

**THE MINUTES OF THE AGM OF THE ENGLISH CHESS
FEDERATION HELD ON SATURDAY 17TH OCTOBER 2020 (VIA
ZOOM) AT 1.30pm****Attendees****Representing:**

Samantha Ali	Chess in Schools and Communities
James Blair	Cambridgeshire Chess Association
Hok Chiu	Coventry & District League, Leamington & District League
David Clayton	Blackpool & Fylde League, Leyland Rapidplay, Ribble Congresses
Julian Clissold	Manchester Chess Federation, Bolton & District Chess League, Chester & District League, Bolton Easter Congress, ECF Non-Executive Chairman, PIF Trustee
Nigel Colter	Hillingdon & District League
Paul Cooksey	Berkshire Chess Association
Neill Cooper	Briant Poulter Chess League
Lorin D'Costa	ECF Gold Members Representative
Kevin Dalley	Derbyshire Chess Association
Julie Denning	ECF Non-Executive Director
Nigel Dennis	Chiltern Cup Counties League, Berks & Bucks Congress, Maidenhead Juniors, British Chess Problem Society, English Primary Schools Chess Association, National Youth Chess Association
Gareth Ellis	Lancashire Chess Association, Merseyside Chess Association, Bury and Rochdale League, Central Lancashire Chess League, Warrington & District League, Blackpool Congress, Heywood Chess Congress
Adrian Elwin	ECF Director of Home Chess
David Eustace	ECF Director of Finance, ECF Platinum Members Representative
Peter Farr	Sussex County Chess Association, Mid-Sussex League
Michael Farthing	Lancaster, Morecambe & District League, ECF Chairman of the Council
Nick Faulks	Bronowski Trophy, Croydon & District Chess League, ECF Chairman Finance Committee
Chris Fegan	North Essex Chess League, ECF Director of Women's Chess The Past Chief Executive
Michael Forster	Chess Arbiters Association
David Gilbert	Kent County Chess Association, London Public Service League
Daniel Gliddon	Coulsdon Chess Fellowship
Guy Greenland	Somerset Chess Association
Mike Gunn	Surrey/Hampshire Border League, The Past Chairman of Council
Ian Hames	Thanet & East Kent Chess League

Alex Holowczak	British Universities Chess Association, ECF Director of Junior Chess and Education
Peter Hornsby	Chess 2020
Robin Kneebone	Cornwall County Chess Association
Alan Leary	Herefordshire Chess Association
Alex Longson	Delancey UK Schools Chess Challenge
Steve Mann	Yorkshire Chess Association, Leeds Chess Association, Doncaster Chess Congress
Alex McFarlane	Northumberland Chess Association, Caplin Hastings International Chess Congress, Scarborough Chess Congress
Aga Milewska	ECF Bronze Members Representative
Paul Mottram	Leicestershire & Rutland Chess Association
Mark Murrell	Southern Counties Chess Union, Essex Chess Association: 2
Graham Neil	Nottinghamshire Chess Association
Malcolm Peacock	Preston Chess Congress
Malcolm Pein	Gibraltar Masters, ECF President, ECF Director of International Chess, The FIDE Delegate, PIF Trustee
Adam Raouf	Golders Green Congress, Hampstead Congress, King's Place Chess Festival
Stewart Reuben	ECF Vice Presidents Representative
John Reyes	Midland Counties Chess Union, Dorset County Chess Association, Shropshire Chess Association, Bournemouth & District League, North Circular League, South East Lancashire League, Stockport & District Chess League, Stockport Rapidplay League, Torbay Chess League, East Devon Congress, Stockport Rapidplay Chess Congress, ECF Silver Members Representative
Mark Rivlin	London Chess League
Paul Sharratt	Staffordshire Chess Association, Worcestershire Chess Association, Cannock & District Chess League, Dudley & District League, North Staffordshire & District Chess Association, Wolverhampton & District Chess League, Worcester & District Chess League
Paul Shepherd	Surrey County Chess Association, Surrey Congress Ltd
Peter Sherlock	Lincolnshire Chess Association
Michael Siddle	Darlington & District Chess League
Chris Skulte	ECF Bronze Members Representative
Robert Stern	Central London League, Pimlico Summer Tournament ECF Chairman Governance Committee
Claire Summerscale	4 Nations Chess League
David Thomas	Birmingham & District League, ECF Director of Membership
Nigel Towers	Warwickshire Chess Association, Southend-on-Sea Easter Chess Congress
Mike Truran	Oxfordshire Chess Association, Kidlington Chess Congress, Witney Congress, Witney Rapidplay, ECF Chief Executive

