



## ECF Awards 2023

This year saw strong entries in several categories and members of the Awards committee had a particularly difficult job in agreeing the winners of some categories. The following represents citations made for the successful 2023 ECF award winners. Other than standardising fonts (where possible) and some light editing, these remain as submitted. Each nomination also had supporting evidence by a third party and many citations were supplemented by further supporting documentation. For simplicity these have not been reproduced here but all documentation submitted as a part of the nomination process was considered as a part of the nomination by members of the Awards Committee.

Each winner will receive a glass trophy, £250 to support their club or organisation (with the exception of the Presidents Awards) courtesy of the Chess Trust and be entitled to use the winner's logo.

As Chairman of the Awards committee, I would like to thank all the committee members (Julie Denning, Sarah Longson, Natasha Regan, Jack Rudd, Nigel Towers and Peter Wells), and for their hard work and the Chess Trust for its generous sponsorship of the awards scheme.

The 2023 ECF Award winners are:

### **President's Award for Services to Chess:**

Bob Jones  
Rupert Jones  
Alex McFarlane  
Peter Purland  
Kevin Staveley

### **Contribution to Chess in the Community**

Greenwich Peninsula Chess Club

### **Contribution to Junior Chess**

Chris Lewis

### **Contribution to Women's Chess**

Caroline Robson

**Club of the Year**

Leeds Junior Chess Club

**Small Club of the Year**

Ringwood Chess Club

**Congress of the Year**

University of Warwick

No awards were made in two categories (Contribution to Online Chess and Contribution to Accessible Chess)

Stephen Greep

Chairman, ECF Awards Committee

(07/09/23)



## **President's Award for Services to Chess (5 Awards)**

### **Bob Jones**

Nominated by Stephen Lewis

Bob Jones is an excellent candidate for the President's Award for Service to Chess.

As a junior growing up in Suffolk, Bob was always very supportive of the local chess players. He organised many events including the hugely successful Bury St Edmunds Congress. I have played in many of Bob's events over the years and he will bend over backwards to help chess players of all ages and abilities.”

GM Nicholas Pert – sent the day after finishing on 5.5/9 at the 2023 British Chess Championships : Bob Jones has been the heart of Suffolk chess for well over three decades, with an influence that extends well beyond those borders.

Bob became Suffolk Junior Chess organiser in 1987, and soon followed a golden age of Suffolk junior chess.

Bob found sponsorship and contacted over 360 schools, with clubs subsequently beginning in many of those schools. In the same year, Bob began the ‘Suffolk Junior Chess Newsletter’, promoting and advertising chess locally and reporting on items of interest.

Independent junior clubs formed in Ipswich and Stowmarket. Bob himself ran Stowmarket Junior Chess Club. At it's strongest, Stowmarket JCC often saw 50 weekly attendees – a very impressive feat for a modest market town. When Bob left to found Bury Knights Junior Chess Club, it took five volunteers to share his responsibilities.

During this time, Bob began compiling local rating lists. The calculation and publishing of monthly ELO ratings was seen as a key motivator for the development of juniors, and soon printed rating lists containing accurate ratings for several hundred players were devoured by juniors eager to see their improvements recognised on paper.

A circuit of weekend junior tournaments emerged, including Grand Prix style qualification into national events. Suffolk Junior Championships, with Bob as the Tournament Organiser, were held annually and rapidly grew, attracting 400+ players and exceeding the capacity of the cavernous main hall in the Ipswich Corn Exchange.

Not only did participation in local chess explode, but national success also followed. Structured coaching plans were developed and implemented for promising juniors to learn from experienced adult coaches. Suffolk's Under 9 team twice won the Inter-Association Championships – in 1990 and in 1992. Within ten years of Bob assuming control of organising junior chess in Suffolk, Suffolk's Under 18 team had achieved two second place finishes and in 1997 won in the National Counties Championship.

In 1994 Ipswich School won the National Schools Chess Championships boasting several players who were part of Bob's setup.

Despite stepping down from the role of Suffolk Junior Chess organiser, Bob still remains the most vital part of local junior chess. He still runs the Bury Knights JCC which he formed over 25 years ago, which is the largest chess club (junior or adult) in Suffolk.

