

1. Apologies for absence.

Received from Keith Tabner, Peter Kitchen, Graham Ives, Colin Roberts, Steve Rooney.

2. Minutes of 2009 AGM. Approved and adopted.

3. Officers reports.

a. President: Iain Wilson resigned and was given a vote of thanks.

b. General Secretary: vacant.

c. League Controller: Vincent Crean said he had really enjoyed the job which had been interesting and slightly challenging, as well as hard work putting fixtures on the website. The biggest job was organising fixtures. To prevent similar problems in the forthcoming season, he asked that clubs would notify him of the number of teams they were entering by August 21, which would allow him to draw up fixtures for all three divisions in good time. He would like to start the season in mid September. During the season the harsh weather had caused a number of fixtures to be postponed, and in the second half he had had to issue a warning to all clubs about the 7.30pm start time, as several travelling clubs were finding that sets were not set up and there were late starts. He expected that in the forthcoming season that there would be two-up two-down in the second and third divisions, but could not guarantee that until he knew how many teams were entering.

d. Treasurer: Francis Best said income was slightly down, reflecting fewer clubs in the league and fewer entries to the individual championship. Fortunately spending had decreased slightly. A small surplus of £155 was made for the year.

The accounts were adopted and approved.

e. Auditor: Nothing to report.

f. Grading officer: Nick Rutter said the grading list would be produced towards the end of July, and a revised list with some small corrections towards the end of August.

g. County individual: Nick Rutter said there had been 19 players. It had been an interesting tournament in which a lot of the top players lost early on. Winner was himself, on 5.5, with three players on five points, but Toby Neal coming second ahead of David Everington and Nigel Ferrington on the tiebreak rules. Under 160 grading prize went to Tony Holdford, and under 140 prize to Nathanael Paul, and under 120 prize to Steve Cooper.

The trophy was presented to winner Nick Rutter.

h. Cox & Minor Trophies: Derrick Powell absent, no report.

i. Publicity officer: Toby Neal said weekly columns had been in the Shropshire Star, but there was nothing specific to report.

j. Website editor: In the absence of Keith Tabner, Vinny Crean reported that there had been almost 38,000 hits since May 2009. He was looking for an alternative web host as the price had gone up to £40 a year. The change would not affect the site. A vote of thanks was recorded for Keith Tabner.

k. Congress organiser: Richard Thompson said that there had been 109 entrants, but after heavy snow a few days before the event there were 19 withdrawals. Normally 100 players were needed to break even. It was decided to refund the entry fees to those who had withdrawn, because it was felt failure to pay a refund might deter people from entering in future years because they would fear they would lose their money if they had to withdraw because of bad weather. The 2011 congress would be at the same venue in the second week of 2011.

l. County junior organiser and under 140 junior team: Francis Best said there were not enough juniors to field a full under 140 team and he thanked the adults who stepped in to bolster numbers. Unfortunately the number of juniors had reduced significantly and he and Steve Rooney had come to the conclusion that they needed to do something different to encourage the younger, beginner, end of the chess scene. There were not enough players to keep running a county under-140 juniors team.

m. County first team captain: A written report from Peter Kitchen was read. He said the team had come third out of four in the MCCU minor section. The services of a number of strong players had been lost and the challenge was to get out a competitive team.

n. County under 160 team: Roger Brown said five matches were played. He said he would in future prefer to captain a different, lower graded team, rather than the under-160.

p. MCCU delegates: Nothing to report.

q. ECF delegate: Nick Rutter said the ECF had been losing money every year for the last three years. Costs were being cut and fees increased. The government grant was being cut from £60,000 to £45,000. Meanwhile a project called Chess For Schools was said to be a complete shambles.

4 ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Francis Best was elected new president; Glyn Pugh was elected general secretary; Alf Evans was elected treasurer.

Richard Thompson was elected auditor.

Under-160 captain Roger Brown stood down in that post but was instead elected to captain a county under-140 team, meaning there will be two county teams - the open, and the under-140 team.

5 AMENDMENTS TO LEAGUE RULES

Iain Wilson said a detailed counter argument to the proposed changes was made by Graham Ives. It seemed sensible to have the league controller and two or three others form a sub committee to look at clarifying rules 8 and 9 and report to the Council meeting.

It was agreed that Vinny Crean, Richard Thompson, Graham Ives, Francis Best and Glyn Pugh should look at ways to clarify the rules, and that players generally should also be invited to email in their views.

6 PROPOSED CHANGES TO COX TROPHY

Toby Neal said there had been 11 defaults or withdrawals in the competition and moved that it become, as a trial, a one-night knockout tournament played at a rapid time control for the 2011 event, with the trophy presentation at the end. He said both Shifnal & Telford and the Telepost venue were big enough. To fit in all rounds the time control would probably have to be 10 minutes per player. He said the aim was to bring back the fun element and have it as a social event, but the disadvantage was half the field would only have 20 minutes of chess, and also some players did not like rapidplay chess.

Fred Harris said he wanted to keep things as they were. Iain Wilson said the Cox trophy could still run unchanged if the organiser was to ask all clubs beforehand if they wanted to enter any teams, so the competition could be organised accordingly.

Francis Best said it was clear the traditional format had not worked very well and supported a one-year trial of a different format.

On a vote, 12 were for Toby Neal's motion, and three against. The motion was carried.

7 PROPOSED ZONING OF THE LEAGUE

Martin Patterson's proposal was read to the meeting – he was not present. He proposed splitting the leagues into two zones, one for West Shropshire, and one for East Shropshire, which would reduce travelling. At the end of the season the winners of each zone would play each other to determine the overall champion.

On a vote, there were no votes in favour of the proposal.

8 PROPOSAL TO REDUCE LEAGUE TEAMS TO FOUR PLAYERS

John Casewell said having five players in a team could involve two vehicles, and so increased petrol costs. He said that in division one last season there were 560 boards, and eight board defaults, a default rate of 1.4 per cent. In division two, the default rate was 4.8 per cent and in division three, it was 17.8 per cent. As captain of Telepost C, there were two keen youngsters and if they found they did not have a game due to an opposition side defaulting boards, it was soul destroying for them. He suggested that as a trial that in division three next season the number of players per team should be reduced from five to four to see if this reduced defaults and increased the numbers of teams.

Eugene Raby asked what would happen if a team of four players was promoted into a division with teams of five players.

Richard Thompson said in the Wolverhampton league, where there were four-man teams in division four, there was no particular reduction in the number of defaults.

Nick Rutter said that like it or not, the number of players in chess was declining and they were either going to find division three getting smaller, or reduce the number of players.

A proposal to reduce the number of players per team in division three for five to four, for a one-year trial, was carried by 15 votes to three. It was also agreed to reduce league fees in division three from £50 to £45 to reflect the smaller teams.

9 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Iain Wilson reminded players of the summer quickplays held at the Shifnal & Telford club, and also said the club now had equipment to play Go, and invited people to have a go at Go.

The meeting closed at 10.23pm.