



**Minutes of the 155th Board Meeting of the English Chess Federation
Wednesday 2 August at 11.30 a.m. by Zoom**

Directors:

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

Invited: Observers and Guests

Chairman, Governance Committee, Robert Stern		RS
Chairman, Council, David Eustace		DE

Apologies, Minutes and Conflicts

1. Apologies for absence

As noted above.

2. Minutes of 154th Board Meeting

(SVW)

The minutes were approved without amendment.

3. Conflicts declaration

(SVW)

No conflicts had been identified.



Directors Reports

4. Finance (AA)

Relevant finance matters were discussed in the context of the discussion on membership options. Overall, the ECF finances were healthy.

5. Home Chess (NT)

The report had been circulated prior to the meeting. NT said that the BCC accounts were not complete but the event was expected to make a small surplus against an expected loss of £5,000-£6,000. Blitz and rapid events in particular had helped to boost the entry numbers and the social events had also been very successful. He hoped to be able to make an announcement regarding the venue for 2024 by the end of the year.

6. Events (SB)

The report on events was subsumed within the Home Directorate report.

7. Membership (RW)

The membership report was subsumed within the discussion of membership options.

8. Women's Chess (AM)

The report had been circulated prior to the meeting. NR noted that there had been notable recent successes in women's chess with England winning the Over 50 Senior European Teams Championships, and also Sheila Jackson being joint winner of the Over 65s at the British Championships.

9. Junior Chess (AH)

The report had been circulated prior to the meeting

AH said there were two tournaments to be considered. The National Schools Championship was only currently entered by English teams and the Welsh and Scottish associations had indicated that this was unlikely to change. He therefore proposed that this be renamed as the English Schools Championship. For the Team Chess Challenge, the Welsh Chess Union had indicated a willingness to align their Championship with the Team Chess Challenge and Chess Scotland had also indicated interest. He therefore proposed that the Team Chess Challenge be renamed the British Team Chess Challenge.

The board supported the proposals nem com, subject to AH receiving agreement from BICC.

Action:

AH to arrange a meeting with the BICC.

There was a lengthy discussion regarding the issue of game fees for inter-school tournaments, with AH proposing that for 2022/23 onwards, a game fee exemption be included at section 6.6 of the pay to play fee and game fee regulations: <https://www.englishchess.org.uk/pay-to-play-and-game-fee-22-23/>

The main concerns were about how the rating of these games might affect the rating database and, whether it would be more difficult to sign the relevant juniors up to ECF membership for future. The Board voted on the proposal:

'to support the principle of AH's paper subject to the development of appropriate details to be discussed further at a future board meeting'.

There was a majority in favour of this proposal, and it was agreed that AH would develop the proposals for further consideration at the next Board meeting.

Action:

AH to report to the next Board meeting.

10. International (MP)

The international report would be circulated after the meeting, and would include details of recent senior successes.

Lan Yao had achieved the WGM title at the British Championships and Ameet Ghasi had received his second GM norm.

Special Business

11. External Relations (DL/MP)

DL And MP reported that a grant of £500,000 had been agreed by DCMS. This covered a two-year period with £200,000 in 2023/24, and £300,000 for 2024/2025. DCMS operated a three-year funding cycle so in 2024 it would be possible to apply for funding for the next three-year period. Part of this pot was intended to help deaf and blind players. DCMS also expected to see women's chess supported.

The Cabinet Office had made it clear that international chess, chess in parks and chess in schools were priorities. They also wished to see a pilot programme to encourage the teaching of chess in 100 schools. MP was in discussion with the Department for Education in this regard. The aim was to promote the educational benefit of chess and the work of CSC. The funding would come with financial reporting requirements attached.

The Board recorded a vote of thanks to DL and MP for an excellent outcome.

The Board further noted that existing ECF funding of international chess could potentially be redirected to grassroots chess.

12. Membership Options (MT/RW/NT)

The Board discussed MT's paper and it was agreed that the two main options would be put to Council as a two-part vote. There would first be a vote to decide the preferred option between 1) a unified Bronze/Silver/Gold category with grandfathering for existing Bronze members and 2) merging Silver and Gold. There would then be a second vote to decide between the preferred option and 'no change'.

The Board held votes on the above basis and in the first there was a majority for the unified category. In the second, there was a majority for a change to the unified over the system remaining as it was. It was agreed that MT's revised paper would summarise the key points of the Board discussion.

The vote would require 50% plus one to pass. SVW would present the Board position to Council, but individual directors could provide their personal opinions as appropriate. AA would produce an appendix to the options paper to include financial forecasts. Two versions of revised bye-laws would be drafted prior to the meeting and presented to Council.

13. Preparation for AGM (MT/SVW)

DE had found a location in Manchester for the AGM.

With regard to officers that were due for re-election, NT and RW would be standing but AA would not. NR had not yet confirmed whether she would stand. MP would stand as FIDE delegate.

DE confirmed that 20 September would be the deadline for papers.

14. FIDE/Russian Federation Update (MP)

MP said that Russia had left the European Chess Union and was now part of the ASEAN Chess Confederation.

15. Trust Funding Paper (SVW)

After a short discussion it was agreed that the webpage envisaged by SW's paper should signpost all relevant trusts, including CSC, with a short paragraph on each Trust together with their contact details.

Action:

SVW to develop his paper further.

16. Photography Proposal

(SVW)

Action:

SVW would discuss this with NT outside of the meeting.

17. Publicity Officer

Rene Butler had been approached but had indicated that he would prefer to offer help on an ad hoc basis. He had agreed to help with obtaining sponsorship for future events.

18. Future of Queen's Gambit Scheme

AM proposed to remove this scheme from the membership options. The Board agreed nem com. SVW to talk to AM regarding the timing and process for doing this.

19. In Year Platinum Membership

It was proposed that upgrades to Platinum no longer receive a rebate against any unused portion of their previous membership since, members who chose this option did so to provide additional support to the ECF.

The proposal was passed nem com.

Any Other Business

There was a discussion on scheduling, with it being agreed that there would be more frequent meetings with an annual schedule. SVW would develop a schedule and consider the approach for face to face meetings.

SVW then declared the meeting closed.