

Attendance, Dean Pinnington, Ivor Salter, Fred Harris, Steve Szajkun, Gary White, Danny Griffiths, Christopher Lewis, Simon Mayhew, Matthew Best, Matthew Clarke, John Westhead, Graham Ives, Alf Evans, Francis Best, Vincent Crean, Nick Rutter, Andrew Davies, Francis Rooney, Steve Rooney, Richard Thompson, Roger Brown, Toby Neal, David Blower, John Casewell, Keith Tabner, Nathanael Paul, Chris Paul, Glyn Pugh.

1. Apologies for absence.

Received from John Fenby, Colin Roberts, Daniel Lockett

2. Minutes of 2014 AGM.

Approved and adopted with matters arising on current agenda.

3. President's Report. Francis Best reported that Chess in a Cafe initiative had been started, on a Sunday in Shrewsbury, on an informal basis which welcomed all abilities to try and encourage new people to take up chess. Both the rapid play and congress appear to be going from strength to strength. The negatives were the lack of junior events and lack of new members generally. Any initiatives would be greatly welcomed.

Officers Reports

General Secretary: Nothing to report as items were on agenda.

League Controller: Vincent Crean says everything went well apart from a few minor issues. All the games had been played.

First division won by Priorslee A by 7 points with Newport A runners up. Ludlow's withdrawal had made little difference to the end result. The trophy presented to G Pugh. Telford A had been relegated along with Ludlow.

Second division won by Church Stretton A, by 6 points from runners up Telford B. Three teams had defaulted against Church Stretton. Steve Rooney was presented with the trophy. Telford C and Wellington B were relegated. Vince stated he had persuaded D Powell to enter Wellington B at the start of the season even though it was known they would struggle to raise a team on occasions.

Third Division was a closely contested affair won by Newport B, over runners up Church Stretton B on game points, and the trophy presented to Danny Griffiths.

Vince stated while he would be happy to continue this year in the post of league controller, unless there were any offers, but he wished to give notice that he wanted to stand down for year 2016/17. Richard Thompson stated he may be interested for that year.

Vince wants to start the 2015/16 season early again so as to enable fixtures to be every other week, teams to be entered by 22nd August, dependent on league size/ divisions.

Treasurer's Report – Alf Evans presented his report, which Richard Thompson only had chance to have a quick look at, but saw no material problems.

The congress had again been the bedrock of the accounts and three more sensory digital boards had been purchased. Without the congress there would only have been a surplus of £60 but the congress had swelled this to just over £600. The county could call upon 10 boards including three from the juniors and F Best owns one.

It was recommended that league fees of £10 per team should remain the same for 2015/16. This was voted on and unanimously agreed.

Grading officer: Nick Rutter said all the games for grading had been sent off and grades should be out 25th July. There is a new F grade when players have played 5 games or more but not very meaningful.

Steve Rooney commented on looking at the game data on grading website and said it was offline quite a bit with teething troubles.

County individual: Nick Rutter said the entries had fallen to 13 this year and many players had dropped out. Nick felt that there were lots of other opportunities to play chess such as the rapid play, Shrewsbury town championship and the 4 NCL which had led to the drop in numbers Nick himself had won, N Ferrington second, with C Lewis getting the U160 grading prize and W Peck the U140.. The trophy was presented to Nick Rutter.

Cox: Keith Tabner said with four players it had led to different winners to the league. The final was held at Wrekin Housing Trust and was broadcast over the internet. The trophy was presented to N Paul as Newport A won the competition..

Minor : Organised by Keith Tabner for second and third divisions. Keith Tabner reported that there had been one or two defaults and Telepost C had re-entered after Shrewsbury dropped out. John Westhead collected the trophy for winners Church Stretton A who defeated Telepost B in the final.

