



**Minutes of the 156th Board Meeting of the English Chess Federation
Thursday 7th September at 11.30 a.m. by Zoom**

Directors:

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

Invited: Observers and Guests

Chairman, Governance Committee, Robert Stern		RS
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Apologies, Minutes and Conflicts

1. Apologies for absence

As noted above.

2. Minutes of 155th Board Meeting (SVW)

NT and RS had sent in clarifications to the minutes. The minutes were approved subject to the inclusion of these items.

3. Conflicts declaration (SVW)

No conflicts had been identified.



Directors Reports

4. Finance (AA)

Early indications were that the year would end very close to budget although AA needed to speak to David Thomas as membership income was not quite as expected. This is likely to reflect the timing of income recognition.

Debra Atkinson ('DA') had been added to the Bankline system to expedite approvals during staff absences.

Finally, directors should check and update the Register of Interests in the light of the expected grant income from HMG.

5. Home Chess (NT)

The British Chess Championship ('BCC') accounts were not yet finalised. It was now expected that there would be a small loss which would be less than the budgeted loss figure

NT was investigating venues for the 2024 and 2025 BCC and would report back to the Board when more information was available.

The UK Open Blitz qualifiers would be held at the end of September with the final on 2 December. Entries were strong and NT was optimistic about breaking even.

Finally, the Cambridge International would run again in February 2024.

6. Events (SB)

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

7. Membership (RW)

Membership statistics that were attached to the agenda were reviewed and it was noted in particular that the proportion of female members had risen by about 1%.

The number of subscribers had risen to around 5,000 although it was noted that there had been a number of credit card renewal failures due to expired cards etc. Members should be encouraged to renew via direct debit rather than credit card as this was more reliable.

Paid membership currently stood at 14,000 with around 18,500 total membership.

8. Women's Chess (AM)

There was nothing to report under this section.

9. Junior Chess (AH)

AH was not in attendance.

10. International (MP)

There was nothing to report under this heading.

Special Business

11. AGM Agenda and Preparation (RS)

RS had produced a short paper indicating the procedure and resolutions to be put to the AGM with regard to the proposals on membership options. This paper had been included with the agenda papers.

MT circulated the Strategy Statement and Board Report to Council papers. These were approved for presentation to the AGM.

12. Membership Options Paper (MT)

MT had circulated an updated membership options paper which the Board agreed. He said that a reminder email would be sent to members in order to obtain a wider and larger sample of views regarding the proposed changes.

13. HMG Funding Update (MT/NT)

It was noted that the funding from HMG would facilitate investment in improvements to grassroots chess. It was agreed that MT/MP/NT would produce a short paper to put to Council.

Action: MT/MP/NT to develop a short paper.

14. National Curriculum (MT/AH)

MT asked whether this could be based upon curricula already in use by other federations. AH was looking this.

NT suggested that the existing Certificate of Excellence scheme could either be incorporated into or replace the National Curriculum although it needed some updating.

It was agreed that a group consisting of MT/AH/NT/AA would meet to discuss how best to progress this. DA would organise a Zoom meeting to review options.

**Action: DA to organise meeting
MT/AH/NT/AA to meet to discuss how best to progress the project.**

15. Update of Safeguarding/Complaints/Safe Play Matters (SVW/NT)

A number of issues were discussed under this heading:

1) The safeguarding policy needs to be updated and in the process a section dealing with vulnerable adults should be incorporated. The Board gave delegated authority to SVW/AM to update the policy further with the revised version being presented to the next Board meeting.

Action: SVW/AM

JW/PS/SVW/AM had developed a Safeguarding webpage and would discuss this further with NT and MT.

Action: (SVW to co-ordinate)

2) A guidance paper for clubs should be developed.

Action: SVW to work with the safeguarding team to prepare guidance.

3) NT had developed a draft Safe Play Guidelines document with support from a working group including the Safeguarding team and Director of Women's Chess. This was attached to the agenda with comments to be provided by board members. It was agreed that the Safe Play document be adopted by the Board with delegated authority to make any further amendments to NT/SVW/AM.'

Action: Board Members to comment and NT/SVW/AM to finalise paper.

4) RS was developing a Complaints procedure with input from MT and SVW to address complaints relating to the behaviour of members and supporters. This was adopted with delegated authority to SVW/MT/RS to update and amend.

Action: SVW to finalise.

MT queried whether the Board had the remit to impose sanctions on clubs/members who did not adhere to safeguarding/safe space guidelines or against whom a complaint had been successfully upheld and, if such a remit did not exist, whether a proposal needed to be taken to Council at some point. It was agreed that SVW would investigate whether such a remit existed and, if it did not, how that could be remedied.

Action: SVW to follow up with MT.

16. Draft Bye-Law Change Proposals (SVW/RS)

The draft Bye Law changes were discussed and it was agreed that clarification on their operation should be included in the papers for the Council meeting.

17. Updating Regulation No. 5 (SVW/RS)

This regulation dealt with complaints about ECF officials and needed updating say that complaints were dealt with on a more timely basis. Proposed changes to effect timely resolution were presented to the Board.

The updated Regulation was adopted by the Board.

18. Player Transfers to ENG (MT/MP)

This item was deferred to the next meeting.

Any Other Business

Awards Committee

SG said that the award winners had now been decided with competition having been very close in some categories, although no award had been made in two categories. He would circulate the winners' details to the Board.

The Board agreed that SG had authority to confirm and notify the various winners.

SVW then declared the meeting closed at 1.05 p.m..