

Scotland - Chess Scotland, Wales - Welsh Chess Union, and Northern Ireland - Ulster Chess Union) by 31st May 2025.

ECF Grassroots Chess Initiative: An Update

Over £80,000 still available for applications which meet the grassroots chess criteria

The ECF grassroots chess initiative was launched in July 2024. Details of the programme and how to apply can be found in the prospectus here:

<https://www.englishchess.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/Grassroots-Prospectus.pdf>

Funds have been allocated on a regional basis; each of nine regions, led by a regional co-ordinator, has £10,000 for grassroots awards. A small central team of Stephen Grep (ECF Non-Executive Director and Chair of the grassroots fund), Mike Truran (ECF CEO) and Nigel Towers (ECF Director of Home Chess) oversee the process and have a smaller amount of funds for cross-regional applications.

The regions, and their coordinators, are:

- North West (Richard Walsh);
- North East (Mick Riding);
- Yorkshire and Humberside (Andrew Wainwright);
- West Midlands (Tim Lane);
- East Midlands (Paul Mottram);
- East of England (John Wickham);
- South East (to be confirmed);
- Greater London (Chris Skulte);
- South West (Nikki Forster).

Applications for funding are considered quarterly and the first two tranches of applications have now been assessed.

To date 64 applications have been made, of which over two thirds have been supported by awards of grants. Grants totalling £23,500 have been made – that said, 80% of funds for regional grants are still available, so there are lots of opportunities for further applications. Applications can be made at any time; the date for the next assessment is 1st March (and then 1st June). We are expecting the funds available through the initiative to last for up to two years. To make a successful grant it is highly recommended that you read the prospectus and target your application accordingly. The maximum for individual grassroots chess grants is expected to be in the region of £1,000 - more for requests for cross-regional applications.

Unsurprisingly, most awards have been made to support the purchase of equipment for new and developing clubs and congresses, but we have also seen a range of community developments, together with help for schools and prison chess. The initiative has supported clubs and associations, junior and school chess clubs, community chess developments, and prison chess.

General enquiries can be made to the Chair of the grassroots chess initiative, Stephen Grep (sjgreep@gmail.com).

We are grateful to Chess & Bridge and DGT, who have provided equipment at significantly reduced rates to enable our available funds to go further.

The following is a list of awards made to date, showing the breadth and regional distribution of awards.

Alsager Owls Chess Club	Equipment and venue hire for new junior chess club
Ashton Community Chess Club	Support for training/coaching
Basildon Chess Club	Clocks for club development
Bath Chess Club	Club development training events
Bracknell Chess Club	Clocks to support development of family and junior chess club.
Bure Valley Primary School	Equipment to aid teaching chess in local schools
Cavendish Church of England Primary School	Equipment for new school chess club
Chess Centre, Ilkley	Support for new congress development
Chess in Cheshire	Support for the development of new chess events in Cheshire
Chess for Life	Support for new club start-up
Chessmates - York	Support for junior satellite events at Chessmates event
Cramlington Community Chess Club	Clocks and publicity flyers for new club

Crewe & Nantwich Library Chess Club	Equipment support for new and developing library chess clubs
Cumbria Chess Association	Support for community chess events in Cumbria
Darwinian Knights Chess Club	Sets, boards and clocks for a new club
Dorchester Chess Club	Sets, boards and clocks for club development
Durham University Chess Society	Clocks to enable local league participation
Edge Hill University	Sets, boards and clocks for club development
English Chess Federation	Sets and boards for chess in prison initiatives
Fareham Academy	Sets and boards for a new school junior development
Ferndown Junior Chess Club	Support for the development of a new junior chess club
Folkestone Junior Chess Club	Support for the development of new junior chess club
Gosforth Chess Club	Support for gazebo purchase for community events
Halesowen Chess Club	Demonstration board and stand for junior coaching
Lancashire Chess Association	Clocks to help the development of county chess
Lido School of Chess	Equipment to support club development
Luton Chess Club	Sets, boards and clocks for club development
Maidenhead Chess Club	Club development support - publicity/social media and training
Medway Chess Club	Funding to support the development of new congresses

Meltham and Denby Dale Chess Club	Support for new congress development
Merseyside Chess Club	Sets, boards and clocks for junior club development
Morley Junior Chess Club	Sets and boards for new junior chess club
New England Chess Club	Set-up and first year costs of a new junior club section
Play Chess Initiative (Glossop centred)	Wide range of equipment, literature and other support for new community chess initiative
Richmond Upon Thames College	Outdoor chess tables
St John the Evangelist Chess Club, Walton, Liverpool	Equipment to support the development of a new chess club
She Plays to Win	Support for new programmes for the She Plays To Win initiative
South Bristol Chess Club	Support and growth for club in deprived area
South London	Support for new women's and junior club development
Thornaby Chess Club	Sets and boards to support chess development at Middleton St George Village
Turing Chess Academy	Sets, boards and clocks for club development
Wells Chess Club	Support for the development of a junior chess club, including coaching
Wigan Chess Club	Publicity and DBS checks for new club
Willesden & Brent Chess Club	Schools chess club development and events support in Brent

Stephen Greep, ECF Grassroots Initiative Chair