

Minutes of EGM of Shropshire Chess Association held at Telepost Chess Club, Shrewsbury, on Wednesday, September 3, 2008.

Present: Steve Rooney, Eric Inglis, Nick Rutter, Jamie Hopkins, Francis Best, Windsor Peck, Peter Kitchen, Glyn Pugh, Roger Brown, Keith Tabner, Keith Grice, John Bashall, Vince Crean, John Casewell, Toby Neal, Derrick Powell, Richard Thompson, and Iain Wilson.

1. Proposal by Richard Thompson regarding a club's responsibility to supply officials.

It is the responsibility of all member clubs to supply the Association with personnel willing to act as officers necessary to enable it to provide the services in clause 3 above. As there is, at present (2008), a close correlation between the number of offices listed at Appendix B (21) and the number of teams taking part in the League Competition (22), each club will nominate one person to stand for office each year for each team it intends to field during the following season. A new club will be excused one nominee during each of its first five years' membership of the Association, and sympathetic consideration will be given to any club pleading genuine difficulties in complying with this requirement. Failure to comply may result in the obligation to pay an additional team fee in lieu of the officer's services.<sup>1</sup>

Richard Thompson said it was the duty of all clubs to supply officers to the league to enable the league to function, but there had been great difficulties in getting anybody to fill posts when they became vacant. To operate and fulfil its roles the association needed money, but also people to do the work.

There was a close correlation between the number of officers required and the number of teams in the league, and it seemed to him fair to say every club should be prepared to put forward one person for one of the officer posts for each team that club ran. So a big club with four teams would provide four people.

RT said he wanted to give the proposal teeth as previous appeals for people to come forward had fallen on deaf ears. The same people were doing the work and there was no new blood. A financial penalty (of a league fee of £50) would concentrate minds.

He had himself indicated that he was going to step down as league controller after this season and if nobody took over there would be no league, and if there was no league there might as well be no association.

They were drinking in last chance saloon, and although the measure would not be popular, he felt it was necessary. Sympathetic consideration would be given to clubs in genuine difficulties.

Nick Rutter said the penalty would not solve the problem, and just make people more reluctant to carry on.

Francis Best said he quite understood the motivation behind the proposal, but he felt it was fundamentally wrong. It did not encourage chess and a financial penalty did not solve the problem of getting more people to serve. A bigger penalty would be no longer having the activity because there were not enough people to run it.

Windsor Peck said it had to be tried. There was no way things could carry on and some method had to be devised to bring the point home.

Asked about the consequences for clubs which did not pay, RT said they would be liable to lose points.

Steve Rooney said the proposal was unworkable, unfair, and unenforceable, and would clearly hit smaller clubs, and would bring more money into the association kitty but not bring in more people to serve.

Keith Tabner endorsed the points made by SR and FB. He said there was a league controller who was about to volunteer. The whole point of the association was to serve the members and encourage clubs. Certain aspects were essential, but county chess was not as popular throughout the country as it had been, and the association had to listen to members to see if they really wanted county teams.

Derrick Powell said penalties would be counterproductive.

On a vote on the proposal there were three in favour (Iain Wilson, Windsor Peck, Richard Thompson) and 15 against.

The proposal was defeated.

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2. Proposal ref the 'Vinnie Crean situation'.

'Players who are ungraded and who have never had a grade will be assigned an estimated grade by the League Controller in consultation with the Grading Officer when there are enough results available.

Players who are ungraded but have previously been graded will be assigned their previous grade reduced by 5 points for every year's absence, up to a maximum of 25 points.

If the application of all the above rules threatens the existence of a team, the League Controller will exercise his discretion to ensure its continuance.

In all the above cases, the League Controller must be contacted in advance of any situation which, but for his ruling, would breach the grading rules.'

Richard Thompson said there had been a dispute during the last season when Vincent Crean had been away from chess for a year or two, and returned, having been away so long he no longer had a grade. There was a complaint that he was ineligible to play for Telepost C when he had already played a few games for Telepost B, and therefore should be tied to the B team. The proposal before the meeting tackled the grey area in regard to how ungraded players should be treated in the league. It meant somebody ungraded and new to chess could play on without being tied until they had played a few games and there had been a chance to assess their strength. For somebody who had played in the past but had been ungraded, the proposal said there was a 'rust effect' of five grading points for every year, up to a maximum of 25 points.

Jamie Hopkins said that, with the new grading system being introduced next year, this was not the season to bring in the measure, as it had a shelf life.

Nick Rutter said Vincent Crean's current grade was 75, but his 'preview' grade for next season under the new system was 110.

Iain Wilson said it would be necessary to revise the league rules in the light of the changes to the grades, and in the meantime the matter would be kept on file.

It was decided to take no vote on the proposal and to look again at the matter when the new grading system comes in.

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There followed the Shropshire Chess Association Council meeting.

Present: As above.

1. Apologies for absence: Colin Roberts.  
2. Minutes of 2007 Council meeting. No matters arising.  
3 Officer reports.

B. League controller. Richard Thompson said fixture lists had been distributed, and the season was starting earlier in September, as agreed at the AGM. He had given out player registration forms for players. The extra information was needed for improvements in the operation of the website, with such things as drop down lists of the players on scorecards.

E. Grading officer. Nick Rutter said there was just one change to the 2008 grading list. Simon Fowler was now 199, instead of 195.

F. County individual. Won jointly by Jamie Hopkins and Trevor Brotherton. The trophy was presented to Jamie, who will hold it for six months.

H. Cox & Minor Trophies. Derrick Powell said Telepost A won the Cox, and Shrewsbury B won the minor. Derrick said he hoped to be on the internet shortly, but his screen had blown up.

J. Website editor. Keith Tabner said the website had moved to a new provider, but the web address was the same.

M. County 1st team captain. Peter Kitchen said he was prepared to help, but not full time. Iain Wilson offered to help him, and on that basis Peter Kitchen agreed to fill the post.

N. County U125 captain. Roger Brown elected.

5. Any other business. None.

Meeting closed at 10.03pm.