

**NORTHERN COUNTIES CHESS UNION
FOUNDED 1899**

Minutes of the NCCU Annual General Meeting 2012

Held on Saturday June 2nd 2012, at the Latvian Club, 5 Clifton Villas,

Manningham Lane, Bradford, BD8 7BY Tel: 01274 546235

PRESENT

Rupert Jones (President)
Dave Cole (General Secretary and Cumbria representative)
George Horne (Treasurer and Cumbria representative)
Jim Moran (County Championship Controller and Merseyside representative)
Keith Smith (Club Championship Controller and Durham representative)
Ihor Lewyk (Yorkshire representative)
Stuart Johnson (Yorkshire representative)
Jim Tennant-Smith (Lancashire representative)
Bill Metcalfe (Cleveland representative)
Brian Bainbridge (Vice President - Durham)
Dave Welch (Merseyside representative)
John Wheeler (Northumberland representative)
Paul Bielby (Northumberland representative)

Before the meeting started Jim Tennant-Smith gave the meeting some sad news that his brother Bill had died on 30th May aged 85. Bill was an active member of Whitehaven chess club for many years and a stalwart of Lancashire and Cumbria Chess for many years, Bill was Cumbria Individual Champion in 1984 and East Lancashire Individual Chess Champion before that. Condolences to Jim and to Bill's family.

1. Apologies for Absence

Chris Underhill, Mike Creaney, Simon Woodcock, Graham Matthews

2. Minutes of the 2011 NCCU Council Meeting

The minutes were accepted as a true and correct record.

3. Matters Arising (including matters not covered in the Agenda)

There were no matters arising.

4. Officers Reports

a) The President

Rupert Jones reported that his health had improved and that he attended the ECF Finance Council meeting in April, where many of the votes were very close such as on the Membership scheme and the FIDE legal issue. The President commended the grants to Northern players for the British Championships and expressed the wish that this should continue. Rupert mentioned various issues during his two years as President and thanked everyone for their help and wished his successor well. Amongst the issues raised was the Lancashire-Manchester application to join the NCCU. A discussion ensued on the legal aspects of the 1974 Boundary changes, with Jim Tennant-Smith reiterating that the BCF confirmed in 1975 that the Lancashire chess boundaries remained and that the Midland Counties accepted the Manchester Federation into their fold, which remains the case today.

b) General Secretary

Dave Cole issued the NCCU Calendar and mentioned the email correspondence on various matters such as the ECF Membership Scheme to be discussed later and the subsequent Membership Survey. The NCCU Individuals took place at the Durham Congress where David Eggleston won the title with Zheming Zhang taking the Junior title. The Treasurer handed over the audited accounts for 2010-11, signed as a true and fair record.

c) Treasurer

George Horne reported that the bank balance is £3641.89 with a deficit in the financial year of £606.29 due mainly to the assistance given to Northern players entering the British Championships. The ECF Membership Scheme under the NCCU MO has £3025.52 in the bank, having paid £5363.12 with a final payment to be made to the ECF and a profit share back to the Counties. (This will be determined at the end of August when the membership scheme ends.)

The NCCU Club Championship made a loss for the year of £260, which if carried on in its present form would necessitate a possible increase in affiliation fees. After a long discussion, the meeting considered prize money matching entry fees, but in the end it was decided to keep the affiliation fees the same, but reduce the Club Championship prize money from £100/£50 to £80/£40.

There was also a discussion on the difficulties of finding the Club and County results on the website. The Secretary agreed to discuss this with Steve Henderson.

d) County Championship Controller

Jim Moran reported that the season had gone smoothly after a slight glitch at the start when the closing date for County entry was extended to December, which caused some irritation. Jim stated categorically that for next season the closing date for entries would be September 30th 2012, with no exceptions.

The County Champions were shown in the updated NCCU Calendar and Jim gave an update on how Yorkshire and Lancashire were doing in the National stages. A query was raised on which grades were used for the Championships and Jim confirmed the August rules were to be used in the regional stages, but greater clarity on 'board order' and 'playing strength' were needed.

