

# Chess Scotland Management Board

Date: Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> January 2017.

## Minutes of meeting

**Apologies:** A Burnett, D Congalton

### 1. Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the October meeting have been circulated and there were no matters arising.

### 2. Financial Report Update

The Financial Director was unable to attend this Board meeting but sent an email to the President saying that an up-to-date status report would be submitted by him

The Management Board wishes to stress that the Chess Scotland accounts must be treated as a matter of extreme urgency.

### 3. Complaints to President

The President reported that he had received three complaints from members and that these matters had been fully resolved and all complaints have now been closed.

### 4. Standards Committee

Following an action from the previous board meeting the president reported that the action for submission to the Standards Board had been completed and we are now waiting on a response of their deliberations.

### 5. Recognition Award to Gordon Rattray by Chess Scotland

A submission was made to the Management Board consider that Chess Scotland formally recognize the considerable amount of work undertaken by programmer Gordon Rattray without whose efforts our grading system would not be at its current level of efficiency.

The submission, in full, is attached to these minutes.

After considering the submission, the Management Board decided that Gordon Rattray should be given a Honorary Life Membership of Chess Scotland.

The Management Board also felt that should we wish to make further such awards a set of criteria should be developed to assist any future submissions.

### 6. Scottish Championships 2017 - Update

- The venue has now been finalised and full details are now available via the Chess Scotland website, including a link the Championship website.
- Alex McFarlane has now to submit a budget to the Financial Director for the events.
- Chess Scotland are to host a Cheese and Wine event, as part of the Championships, to invited guests and potential sponsors. Jim Webster is contributing a case of wine for this event and Ian Brownlee is similarly contributing cheese.

## **7. Website – Update**

- Following discussions with the Chess Scotland webmaster and analyzing the requirements of the website it became evident that some major changes are needed to rationalise the website into a standard format and technology. Currently the website employs several technologies which, in some instances, make it too reliant on specific individuals to update pages.
- Jim Webster, Andy Howie and Andrew McHarg (Webmaster) are to collectively formalise these changes and arrange implementation.
- A budget was submitted for this work and was approved by the Management Board.
- The updated website will also enable each director to update those pages relevant to their specific remits. This further reduces the delay in reports and information becoming available to the membership.

## **8. BICC**

The BICC met for the first time in nearly 5 years, and has now agreed to meet regularly every three months. A report from Andy Howie, Executive Director, is to be attached. The key points are:

- Revamp of the British Championship and a change of the nominated places procedures and conditions
- Creation of a “Grand Prix” system which will also include qualifying places for the British Championships.

## **9. International report, Eligibility and Transfers to SCO**

- A report from Andy Burnett is attached to these minutes.
- Andy Howie has requested, that as FIDE representative, he is kept informed of any SCO transfer requests.
- Andy Burnett is working on revising the Eligibility requirements and is hoping to complete a draft in the coming few weeks.

## **10. Home Director Report – Finals**

- The Finals for the Richardson, Spens, Campbell Rosebowl and Nancy Elder will be held at the Adam Smith Centre, Kirkcaldy on Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> April.
- The Scottish Rapidplay Championship, including the Maclsaac Trophy will also be held at this venue on Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> May. Full details and entry form will be posted.
- Both event dates are published on the Chess Scotland calendar.

## **11. Sponsorship Update**

Fiona has prepared a short report and this is attached to these minutes.

## **12. Live Boards**

The live boards are a major asset of Chess Scotland and are currently out of commission, requiring a replacement collector unit. The replacement cost for this is in £300.00 – this spend was approved by the Management Board at the meeting.

## **13. Junior Grading**

Chess Scotland currently offers free grading for ALL junior events, whether Chess Scotland organised or otherwise. This practice is an investment in the future of Chess in Scotland and will continue. However, all junior events that offer this facility will now be denoted on the calendar as “CS graded event” and the calendar updated accordingly.

**14. Job Descriptions**

A reminder was given that not all Job Descriptions have been received by the President and that these are now required under the Constitution. The intention is to publish all job descriptions, in a common format, and following formal review by the Management Board on the Chess Scotland website.

**15. Council Meeting**

There will be a full council meeting on Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> March, Petal Meeting Rooms, Glasgow 12:00 - 16:00. Andy Howie is to post the formal announcement, in accordance with the Constitution, on the Chess Scotland Website and is to include a call for submissions for discussion.

**16. Next Management Board Meeting**

Wednesday April 12<sup>th</sup> 2017, Petal Meeting Rooms, 18:30 – 21:00

## Attachment 1

### Gordon Rattray

Gordon made first steps to get involved in programming support for the CS grading system in February 2007, so that will be one decade racked up next month. I think an honorary Life Membership would be a deserved recognition as CS gratitude for his work.