Alumni from Bob's time in Suffolk Junior Chess include the GMs Nicholas and Richard Pert, IM Alan Merry, and Timothy Kiddell CBE.

Bob's reach has not been limited to junior chess. To this day, Bob is involved in the management of Bury Knights Chess Club (separate from the junior club) and social chess in Bury St Edmunds. After many years as Suffolk County Chess Association President, Bob remains part of the SCCA committee as county u1850 captain.

I have been unable to locate any information on Bob's introduction to Suffolk chess prior to 1987. I have been told that Bob was instrumental in Stowmarket Chess Club winning the BCF Club of the Year in 1988, but I have been unable to evidence how he came to be in a position to influence it.

Somehow amongst all this he still finds time to play 40+ rated games per season in local leagues and 4NCL!

[https://www.ecfrating.org.uk/v2/new/player.php?ECF\\_code=113887L](https://www.ecfrating.org.uk/v2/new/player.php?ECF_code=113887L)

The potential of Bob's peak strength as a player if he had focussed his efforts into his own game rather than the promotion of chess and others is unknowable, although at least one future GM and one future IM have been caught by him in a trap in one of his various dangerous opening weapons – the Fajarowicz variation of the Budapest Gambit.

Bob's drive and determination to promote the game of chess remains unwavering. His energy and love of the game, and desire to grow participation and playing of the game are truly extraordinary.

Bob's personal contributions to chess over this time are outstanding, and whilst he is a modest man I can not imagine how anyone could be more deserving of the recognition by the ECF of his service.

## **Rupert Jones**

Nominated by Randolph Donahue

Rupert Jones was born in June 1961 in Papua New Guinea. His father was an Australian missionary and his mother an English missionary nurse from Otley, West Yorkshire. Rupert learned chess when he was 9. The family moved back to the UK when Rupert was 10. He played in the Abbey Grange Chess Club and later joined the Leeds Chess Club playing regularly since 1977. Following university Rupert participated in a teaching scheme in Botswana. He taught chess to his pupils and became involved in the embryonic Botswana Chess Federation with Eddie Basa & D Buthali. Rupert participated in his first Olympiad in 1986 playing for Botswana. He was elected BCF Secretary in Dec 1986 and held the position until 1998. In 1990 Rupert joined the board of FIDE Chess in Schools - Embryonic Development Committee and in 1991 he joined the FIDE South African Commission with Eddie Price of S Africa.

Rupert managed the teams for Botswana and played in the 1988 Thessaloniki & 1990 Novi Sad Olympiads. He was the nonplaying captain for Botswana in the 1992 Manila Olympiad. From 1994 to 1998 Rupert was FIDE Zone President for Southern Africa. He participated in the Moscow 1994 and the Armenia 1996 Olympiads. In 1997-98 he left Botswana for the UK. By this time one of his pupils

was Head of Botswana Sports Council and De Beers annual chess sponsorship deal was for 1,000,000 Pula.

In 1998 Rupert noted that Yorkshire lacked a team in the 4NCL. He co-founded with Angus Dunnington the White Rose team, which he managed until 2010. From 2003 to 2006 Rupert was the International Director for the BCF/ECF. He was involved with England at the 2004 and 2006 Olympiads and in the 2005 European team championships. In 2004 he played for Papua New Guinea in the Calvia Olympiad scoring 9/12 and achieving his FM title. He continues to play for PNG to this day. From 2006 to 2018 Rupert was Secretary for the FIDE Development Commission helping Third World countries develop chess. In 2018-2022 he served on the Swiss Pairing Commission to develop computer pairing systems.

Locally, Rupert has taught chess in various schools including Abbey Grange, Frobelian, and Richmond House in the Leeds area. He organised a Junior team in Leeds and co-founded the Leeds Rapidplay League in 2005. He became head of the Yorkshire Chess Association between 2005 and 2009. Rupert undertook the Captaincy role of various Yorkshire teams, mainly the u160 (leading it to title in 2010, 2014, and 2017), but also captained 2nd and first teams, when he took to title the Yorkshire Open team in 2009. He helped reinvigorate the Leeds Chess Club. It is now the strongest club in West Yorkshire and has a vibrant cohort of young adults. He has led the Leeds 2nd team since its founding for the club and Captained Leeds 1st team in the YCA since 2013.

