

ESSEX CHESS ASSOCIATION

FOUNDED 1898

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD ON 30 JUNE IN THE RODING ROOM AT WANSTEAD HOUSE, STARTING AT 7.45 P.M.

Present: Gavin Strachan (in the chair), Sid Burns, John Chapman, Russell Fisher, Bryan Gaze, Jeff Goldberg, Ashley Haydon, Ian Hunnable, Richard Manning, 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 Steve Abbott, Malcolm Crane, David Payne, Geoff Smith and Roy Watts.

2. Minutes of the AGM held on 30 June 2008

These were agreed as a true record (proposed David Millward, seconded Bryan Gaze).

3. Matters arising from these minutes

John Philpott reported that the U175 team had lost the 2008 County Championship final to Surrey by 7½ - 8½.

4. Officers' reports

President

David Smith reported that the President's match against Writtle had taken place in September, and had been won by Writtle.

Chairman

Gavin Strachan stressed the importance of internet communication, and strongly recommended that clubs without a website should establish one. He commended the "adopt a junior" policy for clubs advocated by Arnold Luton.

General Secretary

John Philpott had provided a written report. He emphasised the need for new volunteers to offer to join the Executive to avoid the continued reliance on a small group of "the usual suspects", and welcomed the improved AGM attendance compared with the previous year's meeting.

Treasurer

Joe Rosenberg advised that there were no changes to the unaudited accounts circulated with the notice of the meeting as a result of the audit. The loss for the year had increased from £183 to £208, but that was after a surplus of £185 on the 2008 Congress, so the loss on non-Congress activities was not far short of £400. The withdrawal of Bishop's Stortford and Waltham Forest from the League had impacted on the figures. The asset of £150

described as “prizes” represented four additional digital clocks purchased as prizes for future events.

The Treasurer’s report and accounts were approved nem con (proposed Colin Ramage, seconded Richard Manning). A query was raised as to whether the 10 year depreciation period applied to equipment was appropriate for digital clocks, but it was pointed out that given the County match programme these were in practice used far less frequently than club clocks.

Acting Match Captain

John Philpott had provided a written report. It had been an extremely unsuccessful season, with the team failing to gain a single match point, although Ivor Smith pointed out that there were precedents for this from the 1920s. The main factor was the limited participation from the County’s stronger players: although David Sands had appeared in four of the matches, the other four of the five strongest players to turn out had managed a total of five appearances between them. Jeff Goldberg referred to a suggestion that he had made at the start of the season that David Sherman and players from Cavendish should be invited to play, even if they were only prepared to turn out for home matches. He considered that in the light of a 0/5 record the team had to be prepared to meet strong players’ conditions to a reasonable extent.

U175 Captain

David Brock was not present. John Philpott advised the meeting that the team had retained the SCCU championship, completing its eight match schedule unbeaten, but had lost 9 – 7 to Lancashire in the National semi-final.

Assistant Match Captain/U150 Captain

David Payne was not present. Gavin Strachan reported that the team had won two and lost two of its matches, finishing fourth out of five Counties.

U125 Captain

Simon Moth reported a record of two wins and three losses, as a result of which the team finished fifth out of six Counties. The season had begun well, with a 10 – 6 win away to Sussex despite the presence of several U100 players in the side, but the team did not recover from a loss away to Kent where a car containing four players broke down on the way to the match.

U100 Captain

Fin O’Regan was out of the room when this item was dealt with. David Smith reported that it has been a reasonable season, but that the team had rather lost its way after Christmas and finished fourth out of five Counties.

U75 Captain

Malcolm Crane had provided a written report. David Smith thanked Malcolm for taking on the captaincy after the first match. This team was considered to provide an important opportunity for juniors to play County chess,

Correspondence Match Captain

Steve Abbott was not present but had provided a written report. Both 2007/8 (despite the improved performance in the Ward-Higgs and the winning of the Brown Pond) and 2008/9 had proved to be disappointing seasons.

Congress Secretary/Tournament Secretary

Ivor Smith drew attention to the team blitz and individual lightning championships to be held at Ilford's venue on 12 July. The blitz entry had been as high as 14 in the recent past, and Ivor was hoping that there would be more teams than the eight which played in 2008. The individual rapidplay was taking place on 19 July at Writtle, and would include a U125 section to which juniors had been invited.

The 2009 Congress had been the 10th event that Ivor had organised since 2000, when the venue was changed from Basildon to Ilford. In general, he considered that it was time to stand down from the post. However the competing event organised by Sean Hewitt at Amersham over the weekend was estimated to have given rise to 18/20 fewer entries, leading to a loss for the Association despite the removal of additional prizes and reduced controllers' expenses. Ivor could see a case for remaining involved for 2010 to help retrieve the ground lost to Amersham, but found that the three days directing the event were increasingly stressful.

Essex Knockout Controller

Colin Ramage reported that the 2008 event had been won by Writtle and the Plate by Roding & Loughton.