In 2007 Alex Bisset who had written the application, which is still currently used, had left the scene and we were about to lose the online display of grades.

Gordon got us back online and has written, updated and revised many of the applications which are used in the import and output of data from the Bisset program e.g. the Grand Prix leader board pages, the monthly import of FIDE result data and the online display pages of FIDE data plus an application to convert domestic grading data into FIDE format for submission of FIDE rated tournaments, an online input form for outside Scotland data, the applications which allow for the weekly upload of data to the online grading system. Recently a new uploader program was created which solved a problem when FIDE changed the maximum length of player names in their data which had impacted on our ability to import player data into the Bisset program. In the last few days the program which imports the monthly FIDE spreadsheet of FIDE result data was updated to correct an error.

These are good examples of the behind the scenes ongoing updates which are required but could otherwise halt the grading process if Gordon's support was not available.

His long-term project has been an application to take over from the Bisset program and the first tests of the new application have been underway this season and last.

Gordon's skilled behind the scenes work has been invaluable in keeping the system working. He was assisted in 2011 when Andrew McHarg joined the CS programming team and Andrew overhauled and improved the website and the online grading displays.

## Attachment 2

# International Director's Report

## 2016 Summary

### Olympiad

An Olympiad year always presents extra problems for organisation and budgets, particularly as Baku was a bit further afield than more recent Olympiads have been.

Nevertheless, Scotland managed to field teams in both Open and female events, accompanied for half of the trip by myself as team captains/chief dogsbody.

Both teams performed reasonably well in very strong tournaments, with the added bonus of lots of 'airtime' as the Scotland – Russia match was chosen to open the Female event and Scotland – USA was the focus of live coverage the following day in the men's event.

All players were offered financial assistance although not all accepted – a nice touch from those players – and my captaincy role and FIDE training seminar was self-funded.

### Seniors

The European Seniors team event in Greece and the World Senior Team event in Germany, as well as the World Senior Individual Championships in Czech Republic were all extremely well attended by Scottish teams and individuals with some outstanding results.

There was also considerable interest back home on the CS website in these tournaments, and the 'seniors market' is currently one of the fastest-rising areas of Scottish chess interest and results. Something worth bearing in mind when it comes to funding, budgets and sponsorship.

#### European Club Cup

Edinburgh Chess Club, as Richardson Cup winners, represented Scotland in this event in Novi Sad and performed well. Unfortunately no funding was available to help with the travel, entry or accommodation costs and this is an area I will be looking at for future events.

### Conclusion:

A successful year in many ways internationally, and although stretched the budget was adhered to. For future years, some sponsorship would be useful (as always!) in order to cover as much of the costs as possible for entry and travel to such events.

## 2017 Plans

The **European Team Championships** will be held in Crete in late October. I will soon be publicly announcing this and discussing with David Congalton what finances are available from the budget to help our team participate.

I plan to put a 2300-rating floor on this team – The 2015 event was incredibly strong and Scotland were almost embarrassed in the opening 4 rounds before rescuing ourselves somewhat.

If anyone has any questions about this 'rating floor plan' please contact me directly.

## Seniors

As with last year, the senior's calendar is very full – with World and European team and individual events.

## Crete World Teams

We are currently in the process of deciding on whether we send 2 or 3 teams to this event.

One each for the 50+ and 65+ sections are definite, a 3<sup>rd</sup> team depending on some 'possibles' confirming their attendance.

## European Senior Team Chess Championship –

The dates for this – scheduled for Novi Sad -have been removed from the FIDE website. I will try to find out what this means, but as there was no website available anyway my best guess is that it will be re-arranged for later in the year, perhaps at a different venue. I will keep you all updated as and when I have more information.

**The two individual seniors events**, due to be held in Barcelona in August (Europeans) and Acqui Terme (Worlds) in November will hopefully also attract many of our seniors.

As with almost all seniors events CS will endeavour to pay entry fees where appropriate and through David C. to arrange for group payments, thereby cutting down on bank transfer fees.

## Scottish Championships and commemorative GM event

Planning for these events is well underway and I am providing assistance to the organisers of the GM event with regard to potential players and possible media coverage.

## Budget

Still to be finalised with David Congalton

## Attachment 3

### Marketing Director Update

I have finally had a confirmation email from the correct department of Civil service sports and leisure club regarding discount offer for new members via their website- should have a final reply within 2 weeks, took longer to reach correct person that it should have.

Have had a quiet spell recently but am about to resend emails to some of the previous organisations I contacted previously- I can now give them progress report on Scottish which is a useful tool for initiating interest.

I have made contacts with some of the student residential staff in Dundee University so will be able to contact them directly regarding providing accommodation for the Scottish.

