

**Minutes of the 146th Board Meeting of the English Chess Federation
Friday 28th January 2022
Zoom Meeting
1.30 - 4.00 pm**

Directors:

Director of Finance, Adam Ashton	AA
Director of Events, Shohreh Bayat - APOL	SB
Director of Junior Chess, Alex Holowczak	AH
President, Dominic Lawson - APOL	DL
Director of Women's Chess, Aga Milewska	AM
Director of International Chess, Malcolm Pein	MP
Director of Home Chess, Nigel Towers	NT
Chief Executive, Mike Truran	MT
Director of Membership, Rob Willmoth - APOL	RW
Non-executive Chairman, Julian Clissold	JC
Non-executive Director, Natasha Regan	NR
Non-executive Director, Stephen Woodhouse - APOL	SW

Invited: Observers and Guests

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

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were noted as above.

2. Agenda

The agenda was approved, and it was noted that the Board had voted by email to approve the amended document 'Regulation No. 2 - The Directors and Officers Responsibilities Regulations' as emailed to the Board on 18th December 2021 by MT (note: a small change was later voted on and approved – see the last paragraph of item 9 in these minutes).

3. Minutes of 145th Board Meeting

The minutes of the 145th Board were approved nem con.

4. Finance Report (AA)

AA presented the ECF's year to date balance sheet and profit and loss summary and the Director of Finance's report.

AA reported that the membership levels were strong. Current membership income stood at £178,740. This was already higher than the budgeted figure of £170,966.

AA also reported that the office move would result in significant savings on the annual rent.



AA informed the Board that he would distribute summary monthly reports to directors, although he would not introduce them into Board meetings.

The Board thanked AA for the high quality of the reports.

The Director of Finance's report was approved nem con.

5. The Home Director's Report (NT)

NT reported that the forward calendar of ECF events had been agreed across the relevant directorates up to the end of 2022 and that SB would be overseeing the events programme.

The Home Director's report was approved nem con.

NT presented a report on the British Championships, which had been held in October 2021. The Championships were well received although entries were down due to the impact of Covid-19 and there had been a loss of between £3000 and £4000.

The Board thanked NT and his team for all their work. NT thanked NR for her work on providing live commentary for the event.

NT outlined plans for the 2022 British Championships to run from 8th August to 21st August in Torquay with the Junior and the Over 50 events taking place in the first week and the British Championship itself, the Major Open and the Over 65 Championship taking place in the second week.

NT's report on the British Championships was approved nem con.

NT and MP reported on plans to develop the ECF's presence among the student chess community. The ECF had already emailed all the university chess clubs for which it had contact details and offered them clocks at cost price where available from ECF stock. MP said that Chess & Bridge would be happy to offer heavily discounted equipment on the basis that the ECF would also invite Chess Direct to be involved on a similar basis.

NT suggested that there should be a reduced cost package for students to become members of the ECF. There was agreement that the ECF membership tiers should be kept as simple as possible. Therefore, the Board agreed that it would be sensible to combine the student membership offer with the existing junior silver membership deal. It was agreed that membership for students joining before the end of the membership year should not be cut off at August 2022, and that options for achieving that should be looked at.

NT presented a proposal for blitz pay-to-play to work on a very similar basis as currently takes place with rapidplay. The proposed changes would need to be approved by Council. If approved, there would be a period of grace to ensure there was time for players to be aware of the new arrangements. The proposal was agreed nem con.

6. Junior Director's Report (AH)

AH presented the Junior Director's report. The Board approved the report nem con and recorded their congratulations to Bodhana Sivanandan on her excellent recent performances.

AH presented a document setting out the revised plans for the English Junior Chess Development Pathway. He outlined the revised tiers and the criteria for eligibility for each tier. The Board agreed that a further criterion should be added stating that junior clubs in the pathway must have a web presence (e.g. website or social media page)

AP 146/01 AH to revise the English Junior Chess Development Pathway to include the requirement for clubs to have a web presence.