ACTION: Jim to review the County Rules on this issue.

(Ihor Lewyk joined the meeting)

A discussion on the difficulty of raising players ensued, exacerbated by the narrow grading bands, for which a proposal was being put forward later in the meeting. It was thought desirable especially at the National stages that teams have the option to field a 12 player team rather than 16. The Secretary would contact the ECF on this and the proposal.

e) Club Championship Organiser

Keith Smith reported that 14 teams entered the 3 sections, with 4 teams in the Open. None of the sections had yet played the final, although the Open final was due to be played in the next couple of weeks between Bradford and Preston. Although recognising that other forms of chess and other chess competitions were squeezing the Club championship, early communication and County rep support in promoting the competition would help.

f) Correspondence Organiser

Although Chris Underhill could not make the meeting, he sent a report which stated that 4 teams participated in the 2010-11 event; Yorkshire, Northumberland, Durham and Cumbria and that Yorkshire were more convincing winners than the year before with an almost clean sweep, scoring 11 out of 12 points.

This year's competition is in its early stages, as it started later than normal, but the finish will be extended to the end of September; but at the moment it's too early to tell who has the edge.

g) Grading Officer

Mike Creaney did not send a report, but he had emailed Jim Moran for the County results which were submitted. Mike would like a fixture list on the NCCU website and that match results contain information

which includes date played and grading codes of players. Mike requested that when results are submitted to Jim next season, could team captains copy Mike in.

h) Membership Secretary

Dave Cole reported that to date the NCCU MO had 708 members (now 710) with the breakdown as follows:

Merseyside 256

Lancashire 220

Cumbria 101

Cheshire & N Wales 122

Durham 10

Yorkshire 1

Cleveland 0

Northumberland 0

In comparison to last season (718) the numbers were slightly down.

i) Trophy Officer

The County trophies which were changing hands were requested to be at the meeting for the presentations. Yorkshire and Lancashire brought a number of them. All trophy locations are known and it was confirmed that the now redundant Intermediate Club trophy is held by Heywood.

j) Report of BCF/ECF Delegates

Rupert reported that the ECF Finance Council meeting was very interesting, with many 'hot topics' discussed, such as the issues surrounding Lara Barnes and Alex McFarlane at the British Championships, the FIDE law suit and the ECF memberships scheme. Rupert detected an anti-Northern sentiment on the English Chess Forum. David Welch commented that the meeting was lively and had reservations about the way the ECF was being run.

5. ECF Membership Scheme

The Secretary started the discussion by relating developments since the ECF Council meeting, which had agreed to implement the new ECF Membership scheme from September 1st 2012.

The Secretary had taken the ECF proposals from the ECF website and emailed the 13 page document to all reps for review and to cascade to their clubs and players.

There was also a mailing to Northern Congress organisers outlining possible implications for congresses, asking for comments. This resulted in some useful feedback and many unanswered questions as to how organisers were supposed to implement the changes.

As the resulting disquiet from players increased it was evident that many did not like the scheme, especially from congress players on the increases and it was decided to run a survey on whether players would be prepared to join the ECF, or if offered, a Northern run membership scheme at a lower cost which would involve grading.

The survey results were in favour of an NMS scheme by 3:1 which could be interpreted as reflecting the fact that about 66-70% of players didn't play in congresses or interpreted as being inconsequential in that a turnout of just 13% (of 350+ emails sent) or in reality less than 7% of all NCCU members (708 members), was not sufficient to warrant a rival Northern scheme.

Ihor was concerned that only one league in Yorkshire had ECF members and that the rise in Game Fee to £2 per game would be a substantial hit on player's pockets.

There were worries over disaffiliation from the ECF and a potential North-South split if we went ahead with our own scheme. There was great concern over the implementation of the new scheme and would be an issue raised at the Yorkshire AGM (*ECF CEO Andrew Farthing is due to attend*). David Welch was concerned that the on-line ECF Registration facility at £5,000pa was unproven and hoped it would prove simple to use.

