

Minutes of the 135th Board Meeting of the English Chess Federation
20th December, 2019
11.30a.m. – 5.00 p.m.
Hamilton House, Mabledon Place, London, WC1H 9BD

Members:

President, Dominic Lawson	Apologies	DL
Chief Executive, Mike Truran		MT
Director of Finance, David Eustace		DE
Director of Junior Chess, Alex Holowczak		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	Apologies	JD
Non-Executive Director, Stephen Woodhouse	Apologies	SW
Director of Women's Chess, Chris Fegan		CF

Invited: Observers and Guests

Chairman, Finance Committee, Nick Faulks	NF
Chairman, Governance Committee, Robert Stern	RS
Meetings Secretary, Nigel Towers	NT

1. Apologies for absence

Absences were noted as above.

2. Appointment of Chair

JC was appointed as Chair

3. Approval of the Agenda

The agenda was approved with agreed amendments.

4. Minutes of 134th Board Meeting

The minutes were approved with agreed amendments.

5. Women's Directorate Positions



CF noted that as outlined at the previous meeting, the women's directorate has no pre-approved positions as it has only recently been established. CF said that he would put together a list of the posts he believed were required for the next 12 months for approval. He expected that these would include:

- WRO
- Social Media Officer
- Consultation Manager
- Others to be agreed

CF advised that he was intending to put together job specifications for the roles and it was agreed that TW would continue to work with CF in an ex officio capacity to support women's recruitment until the job specifications and posts were agreed.

MT agreed to contact TW to advise him of the situation.

6. Decision on the Post of Development Officer (MT)

It was agreed that appointment of a Development Officer should be deferred until a suitable point during 2020.

7. [Item 7 redacted]

8. Matters Arising and review of Action Point Spreadsheet (JC/ NT)

The actions spreadsheet was reviewed and updated with progress to date.

Anti-Cheating - It was noted that leagues and associations are keen to see ECF anti-cheating guidelines and the Board agreed that AE should publish his draft document on the website before 31st December as a draft for feedback.

KPI development - The development of KPIs was discussed in some detail. It was noted that membership and international KPIs were completed and published on the website. women's chess KPIs and targets were ready in draft and would be published following the consultation process launched at the Women's Empowerment Conference. Other directorates were invited to provide draft KPIs for discussion.

Library/ DMU – MT reported that a draft contract had been prepared with De Montfort University (DMU) and was in the final stages of review. Subject to that contract, the ECF Library will hopefully be moved to DMU in the first half of 2020. The contract is a 20 year agreement subject to cancellation by either side.



Internet Chess - The board noted good progress with the Internet Chess Project with the service expected to go live during week commencing 6th January. NT was actioned to provide the Internet Chess publicity pack to MP for comment and any additions in advance of the launch, and the board offered a vote of thanks to NT for his work in this area.

9. Junior Organiser Engagement (NT)

NT provided an update on the Junior Organiser Engagement project on behalf of Rob Willmoth and himself. Key points were as follows:

- Junior Organiser ECF Pages/ Added Value Services – Work has started on potential developments for the ECF Certificate of Excellence web pages and ECF online assessment.
- Schools Offer and 'S' Rating – Discussions are continuing on the 'S' rating (Schools Grade) format which will be either a 4 digit Elo rating or a banding scheme along the lines of the USCF A-H rating classes, or both (4 digit rating plus class). There has been no progress on the ratings platform or data capture mechanisms.
- Game Fee Replacement – The proposal for replacement of game fees is being reviewed and amended from various perspectives including financial impact, membership impact, organiser preferences and operational considerations.

The board agreed nem con that work should continue on the engagement plan including game fee replacement. It was proposed that game fee replacement should be progressed with further work on the financial model / event charging levels and a proof of concept / trial which would be carried out in advance of the April Council. RS confirmed that this could be supported with a waiver to the relevant Game Fee Bye Law. Approval would then be sought for the change at the April Council Meeting if justified by the proof of concept/trial. The proposed approach was agreed nem con.

10. Monthly Grading (NT/ DT)

NT provided a report on monthly grading progress on behalf of DT and himself. Key points were as follows:

- Draft requirements specifications are now available for all areas of the system. The submissions interface specification is also ready for consultation with system owners.
- The system implementation has been split into database application, ratings engine and web publishing system.



- The open source package will not be used for the implementation due to lack of developer support and low functional fit with requirements. The implementation will therefore be a custom build with significant areas of reuse from existing systems.
- The coding team still needs to be assembled with a core developer plus volunteers.
- Implementation cost estimates are under review. Initial discussions indicate that costs will need agreement at April Council and / or PIF/Chess Trust support.
- The delivery timescale is currently estimated at around three months from start of build in January 2020 to core system delivery, and a further three months before system ready for operations – i.e. January start build for July/ August delivery / Initial Operating Capability.

