



**Minutes of the 159th Board Meeting of the English Chess Federation
Wednesday 14th February 2024 at 19.30 by Zoom**

Directors:

President, Dominic Lawson	APOL	DL
Chief Executive, Mike Truran		MT
Director of Finance, Alex Longson		AL
Director of Women's Chess, Aga Milewska	APOL	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		RW
Chair, Stephen Woodhouse		SVW
Non-Executive Director, Sarah Longson		SL
Non-Executive Director, Stephen Greep		SG
Non-Executive Director, Katarzyna Toma		KT

Invited: Observers and Guests

Chairman, Governance Committee, Robert Stern	RS
Chairman, Finance Committee, Nick Faulks	NF

Apologies, Minutes and Conflicts

1. Apologies for absence

As noted above.

2. Minutes of 158th Board Meeting

(SVW)

The minutes were approved.

3. Conflicts declaration

(SVW)

No new conflicts were identified.



Directors' Reports

4. Finance

AL had provided a summary paper together with supplementary papers prior to the meeting. These included revised forecasts for the financial year 2023/24 and a draft budget for 2024/25.

He was currently forecasting a revised loss of £26k which would bring reserves to £51k, just within the ECF target of £50k. The biggest changes had been an additional home spend of £19k, offset to an extent by a lower admin spend of £14k.

In addition to the summary draft 2025 budget, AL agreed that he would provide full details to Nick Faulks for the Finance Committee shortly after this Board meeting. The aim had been to provide a break-even budget excluding the DCMS funds. The budget assumed that there was no attrition in membership following implementation of the new blended membership rates.

The proposed increase to membership fees were slightly above those that had been given to Council in October as part of the blended membership fee proposals, but Council had been advised at the time that the proposed blended membership fees did not include any inflationary increase. Membership fees had not been raised since 2019, and the proposed increase were well below inflation for the period from then to the present.

The Board agreed the proposed increases nem con.

AL to send finance papers to Nick Faulks for review by the Finance Committee

DE requested that a paper be provided for Council setting out the expected funding from DCMS and broadly how it would be spent.

MP replied that he would be presenting to the Council meeting on the DCMS funding and would cover these points. The Board anticipated that regional co-ordinators would be approached after the Council meeting with a view to inputting ideas for grassroots and other expenditure, developing the framework/criteria for grant applications, and helping with the production of grant applications.

5. Home Chess

NT covered the main areas in his Home Chess report.

It had now been announced that the British Championships in 2024 were going to be held in Hull using two venues. The venues were about ten minutes apart, and the Weekender and AM and PM events would take place at the Doubletree Hotel, with all other events happening at the City Hall.

A group had been set up to deal with the myriad matters that needed to be covered. The focus was now on the setting of entrance fees and the offering of conditions.

The Board confirmed a vote of thanks to NT and Stephen Greep nem con as proposed by MT Truran.

The ECF Grand Prix would not take place this year, as the hoped for sponsorship monies from Greens had not yet been agreed.

6. Membership

RW had submitted a report prior to the meeting.

7. Women's Chess

There was no report under this heading.

8. Junior

AH had not provided a report.

9. International

MP briefly summarised his report, which would be circulated after the meeting. The main points were:

Successful events at Hastings and the London Chess Classic.

Strong performances from Shreyas Royal and Bodhana Sivanandan.

Aspirations for a strong English presence at the European Senior Teams in Slovenia.

Optimism for the renaissance of a traditional all play all Hastings event in future years.

Special Business

10. Finance Council Preparations

(a) DE intended to send out initial papers to Council at the end of February. There were some issues to be clarified:

Audited accounts – AL would send draft accounts to DE.

Election of KT as non-executive director and AL as Finance Director.

It was resolved that both of these positions would continue as casual vacancies until the October AGM, when both KT and AL would submit themselves for re-election.

DE to send out initial papers to Council by end February

AL to send draft accounts to DE

KT and AL to be put forward for re-election in October

- (b) Proposal to make BCF dormant – It was noted that the decision to propose changes to the BCF Council to make the BCF dormant, but to keep the BCF's bank account open, had been made previously, and was intended:
 - 1) To keep the existing arrangement in place whereby new trustees could be appointed to the John Robinson Youth Trust the the BCF Council as required.
 - 2) To avoid any problems should bequests be made to the BCF.
- (c) It was agreed that the proposal to provide free/life memberships to members of Olympiad/European teams would not be presented to Council at this stage.
- (d) A resolution would be presented to Council on rolling membership to correct the omission at last October's AGM, and there was some discussion as to what this should say about the timing of membership fee increases. It was agreed to keep the general reference to fees increasing on 1 September, but for this year to include a provision for fees to be increased on a date on or before 1 September to be agreed by the Board in order to provide flexibility with dates to assist with the implementation of the merger of Gold and Silver fee levels.

RS to prepare resolution for Council

- (e) SL would forward to DE information about voting apps that could potential be used at the Finance Council meeting.
- (f) DE noted that it would be preferable if communications regarding matters to be discussed at Council with members were made by the Office rather than by member representatives.

11. ECF Committee Reform

SVW would discuss the proposals further with the Governance and Finance Committees, and would report back to the next Board meeting. The Governance Committee had reviewed the paper presented to the last Board

meeting and agreed (subject to any comments from the Finance Committee) that:

- 1- The Committees would flag matters that they believed should be addressed.
- 2- The Committees and the Board needed to commit to greater diversity.
- 3- The non-executive directors should report on the performance of the Committees.
- 4- The standing orders should be amended accordingly.

It was noted that comments were also expected from NF as Chair of the Finance Committee.

Committee standing orders to be updated by the respective Committees

12. Club Membership Proposals

NT explained that the proposals were intended to broaden the ECF franchise by allow more clubs to become member organisations. Currently clubs are only allowed to apply for ECF membership if they organise congresses. The proposal was to allow clubs to include their own club events as well as congresses in the count of games organised as a basis for membership and waiving membership fees. The new minimum bar for a 'club/ congress' organiser would now be set at 50 rated games (or 100 half games). The Board hoped that this change would increase the number of club member organisations at Council, with a positive effect on grass roots representation.

It was also proposed to abolish organisation membership fees, which are technically due from member organisations not organising the required number of games. This was because these fees have proven difficult to administer and collect and produce very limited income. Relevant member organisations who were eligible for membership by way of games organised but no longer organised games would remain as non-voting members for a period of time to be determined, after which membership would be discontinued.

The proposal was agreed in principle by the Board, and it was proposed and agreed to take a detailed version of these proposals forward for consideration at the next Council meeting, including any necessary changes to the ECF's articles of association.

MT and NT to produce paper and revised articles of association for next Council meeting

13 Regulation 2

It was noted that Regulation 2 would need to be updated to add KT to the rota as a third non-executive director.

RS to update Regulation 2 rota

Any Other Business

SVW would circulate a proposal for future meetings to include some face to face as well as virtual meetings. The aim would be for meetings to be on either Tuesdays or Wednesdays.

SVW to circulate future meeting proposals

SVW then closed the meeting at 9.30 p.m.

DRAFT