

**ECF Election Statement - Home Director**

I am standing for office as Director of Home Chess as I believe the role is an important one for English chess, and I feel I am well placed to take on the challenges that we face as a chess community. I would look to work in a collaborative way with ECF board colleagues and officers building on my experience as ECF Secretary. In particular I would work closely with the current Home Director who would take on a role as ECF Events Manager, and with the Membership Director to help to grow the ECF's membership and attract new players.

As Director of Home Chess I would focus on five main areas which I feel are critical for English chess as below.

1. Supporting a safe return to OTB chess

This would include re-establishing ECF OTB events as and when it is safe to do so given the ongoing pandemic, including the British Championship and recently established events such as the Online Blitz Championships and English Seniors. This will take time and could include different types of hybrid event including National events with online group stages and an OTB final, or OTB leagues or competitions with a mix of online and OTB venues. I would also look to share guidance and best practice on when and how to return to OTB chess in a safe way given the situation at the time and recognising differing circumstances at regional and club level.

2. Building on and developing the current online chess offering from the ECF

The objective of ECF online has been to provide members with the opportunity to play competitive online rated chess at ECF club, national and international level, and to establish competitive online chess as an effective way of engaging new members and supporters from all demographics.

I developed and implemented our current ECF online offering and have been running it for over a year with support from a core team. The system has been very well received with ECF members clubs on chess.com and lichess having close to 2,000 members in aggregate, 3,500 members in the open club, and well subscribed Junior and Women's Club. We run regular club events and national competitions including the Online Blitz Championship, National Clubs and Online English Counties and take part in a number of international leagues. We have also developed an online rating system with monthly ECF online rating lists.

Our main areas for development will be to continue to grow the members' clubs towards the scale of the largest federations (eg the USCF and Russia), and to expand our ECF Online events including new online championships and internationals.

3. Engaging more with chess organisers, leagues, clubs and members

I believe this is another critical area for home chess. My objective would be to engage with organisers, leagues and clubs by way of the ECF mailing list and discussion groups to increase participation from all demographics in competitive chess in all formats (OTB and online), and across a range of venues including traditional clubs, libraries, social venues and online chess.

4. Supporting the implementation and operation of the new monthly rating system

I project managed the implementation of the new system which is going live in September. Areas which I would look to develop are relaunching the Master Points system to support national titles and helping to provide an integrated rating system with OTB and online grades shown side by side as per the USCF model.

5. Broadening and strengthening the ECF volunteer organisation in areas related to Home Chess.

Director of Home Chess is a central role within the ECF. I would look to work as a collegiate member of the Board of Directors to support the good working of the Board and the ECF and I ask for your support.

My Chess CV: I played competitive chess at school and university and returned to playing in 1993. I have been a keen player since then and am a member of two local clubs, taking part in local leagues and numerous congresses. I am also the treasurer of Warwickshire Chess Association, Secretary to the ECF board for the last three years, Project Manager for the ECF's new monthly rating system, and ECF Manager of Online Chess. I have also been a joint organiser for various ECF OTB events including the English Online Blitz Championships, the English Seniors Championships and the English Seniors team events.

Nigel Towers

Birmingham,

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