Brian Valentine	Bedfordshire County Chess Association
Tim Wall	Northern Counties Chess Union, Cleveland Chess Association, Cumbria Chess Association, Durham County Chess Association, Bradford and District Chess League, South Tyne Chess League, Northumbria Junior Chess Association, South Lakes Congress, ECF Silver Members Representative
Gerry Walsh	Braille Chess Association, ECF Vice Presidents Representative,
John Wickham	East Anglian Chess Union, Norfolk County Chess Association, Bury St Edmunds Congress, ECF Platinum Members Representative
Huw Williams	Thames Valley League
Robert Willmoth	Middlesex County Chess Association, City Chess Association, Barnet Knights, Chess Coaching Services, ECF Gold Members Representative
Stephen Woodhouse	ECF Non-Executive Director

Guests/Observers:

Andrew Walker (Teller), Gary Willson (Teller), Dr John Higgs (John Robinson Youth Chess Trust), Natasha Regan (candidate), Dr Stephen Greep (candidate), Adam Ashton (candidate), Danny Rosenbaum (publicity/social media).

1 Appointment of Chairman

The Chairman was present from the start of the meeting.

2 Observation of a Minute's Silence

The meeting held a minute's silence for all the members the chess community has lost in the past 12 months, including Julian Farrand.

3 Notices

(a) The attention of representatives was drawn to the ECF website for information on the details of voting entitlements, proxy notes and apologies for absence

(b) Others in attendance with the permission of the Chairman were announced.

(c) Appointment of Tellers: Due to the nature of the meeting and the need to vote electronically, the Chairman informed the meeting that four people (two members, two non-members) had agreed before-hand to be trained in the voting process and attend the meeting to perform the role of tellers. Council agreed nem con to Andrew Walker, Gary

Willson and Mike Gunn acting as tellers, and for Mark Rivlin to join them for the contested election.

4 Minutes of the Last Meeting

David Gilbert stated the minutes of the Finance Council needed clarification: at the foot of page 6, the minutes state "... a recent meeting of the London league had indicated 85% of members would not be confident to play OTB chess again at this time." This should read "...a recent meeting of the London League had indicated 85% of members of one club would not be confident to play OTB chess again at this time."

Council approved by show of hands the revised minutes of the previous meeting:

FOR: 53 AGAINST: 0

5 Matters Arising from the Minutes and not Otherwise on the Agenda.

No matters were raised for discussion.

6 To receive and Approve the Following Reports

(a) The Board of Directors' Report and to Note the Report on Women's Chess

No questions were put to the Chief Executive concerning the Board Report. The report was approved by Council by show of hands:

FOR: 51 AGAINST: 0

Chris Fegan was asked if he would change the target of ECF members being women from a percentage target to an absolute target. He declined, stating a percentage is the most appropriate way to handle the issue in the present circumstances.

Chris was further asked about the requirement for fundamental changes if we are to increase female participation. He replied he was referring to the traditional approach we all have, including to time and venues. He also stated it was for the ECF to support clubs and congresses to help make these changes, including the use of libraries.

The report from the Director of Women's chess was noted.

(b) Report from the Non-Executive Directors

Council had no further questions to Julian Clissold.

Council voted to approve the report by show of hands:

FOR: 52 AGAINST: 0

(c) The Strategy Statement and Business Plan

Alex Holowczak was asked about the strategy for junior chess in schools. He stated that one of the ECF's main objectives was to support other organisations who were better placed to increase participation in schools, such as UKCC and CSC.

