

What made you take up the social media role and how are you settling in?

When I heard about the role it was a 'no-brainer' to put myself forward! I love chess, and have always been fascinated by social media – both its pros and the cons. I am evangelical about the benefits of chess for adults and children and relished the opportunity to become more involved with the ECF. I believe I'm settling in well. Everybody has been very helpful in making it a smooth transition.

Phil Makepeace had managed to get an excellent 7,500 followers on Twitter and you have made a great start in getting the number to around 8,300 (around 100 per month since you took over). How are you reaching out to people on Twitter and Facebook?

Any approach to social media has to be flexible. However, I should say from the outset that I believe gaining followers should be a by-product of what we do and not a front of mind obsession. I think regular activity is the key, particularly with Twitter. I try to post content of interest and of use to ECF members and potential members. Although we have a lot of followers from overseas I try to focus in the main on UK oriented content.

I believe one of the main roles of the ECF social media accounts is to help publicise the activities of chess clubs and congresses in the UK and so I often retweet posts that relate to these events. On a tangent, I invite all clubs to let me know if they have chess-related content they want help publicising either by emailing me at socialmedia@englishchess.org.uk or putting @ecfchess on specific tweets Our Facebook posts are more focused and less frequent. Many of them relate to ECF announcements.

Do you liaise with our women's and juniors' social media accounts?

ECF women and ECF juniors have their own accounts, which are operated by Chris Fegan and Dr John Higgs respectively. If there is something important that they want me to highlight they will endeavour to notify me so that I can post to a wider audience.

What are your goals for ECF social media?

I am always striving for more ways to increase engagement without being controversial or opinionated. Not every post will interest everyone but metrics suggest that nearly all our posts get a decent level of engagement. Some watchwords I keep in mind are inform, encourage, and support. I also see social media as providing an easily accessible point of contact.

Aside from getting messages out to ECF members, how are you reaching out to the casual chess world and to people who don't actually play, but know how to?

I'm always on the lookout for content that is of general interest. I have set up

alerts for relevant keywords and get notified of new content and news which I scan each day. Many of these items are of interest to less experienced players. I have also set up a Twitter list of English clubs that makes it easier to spot items of interest such as events for juniors and local club nights inviting new members. I would be delighted to hear from clubs that want to be added to this list on Twitter, which you can find by going to @ecfchess and then to the ECF Chess Clubs list.

There are some great initiatives in chess at the moment; the new Pro University League, the excellent London Summer League and the recent World Prisons Championship played online. How important is social media in getting the message across for these kinds of initiatives.

They are very important. Posts about these events get some of our best engagement metrics. Not just likes, retweets, replies and shares but we also get a good idea of how many people have clicked on the links in the posts and these types of initiatives you mention do very well on click-throughs.