

ESSEX CHESS ASSOCIATION

FOUNDED 1898

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD ON 29 JUNE 2010 IN THE RODING ROOM AT WANSTEAD HOUSE, STARTING AT 7.55 P.M.

Present: Gavin Strachan (in the chair), Steve Abbott, Tom Barton, Bryan Gaze, Ian Hunnable, Mark Murrell, David Millward, Simon Moth, Fin O'Regan, John Philpott, Colin Ramage, Joe Rosenberg, David Smith, Ivor Smith and Stephen Wedlock.

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from David Brock, Malcolm Crane, Geoff Smith and Roy Watts.

2. Minutes of the AGM held on 30 June 2009

These were agreed as a true record (proposed David Millward, seconded Ian Hunnable).

3. Matters arising from these minutes

Ivor Smith considered that the comments by the Acting Match Captain's reported in item 4 may have been misleading: the primary reason for the Open team's recent difficulties was the relatively small pool of highly graded players by comparison with the other SCCU Counties. The disappointing sequence of results from 1924 to 1928 was documented in the Jubilee Handbook issued in 1948, which was available on the website.

4. Officers' reports

President

David Smith reported that the traditional challenge match between the President's team and the League Champions had taken place at Writtle in September 2009, and had been won by the President's team 5½ - 4½. The match was played using digital clocks with the incremental time limit that will be available for Essex League matches next season and had worked very well, with the benefits of an incremental approach being highlighted by the last game to finish.

Chairman

Gavin Strachan did not have much to report as personal reasons had kept him away from chess activities for much of the season. He thought that it had been a good year for the League, and he welcomed the further developments on time controls which complete the move away from the dark old days of adjudications.

General Secretary

John Philpott had provided a written report. It had been a relatively quiet year for the Association on the administrative front. Outside the normal activities he drew attention to the success of Wanstead & Woodford in the National Club Major, and of the "East Saxons" quiz team at the British Championships in Torquay.

Assistant General Secretary

David Brock was not present.

Treasurer

Joe Rosenberg advised that the accounts had been audited: the only difference from the unaudited accounts circulated with the agenda was the inclusion in the balance of prizes as part of sundry debtors and prepayments instead of as a separate item. There had been a three figure deficit for the third consecutive year, although the overall loss for the year, which was largely due to the deficit of £206 of the 2009 Ilford Congress, had reduced from £208 to £189, and there had been a small surplus on non-Congress activities. The Association was still in a healthy financial position because of surpluses made in the past.

The Treasurer's report and accounts were approved nem con (proposed Colin Ramage, seconded David Millward). The meeting thanked Joe and expressed its gratitude to Malcolm Crane for his donation towards website costs.

Acting Match Captain

Ivor Smith had provided a written report. The SCCU qualifying competition nowadays has just six teams, and Essex tend to struggle because it has fewer players graded over 180 than the other SCCU Counties. The team did well to qualify, but it did not prove possible to field a full strength team on the date chosen for the semi-final against Lancashire. Richard Pert and Matthew Piper will strengthen the team next season.

Acting U180 Captain

John Philpott had provided a written report. He advised the meeting that he had taken over the captaincy when David Brock's work commitments became more onerous at the start of the season, although David will be able to resume his duties for 2010/11. The team had put in a series of battling performances to qualify for the National Stages in second place, and had an excellent victory against Yorkshire in the quarter final, but bowed out to Nottinghamshire on board count in the semi-final: the Essex County teams now have eight successive board count defeats in the National Stages. The SCCU U185 jamboree had been won: Colin Ramage pointed out that this was at Wilsons School rather than at Coopers School as stated in the written report.

Assistant Match Captain/U160 Captain

David Payne was not present. David Smith reported that the team had won its first four matches to clinch the SCCU title, and had then proceeded to lose its academic last match in the qualifying competition. In the National Stages the team had enjoyed a comfortable win against Staffordshire in the quarter-final, but had been eliminated by Yorkshire in the semi-final on board count. David Payne was commended by the meeting on his enthusiasm and organisation.

