

## NORTHERN COUNTIES CHESS UNION

Founded 1899

### **Minutes of the NCCU Council Meeting held on Saturday December 1, 2018 at the Grove Inn, Back Row, Leeds LS11 5PL.**

Present: Bill O'Rourke (President), Tim Wall (Acting Secretary, NCCU Delegate to ECF and Northumberland rep), Bryan Bainbridge (Durham rep), Keith Smith (Club Championships organiser), Rupert Jones (Yorkshire rep), Gareth Ellis (NCCU Delegate to ECF), Mike Barrett (Merseyside rep), Dave Almond (Lancashire rep).

#### 1) Apologies for absence

Dave Cole, Eddie Czestochowski, Paul Bielby, George Horne, Steve Mann, William Metcalfe.

#### 2) Minutes of the NCCU AGM, June 1, 2018.

The minutes were accepted as a true record.

#### 3) Matters arising

The Merseyside Under 120 team lost in the Quarter-Finals of the County Championships.

#### 4) Reports from officials

##### A) President

Bill O'Rourke reported on a very successful season for NCCU counties in the Finals of the ECF Counties Championship.

Open: Lancashire won the Final 8-8 on tie-break against Yorkshire.

Under 180: Yorkshire won the Final 8.5-7.5 against Warwickshire.

Under 160: Lancashire won the Final 11-5 against Yorkshire.

Under 140: Yorkshire lost the Final 6-10 against Nottinghamshire.

Under 100: Lancashire lost the Final 5-7 to Leicestershire.

Council members were asked their opinions about the

The ECF is proposing raising the Silver membership fee from £23.50 to £27.50.

The NCCU proposal was rejected. Not the Bill O'Rourke proposal. For Bronze and Silver memberships to be combined.

ECF CEO Mike Truran rejected the idea of combining Bronze and Silver, instead saying a better goal would be for all members to eventually pay the same membership fee.

Next year, the proposal is that the Silver membership rises to £30.

The question arises: is there a place for the Unions in the ECF anymore? Bill O'Rourke asked members of the committee for their views on the ECF's proposed membership fee increases.

Brian Bainbridge argued against the raises in the membership fees, saying that the most he would support would be raises in line with inflation.

He raised the complaint that the Grading Software that the ECF had purchased was not 'fit for purpose.'

He noted that the increases in membership fees were being sought to pay for increased costs of the ECF Academy and the International teams.

Rupert Jones (Yorkshire) said that it was not clear whether the whole of the Northern Counties supported the merger of Bronze and Silver, saying that he felt most of Yorkshire ECF members were opposed to this change. Bill O'Rourke pointed out that the NCCU meeting had been unanimous in supporting the proposal.

Rupert said he only supported raising membership fees by the rate of inflation.

Mike Barrett (Merseyside) raised the question of whether separate (non-ECF) grades would work, but felt on balance that they would not.

Tim Wall said that the NCCU should do 3 things to make its voice heard within the ECF: 1. Urge member organisations within the NCCU area to use all of their votes in ECF Council meetings; 2. Ensure that as many leagues, congresses and junior events in the NCCU area as possible are graded, to give the Northern Counties more votes collectively at ECF Council; and 3. The NCCU should argue its case consistently in ECF Council meetings.

He said there should be a clear link between services to members and membership fees, whereas currently the only real service the majority of members receive is grading.

Bill O'Rourke asked that the NCCU propose that ECF Council meetings be rotated geographically in turn between each of the ECF's Unions, and it was agreed unanimously that he would draft this proposal, which would be put at the ECF Finance Council in April.

Tim Wall proposed that the NCCU consult member organisations whether they a) support or b) reject the ECF's proposed membership fee increases. He said that it should be emphasized that the ECF's PIFs, reserves and The Chess Trust should be

used to fund increases in International Teams spending and the ECF Academy, not raising this money from membership increases.

Based on the results of the consultation, the NCCU should vote that way and recommend its member organisations to also vote that way.

It was agreed that Bill O'Rourke would draft a simple proposal to member organisations, with the added option of supporting a rise in membership fees in line with inflation.

