

Shropshire Chess Association 2008 AGM
Held at Shifnal & Telford Chess Club, June 26, 2008.

Meeting Commenced at 7:45pm

Attendees Roger Brown(RB), Keith Grice(KG), Vincent Crean(VC), John Casewell(JC), Keith Tabner(KT), Graham Shepherd(GS), Windsor Peck(WP), Nick Rutter(NR), Toby Neal(TN), Richard Thompson(RT), Francis Best(FB), Colin Roberts (CR), Iain Wilson(IW).

- 1) **Apologies for absence.** Received from Derrick Powell, Glyn Pugh, Martin Patterson, Gary White
- 2) **Minutes of 2007** - It was pointed out that the list of attendees was missing but the minutes were accepted as a true record of the meeting **matters arising**. FB had investigated the ECF individual membership but had concluded that it would work out more expensive than the current scheme. It was felt that the ECF would eventually impose such a scheme.
- 3) Officer's reports.
 - a) **General Secretary.** CR referred everyone to the proposed rule change attached to the back of the rules, which would be discussed after the break.
 - b) **League Controller.** RT had taken over the position during the season. The season ran smoothly with only one match being defaulted. There was one dispute re Vinnie Crean playing for Telepost B and C team. Telepost took the view that due to inactivity he was playing well below his old grade. RT said he couldn't play for the C team any more. Telepost appealed and won the appeal. Division 1 was won by Telepost A although Church Stretton A ran them close. Relegated were Ludlow and Wellington. It was pointed out by GS that there were various addition errors in the report presented although the website showed the correct picture. Division 2 was a two horse race between Telepost B & Oswestry. Relegated were Coddon B & Wellington B. Division 3 Market Drayton faded and were beaten by Shifnal & Telford C and Shrewsbury C. Presentations were made to the 2007-2008 season winners – Shifnal & Telford C (Division Three) RB, Telepost B (Division Two) VC ; and Telepost A (Division One) KT. RT informed the meeting that he would be resigning at the end of the forthcoming season. IW thanked Richard for taking over the league.
 - c) **Treasurer.** FT reported we had made a small loss of £44.25. The league fees had gone down due to the loss of a team whilst the game fee and MCCU fee had gone up. Whilst it may not be good for Chess in general the lack of a Darwin Event had reduced expenditure by £25. An increase in bank interest and an advertising fee for the website had also masked the underlying problem. Engraving, travel and the Yearbook were estimates. The accounts were accepted. Currently the league fees are £45 per team, JC understood that Market Drayton were struggling to make a team and may withdraw, GS reported that Church Stretton were likely to lose a team and possibly the club might go if people willing to run the club weren't found. In light of this FB proposed an increase in league fees to £48 per team. JC made an amended proposal of £50 which was carried 8 – 4. VC questioned if junior teams should pay less. FB said that the game fee was a club charge and it was up to the club to decide how they funded it.
 - d) **Auditor.** Absent. He had signed the accounts to confirm they had been audited.
 - e) **Grading officer** NR reported that all results have been sent off. Cox Trophy and Individual matches played up to the end of May have been included. The grading list will be published at the end of July with an amended list in August. Over the years grades have deflated this has been exacerbated by the grading of junior events where few players have accurate grades. As a result grades will be amended. This will have a major impact with someone graded 100 now going up to as much as a 130. Top players in the county are likely to go up by about 10 points. Next year there will be two grades the official grade based on the current system and a preview of the new grade only available on the ECF website which will form the basis of the following season's grade. JC commented that the grades used in rule 8 will need reviewing.
 - f) **County individual.** NR said that the deadline for playing the games had been reached and with one game that affects the winner outstanding Jamie Hopkins leads with 6/7, Nick is second with 5.5/7 but Trevor Brotherton can tie with Jamie if he wins his outstanding game. With the tiebreak also resulting in a tie the trophy may be shared as a playoff seems unlikely. There had been 24 entries.
 - g) **Rapidplay.** Vacant KG reported that no one had come forward so unless another club wishes to take it over there will be no more.
 - h) **Cox and Minor Trophies.** Derrick was absent. IW reported that the Cox final will be between Shifnal & Telford A and Telepost A on a date to be agreed. The Minor knockout had reached the semi final stage.
 - i) **Publicity officer.** TN reported that regular items had been appearing in the Shropshire Star. Contributions were always welcome as most of the information is picked up from the website. Any interesting games forward them to Toby for publishing.
 - j) **Darwin event.** Vacant. JC reported that the Darwin centre was under new management and if someone did want to take over they would effectively be starting from scratch as the contacts we had made were no longer there.
 - k) **Website editor.** KT thanked everyone for their contribution. Some areas needed work (County & Junior in particular). Our domain name (Shropshirechess.org) is currently hosted by netfirms for free (the present cost is the fee for the domain name) but we have now reached our capacity. If we want to develop the website we need to expand the available space. There was a discussion about future plans for the website which were being worked on by VC and the web designer who was responsible for the result formfill we currently use. This may result in automatic input of results with realtime league tables. KG advised caution especially as the people who would be using the system were unlikely to be experienced in the software they were using. Passwords / security also presented a problem. RT commented that he would like to have control of the input as duplication of results and formatting errors were commonplace with the current system. It was felt that there were two issues What do we do with the extra space? More importantly that extra capacity is needed. KT proposed that we move to a new host at a cost of approximately £35 p.a. this was carried unanimously.