Rapid Play: Chris Lewis reported in Div 2 Brewood, had entered and successfully finished runners up to winners Newport B. Unfortunately Oswestry had defaulted a lot of games. Occasionally players from other clubs had filled in for other teams. Simon Mayhew presented with the trophy.

In Div 1 Newport A had steamed ahead and won it by 8 pts but second place had been closely fought with Telepost A coming second, Wellington A third and Priorslee fourth. Church Stretton and Shrewsbury were relegated. No trophy was presented to Newport as it was believed to be still behind the bar at Newport

Quickplay : Toby Neal gave a brief report of the event being held at the Wrekin Housing Trust with five teams entered but extra players from those teams made up a sixth team enabling "home and away" games to be played. Telepost B had won the event and the trophy presented to M Clarke.

Publicity officer: Toby Neal said he published a weekly column in the Shropshire Star but needed comments to put in the article. The website was one source so he would encourage comments to be added when submitting results. He had tried to contact the local radio to publicise the chess congress.

Website editor: Keith Tabner, said thanks to Vinny for all his help. It was good to see individual clubs having their own websites. He like, Toby, wanted pictures and stories.

Congress organiser: Steve Rooney reported that the congress was a financial success and that Shropshire players had competed well. It was good to see John Cox and all his family there and gain some knowledge of the history of the congress which Jeff Cox had run for many years. John Cox and Nigel Ferrington were two players with Shropshire connections that were part of the four players sharing first prize in the open section. Steve Tarr, Trevor Brotherton & Richard Bryant were part of the players sharing the U180 prize. In the Major G Pugh had come third and Matthew Best shared the U145 prize. In the Minor Kate Walker shared the third place. The dates for next year would be the second weekend of January which had the advantage of not clashing with Hastings and so may get some strong juniors. The broadcasting of live games on the internet was felt to be a good addition to the event. He requested to get a few more volunteers on the days of the congress. The feedback which he had received had said that it was a little cramped in the playing area but the only solution would be to move to a different venue which would cost money as the venue was generously donated by the Wrekin Housing Trust. When Steve was asked about the surplus he said he would try to get more digital clocks so that all games would have them. Other clubs had loaned digital clocks for the event and it may be possible to have incremental time controls which is the way the top tournaments were going.

County junior organiser – Steve and Francis reported no one had been doing this.

County under 140 team: Roger Brown said Shropshire had fallen away and it had been withdrawn.

MCCU delegates: Reported that a member of the ECF board had been at the MCCU AGM and was trying to find out more from the grass roots of chess.

ECF delegate: Nick had nothing to report

4NCL team - Nathanael Paul reported that the team had finished 14th starting very well but had fallen way. Next year the venues were going to be Telford and Birmingham due to the current venues messing the 4NCL about. 19 players had expressed an interest and he would have 5 reserves to more than one team would be entered. There was going to be four divisions and he hoped to get promotion this year to division 3.

4 ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Elected en bloc with Simon Mayhew taking the county junior post – 1 No other volunteers. Vote All for – none against.

5. New club – Brewood to join with a change to the constitution that it would be limited to Shropshire with outside applications decided on merit. Distance no problem except for Ludlow/ Brewood match which could be played at a neutral venue.

R.T Goodyear found a pub on the Shropshire /Staffordshire border and played there. Could offer Telford as a venue, and was concerned that it was outside Shropshire.

SM Brewood had already been playing in the rapid play league and Shropshire need another club in division 2 or 3.

SR Need to be aware of the distance of clubs and would suggest midpoint venues where the distance is large.

SM Clubs do play in other leagues e.g. Telford in the Wolverhampton league.

SR EGM to change constitution

RT Wolverhampton league - clubs need to be within 20 miles of Queens Square Wolverhampton .

FB Suggest each application should be decided on merit.

David Blower – Brewood would be competitive in division 3 with a 150 grade on top board.

CL – It had been good to have them in the rapid league.

