

Minutes of the 147th Board Meeting of the English Chess Federation
Friday 18 March 2022
Arden Hotel, Birmingham (except Zoom where stated)
11.00am - 2.00 pm

Directors:

Director of Finance, Adam Ashton	AA
Director of Events, Shohreh Bayat - APOL	SB
Director of Junior Chess, Alex Holowczak (ZOOM)	AH
President, Dominic Lawson - APOL	DL
Director of Women's Chess, Aga Milewska	AM
Director of International Chess, Malcolm Pein (ZOOM)	MP
Director of Home Chess, Nigel Towers - APOL	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

Chair of Council, Michael Farthing (ZOOM – Item 8)	MF
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. It was agreed that items on Ukraine would be discussed under AOB.

3. Minutes of 146th Board Meeting

The minutes of the 146th Board meeting were approved nem con.

4. Conflicts of Interest

NR, MT and AA stated they were directors of the Chess Trust (item 7).

5. Finance and Membership Reports (AA/RW)

AA presented the Director of Finance's report and a draft of the 2023 budget spreadsheet. He noted that the ECF's finances were in good shape and looking better than anticipated.



AA reported that income from membership had continued to recover well, having reached £191,948 so far for 2021/22. The budgeted figure had been £170,966.

The Board voted nem con to recommend to Council that membership rates for next year should be held at current levels despite inflationary pressures in order to support the ongoing return to over the board chess.

It was agreed that AA would amend the FIDE-rated events pay to play fee for 2022-23 from £11 to £12 to correct an earlier error.

AP 147/01 AA to amend the FIDE-rated events pay to play fee.

Preliminary financial results for the year ended on 31 August 2021 were better than expected showing a surplus of almost £19,000. The results had been considerably helped by the sale of duplicate volumes from the English Chess Library.

MT suggested that if an emergency fund of £100k were to be held by the Chess Trust following the proposed PIF donation (see below) that could be called on should the ECF's financial position require it, then it might make sense to review the existing target of holding reserves of £100k in the ECF. It was agreed to consider this at a future Board meeting.

AA said that the Olympiad would now take place in India rather than Russia and as a result this would probably lead to a higher expenditure than previously forecast.

AA mentioned that a generous donor (who had already donated £5k towards England teams at the World Senior Championships) had offered to match any ECF or Chess Trust spend on the England teams up to a further £5k. The Board expressed its thanks to the donor. It was agreed that AA and MP would revisit the international budget outside the meeting.

AP 147/02 AA/MP to finalise the international budget.

AP 147/03 MT and AA to complete review of budget before submission to Council.

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

6. Governance Proposals to Council (RS)

RS presented a paper entitled "Finance Council 2022 – Proposed Constitutional Amendments". The paper was to be presented directly to Council by the Governance Committee and so did not require Board approval.

He highlighted the four main proposals of the Governance Committee:

1. that a Direct Members Representative (DMR) must be a direct member of the same category as those he/she is seeking to represent.
2. that a DMR cannot also be an ECF Board director.
3. that a bye-election will be held if there is a vacancy for one of the DMR posts on or before 31st January in any term.
4. that DMRs have an obligation to consult with relevant direct members prior to Council meetings and, when speaking and voting at Council meetings, to bear in mind the views expressed by those consulted.

7. PIF Donation to Chess Trust (RS / MT)

MT presented the papers relating to PIF and the Chess Trust. After the Board meeting the Board were emailed a revised document entitled "Donation of PIF No 1 and PIF No 2 Funds to the Chess Trust".

Its proposals included:

- The PIF No 1 and PIF No 2 assets would be donated to the Chess Trust.
- A memorandum of understanding would be put in place between the ECF Board and the Chess Trust Trustees setting out the understanding that both bodies expect to have between them.
- The BCF would remain as a dormant body in the short term at least.
- The Permanent Invested Fund would terminate on the completion of the donation.
- The following resolution will be placed before the BCF Council AGM on 23 April 2022:

"THAT the assets of the Permanent Invested Fund No 1 and the Permanent Invested Fund No 2 be donated to the Chess Trust be held on the terms of the Chess Trust".

There were no objections.

8. Arrangements for Council (MF)

MF reported that he had received two resolutions for Council from Durham County Chess Association. The resolutions, both of which related to the war in Ukraine, were put forward out of time; however, MF had decided to put them forward in his own name, and therefore the timing was no longer an issue.

