**Minutes** **of the 144th Board Meeting of the English Chess Federation**

**Friday 21st May 2021**

**Zoom Meeting**

**2.30- 5.00 pm**

**Directors:**

President, Dominic Lawson - APOL DL

Chief Executive, Mike Truran MT

Director of Finance, Adam Ashton AA

Director of Events, Shohreh Bayat - APOL SB

Director of Women’s Chess, Chris Fegan - APOL CF

Director of Junior Chess, Alex Holowczak AH

Aga Milewska (Alternate CF) AM

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

Stephen Greep (ECF Awards Committee) SG

Alex Longson (ECF Academy) AL

Sarah Longson (ECF Academy) SL

1. **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were noted as above.

1. **Agenda**

The Agenda was approved. It was noted that if there were any specific matters relating to the Junior, Membership or Home Directors’ reports they would be taken at the end of the meeting. It was also noted that MP would be raising a couple of matters under AOB.

1. **ECF Awards Committee**

SG reported on the changes that had been made to the Awards Committee. He outlined the terms of reference as stated in his report. Various changes had been made including introducing awards for Contribution to Women’s Chess, Contribution to Junior Chess, Contribution to Chess in the Community, and Contribution to Accessible Chess. He reported that the composition of the Awards Committee was now more diverse. Details of the Awards had been issued a month earlier than usual to help publicise the call for nominations.

MT requested that the Awards Committee be officially confirmed as a Board Committee. RS stated that de facto if SG’s paper was approved then the Board was also approving the status of the Committee as a Board Committee.

The report, terms of reference and status of the Committee as a board committee were approved unanimously. JC thanked SG on behalf of the Board for all his work.

1. **Junior Selection Structure / Policy (AH)**

AH presented a paper entitled Development Pathway which he had been working on with The Chess Trust.

AH said the presentation was to provide the Board with ‘a direction of travel’ and after receiving comments he would produce a final version.

He explained the proposed pathway from the ECF Academy to the Development Programme to the Accelerator Programme and then to the Senior Squad. The middle two stages (the Development and Accelerator Programmes) would be overseen by the Chess Trust, the other two by the ECF. The ECF Academy would be self-funded by parents and would have a 12-month rolling membership. There would be a new tier for the more advanced students entitled Academy Plus. It was hoped that there would be bursaries for the Academy.

ECF Junior team selectors will be the same as the Chess Trust Accelerator selectors. Expressions of interest would be sought in advance for international selection. It would not be essential to have been part of the Development Pathway to qualify for selection.

The Development Programme would focus on under 12-year-olds and would be funded primarily by the Chess Trust.

The Accelerator Programme would focus on under-13 to under-18-year-olds and would continue to be funded by the Chess Trust.

AP144/01 AH to produce the final version of the Development Pathway document and bring to the next Board for approval.

1. **ECF Academy Update (AL & SL)**

AL presented an update on the ECF Academy, which he and SL had prepared. The timing of the update coincided with roughly the half-way point in the three-year arrangement (including the caretaking period) with UKCC to manage the Academy and so was an appropriate moment to review progress.

AL commented that students were being sent around 20 pages a month of original training material and UKCC would be happy to share the circa 250 pages of material with ECF players and coaches on a no-charge basis. As well as the regular training sessions there had been several guest speakers including some of England’s top GMs.

Due to the coronavirus the Academy had been moved online and, mainly because of that, the number of students had dropped from 94 in 2020 to 58 in 2021.

AL noted that 19% of the students were female, a significantly higher percentage than in most other areas of chess activity but still too low.

For the future, whilst he regarded the return to over the board chess as very welcome, AL envisaged there would be a significant online chess training presence as well.

JC thanked AL and SL on behalf of the Board both for their work on behalf of junior chess and for their report.

It was agreed that in the future the Board should receive reports on the ECF Academy every May and November.

1. **Minutes of 143rd Board Meeting and Outstanding Actions**

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

1. **The English Junior Organisers and Coaches Association - Application to Become a FIDE Academy (RW)**

RW explained the nature of the English Junior Organisers and Coaches Association (EJOCA) and what it does. He outlined what he saw as EJOCA’s challenges. He highlighted the lack of new English titled IMs and GMs from 2001. Members of the Board expressed their agreement that this record needed addressing, while recognising that a number of issues such as the prevailing cultural environment in England, Sport England’s refusal to recognise chess as a sport, and the difficulty of retaining children as chess players during the secondary education stage were significant obstacles.

RW proposed the setting up of an EJCOA FIDE Academy to be at the bottom of the Development Pathway pyramid, feeding the ECF Academy. RW emphasised that EJOCA would not aim to circumvent the ECF in any way.

