

**Minutes of the 142nd Board Meeting of the English Chess Federation  
Friday 22nd January 2021  
Zoom Meeting  
2.30- 5.00 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		AH
Director of International Chess, Malcolm Pein	APOL	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
Alternate Director Women's Chess, Aga Milewska	AM
Meetings Secretary, Danny Rosenbaum	DR

**1. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were noted as above.

**2. Agenda**

The agenda was to be revised to show the title of Alternate Director Women's Chess for Aga Milewska. It was agreed unanimously that henceforth AM should be allowed to contribute to Board meetings (albeit with no voting rights unless attending on behalf of CF) rather than simply attend as an observer.

**3. Minutes of 141st Board Meeting and Outstanding Actions**

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved nem con and it was agreed that DR and JC would obtain updates on the action points outside the Board meeting with the relevant directors.

**4. Covid-19: Financial Update (AA)**

AA presented the Finance Director's report. He confirmed that at present levels of expenditure he expected the ECF's funds to be sufficient until at least 2022. The ECF currently has net cash of around £158,500, with expenses of around £12,000 per month.

It was noted that the funds in the Cambridge & Counties account were to be transferred to the main bank account.

AA reported that a good amount of progress was being made with Xero in terms of improving management information and simplifying the chart of accounts.

AP 142/01 AA and the office to develop a stronger system to ensure that event organisers were invoiced for and paid pay to play fees due in respect of ECF online rated events and not to rate further ECF rated events until outstanding invoices were paid.

## **5. Membership Renewals/ New Member Update (RW)**

RW noted that membership levels were continuing to increase slowly but steadily (helped by joiners/renewers for the British Online Chess Championships).

RW said that there should be a concerted effort to spread the word about GoMembership. The Board put on record its thanks to RW for leading the implementation of this initiative.

AP 142/02 RW to investigate providing monthly demographic and regional breakdowns on new members, the entire membership and other subsets of membership.

It was agreed to look into arrangements for Gary or Andrew going on an Azolve reporting course sometime in the second quarter.

## **6. British Championship Report (NT)**

It was noted that the Caplin British Online Chess Championships were a great success with around 800 entrants and approximately 2400 entries. Around 15% of the participants were female.

AP 142/03 NT to compare British Online Chess Championships data with data from its over-the-board equivalent, with breakdowns including geographic distribution and gender balance by age groups (juniors versus adults) of the participants.

MT reported that John Ashworth was very happy with how the Championships went. AM reported very positive feedback from the female participants.

The Board formally put on record its thanks to NT, all the organisers, the arbiters and commentators and others involved in making the Championships such a success.

It was agreed that the fair play guidelines should address how to deal with unfounded accusations of cheating including on social media. MT suggested that the 4NCL's fair play guidelines might have some suitable wording that could be used.

AP 142/04 NT to review fair play guidelines for unfounded public allegations including on social media.

The Board agreed nem con that the British Chess Championships would not go ahead in 2021 in an over-the-board format unless NT recommended to the contrary and brought that recommendation back to the Board. In that event the Board was in unanimous agreement that an online equivalent should if at all possible be held as official British Championships.

RW raised a concern about the application of the anti-cheating procedures in the British Online Chess Championships. It was agreed that this should be considered as an operational matter outside the Board meeting.

## **7. Server Migration Update (NT/RW)**

NT reported that the bulk of the migration had been completed and that the remaining aspects, principally the rating system and LMS, would be completed in the next month.

The Board gave a vote of thanks to Andrew Walker and Dave Thomas for their hard work on the migration.

## **8. Report on Safeguarding Progress (JC)**

JC reported on progress made. CF asked if there had been any safeguarding issues at the British Championships. JC reported that there had been, and that whilst he could not go into detail he could confirm that he had written a report, that the matter had been discussed at the Safeguarding Group and a decision was taken that no further action was required with no need to report the matter LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer). JC further noted that the Safeguarding Group had reviewed the report of the incident.

AP142/05 In response to a request from AH, JC said he would investigate with the Safeguarding Committee whether the ECF could avail itself of the portable DBS facility.

## **9. Home Chess Report including Online (NT)**

After the success of the British Online Chess Championships NT said that he would explore the possibility of organising other events with various federations. If these were to take place the other nations would be expected to make a contribution and no event would be run if it was thought that it would lose money.

NT commented in reply to a question from NR that he had received several approaches from local clubs for help with organising online chess. There was an increase in online activity by leagues and clubs and NT would look at ways to provide more guidance/support on the ECF website.

AP 142/06 NT to explore further ways of supporting clubs and leagues via the ECF website

NT reported that the Manager for Accessible Chess had not yet been appointed. Good discussions were continuing with the Braille Chess Association (BCA) and feedback had been sought from blind and partially sighted players on lichess 'blind mode'. NT reported that BCA online league games organised by Gerry Walsh were now registered for online rating.

The Board voted nem con to appoint Andrew Martin as Manager of Coaching with the role as currently defined and with immediate effect.

## **10. Women's Chess – CF**

AP142/07 CF to advertise the vacancy of Manager of Women's Online Chess on the ECF website and in the monthly newsletter and to discuss possible candidates with NT.

## **11. Junior Chess (AH)**

AH gave his report and the Board gave a vote of thanks to him for all his efforts. AH expressed his concern over some recent incidents at international junior online events and sought the Board's approval to give him discretion not to submit English juniors to play in international junior online tournaments until he knew who the Chief Arbiter and Fair Play Arbiters were and only if he thought that their appointment was appropriate. The Board approved this on a majority vote and requested AH work with other federations to develop a common position for discussion with FIDE and ECU.

AP142/08 AH to see if other federations share the ECF's concern regarding international junior online events and if so to develop a common position with those federations to put forward to FIDE and ECU

## **12. Library Update (SW)**

SW reported that we now have a signed agreement with De Montfort University to transfer the ECF library and the intention is for the books to be transported as soon as possible, lockdown permitting. Agreements have been or are being sought with the main lenders of books to the library as to ownership of their collections and the treatment of duplicate books.

In reply to a query from CF, SW confirmed that the Golombek painting was owned by the Chess Centre, and that before it could be sold, the agreement of the directors of the Chess Centre Limited would be needed and that the tax implications of a sale and realisation of the resulting cash would need to be reviewed.

The Board thanked SW for his work on all these matters.

## **13. AOB**

a. Approach to the ECF on anti-discrimination policies and procedures – MT reported on an email he had received from Mark Jordan (which had been submitted to the Board as a paper) asking for the ECF's support in developing draft anti-discrimination policies and procedures for submission to FIDE. The Board agreed that the ECF would in principle be prepared to support the initiative if the Board has sight of the draft document before it was submitted to FIDE and that there was no financial commitment involved. This was passed nem con.

142/09 - MT to reply to Mark Jordan on his anti-discrimination initiative

b. Late submission of OTB ratings – NT

It was agreed that NT should bring to a future Board meeting a concrete proposal for putting a time limit on the maximum time graders can take after an event before submitting games. The suggested time limit was 3 months for tournaments and 12 months for leagues.

Date and time of next Board meeting: 2.30 pm, Friday 19<sup>th</sup> March 2021