U140 Captain

Simon Moth had provided a written report, and advised the meeting that all the matches had been lost. The key problem was a lack of strength in depth: below the top ten boards, it had been necessary to rely on relatively low graded players to field full teams.

U120 Captain

Fin O'Regan reported that the team won two out of its six matches and finished third out of four. The matches had all been fairly tight, but the grading advantage that Essex had against the other teams did not do the County much good. There were plenty of players to draw on and the side had been easy to run.

U100 Captain

Malcolm Crane was absent. David Smith reported that team had won the three team SCCU division in which it had played, and after a bye had beaten Lancashire in the National Semi-final to qualify for the final against Warwickshire, which would be played on 10 July.

Correspondence Match Captain

Steve Abbott had provided a written report. After the disappointing 2008/9, the two teams fielded in 2009/10 (after dropping the Brown Pond and Butler Thomas sides) had performed extremely well. The Ward Higgs team was in a three way battle with Sussex and Yorkshire for the title, and the Sinclair team was leading from Warwickshire.

Congress Secretary

The 61st congress, which was Ivor Smith's 11th and last had taken place: Ivor thanked the controllers and was pleased with the quick appearance of results on the website. It was becoming harder up and down the country to run viable events: some established congresses (including Braintree) had disappeared and there had been serious doubts the previous autumn about both Ilford and Southend. Southend had received a large donation, and Ilford a number of individual donations approaching £500. These would produce a small surplus, which Ivor would like to use to pay travel expenses to the controllers. There had been 106 entries compared with 110 in 2009 and 140 in 2008.

Ivor was thanked by acclamation for his long service in this post.

Tournament Secretary

Responsibilities had been split, with Gavin Strachan organising the Individual Rapidplay (which would be an open to all event with four sections at Brentwood) and Ivor Smith the Team Blitz and Individual Lightning Championships at Ilford's venue on 4 July. 9 teams had so far entered the Blitz (an increase of one from the previous year).

Essex Knockout Controller

Colin Ramage reported that the 2009 event attracted 9 entries and had been won by Barking, with Upminster taking the Plate. The 2010 competition was about to start, and would have 10 teams as Basildon had entered.

League Secretary/Grader

David Millward had provided written reports in each of his capacities. The League had featured the same 25 teams as the previous season, although it was known that Thurrock IV was withdrawing for 2010/11. Writtle's victory in Division one was the club's fifth in a row. There had been only one defaulted match and one (unsuccessful) quickplay finish claim.

In his remarks, David had referred to Wanstead II as having a bad season. This was challenged by both David Smith and Ian Hunnoble, as the team had performed creditably despite being heavily outgraded in every match: it was pointed out that this was the first second team to feature in the first division since the 6-team divisions were introduced.

Junior Organiser

Arnold Lutton was not present and had not provided a written report. Concern was expressed that the meeting had not been provided with any information on junior activities.

Publicity Officer/Webmaster

Ian Hunnable had produced a written report. He drew attention to his conclusion that he could no longer sustain the production of a paper magazine, to the existence of a Newsletter aimed at chess journalists, and to the creation of the Essexchess Blog site to which other authors will be able to post. A form for the reporting of League results on the website is expected to be in place for next season.

5. Presentation of trophies

The following Essex League trophies were presented by the President:

- Division 3 – Steve Abbott (Upminster 2)
- Division 1 – Ivor Smith (Writtle)

As Basildon was not represented, David Millward took away the Division 2 trophy. The Division 4 trophy had still not been located.

6. Election of Officers and other members of the Executive

The following were elected.

President – Ivor Smith (proposed Ian Hunnable, seconded Colin Ramage).

Chairman (David Smith took the chair for this item) – Gavin Strachan (proposed David Millward, seconded Ivor Smith).

General Secretary – John Philpott (proposed Ian Hunnable, seconded Bryan Gaze).

