

**Minutes of the 141st Board Meeting of the English Chess Federation
Friday 27th November 2020
Zoom Meeting
2.30- 4.30 pm**

Members:

President, Dominic Lawson	APOL	DL
Chief Executive, Mike Truran		MT
Director of Finance, Adam Ashton		AA
Director of Women's Chess, Chris Fegan		CF
Director of Junior Chess, Alex Holowczak (MT as alternate)	APOL	AH
Director of International Chess, Malcolm Pein		MP
Director of Home Chess, Nigel Towers		NT
Director of Membership, Rob Willmoth		RW
Non-Executive Chairman, Julian Clissold		JC
Non-Executive Director, Natasha Regan		NR
Non-Executive Director, Stephen Woodhouse		SW

Invited: Observers and Guests

Chairman, Governance Committee, Robert Stern		RS
Chairman, Finance Committee, Nick Faulks		NF
Meetings Secretary, Danny Rosenbaum		DR
Observer, Aga Milewska		AM

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were noted as above.

2. Agenda

The agenda was approved.

3. Minutes of 140th Board Meeting and Outstanding Actions

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved with an addition made covering the award of lifetime membership to Steve Bush in recognition of his contribution to the monthly rating project.

Outstanding actions:

AP 139.01 NT reported that this was still in progress.

AP 139.02 CF reported that this was still in progress. NT suggested that he and DR could kickstart the process by drafting a suggested page.

AP 139.04 RW to progress with a renewal email as soon as possible to include mention of the British Championships, with further emails (including possibly a letter by post in the New Year) expanding on the various benefits available to members.



AP139.06-09 All completed.

AP140.01 Completed.

AP140.02 NT and RW to agree approach with Brian Valentine and if appropriate include in Matt Carr's responsibilities.

AP140.03 NT reported in progress.

AP140.06 Completed.

AP140.07 Completed. JC noted that the ECF Safeguarding team had met (26/11/2020) and their considerations would be reported to future board meetings. He further noted that current Safeguarding Policies and Procedures will continue to be updated in line with the legislative requirements and best practice.

AP140.08 RW, AH, NT and AA to review the financial implications of setting up a school grading system and of introducing a set fee structure as a potential replacement of the current game fee arrangements.

4. Financial Position/ Membership Renewals/ New Member Update – AA, RW

AA presented the Finance Director's report.

RW provided a membership update later in the meeting under 'Directors' Reports',

5. Monthly Rating – NT, RW

According to NT players were starting to lose ratings because so little OTB chess had been played during 2020. NT informed the Board that the problem had been rectified by extending the calculation periods by 12 months to four years for each category.

NT took the Board through the Rating System Support section of the Home Director's report.

6. ECF Online Report – NT

NT ran through the Online Chess section of the Director of Home Chess's report. He highlighted that the Junior Online Counties run by AH had been very successful and had operated a policy of requiring at least 50% of the players to be female. This had worked well.

7. Governance Matters – RS

RS confirmed that the issues of online voting and directors' terms were both being worked on by the Governance Committee with a view to consulting with Council members and presenting proposals to the Finance Council meeting in April 2021.

8. British Championship Update – NT

NT reported that there had been around 100 entries so far (in the first week since it went public), and that we were aiming for 750-1000 entries.

In terms of publicity MP suggested getting chess.com to do a blog post in addition to mailing their UK members. It was agreed to spend an initial sum of £100 on Facebook advertisements for the British Chess Championships.

AP141.01 NT to liaise with DR to implement Facebook campaign for the British Championships. NT to liaise with chess.com about publicity.

NT reported that we have a good pool of arbiters but we needed more cover. In response to CF's query about the gender balance of the arbiters NT confirmed that he was hoping for around 5 females out of 15-20 arbiters in total.

AA asked whether the British Championships venue in 2021 could be deferred to 2022 if needed at no financial detriment to the ECF. NT said he would discuss with Kevin Staveley.

AP141.02 NT to discuss with Kevin Staveley whether the 2021 British Championships could be deferred to 2022 if needed.

9. ECF Board Code of Conduct - SW JC

SW presented the Memorandum for Directors. CF raised queries regarding the wording of the final paragraph about social media and it was agreed to drop the paragraph in question and adopt the code thus amended.

AP141.03 SW to revise document as agreed and have it posted on the website - DR to place in OwnCloud.

10. Diversity and Inclusion – NR

NR suggested that she set up a small group from inside and outside the Board to come up with practical approaches to the issue of diversity. This was agreed by the Board.

AP141.04 NR to pursue establishing Diversity Advisory Group.

11. Free Membership for New Joining Females - CF

CF talked about the ECF building on the success of The Queen's Gambit in generating interest in chess. RS explained that free membership was not allowed to be given without the agreement of Council but this did not apply to supporters or giving free entry to events. MT reminded the Board that girls can already join the ECF for free under the free Junior Silver membership scheme. It was agreed that RW and NT would come up with a framework of the free offer for females as soon as possible and that this would then be turned into a press release by Mark Rivlin, with DR and MP helping to distribute to the various journalists who have covered the Queen's Gambit and others. It would be positioned as one of various proactive initiatives the ECF are taking.

AP141.05 RW and NT to agree the free offer wording for new female supporters and involve MP, Mark Rivlin and DR as needed.

12. Appointments: Board Secretary – JC

JC introduced Danny Rosenbaum whom he had appointed Board Secretary.

13. Directors' Reports

a. Finance – AA – see item 4 above

AA reported that the membership income for the year to date was £108,766 compared to £178,906 for the same period last year. He asserted that the drop in renewals was predictable given the pandemic.

NF asked about the status of moving the library away from the office and MT reported that good progress was being made.

b. Membership – RW – see item 4 above.

RW reported that although adult gold, silver and bronze memberships were understandably down from last year, there were nevertheless hopeful signs: membership was increasing week on week and there was an anticipated increase in membership as a result of the Caplin British Online Chess Championships, and an increase in membership due to new incentives being offered.

c. Home Chess – NT

NT took the Board through the items in his report not already covered. A Return to Play working group had been established and in response to a query from CF, NT said that he would welcome female member(s) to join the group and welcomed suggestions as to whom to approach. NT also reported that an accessible chess web page had been set up

d. Women's Chess – CF – verbal report.

e. International Chess – MP

MP expressed his appreciation of Caplin sponsoring the British Championships and mentioned that he had secured sponsorship for a couple of norm tournaments.

f. Junior Chess – AH

AH's Junior Selection Policy was approved nem con. The Board asked that AH consider amending the balance of the selection committee with a view to a more diverse membership. 141/06 AH to address the balance and diversity of the Junior Selection Committee.

The Junior Director Report noted the success of the Under 18 Online County Championship (referred to in item 6 above). The winners were Warwickshire, with Kent in 2nd place and Oxfordshire in 3rd place. In the report, AH stated: "It is my intention to run this event in 2021 as an Online event, regardless of the prevailing epidemiological circumstances at the time."

14. AOB

a. FIDE General Assembly: Iran motion – MP briefed the Board

b. FIDE General Assembly: Isle of Man application – MP briefed the Board

c. New Book of the Year judge – MT reported that Jovanka Houska had agreed to be a Book of the Year judge. This was approved by the Board.

AP141.07 MT to tell Ray Edwards that the Board had approved the appointment of Jovanka Houska as a Book of the Year judge.

Date and time of next Board meeting: 2.30 pm, Friday 22nd January 2021