MF reported that he had selected the Broadway House Conference Centre in Tothill St, London SW1H 9NQ as the venue for Council. Their package included technical support to facilitate a hybrid (Zoom and face-to-face) meeting.

MF also reported on a change in the voting technology since the previous Council meeting so that there would be no danger of delegates casting the wrong number of votes.

9. Home Director Report (NT/MT)

MT reported that NT had secured sponsorship from Chessable for the British Championships, the English Championships and the Grand Prix, and that Chessable would have naming rights in all three competitions. The Board thanked NT for his successful efforts in this regard.

MT highlighted from NT's paper entitled "Other Agenda / AOB items" the proposal for a student scheme along the same lines as the junior scheme i.e. first year - free Silver membership, with further years offering student Silver membership at the same rate as junior Silver membership (£6 per annum). There were no objections.

MT outlined the rolling membership proposal to go to Council (and as explained in Dave Thomas' accompanying paper). In summary, Council would be invited to consider and approve the proposal to move from fixed membership years (1 September – 31 August) to rolling membership years (new/rejoining members receive a full year's membership regardless of

(re)joining date). There were no objections. (Note: A subsequent Board email vote was held to confirm the Board's approval that the proposal be put to Council).

AP 147/04 RW/MT/RS to finalise wording for the proposal on rolling membership to be brought to Council.

MT reported that NT wished the Board to confirm its agreement to the proposed amendments to pay to play arrangements for non-members' games in ECF rated blitz congresses outlined in NT's paper entitled "Other Agenda / AOB items" so that a proposal could be made to Council. This was agreed.

AP 147/05 NT/MT/RS to finalise wording for the proposal to Council regarding ECF rated blitz congresses.

10. Junior Director Report (AH)

AH recommended that the ECF join the National Council for School Sport. This was agreed with no objections.

AH presented the latest development pathway consultation paper. The next steps would be to publish it on the ECF website and in *ChessMoves* for consultation ahead of revision, if necessary, and adoption at the next Board meeting.

AH noted that one of the proposals in the paper was to have a multi-academy approach if there were organisations that were of a high enough standard.

AH outlined the levels of the pyramid in the development pathway and emphasised that one of the benefits of the development pathway would be in identifying areas which needed more junior support.

AH noted RW's point (made via email) that GMs do not necessarily make good coaches and that the consultation paper should be reworded to reflect this. There was sympathy from various Board members for RW's point and AH confirmed that he would note the comments as part of the overall feedback with a view to amending the wording following the consultation.

The Board accepted the paper and thanked AH for his hard work on it.

AP 147/06 AH to publish the consultation paper on the ECF website and in *ChessMoves*.

11. Director of Women's Chess Update (AM)

AM reported that she would be hosting FIDE's new Exchange Forum, a quarterly seminar to support women in the chess community. There were ongoing discussions about having a women's event in conjunction with FIDE, possibly as part of ChessFest in July.

AM confirmed that everything was in place for the upcoming women's norm events, taking place at the London Mindsports Centre on 7-11 April. The draw would take place after the new ratings came out on 1 April.

AM reported on her trip to the European Women's Chess Gala in Monaco. The event was very useful for networking and exchanging ideas.

The Board thanked the European Chess Union and La Fédération Monégasque des Échecs for their financial and operational support for AM's attendance.

12. British and English Championships Update (MT/NT)

MT reported that Hull had made an offer to host the British Championships in 2023 but that NT felt that it was too soon to return to Hull. NT intended, however, to talk to Stephen Greep about possibly hosting the British Championships in 2024.

13. AOB

1. ECF position on RUS and BLR teams and players – update (MT / MP)

MP told the Board that he was drafting a short addition to the website announcement on Ukraine to make clear that players registered to the Russian or Belarusian federations may play in all ECF-organised competitions if they change federation or change to the FIDE flag. FIDE have organised a fast-track procedure to facilitate this change.

2. MP mentioned that he was trying to organise a Ukraine versus England Solidarity Match and he would consider trying to hold it alongside the Chess Marathon to raise funds for Ukraine that the ECF was holding on 2-3 April.

3. The Board agreed that the ECF would until further notice offer free ECF membership to all Ukrainians with a FIDE UKR registration, whether they came to this country as refugees from Russia's invasion or they were already in England (in the latter case, if they were already ECF members, when they renew their membership) and would also encourage clubs and congress organisers to offer free membership and free congress entry respectively to any Ukrainian refugees.

Date of Next Board meeting: 20 May 2022

Meeting to held either in London or virtually.