

Chess Scotland

AGM 2013

Director Reports 2012/13

Chess Scotland

TEAMWORK

Firstly, and most importantly, I wish to recognise the huge contribution so many people make without personal financial reward. Organised chess could not happen without so many people being prepared to volunteer and work for the benefit of others. There are too many volunteers to mention individually but we should acknowledge the tremendous work they all do.

For Chess Scotland, the premier event each year is the Scottish Championships which includes an International Open. Alex McFarlane, Andy Howie and the rest of the team always do a very professional job in organising and running the tournament to the very highest professional standards. Anyone visiting the Championships at Helensburgh this year had to be impressed by the use of technology and the superb organisation. Although the overall number of players was lower this year than last year, it was still a major tournament with 9 GMs and 8 IMs.

We have a healthy congress scene with chess competitions being run throughout Scotland; many include junior tournaments. I want to come back to junior chess later, but let me take this opportunity to say just how important that activity is for the future health of the game.

There are many chess events for juniors organised throughout Scotland, from Aberdeenshire in the North East to Ayrshire in the South and West. Again, there are too many names to be mentioned individually but, for example, a person who has organised a huge number of junior events is Michael Hanley. It is therefore particularly sad that Michael has decided against renewing his membership of Chess Scotland.

DIRECTORS

The Board of Directors of Chess Scotland is the main focus for administering the game and I therefore want to say a special thank you to all my Director colleagues for their hard work over the last year.

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WAY FORWARD

Constitution

In terms of the coming year, I really want to undertake a thorough review of the Chess Scotland constitution. It is not a question of criticising what has been agreed in the past, it is more a matter of tightening up a number of ambiguities to help us, as an organisation, to operate more effectively and efficiently. Governance is important and deserves to be kept under review with changes being made where appropriate.

Junior Chess

The importance of junior chess cannot be over-stated and I suggest it is now time to have a serious look at the structure under which it operates. My favoured approach would be a form of regional structure operating within a Chess Scotland 'umbrella'. This would allow greater autonomy at local level whilst remaining within the national structure for support and services.

The coming year

I look forward to my second year as President, I think there is much to be done to build upon the past and the continuing good work so many people do in enabling organised chess to be played in communities across Scotland. Thank you to everyone who has helped me in my first year. I hope to retain your support for the coming years of my term of office.

Hamish Glen, President

Chess Scotland

2012/13 Has been a difficult year, but I am heartened by the green shoots of recovery that we are starting to see.

I am pleased to see that we have Directors joining us at the AGM who are younger than me! At last I can say I am not the youngest Director. For too long the running of Chess Scotland has been the realm of the “Oldies” and it is time for us to move forward and bring fresh new ideas and perspectives.

Last season has been one of conflict and it has been particularly hard for me as I have been right in the middle of things. There have been times when I have thought whether it was worth it but after a chat with some of you, I am convinced now that I can still be of service to Chess Scotland. You have won your argument!

The highlight of last year has to be the Scottish Championships and I have to pay tribute to Alex for carrying me through it. By my own standards, I did not perform well. I think it is fair to say there has been some hard lessons learned and taken on board.

I have been trying to get the Governments attention to the fact that we are running the Commonwealth Championships. We have the funding to run an event but we need the extra funding to make it special. I expressed my desire to get a major tournament to Scotland 6 years ago and I am over the moon that we have done it.

It is good to see that people have listened to the appeals I have made for more helpers and organisers. The Arbiter list is getting shorter and shorter but I know there is a couple of people just about to get their

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third report which will make them fully fledged arbiters. Something we have not seen for some time.

This season has seen the resignations of Stephen Hilton and Mike Hanley. Both are doing excellent work in their fields and I truly hope we can have them both back on board soon.

We also have Linda McCusker and Paul MacDonald stepping down at the AGM. I would like to pay tribute to both and thank them both sincerely for all the hard work they have given us. I wish Paul a speedy and full recovery and Linda, the work you are doing with your School with reaching out to Primary Feeders has to be applauded and I wish you all the best in your endeavours.

I have started a committee to work on the Chess in Schools project which has been dormant for most of this year. Work starts after the AGM and it is time to rattle the cages of the politicians and get them to listen.