Besides Rupert's active role in promoting chess, he is a great humanitarian. A few years ago I personally witnessed his efforts in assisting a Yorkshire player whose drinking had seriously affected his health, and more recently he assisted another player (an ECF Formative Master) who had recently become homeless. He found him temporary shelter including at Rupert's house while organizing more permanent arrangements.

Rupert Jones has made major contributions to the development, expansion, and enjoyment of chess locally, nationally, and internationally and we, Randolph Donahue, Bernie Hare, Robin Browne, and Peter Mason are proud to nominate him for the President's Award for Services to Chess.

## **Alex McFarlane**

Nominated by Mike Truran

Alex has been a long-standing servant of English and Scottish chess for many decades, and has also been influential on the international stage with FIDE. Few UK chess organisers have a track record as impressive and as influential as Alex's, as the curriculum vitae below indicates. A President's Award for Services to Chess would be fitting recognition to someone who has given so much for so many years to chess organisation in England, Scotland and internationally.

### **Titles Held:**

FIDE International Arbiter/ECF Arbiter Level 4 (1994-present)

FIDE International Organiser (2011-present)

President of Chess Scotland (2022-present)

FIDE Lecturer/ECF Arbiter Instructor

Chief Arbiter of the Chess Arbiters Association (2007-present)

Member of FIDE's Arbiters Commission (2018-present)

**Arbiting Activity:**

Match arbiter at five Chess Olympiads (2012, 2014, 2016, 2018, 2022)

Arbiter at the FIDE Candidates Tournament (2011)

Chief Arbiter of the British Chess Championships (2003-2013)

Director and Chief Arbiter of the 4NCL (2020-2023)

Chief Arbiter of the Hastings Masters (2008-present)

Chief Arbiter for many tournaments in England including Scarborough, Northumberland and Blackpool

## **Peter Purland**

Nominated by Kevin Staveley

Peter has served as an arbiter, for many years. He has controlled events from weekend congresses to major international events. For many years he was the chief arbiter at the Glorney Gilbert Cup, He has acted as Chief Arbiter for the British Championships from 2014 - 2019. He is the Chief arbiter for Wales, a role he has undertaken, again, for many years, and has acted as Chief arbiter for Welsh championships and South Wales International Open for a significant period of time. In the case of the South Wales Open he has been Chief Arbiter each year since it's inception in 2003.

We believe that (apart from the missing years due to the pandemic) he has acted as an arbiter at the British Championships for 40 consecutive years, for many of these years overseeing the Junior Championships.

In addition to his role as Arbiter he has been ECF Director of Junior Chess, an official of the English Primary Schools Chess Association and an official of the English Junior Chess Squad - in this role organising many overseas trips.

Peter is well known, highly respected and has always undertaken his roles with conscientiousness and diligence.

## **Kevin Staveley**

Nominated by Mike Truran

Kevin has been a long-standing servant of English and Welsh chess, with over 40 years in chess administration for which he was awarded the British Empire Medal in the 2020 Queen's Birthday Honours List. Kevin became a FIDE International Arbiter in 1991 and a FIDE International Organiser in 2013. Quite apart from his many achievements in Welsh chess, the main reason for his receiving the British Empire Medal, he has been involved in the 4NCL National Chess League as a Senior Arbiter for many years and has on many occasions been Tournament Director for the British Chess Championships. Under Kevin's guidance over the years the British Chess Championships have gone from strength to strength, and such has been his dedication that recently he has not allowed personal matters to distract him unduly from carrying out his Tournament Director duties. The most recent British Chess Championships have represented something of a personal triumph for him, with record

numbers of entries and unstinting praise from both organisers and participants for the quality of both the venue and the chess and social events. It's safe to say that without Kevin's unstinting efforts over the years the British Chess Championships would be a shadow of what they are now.

The words of Mark Adams of the Welsh Chess Union in that citation sum up Kevin's contribution perfectly: 'He has offered so much of his free time to chess, offering unconditional support for the benefit of others. I wholly endorse the application for this award'.