 - l) **Congress organiser.** CR reported that we held a congress which made a small profit full report available on the website. Next years congress will as always be held the first weekend of January. GS and IW after consulting their diaries confirmed this as 3-4 January. IW commented that this was the earliest we had ever held it.
 - m) **County junior organiser.** FB reported that this year we entered a junior team in the county U100 section instead of entering the normal EPSCA events. Although the team lost all of their games the top boards showed that they can hold their own and that we just lack strength in depth. We held a Chess Academy in the Autumn and will be repeating this. Several of the juniors have qualified for the Gigafinal in the British Land Chess Challenge. FB drew our attention to the renaissance academy, which is hoping to get local chess associations involved in the coaching of juniors. The downside of the initiative is the requirement for Public Liability Insurance, A formal Child Protection Policy (something we should have already), CRB checks and coordination of who is doing what. JC commented that he and John Liddell had volunteered to go into Conover school but had received a lukewarm reaction from the school. IW reported that he had a similar experience after being involved in a minority sports day at Hadley Learning Community. FB felt that at this stage we should monitor its progress but in the meantime volunteered to draft a Child Protection Policy.
 - n) **County first team.** WP reported that we lost all the games in the season. We were however nominated for the ECF minor counties where we had a bye in the quarter final stage and beat Cambridgeshire on board count in the semis so without winning a game we have reached the ECF minor counties final on the 6th July in Leicester. Best performance was by NR with 4/4. WP asked for better support from the west of the county. He confirmed his decision last year to step down as captain.
 - o) **County under 125 team.** WP reported that we had played three and lost three.
 - p) **Under 100 team.** RB reported that five teams entered 2 from Shropshire, 2 from Staffordshire and 1 from Warwickshire. Shropshire won two and lost two although they were all close matches. RB said he would not be running the team next season.
 - q) **MCCU delegate** IW commented that he was not an MCCU delegate. RT had nothing to report.
 - r) **ECF delegate.** NR reported that there had been a number of resignations at the ECF most notably Martin Regan, who had hoped to shake up the Federation, had, after 18 months, resigned citing that reforms were proving difficult. The Federation had therefore returned to the "old guard". The ECF were looking to replace game fees with membership but nothing had been resolved.
- 4) Election of officers. President, Iain Wilson; secretary, Colin Roberts; league controller, Richard Thompson; treasurer, Francis Best; auditor, Glyn Pugh; grading officer, Nick Rutter; county individual organiser, Nick Rutter; Oswestry rapidplay, no nominations; Cox and minor knockout, Derrick Powell; publicity officer, Toby Neal; Darwin festival, no nominations; website editor, Keith Tabner; congress organiser, Colin Roberts; junior organisers, Steve Rooney and Francis Best; county 1st team organiser, no nominations; under 125 team organiser, no nominations; under 100 team, no nominations; MCCU delegate, Richard Thompson; ECF delegate, Nick Rutter. RT then read the following prepared proposal, which was a resurrection of a proposal he had proposed a few years ago which although not introduced stimulated a number of candidates to come forward. **'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.'** CR commented that the object of the association was to promote chess and that this proposal was likely to result in clubs dropping out of the league rather than paying the fee. KT commented that there was not enough communication of the problem to the rest of the association beforehand. The Website, Club noticeboards the Shropshire Star were all needed to be used to convey the message. It was felt that a carrot rather than a stick should be used and that giving a reduction in league fees to teams supplying officials whilst achieving the same result (assuming an increase in league fees) appeared to be a concession rather than a penalty. JC commented that three clubs were not even represented at the meeting. IW commented that we could not carry on with the same people holding posts. RT commented that if we didn't fill the county captain and league controller posts there would be no association. Further debate ensued. RT requested an EGM before the council meeting to discuss the proposal. An unconfirmed date was set of 3rd September subject to availability of the Telepost venue.
- 5) **Proposed amendments to league rules.** In view of the time it was decided to defer discussion on the proposed rule change until the E.G.M. Despite this RT then explained the rule. KG asked to comment but was told that we would not discuss it further. JC then responded to RT that he did not intend to do anything wrong. Vinnie had deteriorated and Nicks assessment of him confirmed this. Further debate was attempted but IW called a halt and deferred it to the E.G.M.
- 6) **Proposed amendments to constitution.** None.
- 7) **Any other business.** JC In view of the difficulty in getting required teams and increasing fuel costs would it be an idea to reduce the number of players from 5 – 4 players? NR commented that it might be useful in the third division. A proposal for consideration was requested.

The meeting finished at 10:40pm.