On the FIDE front, it has been a quiet year. Not a great deal going on. I intend to attend the ECU meeting in the next few months as well as keep my contact. I have recently changed jobs which will mean more international travel. I intend to take any opportunity I can with this to speak with other nations and continue to build on the links we have.

Here's to a good 2013/14

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I would like to pay tribute to my predecessor, Mac MacKenzie. Having filled the finance role for just a year I can now fully appreciate the enormous contribution made to Scottish Chess by Mac over the many, many years he filled the role.

Stepping into Mac's very large shoes has been a challenge I have enjoyed during the twelve months I have held office. There have been some ups and downs but overall I think the year has been a successful one for Chess Scotland (CS) financially.

The bad news, towards the end of the year, that CS would be losing government support with the ending of the previous fund we had benefited from and our unsuccessful application to the government suggested fund replacing it was not unexpected, as Mac had been warning us for a few years that this might happen. While it was undoubtedly a blow, I have communicated the opinion of the CS Council to the appropriate government department that we feel we were poorly advised and directed. I have received the following response -

"I note your disappointment around the issue of funding support for Chess Scotland. I understand that Linda Fabiani MSP has written to the Aileen Campbell, Minister for Children and Young People on behalf of Chess Scotland to raise your concerns.

Thank you for making the policy team aware, and hopefully you will receive a response via Ms Fabiani in the new few weeks."

Obviously, I am hoping for a positive outcome to this.

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Regardless of the outcome, I think the loss of the grant, temporary or otherwise, may be a wake-up call, which CS would be wise to heed. As a body CS has possibly been too reliant on the annual grant and this safety net may have led to a more relaxed attitude towards spending and pursuing other means of income from external sources.

It is important that a proactive attitude is now taken and every avenue for potential income is explored and acted on. Thought may be given to setting up a small working party to co-ordinate and carry out a plan of attack. It would be extremely difficult for one person to properly do this. The fact that most of us have lives outside chess makes it difficult. The time taken up has been the main issue for me this year and was instrumental in the oversight made regarding the auditing of the accounts being presented. As it stands the accounts are unaudited but arrangements have been made with Accountants Plus of Hamilton, as qualified and approved auditors to audit the accounts in the next few weeks. I would hope to be able to present the auditors report to the membership by the middle to end of September.

I do not expect the auditors will ask for any adjustments to be made to the accounts presented to the AGM. I think it is extremely important that the accounts are properly audited by a qualified firm as I would anticipate that any application for external support would be strengthened by the CS accounts being professionally audited.

During the last year CS managed to work wonders once more with the limited funds available. The contribution made by all those involved with the core running of the national organisation should not be

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undervalued. The service they provide for minimal reward, very little thanks and sometimes a bit of grief is fantastic value for money and really keeps chess in Scotland alive.

The grading system and grand prix are valuable assets which generate considerable interest among the players. Douglas Bryson does a lot of work behind the scenes to keep all this current.

Dick Heathwood has provided invaluable support and encouragement to me personally as well as administrating the membership of CS and other tasks.

Both give up a lot of their own time to keep everything running smoothly and deserve acknowledgment and thanks for all the behind the scenes work they do.

Another couple of people that deserve enormous thanks are our Championship benefactor whose financial contribution has allowed two very successful Scottish Championships to take place, featuring top class players from all over the world and Alex MacFarlane who has done tremendous things with the Championship and at a reasonable cost.

Indeed all branches of CS have kept a tight reign on costs and should be thanked for this. Despite the limited funds CS has still been able to assist and support our seniors, adults and juniors both at home level and international level, in many tournaments and events.

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While expenditure was up slightly on last year, income was also up which allowed the extra spending in some areas. The increase in income was largely due to the generosity of members, through donations and while CS can't rely on this I would hope that this generosity will continue in the short term while CS adjusts and finds alternative means of income.

Some of the extra income was used to benefit a large section of the chess playing community by the purchase of additional boards, sets and clocks. This will benefit those who play in the Scottish National Chess League (SNCL) and the circuit of successful congresses which use the equipment.