Assistant General Secretary – Bryan Gaze (proposed Gavin Strachan, seconded David Millward).

Treasurer – Joe Rosenberg (proposed Colin Ramage, seconded Tom Barton).

Match Captain – Ivor Smith (proposed Colin Ramage seconded David Millward).

Assistant Match Captain – David Smith (proposed David Millward, seconded John Philpott).

Correspondence Match Captain – Steve Abbott (proposed David Millward, seconded Ian Hunnable).

Congress Secretary – in the absence of a candidate, this post was referred to the Executive.

Tournament Secretary – Gavin Strachan (proposed Colin Ramage seconded David Millward).

League Secretary – David Millward (proposed Stephen Wedlock, seconded Tom Barton).

Grader – David Millward (proposed Colin Ramage, seconded Tom Barton).

Junior Organiser – Arnold Lutton (proposed David Millward, seconded David Smith).

Publicity Officer and Webmaster – Ian Hunnable (proposed John Philpott, seconded Fin O'Regan).

Additional members of the Executive – Malcolm Crane and Colin Ramage (proposed David Millward, seconded Tom Barton).

7. Election of Vice-Presidents

The existing Vice-Presidents other than Peter Walker who had opted to stand down (Steve Abbott, Ian Hunnable, Richard Joyce, Syd Kalinsky, Richard Manning, David Millward, John Philpott, Colin Ramage, John Sargent, David Smith, Stephen Wedlock and Norman Went) were re-elected en bloc (proposed Colin Ramage, seconded Fin O'Regan).

David Smith was appointed an Honorary Life Member by acclamation.

8. Appointment of the Auditor

Syd Kalinsky was reappointed (proposed Colin Ramage, seconded Tom Barton).

9. Subscriptions, Game Fee and Surcharges for 2010/11

The Treasurer's report had proposed increasing Game Fee from 65p to 69p to absorb the increase in the ECF element, but to leave all other charges unchanged. Acceptance of the Treasurer's recommendations was proposed by Colin Ramage, seconded David Smith and approved nem con. The charges for next season will therefore be:

- Club affiliation fee £15.
- Fee for affiliated leagues and other affiliated organisations £20.
- Game fee of 69p per player per game in the Essex League, made up of ECF 54p and ECA 15p.
- Individual subscriptions of £2 for adults and £1 for juniors.
- Vice-Presidents' subscriptions of £12
- A surcharge for late payment of subscriptions by an Essex League club failing to make payment by 10 December or within 30 days from the date of submission of the invoice, whichever is later, of 10% of the amount due with a minimum of £15.

10. Any other business

Bryan Gaze expressed concern about the effect of incremental time limits on the period for which a venue was available if a game extended to (say) 120 moves. It was confirmed that a Club could, as of right under the League rules, begin matches at 7.15 p.m. if it so wished. Ian Hunnable pointed out that the use of incremental limits was an option, which the home team would only apply if it had the capability and wished to do so. There was some

discussion about the relationship between the provision in the Constitution that GPC recommendations were to be passed to either the AGM or the Executive and the League Rules which specified the Executive. Ian Hunnable (Rules Committee) was happy that the rules were internally consistent, but considered that some words should be added to clause 8 of the Constitution for clarity. He also thought that the involvement of the League Management Committee in the process for changing League rules was not working properly: the LMC needed to meet as soon as possible after the 1 March deadline to discuss any proposed changes notified to the League Secretary, and the proposals, with the LMC's comments, should be circulated to Clubs as soon as possible after that, so that they had plenty of time to debate the issues and reach their own conclusions prior to the GPC meeting. Members of the Association were entitled to raise concerns at the AGM even if their views were different from their Club's. The introduction of the incremental time limit was largely the result of comments raised at the 2009 AGM. However, it was stressed that members' rights in this respect were limited to the airing of views and that League Rule changes could only be enacted through the established means (LMC/GPC then submission for Executive decision).

The meeting closed at 10.33 p.m.