Request change of constitution to be amended for 21 against 0 abstentions 1

6(a) Clarification of grading – will use Summer grades for substitution purposes through the year but will use the latest available grade to determine the order of the team within the existing 10 point (in total) difference.

(b) Postponements are loosely interpreted in current procedure and there is opportunity for possible abuse.

Postponements should contact league controller first before approaching opposing team.

FH did not feel it right to change the current rule especially when there is likely to be a new controller of the league shortly and for them to implement the rule, but he felt there should be a good reason.

DB didn't want to go into a match one player down.

VC stated there had been 4 postponements in division 1.

MC say driver availability was a major factor for some teams and current rules were rigorous enough.

TN – captains had to be tough enough to say no and it can cause fixture congestion

FB It is not always clear to know whether you can get players for all matches

GW should go to league controller first not opposing captain. GI agrees.

NP should never accept lack of players as excuse for postponement as unlikely to be at full strength every match. Postponement until later can affect divisional outcome.

SR Decision should be shifted to controller.

Rule 14 change to - Matches must be played on the appointed date unless another date is previously agreed by the League Controller. All matches (including postponed matches) must be played by 30 April.

Voted for 19, against 3

6(c) Steve Rooney stated he felt embarrassed when hiring club rooms this season only to have too many defaults by opponents. He felt a penalty should be imposed like it works for the 4NCL.

Comments included

Defaulting of individual boards should be pre warned. To avoid a default of a match, a team shall have at least half the number of boards normally associated with that division.

SR Only four teams actually defaulted matches in division 2 but three of them against Church Stretton. Defaults claimed to be due to lack of players.

NR asked what happens if car breaks down.

TN – would penalty points make a difference in avoiding defaulted matches.

MC Wellington B defaulted two matches after they had already been relegated.

VC He had persuaded Wellington to enter knowing they might fold for league numbers.

SM Ludlow are likely to be in same position as Church Stretton were in, with a strong team in division 2 and long travelling distances.

RB wanted amendment to rule to be one point not two.

A series of votes now took place

1- Introduction of penalties for 11 against 9 abstention 2

2- Need more than half a team for 20 abstention 2

3- Penalty will be one league point for 10 against 9 abstention 3

4- There should be a warning for first occurrence then one league point penalty for 6 against 13 abstentions 2

This leads to a new league rule 15 with renumbering of subsequent rules.

Rule 15

A default of a match will result in a 1 point deduction, no warnings. A team should consist of at least half the number of boards

6(d) Incremental time controls

SR Trend at higher levels of chess to play incremental time controls. It also avoids two minute rule claims etc.

RT Wants players to be aware of problems setting up clocks

GW Wants captains to decide and default position to be current time limits

TN What should the time limits be for incremental controls.

SR Proposal 75 min plus 15 sec per move what give 85 minutes for 40 moves and 90 min for 60 moves.

Rule 11 Proposed amendment:

In all games the time control is all moves to be played is either 1 hour 35 minutes in accordance with the current E.C.F. rules for Quickplay finishes; or if digital clocks are available and it is agreed by both captains, an incremental time limit of all moves in 75min plus 15sec a move from move one. If not agreed the default position is the current 1hr 35 for all moves.

Voted for 16 against 4 abstentions 2

6(e) Re substitute players from other clubs.

GW – wishes to amend rule to the player being only eligible to play on the lowest boards rather like a substitute from a team within the same club.

SR – felt most clubs do not hire a 'ringer' and players just want more games.

CP felt Newport B came a cropper last season as a result of strong players suddenly playing for other teams.

RT – players playing for other teams should be registered and new registrations after a period of time e.g. 1st Jan

RB asked what happens if a play moves house

Vote for change in current rule 8 for 3 against 13 abstentions 4 - no change

It was agreed that a working group should be set up in early September, with Francis Best heading the meeting with a view to any rule and constitution changes being agreed for the 2016 AGM, with implementation for 2016/17 season.

7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Nothing raised

The meeting ended at 10:45