The Board noted the progress report and there was some discussion of how to fund the potential implementation costs. The Board's view was that one approach might be for the funds to be requested from the Chess Trust after transfer from the PIF trustees, if necessary and once the total spend requirements were clarified.

NT was actioned to draft a request for volunteers to support the implementation team to be published on the ECF web site and included in the January newsletter and on social media.

11. Directors' Reports

I. Director of Women's Chess

CF reported on the very successful Women's Empowerment Conference held as part of the London Chess Classic. He noted that the event was supported by colleagues from the USCF, and noted that female participation levels in the USA were well ahead of those in England and many other European countries. CF noted that the conference was a great success and that there was now a lot of material on the conference website. He intended to refine the women's chess development plan following the consultations at the conference and make the completed document available at the April Council meeting.

It was agreed that JC should continue with his action to look for female director candidates.

[Sentence Redacted.] There was some discussion of Board positions which would become vacant in 2020 and whether female candidates could be sought for one or more of these.



II. Director of Junior Chess

AH reported on progress in a number of areas including support for the CSC events at the London Chess Classic.

III. Director of Membership

DT had submitted the latest membership stats in advance of the meeting. It was noted that paying membership was up 10% year on year. Although this was an encouraging trend, MT noted that the statistics were of limited use without a commentary and this was not available with the figures.

NT was actioned to look at developing an enhanced junior membership pack based on the organiser engagement activities and with support from AH and Alex Longson.

IV. International Director

MP reported on the London Chess Classic which had included an ECF endorsed female tournament for the first time with 51 entrants and 46 playing. The prize money for the tournament was funded by CSC. MP had also made the qualifiers and knockout competitions more aligned with ECF and CSC objectives including encouraging participation from u25s and female competitors. Marcus Harvey had achieved a TPR of 2697 in the qualifiers and had almost eliminated Mickey Adams in the British Knockout. There were no IM norms from the competition but overall it had been a very positive event.

MP reported that as a result of CF's grant, the 4NCL was now offering free places for female players in 4NCL events.

MP also reported that English teams had won bronze and silver medals at the European Team Championships in Batumi.

[Sentence redacted.]

V. Director of Finance



DE provided management accounts for 2018/2019 and accounts to date for 2019/2020. He reported that the Women's Directorate and International had all been within budget for 2018/2019. The British Championship had made a higher than expected loss of £9.5k. Overall the ECF had made a loss of £67k compared with a forecast loss of £50k. DE asked for all directors to review their areas and provide comments during January in good time for the annual audit which was due to start in February.

The management accounts for 2018/2019 and 2019/2020 to date were noted.

DE indicated that he would be providing updated copies of these accounts for subsequent Board meetings and would also be producing outline budgets for 2020/2021 and 2021/2022.

VI. Director of Home Chess

- AE noted that Alan Atkinson had been appointed as the new Manager of Arbiters. Following discussions with Guaranteed Events AE has visited Norbreck Castle Hotel in Blackpool as a potential venue for the 2020 British Championships and CF suggested that the ECF could seek support from Blackpool Council as Stephen Greep had done with the Hull British Championships.

AE was actioned to contact Stephen Greep to ask whether he would be willing to provide advice and support etc, and also to discuss accommodation arrangements with Guaranteed Events/ Bridge Overseas.

AE reported that Kettering would not be able to host the County Championship finals and he was currently looking for a replacement.

12.AOB

- ECF Web Site

MT advised that Andrew Walker had been asked to review items before publication and highlight any concerns to MT before adding new documents to the website. MT also said that he had asked Mark Rivlin (MR) and Danny Rosenbaum (DR) to review newsletter and social media content before publication.



It was agreed that MT will also talk to DR about taking on a more formal role as deputy webmaster and should be involved in a checking process.

- Arbiter Licence Fees

AH reported that FIDE are now enforcing their scheme to charge for arbiter licences. It was agreed that the ECF should pay the current licence fee invoice presented by FIDE, but should raise a formal objection to this new development. AH agreed to draft a motion to this effect for MP to propose at the February FIDE General Assembly.

- Hastings

MP proposed a formal vote of thanks to John Ashworth of Caplan Systems for supporting the Hastings Congress which now has 20 GMs playing, and expressed the hope that a return to the former all-play-all format for the top section at Hastings might be possible in 2020/2021.

13. Date and Time of next Board Meeting: 24th January 2020, Birmingham

There being no other business the Board meeting closed at 17-00.

