

Report of the ECF Non-Executive Directors, Julian Clissold, Stephen Woodhouse and Julie Denning**Report to Council October 2020**

The Board has met eleven times in the year since October 2019. Council Attendance has been slightly below 90%. There have been no significant patterns in non-attendance.

The Board strengthened its position by the addition of a Secretary who subsequently was made the Manager for On-Line Chess (May 2020). This was consistent with a stated Board priority. The provision of secretarial support has enhanced many of the routine functions of the Board. The Board has been less successful in extending the gender balance of the Board (a Board priority) and this remains work in progress. The Board has made significant improvements in its stated aim of getting Board agendas out as required.

Following the Covid 19 Pandemic, Board meetings have been held successfully on Zoom.

Board meetings have received reports from all the directorates. These have notably included monthly financial reports and monthly reports on Membership. Both of these were Board priorities.

The conduct of Board meetings has been difficult this year. The principal, but not the only, cause of dissension followed a complaint about the appointment process for a Development Officer. The complaint included suggestions that Board Members had acted inappropriately in the conduct of the appointment. Many Board members noted that relations between members were strained and at their lowest point as a result of the complaint. The complaint questioned the integrity of Board Members and others and indeed criticised the behaviour of the Board as a whole. Following some well-judged shuttle diplomacy, a rapprochement was achieved but it is probably the case that the content and the source of the complaint retain a significant potential to divide the Board. Before and since this episode there have been other matters that have led to strong disagreements. We are in the process of developing a code of conduct with the intent of regulating board relations. This should help regulate Board relations.

In a more positive vein, the decision by the Board to drive forward on On-Line Chess has seen a very well planned and progressive development of ECF On-Line chess. The Director of Junior Chess and the Manager for On-Line Chess have taken this forward with some success.

Four Board members complete their terms in October 2020; David Eustace (Director of Finance), David Thomas (Director of Membership), Julie Denning (Non-Executive Director) and Adrian Elwin (Director of Home Chess). They have each decided not to stand again. The Board recognises their individual contributions and their commitment to the ECF. They have our thanks.