## **Contribution to Chess in the Community**

### **Greenwich Peninsula Chess Club**

Nominated by Andrew Pavord

Andrew Pavord and Nick Templar are the co-founders of Greenwich Peninsula Chess Club, (GPCC) which began in May 2021, when Nick and Andrew set up a couple of boards on the riverside next to the Cutty Sark in Greenwich. Passers by were invited to play, and a facebook group was set up. Regular Sunday afternoon sessions were established, and in November as the weather deteriorated, the club moved to a room above "The Spanish Galleon" pub. The following spring, Nick and Andrew (missing the outdoor street chess vibe) moved venues to the beautiful colonnade in the grounds of the Old Royal Naval Hospital, designed by Sir Christopher Wren in 1696. The tables under the colonnade are owned by a restaurant called "The Old Brewery", who have been fantastic supporters, allowing the club to meet there every Sunday rain or shine. Our Facebook group now has over 600 members, sharing games we have played online and posting chess related info and chat.

The club is dedicated to "street chess", informal rapid or blitz games, free of charge, for anyone who wants to play. We have around 20 boards, each with a clock. Nick likes to bring his triple weighted Staunton (Ebony and Boxwood) sets, for board one and two, where it is strictly winner stays on. We have players of all levels coming, several of the regular players are experienced qualified chess tutors, who are happy to help beginners and intermediates improve their game, free of charge. We tolerate a little good humoured "trash talking" but there are lots of children playing, so we do not approve of bad language. In short, it's fun chess, between people who love the game. If the players want a bit more formal play, then we encourage them to join our local club, Charlton Chess Club, which many have done.

In 2022, GPCC was invited to run Saturday sessions at "The Seafood Disco" table, on the riverside in North Greenwich, Local residents were invited to join in, via the various local residents' groups and schools. The local community centre "The Aperture Building" was made available for the first GPCC Rapid Chess Tournament.

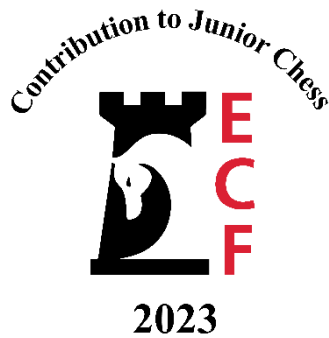
Also in 2022, the GPCC community was asked to raise funds for the Epitome Chess School in Kenya, we had been speaking to James Kang'aru Mwangi for some time about his chess in slums initiative. £320 was raised and sent over to James in August 2022. Nick and Andrew stipulated that chess sets should be given to girl's schools in the slum areas of Nairobi, we have had some great photos, and many online games. GPCC were delighted to welcome Marube Newton, one of James's players when he visited London in October 2022.



In March 2023, a BBC journalist got in touch and wrote an article about the club and the boom in "Street Chess" that had taken place after the pandemic. (<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-london-64877063>). This led to another big increase in attendance, luckily the Old Brewery was happy to accommodate. Many of GPCC players were getting really good and were keen to try their skills in competitive tournaments. GPCC encouraged them to join ECF, and many London tournaments now have a GPCC contingent. The first tournament arranged by Nick and Andrew is taking place as I write this statement! There are 32 participants, 6 rounds of 15/10 rapid. The venue is a beautifully light and spacious community room, which was given free of charge by the Greenwich Peninsula residents association.

The BBC article was seen by the deputy director of HMP Thameside, who thought it might be a good idea to invite some GPCC players to play inmates. Six regular players including an experienced chess trainer attended the prison on 14th July. After this first successful visit, Nick and Andrew got in touch with the Chess in Schools and Communities charity to get more information about their prisons programme. The intention is to establish a regular visit, working with CSC to build a long term relationship between GPCC and the prisons in our area.

Nick and Andrew are planning a larger tournament later this year. Andrew (a Location Manager in the film industry) is keen to use unusual and historic locations for the tournaments. They have their eye on St Afeges Church in Greenwich, the first London church designed by Sir Nicholas Hawksmoor. It's an architectural masterpiece, and a perfect setting for a larger tournament.



## **Contribution to Junior Chess**

### **Chris Lewis**

Nominated by Matthew Clark

Chris is an active member of Newport Chess Club in Shropshire and has been a member of their first team for many years.

