

Minutes of the 2024 Annual General Meeting held at Chippenham Chess Club on Tuesday 21st May 2024

In attendance: Messrs J Bourne (Chairman), R Carver (Vice-President), R Ludlow (Secretary), A Gladwell (League Secretary), P Owen (Rating Officer), S Zeidler (Treasurer), A Ransom (Tournament Secretary), P Girdlestone (Junior Chess Liaison Officer), A Coffey, G Loyden and T Parker. .

1. Apologies had been received from D Auld and J Comerford. .
2. Minutes of the 2023 AGM held on 24th May were accepted (and duly signed by the Chairman).
3. There were no matters arising, not otherwise on the agenda
4. Reports from Officers:
  - a. The Chairman expressed warm thanks to all officers of the Association for their hard work, especially the Secretary; they rendered his job easy and straightforward. He had been Chairman since 1996 and would be happy to stand down if someone were willing to take on the role.
  - b. Secretary - no report
  - c. The Treasurer distributed copies of the Summary of Accounts, explaining that the financial situation was very healthy, there being a balance of £1236.25. The considerable increase was due to a most generous donation of £420.56 from the Brown Jack Club, which had sadly folded, following the loss of its premises. All league fees had been paid.
  - d. The Rating Officer declared that all was proceeding well; there had been no problems.  
The Meeting expressed hearty thanks for his conscientious work.
  - e. The Junior Chess Liaison Officer (PG) gave a most encouraging report: his work had two strands - (a) with individuals and (b) with schools: (a) he directed individuals to appropriate clubs and encouraged them to take part in local tournaments and the UK Chess Challenge, in which many local young people had won prizes; (b) he encouraged schools to establish chess clubs. He was working in Bristol, Gloucestershire, Somerset and Wiltshire. Not a great deal was happening in Wiltshire but he was confident about progress in the long term in Warminster and Malmesbury. Schools are struggling financially, which is a problem. Equipment donated by the former Brown Jack Club has been a great help, as is the equipment provided by the charity Chess in Schools, although with the latter schools incur some expense. Volunteer help is always welcomed.  
The meeting thanked PG for his hard work and congratulated him on the progress made,

f. The Tournament Secretary reported on two tournaments (a) the Blitz, held in September and (b) the Wiltshire Individual Championship. Both had been successful. The Blitz had been won by George Crockart, with Steve Harding the runner-up. The Individual Championship was contested by the four winners of the club tournaments: A Coffey (Chippenham), R Ludlow (Trowbridge), D O'Byrne (Swindon) and D Ross (Devizes/Nationwide). The winner was A Coffey, following a quick play game against D Ross, the main game having been drawn. Next season's Blitz Tournament would be held on Wednesday 4th September at Langley Burrell Village Hall.

g.. (Incorporating agenda item 9) The League Secretary informed the Meeting that there had, once again, been just two leagues.

Six teams had competed in the Intermediate League. The winners were Swindon B with 19 points, followed by Chippenham with 12 and Swindon A with 10.

Four teams had competed in the Minor League. The winners were Swindon A, with 16 points, followed by Swindon B, with 9.

There had been occasional defaults, but matches in both leagues had been well contested.

One minor League match was still to be played. In answer to a question from GL, AG explained that there was no official "cut off" point but that it was hoped, generally, that all matches would be completed by the AGM. He would consider the suggestion of an official "cut off" point in time for the Executive Committee meeting in September.

AG informed the Meeting that the ECF was abolishing the Silver category of membership; there would be just Gold and Bronze.

5. Presentation of trophies. The Chairman presented both league trophies to RC, who was representing Swindon B in the Intermediate League and Swindon A in the Minor. He warmly congratulated RC, not only on winning both leagues, but also on the strength and continued growth of the Swindon Club.

The Chairman then presented the Individual Championship trophy to AC. This trophy had had a former use. AC would arrange a new inscription.

6. Election of officers: All officers expressed their willingness to stand again; they were all duly proposed, seconded and re-elected unopposed.