I am also intending revisiting/visiting some of the local media- radio stations/papers etc. and hope to have some positive feedback by mid-February.

## Attachment 4

### *Website Conversation, Jim Webster & Andrew McHarg*

#### **Andrew McHarg**

Unfortunately, the CS website has been a bit of an evolution over the years. The old stuff was pretty static and required individuals to directly modify code on some pages to make content changes to them. The new stuff (the stuff after I made a new website for CS) is a bit better, in that some of the most commonly updated content is updated via a control panel (where the code in the background doesn't need to be modified directly). But, unfortunately, the whole website is a rather large combination of both of these concepts mixed into one. Ideally, in the future, we should look to move to a content management platform to manage the entire website (like Wordpress - which is only partially embedded at the moment and used for things like the news on the front page). Using this we could set up user access so certain people could directly change certain content without ever having access to the code itself (so no risk of accidentally damaging some of the website or overwriting work done by other people). And it's pretty user-friendly in that it wouldn't require anyone to have more than just a very short and simple demonstration on how to use the content management control panel.

This is the direction I want to go in so that when I eventually step back from the website and let others take over control, the legacy of what I've done will be to bring it up to speed with modern ideas and technology. It would spread the work over a variety of people in a way that's manageable, useful, and easy to pass on to new volunteers when the time comes. Unfortunately, I don't have time to do an update on the website on this scale at the moment (it's quite a big job), and to make time I'd need to charge CS some money. If CS had the resources I could make it a target for 2017. Does CS have any resources that we could use to do this? I wouldn't - obviously - charge a ridiculous sum, but an idea of what CS could afford would allow me to have a think about a timeframe for going about this.

#### **Jim Webster**

**Website development and evolution:** I like this idea and agree with you that the site should be rationalized into a content based management system. Let me turn one of the comments back on you though. Rather than ask how much CS can afford let me ask you for a cost estimate for you to do this work and I can investigate how we can fund this. It would be nice if we had something that I could take to the January management board meeting (18<sup>th</sup>) and argue the cause.

It would be ideal to take

- a set of bullet points of the work needed to be done, with small supporting comments for each point
- a timescale for the work to be done
- an expected cost

We have been looking at the possibility of obtaining sponsorship from external sources and a good website experience would help our cause no end. It would also add weight to the justification of the expenditure.

## **Andrew McHarg**

New website proposal (bullet points):

- To integrate the entire website into a content management system (Wordpress) so that the process of keeping the website up-to-date can be easily delegated to many people without anyone requiring website design experience or having access to the server / database. Ultimately this would have a variety of very positive effects: i) It would be much easier to manage the website and it would subsequently look a lot better and be kept up-to-date. ii) It would be much easier to hand over control of particular areas of the website when people step down and new people take over. iii) It would be more secure as people wouldn't need direct access to the database and/or server. iv) Past content would be easier to navigate to and be used, without the need to trawl through dozens of old static html pages.

- I could get the basics up and running in four months. Of course, it wouldn't be me working full time (I have another job). If it took longer than this then so be it - I wouldn't charge extra. I'd see the project to a reasonable conclusion before stepping aside or asking for more money.

- Moving all of the very old content to the new format would be far too big a task to undertake because it would need us to either copy and paste the content manually or create some kind of programme to do it (both of which would likely be too time consuming). My idea would be to leave all the very old stuff as an ancient relic. The important pages that currently exist could be easily created. Other pages could be created and left blank initially while their respective owners filled them in with appropriate content.

- The intention would not be to make any particularly significant modifications to the way the ratings and player search functions etc. operate. They may change visually as the website has a face lift, but I'd intend to keep much of that code the same as I think it works pretty well.

- Member login could be made to be more powerful, utilising the built-in features of Wordpress. In addition, I'd be happy to help get the membership system set up so that we can take monthly direct debit payments from members as an option. I've been doing this for a while now with ChessHosts and we use a company called GoCardless. Their fee is 1% as things stand, which is smaller than PayPal etc. I cannot be sure, but I would suspect the membership levels could potentially be more solid as people would be more inclined to just let a direct debit come from their accounts once per month and continued renewal would be a seamless process (so no chasing people up for payment and renewal). I think this would save CS money (and make more money potentially).

- With the website on the Wordpress platform (a well-known platform) it would be easy for a future developer to take over the role of Webmaster and add their own touch as required. At some point, I intend to step down from the role as my career takes me in a different direction.

- For the above I would charge █████ at the rate of █████ per month for four months. If - after four months - the website wasn't complete, I would continue to invest the remaining required time at no additional charge to get it done. As stated earlier, when I eventually step down from my role with CS I want to leave a lasting positive legacy.