

Election Address: Mike Truran

Looking back at my [election address](#) to Council three years ago, I'm delighted with the progress we've made on the eleven main areas I suggested the ECF should be focussing on. However, I don't intend in this address to comment on the degree to which I have as Chief Executive contributed (or not) to developments over the past three years. Council members can make that judgment without any interventions from me, and in that regard our website and monthly magazine *ChessMoves* have given plenty of information to Council members about the ECF's progress during that time.

Instead, I would like to explain my decision, which will already be known to you from the recent announcement on the ECF website, to stand again for election and to stand down in October 2025 at the latest once a suitable successor has been found. I could have stood down without further ado. I decided against that because it would in my view have been a dereliction of duty not to have prepared the ground properly for an orderly hand-over to a successor, while ensuring that Council still has the opportunity to confirm (or not) that successor. Importantly, that prevents nobody from standing against me this time round, or from standing against my successor next year – and nor does it prevent Council from voting for 'none of the above' at both Council meetings.

I've no wish to 'hand-pick my successor'. Exactly the opposite is the case. Accordingly, I've asked the Non-Executive Directors, and they have agreed, to take on the task of identifying, interviewing and appointing suitable candidates, and I expect to take part in that process only if requested to by them. I've also told the Non-Executive Directors that I'm more than happy to work with whomever is identified to ensure a proper hand-over (that being the principal purpose of the process), reserving only the right to stand down at once in the unlikely event that I consider my successor to be someone who is not prepared to 'roll their sleeves up and get stuck in' and to continue to develop the spirit of collegiality and teamwork that the Board has worked hard to foster over the last few years.

I took on the vacant post of Chief Executive in January 2016. So if I stand down, as I expect to, no later than October 2025 I will be just a handful of months short of a decade-long tenure; and as I have been in post several years longer than any of my predecessors, as the job is not getting any easier or less time-consuming,

and as I am not getting any younger, I'm looking forward to handing on the baton to someone new. It has been an exhausting, and on occasion turbulent, time – but I have always tried to put the interests of the ECF and English chess first in everything I've done. I've tried to be an 'enabling' Chief Executive, by which I mean that I've tried where possible to have the ECF work more closely with other chess organisations and, if they can do things better than the ECF can, encourage and support them in doing that. Not everyone has agreed with me in that regard, but as I look back over my tenure I'm struck by the sheer amount of good things that the ECF has taken the lead on and delivered in its own right rather than as just an 'enabling' organisation.

This year's Board report to Council takes a look at what the ECF has achieved over the last ten years or so – an appropriate timespan to carry out some kind of retrospective. I believe, as I have always believed, that the ECF is a powerful force for good in English chess, and I salute the work of our wonderful volunteers, as well as our paid Office staff, in achieving the success that we have. A good friend in the chess world recently told me that his two success criteria for departing staff were always 'Could I see where they had been?' and 'Was the organisation a better place now than when they arrived?'. I sign off my last election address to Council with the words that I used in my first: 'How much of our success can be attributed to the present Chief Executive I leave to Council to decide.'

Mike Truran