In 2019, Chris took over as Shropshire's Head of Junior Chess. At that time, there were few juniors playing serious competitive Chess in Shropshire. Chris started a Shropshire Junior Chess Club at the Nerdy Café in Shrewsbury. Every Saturday during term time, juniors aged 6-13 attend this club. Many of these players have successfully progressed straight from the junior club into the Shropshire Chess Association league. Shropshire Junior Chess Club was one of the first to be recognised on the ECF development pathway.

Chris moved on to organise Shropshire Megafinals in 2022 and 2023 and a Shropshire Junior Chess Congress in 2023. We were delighted when 56 players entered the 2022 Megafinal. 74 players entered the 2023 Junior Congress, and 116 players entered the 2023 Megafinal. The 2023 events attracted players throughout the country. These tournaments include refreshments, mega chess sets, live boards and commentary from some of the strongest local players. Chris acts as the chief arbiter for these tournaments. Chris has put in particular effort to attract local entrants. This has included some days spent travelling up and down Shropshire delivering leaflets to every library in Shropshire, through which Chris has established additional contacts that he has then followed up on resulting in additional junior clubs being established or new juniors identified.

Chris was also one of the organisers of the Shropshire Chess Congress in January 2023. This event enabled a number of Junior players to demonstrate their progress against experienced adult players. Chris is already planning for 3 more tournaments in 2024.

As a result of Chris' inspired leadership, there are now more than 50 active Junior Chess players in Shropshire. Newport Chess club now has 16 active junior players, Telepost Chess Club Shrewsbury has 13 junior members, Telford Chess Club now has 4 junior players, and all these clubs intend to enter Junior teams in next season's Shropshire Chess League. Chris recently started his second junior club at Newport to provide opportunities for over 10's to learn and progress their game.

Shropshire juniors coached by Chris have achieved a string of successes in 2023. One player placed 1st in the Shropshire Congress Minor section in his first ever congress. Another was 1st in the U9's Nottingham Junior Rapid Play, and U10's Shropshire Megafinal and 2nd in the U10's Hereford

Megafinal. A third was 1st in the U11's Shropshire Megafinal and 2nd in the U12 Shropshire Junior Congress.

As Treasurer of the Shropshire Chess Association, Chris has led the way in converting Shropshire Chess Association into a charity with the aim of promoting Chess in our county. The Association has been able to sell and donate subsidised sets to schools, colleges and libraries within the county to encourage junior players. The Shropshire Association has sold/donated subsidised sets to Highley School, Childe Lacon School, Shrewsbury Colleges, Market Drayton Library and Ludlow Library. Chris has travelled the full length of the county to deliver these sets. He helped to found the Chess club at Market Drayton Library, providing the equipment and assisting with coaching there on Wednesday afternoons.

Chris has voluntarily assisted at numerous junior tournaments in neighbouring counties including Staffordshire, Warwickshire, Herefordshire and the Northern Gigafinals. Chris has entered and captained the Junior 4NCL online team for 3 seasons.

Chris arranges matches between different junior clubs to give juniors their first taste of competitive chess. He spends many hours each week signposting parents to appropriate clubs and tournaments, promoting junior chess through social media channels and giving radio interviews. He is aiming to further progress junior chess next season by setting up a schools' league. He has been building his contacts with local schools to create this league and we are hopeful of starting it in the new school year.

Chris uses these events to continually promote junior chess in the county, regularly maintaining the Shropshire Junior Facebook page.

<https://www.facebook.com/ShropshireJuniorChess/>

Chris acts as a volunteer on behalf of Shropshire Chess and balances his role as head of junior chess with a full-time job as an accountant and many other voluntary roles supporting chess, including:

- Shropshire Treasurer
- Shropshire Congress Organiser
- Newport Chess Club Treasurer
- Newport Chess Club Publicity Officer
- Newport Chess Club Tournament Organiser
- Newport A Team Captain
- Wolverhampton League Vice President
- Wolverhampton Chess Club Tournament Organiser
- Wolverhampton WDCL A Team Captain
- Warwickshire Trustee



## **Contribution to Women's Chess**

### **Caroline Robson**

Nominated by Lawrence Cooper

Caroline took over as ECF Manager of Women's Online Chess when I retired at the end of 2022. Prior to this she was the player who played the most in our LiChess team battles and had also helped to find new players at a time when interest was dwindling. Since her appointment she has attracted more players and compared to late 2022 when she was sometimes the only player taking part for the England team there always seems to be enough players taking part that the team is regularly finishing high up in the different arenas.

