



English Chess Federation

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Dear Council Delegate,

Firstly, my apologies for not attending the meeting. I will be representing the ECF at the Global Chess Festival in Budapest this weekend. In my election address I would like to cover the main achievements in International as well as highlight the continuing challenges and ask you for your support.

Since the last Council meeting, in addition to the work in International and as FIDE delegate, I have supported and will continue to support Adrian Elwin, Chris Fegan and Alex Holowczak in Home, Women and Junior respectively. I have managed to attend nearly every board meeting as well as represent the ECF at European Chess Union and FIDE gatherings.

Achievements

The highlight was the silver medal at the World Team Championships to which we were only invited because of our excellent placing of 5th at the Chess Olympiad in 2018. This was a remarkable result, our best in nearly 20 years and a fabulous reward for the support of our international teams. It was made all the more remarkable because we had only four of our top six players in the team plus Jon Speelman who is largely retired. We ended behind the Russians with whom we drew 2-2 and ahead of India and China! Michael Adams, Luke McShane, Gawain Jones and David Howell all played superbly.

England Over 65 team also won silver at the World Teams in Rhodes, congratulations to the team of IM Robert Bellin, IM Nigel Povah, FM Tony Stebbings (5/7!) Ian Snape (6/8!) and John Quinn.

We've had several new English IMs this year and a GM norm, but no titles and seeking opportunities for our best U25s will be one of my priorities at the London Chess Classic which I am pleased to advise will also support the ECF by including the 1st Women and Girls English Rapid Championships for which I have raised funds.

England rose to 11th in the world rankings on the back of the successes in the World Team and the good form of Gawain Jones, David Howell and Luke McShane.

Sponsorship

I note the Bronze representative to this meeting recently sent out a missive to Bronze members saying I had said I would resign if I did not raise sponsorship, he clearly has a short memory and I'm sorry to dash his hopes. To add to the £25,000 I secured from Jupiter Asset Management for 2016, please add the best part of £20,000 to support the team to go to Kazakhstan for the World Teams. This sponsorship also enabled us to hire a top-class analyst to give the team an edge in pre-match preparation. I continue to try and ensure we retain a small core of professional players to inspire future generations. The days when the weekend circuit could support players are long gone.

Challenges

The main challenge is to create some new GMs and particularly some strong enough to challenge for places in the international Open and Women's teams. This is one of my published KPIs which has not been achieved. Our performances in international junior events continue to be average at best, perhaps that's even putting it kindly. We do have some excellent prospects at ages 10-12 and we need to focus on supporting them. To that end, the initiative of the Chess Trust in setting up the Accelerator was excellent and I continue to be involved in that. It's clear that despite our international team's remarkable form this year and the rise to 11th in the rankings, within five years we will inevitably fall unless we replace those getting towards or passed 50. Availability of players for competitions is an issue with the Women's team, but we have added Katarzyna Toma who as you may have noticed at the British, is a highly accomplished player.

Budget

In the last 18 months, there has been more management information readily available from the accounting software which makes managing the budget a lot easier. At the last Board meeting I confirmed with David Eustace that expenditure was slightly under budget for the last year. My thanks to delegates at the last Finance Council for approving the budget for the coming years. As well as enabling us to field teams in Open Women's and Senior events, the budget also allows me to provide a little support for players in the world championship cycle, for those seeking norms and to help stage international events like the 4NCL FIDE rated international and the Northumbria Masters. Far more could be done, but funds do not permit. My thanks again to our sponsors who supplemented the budget.

FIDE Matters

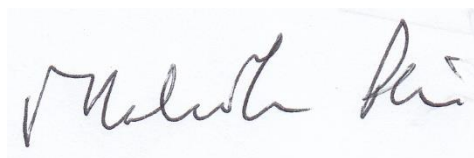
There have been some additional challenges with the staging of clandestine tournaments on the Falkland Islands by the Argentine Chess Federation. Together with ECF President Dominic Lawson, whose contacts with government were invaluable, and Nigel Short, with whom I now have a decent working relationship after the election turbulence, a significant diplomatic success was achieved at the Presidential Board where a supportive resolution was passed. These proceedings led to the formation of a chess club on Stanley which has since met and we are planning to involve them in the new ECF online offering.

Generally, the new FIDE administration has instituted some improvements, you may have seen the new website. Some fees to the ECF and to participants in junior events are being reduced. The main challenge is to find some western sponsors which is clearly a work in progress in which I have recently been asked to assist. Most major events announced, save for those being organised by Agon such as the Grand Prix, are still in Russia or former Soviet republics.

Hastings

I could have included this in achievements, but I was only one of many who have contributed. I want to take this opportunity to thank GM Simon Williams, and from the Hastings Committee; Pam Thomas and Stewart Reuben whose work was invaluable in securing new sponsorship from Caplin Systems and securing the congress. The end of Hastings would have been a terrible blow and I hope that in 2020/21 it can be restored to its traditional format of an all play all and an Open. I want to put on the record my thanks to Stewart not only for this but also for his untiring work in organising the senior teams. I also want to thank the chap who I met outside the Riviera Centre during the British who had prepared some leaflets to fund raise for Hastings. I was delighted to be able to tell him the sponsorship had been secured just a few hours earlier!

My thanks to you for your support.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Malcolm Pein', written on a light-colored background.

Malcolm Pein