

Meeting of Chess Scotland Council
held at Edinburgh Chess Club on Sunday 16 March 2014

Present & Apologies

Council Members

Douglas Bryson
David G Congalton
Daniel C Deary
David M Deary
Hamish Glen - Chairman
Dick Heathwood - Secretary
Andy Howie
June Underwood
Jim J Webster

Observers

Andrew McCulloch
David Archibald

Apologies

Alan Borwell
Ian G Brownlee
Gerald Lobley
Linda McCusker
Alex H McFarlane
John Montgomery
Andrew Muir
Ken Stewart
Alastair White

Minutes

Because of an injury sustained by the Executive Director, Dick Heathwood had been asked to take minutes. There was some discussion about options as to style of minutes and a degree of support was expressed for avoiding incomplete verbatim reporting and, instead, adopt a less personalised and more summary level approach. Also, it would be reasonable to expect minutes to be issued within a month of the meeting date.

Minutes of previous Meeting - 11 January 2014

a) Matters arising

- The names of Council members had now been added to the web page listing Chess Scotland contact details.
- Eligibility criteria were being reconsidered within the Constitution Review Group.
- After due consideration, it had been decided at this stage not to change the existing rules for allocating Grand Prix points.
- Scottish Junior Chess had agreed to clearly mark all entry forms to identify who was running the event. It was agreed at the Meeting under minute that the Home Junior Board should review the style, content and layout of the calendar on the Chess Scotland website.

b) Approval

The Minutes of 11 January were accepted subject to one or two minor modifications.
Proposer - Jim J Webster Secunder - Daniel C Deary

Report from Directors

1. President

- The Jonathan Rowson memento and a framed certificate had been presented to Euan Gray at the NEJCA Junior Event and Adult Allegro held in Stonehaven on 1 February. The award itself had now been recovered from the previous winner and would be presented in early course.
- The Cherie Booth award's engravings had been brought up to date and the award presented to Caitlin Reid at her school. Attendance by the Provost of Renfrewshire Council had added importance to the event and the school had been very supportive in giving Caitlin due recognition for her achievement. Photographs were awaited in order to be able to put a notice up on the website.
- A meeting involving the President, the International Director Junior and the Finance Director had been held with Lynsey Shovlin of Stirling University to establish arrangements for the Glorney Cup.

2. Scottish Championships Director

Another chess commitment prevented the attendance of the Scottish Championships Director but it was reported that the arrangements for the Commonwealth Championships were progressing well with entries being received from players in various countries. A request was made for volunteers to assist with recording games, greeting overseas players etc.

The possibility of arranging further events (such as an U/1800 competition) within the overall tournament was still being considered. A decision would be taken when more information was available on the number and playing strength of entrants.

3. Executive Director

Meetings had been held with English Chess Federation officials and a British Isles Coordinating Committee Meeting was being sought for later in March with Kasparov in relation to the forthcoming election of FIDE President.

4. Chief Grader

The main recent issue had been the transfer of the Chess Scotland website to the new server. Initial technical problems had now been resolved. Council endorsed the Chief Grader's statement expressing his appreciation of the support provided by G Rattray and A McHarg over a number of years.

5. Home Chess Director (Junior)

- The Scottish Girls' Championships held on 22 February at Lathallan School had been very successful with 26 girls taking part. The winners were:-
 - Scottish Girls Champion – Monica Espinosa (Girvan) 4.5/5
 - Scottish Girls Primary Champion – Yvonne Zhou (Lenzie) 5/6
 - Primary P5 & Under – Kelly Campbell (Albyn) 5/6

The opportunity was taken to record thanks to Gerald Lobley of NEJCA for all his assistance in making arrangements to host the event.

- The Scottish Boys' Championships had been arranged for the weekend of 23 to 25 May. The events would be:-
 - U18 & Scottish Boys Championship
 - U16
 - U14
 - U12
- The Scottish Primary Individual Championships had been arranged for the weekend of 13 to 15 June at Spittal of Glenshee.
- The first Meeting of the Home Junior Board comprising representatives from junior chess organisations throughout Scotland would be held on 28 March. As yet, SJC had not confirmed that they would participate but it was hoped that they would take up the invitation.
- Council were advised that allocation of the Rowson and Booth awards would revert to the previous approach of a standing committee selecting the winners. The core of the awards committee would comprise a leading player, a former junior player and the Home Chess Director (Junior). The committee would draw on the knowledge of others to ensure that as far as possible objective assessments would be made. Both of these awards were very prestigious and had very impressive list of former winners.

Ideas discussed without reaching any firm conclusion were:-

- reviewing the date engraved on the trophies each year
- bringing the award announcement into line with the adult Player of the Year (i.e. at the Scottish Championships)
- considering whether the Cherie Booth award should be renamed.

6. Schools Development Director

A number of ideas were being worked on to improve the profile and awareness of chess in schools. For example, the theme of chess playing could be integrated into existing art and dance projects. Contact with interested parties as being pursued, mainly by email.

7. Technical Director

Illness prevented the attendance of the Technical Director but he had indicated that there was nothing to be added to the Minutes of the Arbiters Committee meetings as posted to the Chess Scotland website.

Accounts, Fees and Budget

- a) It was noted that the accounts for the year to 30 April 2013 had been audited by a recognised accountancy firm and had been presented in an accurate and professional format. The audited accounts were approved.