7. Appointment of auditor: It was agreed that there was no need for an auditor to be appointed. However, the Chairman expressed the desirability of an audit of accounts. It would be helpful if someone knew of a possible auditor.

8. Subscription rates. These would be unchanged.

(9. Please see item 6 h above).

#### **10. Possible re-instatement of the Major League for the 2024/25 season.**

**The Secretary, at the request of the Chairman, summarised the current situation:**

**There was a general view that there should be a Major League. Currently some players are debarred from playing league chess because they are too highly rated to play in the Intermediate League. In one sense, they can be seen as victims of their success. This situation also contravenes a principle objective of the Association (re-stated by the Chairman), namely to enable as many people as possible to play league chess.**

**The Meeting had before it a proposal from David Auld, seconded by Philip Owen:**

**"For the 2024/25 season, there be a Major and Minor League with the grading limits as follows:**

**Major: boards 1 and 2 no limit.**

**boards 3 and 4 limit of 1900**

**Minor: limit of 1650."**

**On behalf of the Swindon Club, Richard Carver had suggested an amendment:**

**1. That there be an Intermediate League, thus making three leagues**

**2. That grading limits should apply to each entire league and not to specific boards.**

**Suggested grading limits would be:**

**Minor League - maximum 1600**

**Intermediate League - maximum 1900**

**Major League - no limit**

**On behalf of the Trowbridge Club, Roy Ludlow explained that the grading limits proposed by Swindon would not work for Trowbridge. He suggested a limit of 1500 for the Minor League and of 1750 for the Intermediate League. He wondered if the clubs could field sufficient teams to make three leagues viable.**

**The Secretary made the point that the four clubs in the Association had widely different circumstances, particularly with respect to players' grades, and that this made a compromise difficult.**

**There followed lively discussion. Key points made were:**

**PO - a Major League may attract more players.**

**JB and GL - the Major League should be re-named the Open League**

**GL - the Intermediate League was the "bread and butter" of Wiltshire chess; the average grade of WCCA league players was 1590.**

**RL - the Intermediate League was comfortably the most successful of our leagues.**

**In accordance with normal procedure, the Chairman took a vote first on RC's amendment: this was carried by six votes to two, with two abstentions. Thus, David Auld's proposal was dropped.**

**At the Executive Committee meeting in September, club captains would state the number of teams they could field in each league. If it was felt that it was not viable to have three leagues, David Auld's proposal might be reconsidered.**

11. Proposal for change to rule 11

proposed by Adrian Gladwell  
seconded by David Parsons

That the following section:

"Eligibility for the whole season be based on the August original grade, with the exception that, if a member has no grade in the August list but obtains a grade of over 1900 (Minor League 1600) in the next February initial revised list, he/she will no longer be eligible (although games already played and results obtained will count)"

be changed to

"All league players will be deemed non-rated unless and until they have a rating based on at least five rated games. Eligibility for the whole season will be based on the August original rating, with the exception that, if a member is deemed non-rated in the August list but their first rating (minimum of five rated games) is over 1900 (Minor League 1600), then he/she will no longer be eligible for that league for the remainder of the season (although games already played and results obtained will count)"

and that any reference to grade or grading be replaced with rating.

This proposal was accepted (**although the wording and rating limits may have to be modified in the light of the decision on item 10 to be made at the Executive Committee meeting in September** )

12 Establishing teams for the 2024/25 season - in the light of discussions on item 10, this item was deferred to the Executive Committee meeting in September/

13 The date and time of the meeting of the Executive Committee was confirmed: Wednesday 11th September at 7.30 pm at Langley Burrell Village Hall.

14. The Annual General Meeting for 2025 would take place on Tuesday 20th May at 7.30 pm at Langley Burrell Village Hall.

15. AOB

RL raised the use of increments in time controls, possibly of 70 minutes and 20 seconds or 80 minutes and 10 seconds. A decision was deferred to the Executive Committee meeting.

AG mentioned that the ECF had again been advertising digital clocks at a reduced price. He would find out if any were still available.

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