BCET Award. Bill O'Rourke said that since Cumbria had not nominated a school to receive the BCET Award, Durham should nominate a school instead. Bryan Bainbridge agreed to forward's Durham nomination to the NCCU.

## Club Championship

Prescott & Knotty Ash beat South Shields in the NCCU Senior Club Championship to take the title. No other teams entered the various club championship competitions.

Clash between County Championship Semi-Final weekend and South Lakes Congress should be avoided if possible.

South Lakes Congress will be asked if they can change their 2019 dates to avoid a clash with the County Championships Semi-Finals on June 8.

Social chess – development officer – Lancaster library chess and Asda community room show that chess clubs can reach out into the community and hold chess events in public spaces.

Trophies: Bill O'Rourke to ensure that NCCU Individual, Senior & Junior trophies are forwarded to Northumbria Masters in February. (Holders are: Charlie Storey, xxx xxx and xxxx xxx.)

#### General Secretary

In Dave Cole's absence, there was no formal report from the General Secretary.

#### Treasurer

In George Horne's absence, Bill O'Rourke reported that the NCCU currently has a balance of £1,966 in its account.

It also has 11 digital clocks, worth a total of £481, in stock, to be used as prizes in the various NCCU Club Championship sections.

It was noted that the NCCU Individual Champion is entitled to free entry from the NCCU for entry to the British Championship.

#### County Championships

In Jim Moran's absence, Bill O'Rourke gave a rundown on this season's fixtures list.

The NCCU Counties Rapidplay Teams Championship had not been held so far, and it was agreed that Tim Wall would coordinate with Andrew Bak and organise it at Bradford Latvian Club.

### Club Championships

Keith Smith invited all counties to enter teams in the Open; Major (Grading limit ECF 680 for all 4 players, average top 2 boards 180); Minor (Grading Limit ECF 520 for all players, average top 2 boards 140); and Senior (average age at least 55).

It was reported that Heywood, Prescott & Knotty Ash and South Shields would be entering the Senior Club Championship.

Entries invited for the NCCU Club Championship sections. Heywood offered to put a team in any competition if another club enters. Tim Wall reported that Forest Hall (Northumberland) would enter the Open.

Grader – Dave Cole to request report from Chris Goodall.

Trophy officer – Bill O'Rourke has got the Mike O'Hara Trophy for the County U-140 Championship.

Webmaster

Keith Smith reported that he had freshened up the website, so that only reports from this season are on the homepage. Articles from previous years are now in an archive.

Bill O'Rourke to supply Keith with missing chapters of 'History of the NCCU.'

5. Proposals:

NCCU Individual Championships rules revision. Minor changes to the rules were accepted, including the addition of County Durham to the list.

#### 6. Under 16 Pennine Cup 2018 report

The Pennine Cup was organised by Peter Cloudsdale and Tim Wall, and contested over 8 boards by Yorkshire and Northumberland on October 6 at Ackworth School, near Pontefract in West Yorkshire. After two rounds the score was tied 8-8. In a blitz playoff, Northumberland beat Yorkshire 5.5-2.5 to take the trophy.

#### 7. Pennine Cup 2019

Bill O'Rourke agreed to organise the 2019 Pennine Cup at Bury Bridge Club. Date to be announced.

#### 8. BCET Schools Awards 2018-19

Ackworth School (Yorkshire) were nominated and approved unanimously. As Cumbria were not nominating a school, Durham were asked to nominate a school instead.

9. NCCU Individual Championships. Tim Wall reported that preparations for the Northumbria Masters (Feb 16-20, 2019), hosting the NCCU Individual Championships this season, were well underway.

#### 10. Date and time of AGM

It was proposed and accepted that the 2019 AGM would be held at Bradford Latvian Club on Saturday June 1, starting at 1pm.

#### 11. Any other business

Tim Wall proposed that congresses in the Northern Counties cooperate to negotiate with hotels on room rates and venues. Action: Tim said he would circulate interested congresses and come back with concrete proposals.

The meeting closed at 4:21pm.