After RW’s presentation there was a wide-ranging discussion. Most of the debate revolved around EJOCA’s desire to apply to FIDE for FIDE Academy status. A number of Board members were concerned at the confusion to parents/guardians and children that could be caused if two separate organisations, both including the word ‘Academy’ in their description, were to be seen to be publicising and providing coaching services to juniors, Some felt that there was a need for a FIDE Academy but it should be the ECF Academy that took the role on, whilst others supported the idea presented by RW of EJOCA running a FIDE Academy. Otherwise, there was a consensus of support for the rest of the EJOCA initiative.

MT suggested that RW, AH, NT and he should meet outside the Board to try to reach a resolution on the FIDE Academy issue in particular. Whilst RW welcomed this, he also wanted to take a vote on his proposal at the Board meeting. MP suggested that a non-binding straw poll be taken on whether the ECF supported EJCOA applying to become a FIDE Academy.

AA had earlier stated he had to leave the meeting and had given his vote to AH. DL had given MP his proxy vote, stating that he supported the proposal for EJOCA to apply for FIDE Academy status.

The Board voted 6-5 against RW’s proposal.

The Board delegated MT, RW, NT, and AH to discuss a way forward.

AP144/02 MT, RW, NT, and AH to meet as soon as possible to discuss on the matters related to RW’s presentation.

1. **Governance Regulation 2 (RS)**

RS presented a marked-up version of a suggested amended version of Governance Regulation 2. He highlighted that the presumption in the Appendix as to serving two terms had been deleted, that the Appendix was made easier to understand by inserting dates, and on Page 2 there was new text stating that “It is important that full and proper consideration is given by Directors to the desirability of Board renewal when Directors are due for re-election.”

MP’s suggestion of transferring the line “Responsible for the work of the Manager of Senior Chess” (with the additional words “except international senior chess”) from the Director of International Chess to the Director of Home Chess was agreed. It was also agreed that in the same section the words “the Chief Arbiter” after the words “Works with” would be removed.

The Board requested that it also be made clear that the Home Director is responsible for the scheduling and planning of events organised by the Federation and is also the person who consults with unions, counties and leagues to ensure their plans are feasible and properly implemented (apart from junior and international events).

The Board agreed unanimously that RS and MT should make the changes discussed and that there was no need to revert to the Board.

AP 144/03 RS and MT to make the agreed amendments.

1. **Developing an ECF Trans Policy (AM)**

AM explained that there had been an inquiry by a trans person asking if they could join female tournaments. AM requested that AM and CF be approved to formulate a policy on this. The Board agreed that they should draft a policy and bring it to the Board for approval.

AP144/04 AM and CF to develop an ECF trans policy and bring to the Board.

1. **Finance, Junior and Membership Reports (AA, AH & RW)**

The reports were noted.

RW mentioned that he would get the first indication soon of how membership levels had been affected by the decision to allow memberships to the end of August 2022 from 15th May rather than the usual 31st July date.

AH said that there was a plan to hold the British Junior Rapid and Blitz Championship on 13th and 14th November in Milton Keynes. There was a potential financial risk attached of £500. AH did not believe, however, that it was a significant risk. It was agreed unanimously that AH could go ahead organising the event.

AP144/05 AH to organise the British Junior Rapid and Blitz Championship

1. **Safeguarding Report: Additional Guidance to Clubs, Leagues and Congresses (JC)**

JC presented a revised Safeguarding Guidance document. After discussion by the Board it was agreed that JC should delete the words “and has a duty of care” given the precise legal meaning that the term had.

NT reported that there had been an offer from Alan Kennedy of Witney Chess Club to develop a safeguarding template specifically for clubs.

AP144/06 JC to revise the wording of the Safeguarding Guidance document as agreed.

AP144/07 JC to discuss Alan Kennedy’s safeguarding template offer with him.

1. **Draft Board Calendar for 2021/22 for Comment (JC)**

It was agreed subject to reviewing the cost implications that JC would amend the draft calendar so that Board meetings would take place every two months and that Board’s meeting locations be assigned on a ratio of four virtual to two face-to-face.

144/08 JC to amend the draft calendar and circulate to the Board for comments.

**13. AOB**

MP gave the Board advance notice that he expected to bring to the next Board for discussion and approval a sponsorship deal that he was currently working on.

MP announced that Chess in Schools and Communities was organising a three-day outdoor chess event, the London Chess Classic Chess Festival to take place from 16th-18th July, and that they had been granted use of Trafalgar Square on 18th July. MP asked the Board to support the event, which would be on the theme of Alice in Wonderland and would include use of a giant chessboard.

It was agreed that the ECF would help to publicise the event including via the ECF newsletter, the ECF website and social media.

Date and time of next Board meeting: 2.30 p.m. Friday 30th July 2021 by Zoom call.