Under the new system the ECF would be registering junior clubs. It was agreed that JC would talk to the safeguarding team regarding any safeguarding implications this registration might have and advise the Board.

AP 146/02 JC to discuss with the safeguarding team the legal implications of the ECF registering junior clubs.

The Board agreed that once the junior club system was finalised, all clubs should be emailed to make them aware of it.

It was agreed that the benefit of free junior silver membership for all members of junior clubs level 2 was not needed and that AH would revise the drafting of the system accordingly.

AP 146/03 AH to remove the free junior silver membership benefit from the ECF Registered Junior Clubs System's registration benefits.

With the above amendment, the Board supported AH's proposal.

7. ECF 2022 Priorities Update (AA)

AA and NT presented a spreadsheet summarising the ECF's agreed top priorities for 2022.

MT reported that the Chess Trust was minded to support the national curriculum pilot and had requested a more detailed paper on the matter, and was also prepared to consider plans to expand the Academy's services.

It was noted that if club initiatives had a junior focus, they too were likely to be of interest to the Chess Trust and the John Robinson Trust.

AP 146/04 AA to provide cost estimates in the cost column of the spreadsheet to replace the H/M/L categorisation.

The Board thanked AA and NT for their work in this area.

8. PIF/Chess Trust Action Plan (MT/RS)

RS confirmed that he was working with MT and MP on the documents to be put to the British Chess Federation (BCF) that would enable the assets of the PIF be transferred to the ECF. Additionally, RS advised that amendments would need to be made to the ECF's articles. The draft Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Chess Trust also needed to be reviewed by MP (SW and MT had already approved it). A briefing paper needed to be produced to go to Council in April.

It was agreed that MT, MP, and RS should form a committee to deal with this matter on behalf of the Board and MP advised that he would suggest one other person to be a member. The Board agreed that MT, MP and RS could collectively decide on the identity of the fourth person.

AP 146/05 MP to review the MOU with the Chess Trust.

AP 146/06 MT to draft a briefing paper for Council.

9. Regulation 4 and 5 Amendments (RS)

RS presented the proposed amendments to Regulations 4 and 5.

Regarding Regulation 5, he noted that the complaints process should be seen as a last resort, and that the administration fee had been raised from £50 to £75. He also noted that the serious maladministration wording had been changed to provide greater clarity. It had been made clear that Regulation 5 is a complaints procedure and not a disciplinary procedure and that it was not applicable to disputes between directors.

Regulation 4 had not been changed greatly and RS had no matters there he wanted to highlight.

The Governance Committee proposed extra wording for Regulation 2 to make it clear that it was incumbent on the chair of the Board and non-executive directors to consider disputes between Board members.

There was one change to the documents that had been sent to the Board that RS wanted to make. In Regulation 5 there was a sentence about the investigation of a complaint being final – RS requested that that sentence was deleted as it was the hearing of a subsequent appeal that would be final.

The Board approved nem con the revised Regulations 4 and 5 (with the change above regarding resolution of complaints being final) and also the proposed insertion in Regulation 2.

10. AOB

a) Board Meeting Calendar Draft (JC)

JC reported that the next Board meeting on 18 March would now be held in Birmingham (to avoid paying for the cancellation of the Board's previous booking at the venue there).

It was agreed that individuals on an ad hoc basis could ask JC that they be given a virtual link if they are unable to attend the face-to-face Board meetings in person.

A discussion took place regarding the time of day for meetings most suitable to Board members.

AP 146/07 JC to adjust the Board calendar and time of meetings in line with directors' feedback.

b) Appointments Framework (JC)

It was confirmed that the Board secretary would be responsible for keeping the appointments framework up to date.

AP 146/08 DR to send the appointments framework to the directors for them to check for accuracy.

c) Trans Policy (NF)

NF commented that FIDE was interested in seeing national federations' own trans policies.

The Board agreed to establish a committee to look at this issue. It would comprise of AM, NT, NR and RS (not in a legal capacity).

It was agreed the committee would look at the English Bridge Union's policy and experience to date.

Date and place of next Board meeting: Friday 18th March 2022 in Birmingham