

Election Address: Mike Truran

I should like to thank Council members, Board colleagues and the army of chess volunteers across England for your support for me as Chief Executive, and for everything that we have achieved together since I took office in 2016. I firmly believe that the ECF is in a far stronger position now than five years ago, thanks to the collective efforts of Council, the Board, organisers across the country and of course our members and supporters through challenging times.

I summarise below some of our main achievements during the last five years:

1. Created a range of value-added member benefits (monthly magazine, new format yearbook, GoMembership, ChessKid, product discounts etc);
2. Transformed our branding and social media presence;
3. Implemented a comprehensive online offering, including rating of online games;
4. Implemented a new monthly rating system with live and monthly four-digit ratings;
5. Established a new directorate to focus on ECF-organised events;
6. Developed our support for chess communities including clubs, seniors, female players, players with disabilities and new/social players;
7. Implemented/enhanced central support functions (monthly rating, LMS, coaching directory, calendar, community pages, club finder etc);
8. Worked with the Chess Trust and UKCC to set up a structured junior development programme;
9. Secured the long-term future of the National Chess Library;
10. Successfully managed English chess through Covid, almost certainly the most challenging business environment we've faced in living memory.

Although the ECF now has a much clearer remit, several major achievements and a huge amount of goodwill from English players at all levels, there is still much to do. I set out below my thoughts on the direction of travel and the main areas that we should focus on in the next three years. This strategy recognises that we're a federal organisation where a top-down, 'command and control' approach would be ineffective, acknowledges the constitutional, social/cultural, financial and resourcing issues with which we have to contend, and builds on our achievements so far:

1. Support the return to post-Covid over-the-board chess with a programme of ECF events and targeted support for our clubs and organisers;
2. Strengthen the ECF's remit, operating model and financial position by offering additional member/supporter events and services that make ECF membership worthwhile regardless of rating;
3. Continue the work we've started with clubs across England to help them prosper in the future;
4. Maintain and develop a support structure and framework within which other English chess organisations can flourish and develop ;

5. Develop and publicise chess on a wider national and international basis including ECF broadcast services for major events, building our social media presence and engagement with the wider chess community;
6. If other chess organisations can do things better than the ECF, encourage and support them in their endeavours;
7. Develop and support an inclusive and diverse environment in which all can participate;
8. Encourage chess organisations to work together collaboratively for the good of English chess;
9. Maintain and develop a range of benefits that make joining the ECF an attractive proposition independently of playing rated games;
10. Continue to organise flagship events both for the ECF and on behalf of the other British Isles federations;
11. Develop English chess's international presence.

I welcome and am always happy to consider well-structured proposals for new initiatives that are put forward for consideration by the Board, provided they align with the overall strategic framework approved by Council. If any proposals were to involve a major change in strategic direction they would need to be reviewed by Council.

I've been subject to some highly unpleasant and hurtful public and personal attacks during my tenure, in particular during the last couple of months, unlike anything I've experienced before in my decades-long business and volunteer career. The same handful of individuals who have made those attacks have suggested that I should stand down rather than seek re-election. I'm not going to do that, despite the personal toll that the attacks have taken, because I'm proud of my record and of the huge progress we've collectively made since 2016, and because I've been so heartened by the immense groundswell of support and goodwill that I've received recently from so many people in the chess community. I also believe that Council should have a real choice over our federation's future direction of travel. Accordingly, I would be proud to serve the ECF as its Chief Executive for a further three years should that be the will of Council.