Council approved by show of hands the Strategy Statement and Business Plan

FOR: 51 AGAINST: 0

(d) The Chairman of the Governance Committee's Report (Robert Stern)

There were no questions for the Chair of the Governance Committee. The report was approved by show of hands:

FOR: 54 AGAINST: 0

(e) The Chairman of the Finance Committee's Report (Nick Faulks)

Nick Faulks added that he thought the take up of memberships of 45% was better than could have been expected in the circumstances. He said that he hoped to work closely with the new Finance Director over the coming six months as the impact of Covid on chess continues to unfold.

The report was approved by show of hands:

FOR: 54 AGAINST: 0

7 To Note Special Reports on the Current State of the ECF

(a) From the Director of Membership

The Director provided Council with an oral report. Membership renewals were standing at 45% on the final totals for the previous year, but there was scope for the incoming Director to improve uptake.

The report was noted.

(b) From the Director of Finance

£101K income has been received from membership renewals. There is likely to be a significant shortfall if the situation does not improve. Staff are working reduced hours and we are looking to save costs wherever possible. We have enough funds to take us through until June 2021. The report was noted.

8 To Note Revision of Regulation No 2: The Directors and Officers Responsibilities Regulations

The minor changes to the regulations were noted (primarily the removal of the requirement for the Director of Finance to have formal accountancy qualifications provided they have relevant experience).

9 Elections**(a) Director of Finance**

Adam Ashton, nominated by Mike Truran (Chief Executive) and David Eustace (outgoing Director of Finance).

In addition to his published address, Adam added that he saw his main role for the coming year to keep the ECF finances on an even keel.

VOTES FOR: 266 VOTES AGAINST: 2

(b) Director of Home Chess

Nigel Towers, nominated by Mike Truran (Chief Executive), David Eustace, (Director of Finance) and Adrian Elwin (outgoing Director of Home Chess)

Tim Wall, nominated by Northern Counties Chess Union, Cumbria County Chess Association, Durham County Chess Association, Northumberland County Chess Association, Yorkshire County Chess Association, Northumbria Junior Chess Association, Aga Milewska, Bronze Direct Members' Representative, and Rob Willmoth, Gold Members' Representative.

In addition to their published addresses, both candidates gave an oral statement, followed by a question and answer session.

VOTES FOR NIGEL TOWERS: 168

VOTES FOR TIM WALL: 92

(c) Director of Membership

Rob Willmoth, nominated by Mike Truran (Chief Executive), Dave Thomas (outgoing Director of Membership), Middlesex County Chess Association and Lorin D'Costa, Gold Direct Members' Representative

In addition to his published address, Rob answered questions from Council members.

VOTES FOR: 229 VOTES AGAINST: 39

(d) Non-Executive Director

Natasha Regan, nominated by Mike Truran (Chief Executive), Malcolm Pein (Director of International Chess), Chris Fegan (Director of Women's Chess) and Robert Stern (Chairman of the Governance Committee)

Natasha had provided a published statement ahead of the meeting. There were no questions.

VOTES FOR: 263 VOTES AGAINST: 0

(e) Chairman of Council

Michael Farthing standing for re-election

Michael was asked about possible conflicts between his roles of Chair of Council and Voting Register Officer. He said that he did not see any conflict of interest, but that the roles both had a high level of work in the run up to Cou and that he did wish to relinquish his role as VRO. He will be working to ready the role for someone else to take over.

VOTES FOR: 272 VOTES AGAINST: 15

Following the closure of the meeting, the votes cast were re-checked, and it was found that one delegate had cast their total votes both for and against the candidate. The tellers agreed these should be discounted, and the following (had the error been identified at the time) would have been the declared vote:

VOTES FOR: 266 VOTES AGAINST: 9

(f) FIDE Delegate

Malcolm Pein standing for re-election

Malcolm answered a number of questions from Council members concerning the current state of FIDE following the election of the new President.