As an aside to this, it has been decided that no charge will be made for borrowing the CS equipment or for the use of the live boards, CS will, however, look at implementing a deposit for the equipment which will be returned on the equipment being given back in good order.

Looking forward, the next year promises to be one of the most exciting yet, with the Commonwealth Championships, the Glorney-Gilbert International and the Olympiad in Norway to look forward to.

It will also be a challenging year for whoever is elected to the finance role at the AGM. I have already had a little success by negotiating a value for money deal which has already saved CS money, with our chess friends in Montenegro, who are organising the European Youth Championships in September. While I am still waiting on final confirmation I am hopeful that there could be more potential savings to come.

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I would ask all chess players, whether they are over the board, internet or occasional to assist CS in meeting the challenge. If you're not a member please think about joining. Annual membership is very reasonably priced. If you only play on the internet think about joining a club (or starting your own) or playing a congress or one day event. Over the board is a whole different animal which I'm sure you'd enjoy.

Clubs can actively help by encouraging new members to join them. Open the doors and have an open day, don't be shy you might make new friends.

For those who are members, thank you. If you can, please consider joining the 100 club. At the moment we don't have 100 members but I would like to see the 100 club be the 200 club by the end of the coming season. It is only £1 a month and you could win a few pounds.

In order to encourage more members to join CS, retain those already members, see more events to take place, help those already on the calendar and ultimately see more people of all ages and abilities to play I have frozen all fees for this coming season.

I would like to see fees held at a reasonable rate in the future and unnecessarily high increases avoided. If the 100 club does become the 200 club, if ten people play a congress they don't normally play, if one person organises a new, small one day event and if six people join Chess Scotland it would, all combined, raise around £1,000. This would make it easier to retain fees at the present .

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Don't leave the challenge to someone else. Join us in our efforts to make the 2013-14 season the best for Scottish Chess yet both on a financial and a playing front. As Bob and Barrack said "Yes we can."

David Congalton

Finance Director

Finance Director

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Membership Secretary

It is traditional to report the membership statistics as at April, for completeness I add the statistics as at 31 July.

Full	April 2009	Apr 2010	April 2011	April 2012	April 2013	July 2013
Adult	156	153	151	155	161	161
Under 17	9	5	6	2	1	2
Under 14	13	11	11	10	17	16
Family Adult	20	28	22	22	23	27
Family Junior	2	2	4	4	2	2
Basic						
Adult	147	146	149	183	159	161
Under 17	12	8	6	11	9	9
Under 14	20	22	26	22	27	25
Family Adult	36	46	38	21	13	14
Family Junior	25	21	18	11	13	11
Patron & Life						
Patron	5	5	4	5	6	5
Life	131	109	111	108	111	109
Life magazine		29	28	31	28	30
TOTALS	576	585	574	585	570	572

In addition to the above, currently there are eight non-members who subscribe to the magazine.

All of the above information is included in a comprehensive set of reports posted to the Membership Statistics page on the Chess Scotland website. The data is updated each calendar month.

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A few bullet points:-

- Overall membership numbers are stable
- The use of PayPal continues to grow, 56% of payments (48% last year)
- The cost of distributing renewal invitation letters continues to be reduced
 - o More use made of email, 713 (554 last year)
 - o Corresponding reduction in use of Royal Mail, 69 (92 last year)
 - o Magazine inserts increased, 248 (214 last year)

Dick Heathwood 31 July 2013

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MEMBERSHIP

Lara A L Barnes - member prior to 2012 and re-appointed at 2012 AGM

Richard Heathwood, Chairman - appointed at 2012 AGM

Gerald Lobley - appointed post 2012 AGM by Chairman's invitation

Patrick McGovern, Vice-Chairman - appointed at 2012 AGM

Judith Milton - appointed post 2012 AGM by Chairman's invitation

John S R Smith - appointed post 2012 AGM by Chairman's invitation

Ken Stewart - member prior to 2012 and re-appointed at 2012 AGM

MEETINGS

The Committee held meetings on 20 October 2012, 22 October 2012 and 27 January 2013; minutes were posted to the website. In addition, there were a number of Panel meetings, emails and telephone conversations.