Proposer - David M Deary Seconder - Andy Howie

Passing reference was made to the confusion over the impact of not separating out the figures relating to the Scottish Championship in the 2012/13 accounts (a departure from the practice of former years). If the accounts were prepared in the previous way, excluding the Scottish Championships, the deficit would have been shown as £241. Council expressed their appreciation for the support provided anonymously to enable Chess Scotland to host Scottish Championships of the quality that titled players, including from overseas, took part.

Disappointment was expressed over the contact which had been made with the auditing accountancy firm without extending the courtesy of approaching the Finance Director.

- b) The discussion document proposing fees for the forthcoming year had given rise to a great deal of ill informed speculative comment prior to the meeting. It was a matter of conjecture whether or not these erroneous comments were motivated by maliciousness or misunderstanding. The point of controversy was the inclusion of a fee for grading juniors' games. (It was some ten years since U/14 games were charged a grading fee, it had been a free service since that time.) One objective of including a suggested charge was to establish the principle that the service had value, for example could be used to strengthen the case for seeking financial support.

The proposed budget for 2014/15, which had been published prior to the meeting, showed that no figure for grading junior games had been included in projected income. It was agreed that the previously proposed figure should be replaced by 'to be confirmed' pending further discussion at the Home Junior Board with a view to submitting any proposals to the August 2014 AGM.

- c) Council approved the Budget as tabled.

Proposer - Daniel C Deary Seconder - Jim J Webster

In the course of discussion, reservations were expressed about the benefit, if any, which would be obtained by the game of chess in Scotland by spending £5.5K on adult international chess. It was accepted that it was a wonderful opportunity for the handful of players involved to receive financial support whilst representing their country but the counter-argument was that some of that £5.5K would be better spent, for example, in supporting local congresses.

Discussion Paper - Compulsory Membership

The discussion paper before Council proposed that a working party should be set up to look at the practicalities of compulsory membership. The paper envisaged a monthly membership fee which would supersede all grading fees.

During discussion, some of the points made were:-

- many other activities demanded compulsory membership to be eligible for participation in official competitions
- as currently administered, chess was relatively speaking cheap compared with other hobbies
- 'social chess' type players who only played, say, a handful of graded games per season might react adversely to paying a membership fee (however low)
- the administration of a compulsory membership scheme would be considerably increased compared with the current voluntary membership arrangements in Scotland
- the ECF had a very significant budget to cover the administration of their scheme
- illustrative annual figures in Scotland were:-
 - of the 139 adults who played 30 or more games, 111 were Chess Scotland members
 - of the 529 adults who played less than 10 games, only 81 were members

It was agreed that a working party should be formed to look at all aspects of future finance options, including compulsory membership. An invitation would be placed on the Chess Scotland website.

Action.....Executive Director

Thereafter, the president and Executive Director would confirm membership of the working party. Ideally, it might be possible to submit some form of interim report to the 2014 AGM.

Interim Report on Constitution Working party (CWP)

The President reported that the CWP had made very good progress to date and Council recorded its thanks to all Chess Scotland members who had offered ideas and suggestions for the CWP to consider.

CWP was approaching its task by subdividing the existing constitution into separate sections and allocating members to review each segment. In order to ensure accuracy and consistency, the CWP had appointed moderators to review its output. The moderators who had been invited and agreed to serve were, Steve Mannion Snr, Alex McFarlane and Mike Mitchell.

A notice on methodology and progress to date would be added to the Chess Scotland website.

Action.....Membership Secretary

Chess Scotland Child Protection Procedures

At the Council Meeting held on 22 June 2013, it had been agreed to set up a committee to look at a number of objections documented by the then Schools Development Director in relation to a complaint which had been referred to the Standards Committee.

Membership had been established as:-

- Jim J Webster
- Linda McCusker
- Pat McGovern
- Derek Howie.

It was understood that the committee had elected Linda McCusker to take the chair.

The indications were that the committee had met once, in October. As yet, no proposals had been submitted either to Council or to AGM and it was understood that two of the members had resigned.

Council agreed that, clearly, a committee of two was no longer valid but they also took cognisance of the advice by the Executive Director that he had an email from Linda McCusker indicating that they were in the final stages of completing a report which would be available in the region of two weeks or so.

After some debate, Council agreed that the committee was no longer viable and should be wound up.

Replacement of trophies

Council were advised that the trophy for the Scottish Team Lightning Championship was now showing distinct signs of wear. Jim J Webster offered to fund a replacement with a ceiling of £200. Council expressed its warm thanks to Jim for his very generous offer. A suitable trophy, for example a quaich, would now be purchased.

Action.....Finance Director

AOCB

- a) The group looking at the mechanics of providing remote access to participate in congresses was reported to be making satisfactory progress.

- b) Council were sad to learn that the Editor of Scottish Chess had intimated his resignation with effect from the April issue and recorded their thanks for an impressive contribution as Editor. Previous Editors had produced good quality chess coverage which Peter Woods had continued but the extra dimension he had added was a more sophisticated, modern layout and presentation.

An advert inviting applications for the role of Editor would be placed on the website.

Action.....Executive Director

A letter of thanks would be sent to Peter Woods.

Action..... Executive Director

- c) It was agreed that there should be a review of the Chess Scotland Archive currently held in storage in Greenock. The first step would be to establish what material was currently held in storage.

Action.....President

David Archibald indicated that, depending on volume to be kept, Edinburgh Chess Club might be in a position to provide storage.

- d) The AGM would be held on Saturday 23 August, hopefully at the Adelphi Centre, probably with an 11:00 start. A notice would be added to the website and calendar.

Action.....Membership Secretary

End of Minutes