VOTES FOR: 268 VOTES AGAINST: 9

(g) Members of Finance Committee (this committee has no fixed size)

Ray Clark, nominated by Nick Faulks, Chairman of the Finance Committee

David Eustace, nominated by Nick Faulks, Chairman of the Finance Committee

Ray was not present as he was not available. David stated he wanted to continue to serve the ECF in a new capacity and to assist Nick.

VOTES FOR RAY CLARK: 242

VOTES FOR DAVID EUSTACE: 236

(h) Members of Governance Committee (this committee has no fixed size)

Michael Farthing, nominated by Robert Stern, Chairman of the Governance Committee

Stephen Greep, nominated by Robert Stern, Chairman of the Governance Committee.

Both candidates indicated they wanted to assist the ECF. There were no questions from Council.

VOTES FOR MICHAEL FARTHING: 248

VOTES FOR STEPHEN GREEP: 226

10 Appointment of Auditor

Note: Since publication of the agenda the Director of Finance brought forward the firm of Watson Associates of East Sussex as the suggested auditor

Watson Associates were duly appointed nem con.

11 Amendment to the Articles to Permit Online Meetings

To consider a special resolution (requiring a 75% vote in favour to be passed) from the Governance Committee concerning the option of holding future meetings of Council by virtual or partially virtual means:

Council resolves that the Articles of Association of the English Chess Federation be amended by:

1. numbering the existing article 16 as 16 (1) and inserting thereafter the following wording:

“(2) If (a) it is decided by the Chairman of the Council (or if there is no Chairman of the Council, the Board) that in light of prevailing circumstances it is impractical, undesirable or unlawful for Members (or their proxies) physically to attend a General Meeting

or (b) it is resolved by Council that a future General Meeting should not be held physically,

then Members (or their proxies) shall take part in a General Meeting by telephone conference or by using video teleconferencing equipment or by use of other equipment of like effect designed to allow everyone to take part in the meeting.

Council may also resolve that a meeting can be held with some Members (or proxies) in physical attendance and others attending by using such technology.

Taking part in a meeting by using such technology will count as being present at the meeting and will entitle the Member (or his proxy) to vote and count in the quorum and any such meeting will be deemed to take place at the place where the chairman is.”

2. inserting in article 20 after the word “place” the words “(save that the requirement to specify a place of meeting shall not apply if there is no statutory requirement to specify a place of meeting)”.

Following discussion, this was carried by a hand vote:

FOR: 49 AGAINST: 0

12 Resolution for Consequential Revision to Bye Law No 3

Council resolves that Bye-law No. 3 (the Procedural Bye-laws) be amended by inserting at the end of paragraph 2.1: “For the purposes of this paragraph 2.1, if a meeting is held virtually it shall be deemed to have taken place in the place contemplated by the two-year cycle”.

This was carried by a hand vote:

FOR: 49 AGAINST: 0

13 Amendment of the Articles concerning the re-election of Directors

To consider a special resolution (requiring a 75% vote in favour) from the Northern Counties Chess Union regarding the right of existing Board directors to be re-elected:

Council resolves that the Articles of Association be amended as follows:

Instead of:

‘59. At each Annual General Meeting held in or after 2017 Directors shall retire in accordance with the Board Rota.

60. Any Director who retires at an Annual General Meeting pursuant to Article 59 shall be eligible for re-election at such Annual General Meeting.’

They should be changed to read:

‘59. In the interests of Board renewal, all Directors are eligible to serve a maximum of two consecutive terms in the same board position. At each Annual General Meeting, Directors shall retire in accordance with the Board Rota.

60. Any Director who retires at an Annual General Meeting pursuant to Article 59 shall not be eligible for re-election at such Annual General Meeting, but if the post is not filled at that Annual General Meeting then that retiring Director may consequently be appointed by the Board to fill the vacancy in accordance with Article 57.’