Although she was quite nervous about taking the role her enthusiasm and hard work have transformed the fortunes of the team and as the person who struggled to keep the team going towards the end of last year I am very happy to see a healthy mix of new and returning players enjoying playing in the different events. She has also increased the profile of the team with regular posts and chat groups on Facebook and is in contact with chess.com about potential future events.

Her latest project is publicising and helping players to enter the Queen's Online Chess Festival with the European qualifier taking place on July 2nd and the final on the 16th. This is an event organised by the FIDE Commission for Women's Chess and includes sections open to all women, under sixteen and under nine.

She has made an outstanding start in the role and I am confident that she will continue her excellent work in the coming weeks/months.

*Club of the Year*



**2023**

## **Club of the Year**

### **Leeds Junior Chess Club**

Nominated by John Hipshon

Leeds Junior Chess Club was formed in 2008. Numbers varied between 20 and 40 for a number of years, but has seen a huge spike recently. The club now has 72 children aged from 7 -18. The sessions are split between two groups which run for an hour and a half every Sunday with an improvers' group followed by a stronger group. The club has a waiting list of 126, and has already signed up 82 new children for its taster sessions in the summer.

We now have 5 coaches, with a head coach who leads most sessions. Coaching is based on a systematic approach to teaching newcomers the basics of openings, middle and end game strategy. The top group work in small groups to analyse complex positions from real games and come up with a move series (never just one move). Half the session is spent coaching and half playing. For the improving group internal games are graded most weeks so that a better focus is achieved, but members are encouraged to be adventurous and play aggressively rather than 'safe', although a thorough approach to defence is not neglected.

Each term ends with a competition with prizes, and at Christmas and end of term parents are invited to join in. Some parents have joined the adult club at Alwoodley. We also have occasional simultaneous events inviting guest players.

The club emphasises enjoyment of the game is essential, with children attending because they love playing chess. We ask all children to compete in chess outside the club at some stage during the year and encourage participation in the Yorkshire Junior Grand Prix, The UK Chess Challenge, the English Youth Championships and other competitions. We entered three teams in the Yorkshire Junior Chess League (more than any other club) and better players are asked to play in the adult teams for Alwoodley Chess Club in the Yorkshire league. This year 19 juniors from the club played in Yorkshire league matches. The club also had 37 players in the Yorkshire UKCC Megafinal (about one third of the total entry), with 24 players qualifying for the UKCC Gigafinals. Nine of our players were in the Yorkshire Under 11 team who played in the EPSA finals this year – more than any other club.

The club is inclusive and has a strong policy of encouraging girls. Most of the strongest girls in the county play at the club and this has been the case for many years, and we have a strong role model as one of our coaches is a former English Girls Chess Champion. The club has a highly diverse population in terms of ethnicity and is a friendly place, while still being focussed on learning and playing well. Standards of respect and behaviour are extremely high. On each club night at least one

player in each session wins a reward (club pens and key rings) for good play or trying hard. We now have our own club kit and an excellent website and were are an approved ECF Development Pathway Club. At the end of the year, we announce a player of the year, a most improved player and a coaches' award for someone making an exceptional effort.

We believe that our approach has produced a great depth of players. While other junior clubs in the county can match and even better our strength at the very top, none of them can match the sheer numbers of competent players.

During the pandemic we are extremely proud of how we kept the club running for the members during the lockdowns. We coached both sessions by Zoom every week and had a lichess competition every week after the coaching. When we were allowed back with restrictions, we met in three sessions in 'bubbles' with each child having their own board and mandatory face covering apart from those exempt. We provided an exceptionally safe environment during that time and also took part in online competitions with other clubs from around the country and around the world. We played online in the interclub competitions and our members are encouraged to take part in the intercounty matches online.

The club is moving to three sessions from next September to try to meet demand and we expect to have 100 members. We believe we are trail-blazing club - certainly in our county, and our example has encouraged a number of other junior clubs to form around Yorkshire where tournaments now sell out weeks in advance.

Small Club of the Year



2023

## **Small Club of the Year**

### **Ringwood Chess Club**

Nominated by Peter W Anderson

#### OVERVIEW

Ringwood chess club, which was established in 1959, participates in the Southampton League, Dorset League, Bournemouth and District Chess League and Bacchus League.

