

Report of ECF AGM 15th October 2016

This AGM was much more ordered and well tempered than last year's.

The ECF is the poorer for the deaths of 2 key figures. We had a minute's silence for Richard Haddrell who had filled many roles, the last being running the grading system. After the meeting we found out that John Philpott had died on the 15th. He was company secretary, and volunteer finance controller. He will be sorely missed.

The elections were uncontested apart from the 2 non-executive directors where Julie Denning was re-elected with 240 votes, and Stephen Woodhouse from Worcestershire was elected with 193 votes. The unsuccessful candidates were Peter Hornsby 55 votes and John Foley with 31, this was the only card vote, all others were on a show of hands. I voted for Julie and Stephen. The existing directors and Governance and Finance Committees were all re-elected. The new posts were Non-Executive Chairman of the Board - Julian Clissold, Director of Women's Chess - Sarah Longson and Chairman of Council - Mike Gunn. We changed the articles of association to allow an increase in the number of Directors from 10 to 12; we now have 11. In future years only a third of the posts will be up for election so this year some were elected for a 3 year term, some for 2 and the rest for one year.

This year for the first time there was one Board report covering all the directorates. The report is on the ECF web-site. There was pride over the success of the men's team finishing 9th and defeating China in the Olympiad, and at gaining good sponsorships for our international teams. There was an apology for the late publication of the year book with a promise to do better for this season; from 2017-8 the yearbook will be online only. The Draft Strategy document was referred back because there were several people who wanted to make detailed changes at the meeting although they had not contacted the ECF prior to the meeting. The SCCU proposed that the penalty prescribed in County Championship rule D1.2 be reduced from £100 to £25. The Director of Home Chess said he would scrap the penalty, as he is changing the date for the County Championships to the 31st of March instead of the 1st.

The 5 year plan was passed. The key points are that the current budget was varied by £10k to pay for book-keeping to replace the finance controller, making a budget deficit of £17k to come from the reserves.

The Board wish to increase expenditure, but retain reserves of £100k in the PIF = to 6 months' expenditure. To do this the Board wants membership fees to increase in both September 2017 and 2019, by £1 for bronze and silver membership by £2 for gold and £4 for platinum, with 50p increases in game fee.

The Chess Trust has been set up as a charity to allow exemption from Corporation tax for legacies, and to transfer £320k from the PIF to it over the 5 years. The BCF meeting was delayed so it could also agree to the changes in the Permanent Invested Fund as the trustees report to the BCF. There was general agreement that the reserves should be used to fund the ECF although there was some dissent. It is difficult to gain substantial sponsorships if we are seen to have large assets.

Report of the ECF Finance Council Meeting 22nd April 2017

The meeting started an hour earlier than usual as the Board thought the meeting would be rather contentious. The meeting finished by 5pm instead of 6. The BCF meeting started at 12.30 instead of during the tea-break in the ECF meeting. The BCF meeting to consider the following motion:

"The British Chess Federation Council recommends to the Trustees of the John Robinson Youth Trust that:

(a) The Trustees give due consideration to requests for funding for junior chess made by the English Chess Federation; and

(b) When determining whether such requests should be accepted, they are prepared to make payments by way of grant out of the capital of the Trust Fund and do not limit the acceptance of such requests to such amounts as can be funded out of the income received by the Trust Fund."

The motion was passed, but it is only advisory. We were told that very soon a big bequest will come into another fund which also can be used for the Chess Academy.

The ECF Meeting started at 1pm.

The 3 main issues discussed at the Finance Council Meeting were:

1. Abolition of Game fee from September 2017. This was agreed.

This means non members can play up to 3 games per league free. Leagues will be billed £16 for each player who plays 4 times or more in a league and does not take out at least a bronze membership for £16 by the end of May. There was an amendment that reduced the bill to £16 from £25.

The purpose is to cut the admin costs of game fee, and to encourage new players.

2 Membership fees from September were increased as follows:

i. Platinum (adult and junior): £70 increase of £10

ii. Gold (adult): £34 increase of £2

iii. Gold (junior): £27.50

iv. Silver (adult): £23.50 increase of ££1.50

v. Silver (junior): £17

vi. Bronze (adult): £16 increase of £1

vii. Bronze (junior): £9.50 a reduction of 50p

(c) Minimum membership fees for Member Organisations

£60 (unchanged)

(d) Pay to play fees (upgrading membership)

i. ECF graded congresses: £7.50 Increase of £0.50 bronze to silver

ii. FIDE rated events: £10.50 Increase of £0.50 silver to gold

iii. Junior only events: £0.80

there was one vote at the end of the discussion of the budget including membership fees, which were not raised last year.

3. The Governance Committee was asked to look at giving direct members more say in the running of the ECF. It came up with 3 options:

(a) Option 1 (For or Against) Abolish Council with the Board being elected by direct members.*

(b) Option 2 (For or Against) Keep Council and only have direct members voting for councillors.* with One member one vote, no organisation votes for Council.

c) Option 3 (For or Against) As now with more votes for members.

Not surprisingly options 1 and 2 were defeated. Option 3 got 119 votes for and 84 against assuming 25% for direct members but this was less than the 75% needed to change the Articles. In October there may well be a vote to increase direct member representation a little.

I voted **for** issues 1 & 2, and to vote **against** all 3 options in issue 3.