



**Minutes of the 160<sup>th</sup> Board Meeting of the English Chess Federation  
Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> April 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		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	APOL	RW
Chair, Stephen Woodhouse		SVW
Non-Executive Director, Sarah Longson		SL
Non-Executive Director, Stephen Greep	APOL	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 159<sup>th</sup> Board Meeting

(SVW)

The minutes were approved.

3. Conflicts declaration

(SVW)

No new conflicts were identified.



## Directors' Reports

### 4. Finance

AL reported that the 2023 accounts had been approved by the auditors and that a version for signing was awaited. The final result for the year had been a £7,000 loss against an original budget of £19,000 surplus.

The bank balance was currently £120,000 against a year end figure of £220,00. The difference was accounted for by the spend ahead of the expected DCMS funding. He noted that there had been delays in the DCMS funding in part because they required claimed amounts to be fully supported by invoices or other supporting documentation, regardless of the size of individual amounts claimed. Since some of the events had been prior to any knowledge of the DCMS funding the trail for the amounts claimed had been more difficult to produce. This was a reminder that future spending needed to be fully supported by documentation.

It was agreed that the Council did not need to see a line by line budget for 2024/25 and that any further information that was requested would be supplied separately.

Nick Faulks noted that the Finance Committee were very impressed by the work carried out by AL.

There was some discussion about whether the reserve level of £50,000 was sufficient. It was noted that the Chess Trust had ringfenced £100,000 to support the ECF as a 'lender of last resort' which was supported by an MOU, and the figure of £50,000 reflected this fact. AL was happy with the reserve level, and it was confirmed that this was a minimum figure and not merely a target.

NT raised the issue of allocation of funds from the Women's Directorate budget to the British Championships, and it was agreed that NT/AM/AL would discuss this further outside the meeting. **Action: NT/AM/AL**

Following the discussion on the Finance report the Board agreed to propose the following at the ECF Finance Meeting nem. con:

*That membership fees for each category would be increased by £2 after the Silver/Gold merge.*

*That should the resolution to abolish the member organisation fee not be passed the fee would increase by £2.*

### Game Fee

The proposed new levels for game fee were discussed.

After extensive discussion, it was agreed that the proposal to be put to Council would be:

Congress Pay to Play Fee 15.00 (difference between Bronze and Gold)

Congress Pay to Play Junior 3.00

Pay to play fee relabelled as £1.50 admin fee for each player whose FIDE affiliation is not ENG and not ECF members at gold or above

Non-Members Game Fee 20.00 (Bronze membership price)

Non-Members Game Fee Junior 12.00 (junior Gold membership price)

## 5. Home Chess

NT's report had been circulated. Some key points are as follows:

**2nd Cambridge International 2024** – This year's event took place in February and was once again a great success, with GM Michael Adams taking first place on tie break in a strong international field.

**British Rapid 2024** – This was another highly successful event run by the 4NCL on behalf of the BICC, with entries sold out. The event was won by GM Danny Gormally in a play-off with Irish WIM Trisha Kanyamarala.

**English Championships 2024** – The English Championship events are scheduled for the Holiday Inn, Kenilworth in May (Seniors) and June (English and English Women's)

**British 2024** – Preparation continues for this year's British Championships in Hull, which will benefit from support from Hull City Council, HERCA, JRYCT and the Chess Trust. The entry form was now live, with entries to date published on the British Championships web page.

**Chess in Prisons** – Carl Portman continues to carry out visits to a number of prisons, with highly positive feedback from HM Prison Service staff and inmates. He has prepared a very personal statement which appears on the ECF website, and gives an excellent flavour of chess in prisons and why it matters: <https://www.englishchess.org.uk/chess-in-prisons/>

## 6. Membership

RW had submitted a report before the meeting which noted the continuing strong level of new and renewing members.

## 7. Women's Chess

AM had submitted a report prior to the meeting. She reported that her and Satish Gaekwad's applications for the IA title were due to be considered at the next FIDE Council meeting.

## 8. Junior

AH had submitted a report before the meeting. In response to a question from NF he noted that the majority of players who would be interested in the World Juniors would not be in need of funding. In addition, players were becoming less willing to attend overseas events.

## 9. International

There was no report under this heading. MP noted that GM Nikita Vitiugov was now registered under England and that he had now secured a residency visa thanks to help from DL.

AM reported that WGM Elena Mirzoeva had also now transferred to England.

## **Special Business**

### 10. John Robinson Youth Chess Trust

MP had circulated a paper in advance of the meeting. The assets of the JRYCT were growing, with relatively low expenditure. He felt that the ECF should request further targeted funding. The feedback he had received from some of the trustees was that the issue was in part a lack of applications. MP had produced some suggestions for areas where the JRYCT could provide further funding, and these were outlined in his paper.

NT said that he had approached JRYCT regarding a bursary fund for juniors last year, and MP agreed to add this to his list of suggestions. NT also noted that the JRYCT currently provided support for the British Championships on an annual basis.

SL and NF were unsure whether the suggestion of a 'Tony Miles' prize for the first junior to gain a GM title was sufficiently focussed, and MP agreed that he would amend this to exclude anyone under 21 who currently held a GM norm.

It was agreed that SVW would draft a letter to the JRYCT containing the suggestions and pass this to AH to review and submit as Junior Director.

### 12. DCMS Update

MP reported that there had been some delays in receiving the expected DCMS funding because of the need to submit detailed documentation for every line item regardless of size (see above), but the funds were expected in the next week or two. Once funds were received MP would speak to the

Committee on spending for the 2024/25 year. He invited Board members to contact him with suggestions.

He had been asked if the grant was likely to be repeated, and was fairly optimistic that it would be. He aimed to hold discussions with the shadow DCMS Minister and had already met with their Special Adviser. Good management of the current grant would also be a factor in obtaining any future grant.

MP confirmed that the DCMS contract defined eligible expenditure in some detail, so the ECF needed to have receipts to provide evidence that money had been correctly spent regardless of the size of the item claimed for.

This led to a short discussion about funding for grassroots chess. NT had produced an updated version of the grassroots support paper for Council which outlined some potential spending areas. He hoped that Council would provide some useful feedback on the paper. He would draw up a list of people who might potentially help as regional co-ordinators.

### 13.Club Membership

The Board approved the paper to be submitted to the ECF Finance Meeting.

### **Any Other Business**

AH reminded the junior selectors present that he awaited their comments on the email he had circulated regarding the Glorney Cup.

AL said that membership had reached a new record of 14,200 paying members.

There being no further business SVW declared the meeting closed at 9.30 pm.