Paul Bielby was concerned about the impact on juniors as 40% of the Northumberland MO are juniors and would have to become silver members as most play in congresses; whereas Southern juniors mostly play in leagues and would only need to be bronze members.

As the majority of Eastern Counties had already agreed to set up their own MO's with the ECF and there being little appetite for an NCCU led scheme, the meeting voted against the proposal. It was thought best to leave the decision to each County to sign their own MO's. As a consequence the agreed statement from the NCCU to Counties would be as follows:

'The NCCU Supports the aspirations of the National ECF membership scheme, but has reservations as to the way it has been set up. The NCCU will not create a rival Northern membership scheme, but leave it to individual Counties to decide whether to sign up an MO with the ECF or set up their own Countywide membership and grading scheme.'

6. Proposals

1. The NCCU considers running a Northern membership scheme if the survey results are favourable. –

Proposed by Lancashire and Cumbria

Vote: 9 against, 1 for and 2 abstentions

2. The NCCU supports a reduction in the number of County sections from 7 to 6. – Proposed by Lancashire

Vote: all in favour, but with amended wording as follows:

'The NCCU supports a motion to the ECF to reduce the number of County sections from 7 to 6 with a grading difference of 25 between each section.'

The Secretary to contact the ECF.

7. U16 Pennine Cup (December) & U18 Jamboree (April)

The U16 Pennine Cup took place at the Newcastle –upon-Tyne Royal Grammar school in December 2011 organized by Paul Bielby. Teams of 12 juniors from Northumberland, Cumbria and Merseyside took part. After a thrilling finish Cumbria won the event with 20.5 points, Northumberland 19 and Merseyside 14.5. Thanks to all who took part and especially to Paul for organising the event.

The U18 County Jamboree took place in Southport on April 21st organized by Cathy Rothwell and Karl Nadin. Teams of 12 from Merseyside, Lancashire and Cheshire & North Wales took part in a three round jamboree. Lancashire won the event with 29 points, Cheshire 20 points and Merseyside 5 points. Many thanks to Cathy for organising the event.

8. Schools Awards 2011/12

BCET Award – The nomination from Audley Junior School in Lancashire had been submitted to the ECF.

NCCU Award – No nomination from Cumbria, so no award this year.

9. Schools Awards 2012/13

BCET Award – Nomination required at December meeting – Merseyside

NCCU Award – Nomination required at December meeting – Durham

10. Presentation of Trophies

Rupert presented the County trophies to Yorkshire and Lancashire, winners in all the various sections.

11. Election of Officers

- President - Bill Metcalfe
- General Secretary - Dave Cole
- Treasurer – George Horne

- County Championship Organiser – Jim Moran
- Club Championship Organiser – Keith Smith
- Correspondence Organiser – Chris Underhill
- Grading Officer – Mike Creaney
- *Membership Secretary – Post Abolished*
- Trophy Officer – Dave Cole
- NCCU Webmaster – Steve Henderson
- Delegates to the ECF – Bill Metcalfe (reserve Rupert Jones)
- Vice-Presidents to Council – Rupert Jones & Bryan Bainbridge

12. Appointment of Auditor – Neil Foxcoft

13. British Championship Qualifying Places 2012-13

Individual Champion qualifier (+ 1 other place)

Lancashire - Heywood Congress

NCCU Qualifying Congress x2 places

Yorkshire and Northumberland to nominate x1 Congress each.

14. Time & Date of next meeting

Saturday 1st December 2012.

15. Any Other Business

Bill Metcalfe asked that the NCCU consider supporting Zheming Zhang at the forthcoming Junior World Championships. This was agreed in principle and an application is to be sent to the NCCU for consideration of the amount.

The meeting closed at approx 4.10pm.

**Dave Cole
General Secretary**