League Secretary/Grader

David Millward had provided written reports, including league tables. There had been no quickplay finish disputes and only one defaulted match, ironically the last one scheduled. A disproportionate number of the late result fines were attributable to one club. It was noted from the floor that the smaller Divisions seem to have led to closer matches.

Jeff Goldberg was critical of the fact that there would be three different time controls in three seasons and asked whether any other league played all moves in 90 minutes: John Philpott undertook to ascertain this information. Jeff considered that a stronger lead should be taken by the League Management Committee to ensure stability. Noting that several clubs now owned digital clocks, Jeff suggested that consideration should be given to the introduction of a Fischer time limit of, for example, 85 minutes plus 5 seconds per move, and that the League should be tolerant of the use of such a limit for 2009/10 by mutual agreement, even though it was not explicitly allowed for in the Rules. There was, however, no support from the meeting for such an innovation in advance of the consideration of a formal rule change by the 2010 GPC.

Junior Organiser

Arnold Lutton was not present.

Publicity Officer/Webmaster

Ian Hunnable indicated that the hit counter on the website had reached 98300 and referred to the enhanced hosting package. Despite there having been little movement on Chessex, the idea of a paper magazine was not dead. Ian had more time at his disposal as he was now retired but working one day a week, and following a makeover of the website which was

underway, the online version could be produced in a format that would be easy to manage from the perspective of a paper copy. He was planning to produce smaller but more frequent issues, which could be sent to County newspapers.

A further upgraded package would provide an e-commerce option allowing entries to be taken online for the congress. It was the view of the meeting that as the website represented the Association's window to the world, it should be an expenditure priority.

5. Presentation of trophies

The following Essex League trophies were presented:

- Division 3 – by David Smith to Simon Moth (Roding & Loughton).
- Division 2 – by David Millward to David Smith (Wanstead & Woodford).
- Division 1 – by David Smith to Ivor Smith (Writtle).

The whereabouts of the Division 4 trophy remain unknown.

6. Election of Officers and other members of the Executive

The following were elected.

President – David Smith (proposed David Millward, seconded John Philpott).

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

General Secretary – John Philpott (proposed David Millward, seconded Bryan Gaze).

Assistant General Secretary – David Brock (proposed Colin Ramage, seconded Ian Hunnable).

Treasurer – Joe Rosenberg (proposed Colin Ramage, seconded Ashley Haydon).

Assistant Match Captain – David Payne (proposed John Philpott, seconded Ashley Haydon).

Correspondence Match Captain – Steve Abbott (proposed John Philpott, seconded Bryan Gaze).

League Secretary and Grader – David Millward (proposed Stephen Wedlock, seconded John Philpott).

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

Publicity Officer and Webmaster – Ian Hunnable (proposed David Millward, seconded Ashley Haydon).

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

There was no candidate for Match Captain: David Smith pointed out that although an Open team had been entered in the SCCU competition and fixtures announced, this team would have to be withdrawn (no later than the beginning of September) if a captain could not be found. Ivor Smith was willing to stand for re-election as Congress Secretary and Tournament Secretary, but regarded it as unthinkable that the Open team, which had existed since 1901, should be discontinued. He was prepared to take on the match captaincy if he could relinquish some of his other responsibilities: Gavin Strachan indicated that he would be prepared to undertake part of Ivor's existing role. It was agreed, on the proposal of Ian Hunnable, to leave it to the Executive to agree a split of responsibilities that would enable all these functions to be fulfilled.

7. Election of Vice-Presidents

The existing Vice-Presidents (Steve Abbott, Ian Hunnable, Richard Joyce, Syd Kalinsky, Richard Manning, David Millward, John Philpott, Colin Ramage, John Sargent, David Smith, Peter Walker, Stephen Wedlock and Norman Went) were re-elected en bloc (proposed John Chapman, seconded Ashley Haydon).

There were no additional nominations.

8. Appointment of the Auditor

Syd Kalinsky was reappointed (proposed David Millward, seconded Stephen Wedlock).

9. Subscriptions, Game Fee and Surcharges for 2009/10

Joe Rosenberg considered that action needed to be taken to address the imbalance between income and expenditure by seeking to increase income by approximately £200. He considered that this would be best achieved by raising the total Game Fee charge, where for a number of years the Association had absorbed increases in the BCF/ECF element, from 52p to 65p while leaving all other rates unchanged. The proposed package therefore comprised:

- Club affiliation fee £15.
- Fee for affiliated leagues and other affiliated organisations £20.
- Game fee of 65p per player per game in the Essex League, made up of ECF 50p 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.

Acceptance of this package was proposed Colin Ramage, seconded Ashley Haydon and agreed. Jeff Goldberg asked whether the Treasurer considered it would be appropriate for

the ECA game fee to be a fixed percentage of the ECF game fee: the Treasurer was not in favour of this.

10. Any other business

None

The meeting closed at 9.33 p.m.