invest in the British Chess Championships and, while aiming to make a small surplus if a suitable sponsor could be found, accept that they might need to make a loss if existing standards were to be maintained.

AE reported that two potential venues for the 2020 British had been lost at short notice due to unacceptable price increases being imposed by the venues at short notice, and as a result it had been decided that the event would return to Torquay. The event has been scheduled so that the main championships will finish on 24th July to allow time for players to travel to the Olympiad. The second week's schedule should provide opportunities for increased junior participation.

14. Engagement with Junior Organisers (RW)



RW presented his proposed approach to increasing levels of engagement with junior chess organisers. Key points were as follows:

There are 100s of junior organisers involved with English chess who are not generally much engaged with the ECF as their national federation.

RW had conducted a survey of these organisers with key findings as follows:

- There is a significant disconnect between the ECF and grass roots junior coaches / organisers and amongst different groups of coaches/ organisers;
- There is considerable demand for a training and accreditation structure to replace the discontinued accredited coaches scheme;
- Recent increases in game fee have not been well received and were causing some organisers to consider withdrawing their events from ECF grading.

RW outlined a number of proposals to address the perceived issues including:

- Introduction of junior incentive programmes for organisers;
- Significant increases in junior membership based on organiser incentives, reduced membership joining fees, and added value offers/ services for junior members (eg discounted ChessKid.com memberships);
- Introduction of set fees for junior events as an alternative to game fees. The set fee would apply for events which used a templated entry form, and would be waived if all entrants were ECF junior members.
- Grading of events in schools;
- Rebuilding a credible coaching and qualifications scheme.

There was a wide-ranging discussion of the various proposals.

The Board thanked RW for his presentation and actions were agreed for:

- NT to work with RW to develop a more detailed implementation plan for engaging with organisers, helping to grow junior membership, and providing improved junior membership offers based on Rob's proposals;
- AH to work with RW on reviewing options for a re-engineered coaching and qualifications scheme.

15. Proposed Updates to Constitutional Documents (RS)



RS outlined proposed changes to the Articles and Bye Law 2 which are to be put to Council in October and asked for comments by the weekend.

16. Membership Applications from Bolton and District Chess League and Richmond Junior Chess Club (JC/ NT)

The Board approved membership applications for BDCL and Richmond JCC.

17. Directors' Reports against Action Plans

- (a) Membership (DT) – DT had provided a written report on the renewals process and of direct debits implementation which was noted.
- (b) Home Chess (AE) – AE had nothing to add to his earlier report on the British Chess Championships.
- (c) Junior Chess (AH) – AH had submitted a written report which was noted. The Board agreed with AH that there should be no entry for the World School Championships in Peru and that other tournaments would take priority.
- (d) International (MP) – MP indicated that the ECF had entered an Open and a Women's team in the European Team Championships in Batumi, Georgia in October. The open team is seeded third, with England now having five players in the world top 100.

Malcolm also reported that Matthew Wadsworth had achieved a GM norm in the 4NCL and that a number of new English IM awards had been confirmed by FIDE.

There were also three English players in the Chess World Cup to be held in Khanty-Mansiysk, Russia from 9 September to 4 October 2019.

- (e) Women's Chess (CF) – CF reported back on the highly successful Women's Festival and English Women's Championship in Hull. The championship included a much increased prize fund with new trophies. CF expressed his thanks to the support that had been given by Hull and District Chess Association, Hull City Council and Hull Culture & Leisure.





CF said that he was looking forward to running the Festival and Championship again next year.

The board agreed to a vote of thanks to Stephen Greep for his support to the Women's Festival and Championship.

MT noted that the 4NCL Women's League was due to start in October with close to 100 expressions of interest and over 30 entrants so far. The inaugural weekend would be held at Holiday Inn Kenilworth/Warwick.

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

There was no AOB.

Date and Time of Next Board Meeting: 12^h October 2019, Thistle City Barbican, London

There being no other business the meeting closed at 5.30 pm.