PROCEDURES

The Committee agreed that the Operating Procedures document regulating their activity could be made clearer in order to avoid misunderstandings. The proposed amendments have been submitted for approval at the Annual General Meeting of Chess Scotland.

A pro forma "Complaint Cover Sheet" was posted to the website to assist the complainer and the committee to establish a summary level understanding of the complaint to be addressed. The cover sheet would of course be supplemented by any additional documents submitted by the complainer.

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HOW TO COMPLAIN

A brief guide to effective complaining was published to the website.

COMPLAINTS

Each complaint was issued with a number. They were processed as follows:-

- 1201 was an attempt by a complainer to perpetuate argument over an issue closed by the previously constituted committee. No fee was paid and, although it gave rise to a number of emails,
- 1201 did not achieve the status of a formal complaint. No appeal was lodged.
- 1202 was a clearly defined complaint which was not upheld. Again, no appeal was initiated.
- 1203 was upheld but appealed by the original complainer. That appeal was not successful. A proportionate response to the original event was implemented by Chess Scotland.
- 1204 has been withdrawn.
- 1205 was rejected by the committee on the basis that there had not been any attempt to resolve the matter before seeking the committee's involvement.

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Standards Committee

The cumulative workload involved in these five complaints was excessive, particularly taking account of the fact that committee members undertake this difficult and unpleasant workload without reward. The committee members accept and discount as inevitable that they will have to endure adverse comment and criticism in carrying out their role. All members take their responsibilities very seriously and take all steps to act in a careful and conscientious manner.

ROLE OF STANDARDS COMMITTEE

The Committee wish to use the opportunity presented by submitting this report to underline the importance of complaints being addressed as closely as possible, in both time and place, to the original incident.

The Standards Committee should only be called on to look at cases where all possible approaches to achieving "local" resolution have been pursued but have failed.

RE-ELECTION

All members have indicated their willingness to continue in office.

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The Arbiters' Committee met in March. Lara Barnes was appointed as Senior Arbiter; it was noted that Andy Howie had passed the Senior Arbiter exam and now required to supply reports. Full minutes are on the website.

A course for Arbiters was held at Kilmarnock in October; four candidates subsequently passed the exam.

There have been many delays by FIDE in producing the revised Laws, originally due to operate from July 1. It appears that the general Laws are now finalised but those for Rapid and Blitz are not, and that the operative date will be in 2014. Accordingly, no new paper version of the Rules Book will be produced until then. Regardless of this, the aim will be to ensure that the website version of the Rules Book remains current.

K Stewart

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The 2013 season was concluded in July and the 2014 season is underway. There were around 50 individuals and area graders supplied result data for the 2013 list. FIDE also supplied data monthly of all players with a SCO code. The Alex Bisset program is still the system used by area graders for submitting results and by the chief grader for collating data, maintaining the player database, updating the Grand Prix, updating FIDE grades and uploading the weekly set of results to the online system.

Programming: Gordon Rattray and Andrew McHarg continued to support the grading system with modifications to import and upload routines. The online system has been enhanced and will be further improved when time permits. Although there is an ongoing intention by Gordon to move the system to an online entry rather than via the standalone Bisset program the size of the task means this may be a considerable time in the future. One consequence of that is there are unlikely to be any changes possible to system arithmetic until a new program appears.

Printed List: At the time of compiling this report the grading book is at the printers. There is potential for cost saving if a printed book is no longer required since it would be easy enough to make it pdf only and email out complementary and purchased copies.

FIDE Rating: The suggestion that we re-start FIDE rating the Richardson and Spens Cups, our premier knock-out club competitions, now looks unlikely. New FIDE regulations from July 1 insist a FIDE licensed arbiter must officiate at all FIDE rated events. CS currently has five FIDE licensed arbiters. FIDE suggested that

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clubs could nominate an arbiter for 20 euros but only as non-playing captains. This effectively rules out FIDE rating the event in its current format of multiple club home venues.

Grand Prix: The sponsors Chessbase, Everyman and New in Chess have again provided prizes this season. There was a modest increase in cash prizes in the junior sections such that 1st to 3rd will be guaranteed a prize this season – previously it was only 1st place in each age category. Chessbase have already offered to continue sponsorship for the new season

– a response is awaited from the other two firms.