During the pandemic we provided the opportunity for not just our own members to play online chess but also players from other local clubs, establishing what became the most popular online competition in the region.

Post pandemic we have put an emphasis on growing the core membership and in particular recruiting and developing players new to competitive chess:

- Prior to the pandemic we had about 10 full members and many associate members for whom ours was a second club.
- As 1st June 2022 we had 16 members (12 full members, 1 junior member, 3 associate members).
- By 31st May 2023 we had 21 members (16 full members, 3 junior members, 2 associate members). 6 of the members recruited in 2022 and 2023 were new to competitive chess.

More recently we ran the first Ringwood Rapidplay tournament which sold out with 60 entrants.

#### PROVIDING A WELCOMING AND SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT FOR NEW MEMBERS AND GROWING MEMBERSHIP:

- We ensure all new visitors are given a warm welcome and the opportunity to play friendly games for a few weeks before deciding whether or not to join.
- We maintain a high quality, friendly and informative website, with the primary aim of attracting new members.
- We have placed advertising posters at key sites in Ringwood and surrounding areas.

- We support the largest local school, Ringwood School, in running its internal chess events, partly to simply help them in the promotion of chess but also as a route for their pupils to join our club.
- We anticipate expanding our membership further in 2023-24 as we have had recent regular visitors to the club that we are confident of turning into new members.

#### COACHING AND DEVELOPING CLUB MEMBERS WITH A TRACK RECORD OF RESULTS:

- We participate in the Bacchus League, a local league aimed at inexperienced players. We appoint an experienced non-playing captain acting as our team organiser for this league.

(N.B. one of our club members was one of the 3 people who jointly founded the Bacchus League in 2018.)

- Once new players have gained experience in the Bacchus League, some of our established players have given up places in the Dorset League and Bournemouth and District League teams solely to provide opportunities for the new players in the “full” leagues, with good success.
- When matches are not being held, experienced players are always on hand for practice games and advice for new members.
- We occasionally run informal puzzle evenings, with instructive puzzles of varying degrees of difficulty being provided to help develop players of all levels.
- Experienced members loan books and videos to new members and provide advice on books / videos to purchase and a good approach to chess study.
- The success of our approach can be seen in the excellent 2022-23 results of new players, including Liam Hardman (adult), Julian Schofield (adult), Ben Willis-Owen (junior).

#### RUNNING OVER THE BOARD AND ONLINE CLUB EVENTS INCLUDING SOCIALLY DISTANCED / RULE OF SIX EVENTS:

- In the summer of 2022, in between league seasons, we ran blitz/rapid tournaments. These were largely internal tournaments, but occasionally other clubs were invited to participate. These included handicap events to provide encouragement to new members. In future these will be run every summer (and are indeed running in 2023).
- From December 2022 we started organising the first Ringwood Rapidplay tournament (ECF Rated) which was held in June 2023, attracting 60 players from Hampshire, Dorset and Wiltshire, including 10 juniors.

15 entrants completed the online feedback form after the event. All 15 rated the event as excellent on an excellent/good/fair/poor scale.

#### MAINTAINING THE CLUB COMMUNITY AND SUPPORTING MEMBERS DURING THE PANDEMIC:

- During the pandemic, from June 2020 to July 2021, we ran online team tournaments open to all local players, offering them competitive chess when face-to-face play was not possible. During this period, the team competitions were the major chess events in Dorset and also attracted many players from Hampshire and Wiltshire.



- During the pandemic, from June 2020 to July 2021, we ran online individual tournaments open to all local players, offering them competitive chess when face-to-face play was not possible.

**Chairman's Note :** The Committee debated the inclusion of Ringwood in this category as by the end of the assessment period it had more members than the category allowed. It decided the clubs' achievements, including the growth in its membership, in year demonstrated merit and its submission for this category should be allowed.

*Congress of the Year*



**2023**

## **University of Warwick**

Nominated by Sidharth Panicker

The nomination for this award consisted of an illustrated pdf which may be viewed here:

<https://britchess.wufoo.com/cabinet/3fb9515b-417b-40a2-ab59-d6eac71baf66>