That the amended Articles of Association come into effect immediately, and that this resolution is enacted before the Board elections take place at the 2020 AGM.

That additionally the Board is directed to amend Regulation No. 2 (Election Rota) accordingly.

Council discussed the motion. The Chair of the Governance Committee referred Council directly to the Pearce Report’s comments on the matter.

By a show of hands, the vote failed:

FOR: 15 AGAINST: 33

The proposer requested a card vote because it was believed the issue was important, and the result might assist the Governance Committee in its recommendations.

A card vote was taken. The result was not available when the meeting formally closed, but was announced shortly afterwards as:

FOR: 68 AGAINST: 182

The detailed voting figures prepared later showed a variation:

FOR: 77 AGAINST: 180

The cause of these differences is discussed in the document “Record of Card Votes” which accompanies these minutes.

14 Amendment to Bye Law No. 1: The Direct Members’ Bye Laws

To consider a motion from Stewart Reuben, Life Members’ Direct Members’ Representative and John Reyes, Silver Members’ Representative (Silver) to amend the Direct Members’ Bye Laws:

Council resolves that
Bye Law No 1 (The Direct Members Bye Laws) be amended by replacing the first sentence of paragraph 5.2 from:
‘Each of the five categories in 5.1 shall be entitled each year to elect two representatives (who shall be Direct Members but not necessarily of the relevant category).’
to read:
‘Each of the five categories in 5.1 shall be entitled each year to elect two representatives (who shall be Direct Members of the category they seek to represent).’

Council discussed the motion in detail, including whether the level of membership or ability to represent members was more important.

Council voted on the motion with a card vote.

FOR: 99 AGAINST: 127

The detailed voting figures prepared later showed a variation:

FOR: 96 AGAINST: 133

The cause of these differences is discussed in the document “Record of Card Votes” which accompanies these minutes.

15 Formation of Working Group on Safe Restarting of Chess

To consider a motion from Cumbria Chess Association and Durham Chess Association to instruct the ECF Board to form a Working Group:

Council resolves:

that the ECF Board should convene at the earliest possible opportunity a Working Group comprised of experienced organisers and arbiters, plus qualified medical and health & safety professionals, to encourage and support the safe, socially distanced restart of over-the-board and hybrid (online under arbiter supervision) chess events over the coming year.

that the Working Group be available to offer advice to clubs, leagues, congresses and other chess events in completing and publishing Risk Assessments for their venues that comply with government safety guidelines on preventing the transmission of the Covid-19 virus.

The issue was discussed in detail, including the need to get chess working again, whether the Board would consider itself bound by decisions of the working group, and the legal implications of issuing instructions and guidance to clubs and congresses.

By a show of hands, the motion was defeated:

FOR: 13 AGAINST: 30

16 Awards

Council noted the awards for 2020 as set out in the website presentation from Stephen Greep.

[<https://www.englishchess.org.uk/ecf-awards-2020-citations/>]

17 Time and Place of Future Meetings

To approve the dates of the Finance Council and AGM in 2021:

Council resolves that in 2021 its Finance Meeting shall be held in Birmingham on 24 April 2021 and its Annual General Meeting shall be held in London on 16 October 2021.

John Reyes suggested that the Finance Council meet virtually. Robert Stern believed that, should circumstances continue to make a face to face meeting in April or thereafter unviable, the Council Chair could still call a virtual meeting.

Stephen Woodhouse proposed an amendment to the motion, that the Finance Council meet on-line, on the same date as proposed in the original motion.

On the amended motion Council voted in favour:

FOR: 33 AGAINST: 2

On the substantive motion as amended, Council voted in favour:

FOR: 43 AGAINST: 1

18 Any Other Business

Malcolm Pein invited Council to congratulate Kevin Staveley on his award in the Queen's Birthday Honours list. The proposal was passed nem con on a hand vote.

Dave Thomas and Nigel Towers invited Council to consider awarding Steve Bush a lifetime membership award, in recognition of the work he has done programming the new rating system. The proposal was passed nem con on a hand vote.