

Shropshire Chess Association

2021 Annual General Meeting

Thursday 4th July 2022 – Maddocks Club, Telford

President: Matthew Clark

Minutes

Present – Matthew Clark, Jon Smith, Roger Brown, Glyn Pugh, Peter Kitchen, Ivor Salter, Dan Lockett, Mark Smith, Phil Love, Gary White, G Vizokai, J A Hill, M Morrison, W Bates, Francis Best, Ian Jamieson, Tony Preece, Steve Wilson, Dave Gostelow, Chris Lewis, Dan Hilditch-Love (Nick – virtual attendance)

Agenda

1. **Apologies** - Nick Rutter, Dennis Bonner, Richard Thompson, Adrian Zdanowski
2. **Minutes of the 2021 AGM** – agreed as true record of that meeting.

3. Presidents Report

1) I want to congratulate all clubs and players for their resilience this year. It has been a real challenge to manage Chess under pandemic conditions. I am delighted with how much Chess has been played both over the board and online and it has been very encouraging to welcome new players to the League and to see some great games.

2) I would like to offer particular congratulations to Maddocks Chess Club and it is fitting that we are holding the meeting

here after such a successful season for the club. Maddocks A team deserve particular praise for winning Division 1 with 8 wins out of 8. This is an amazing achievement, considering the strength of the League and is testament to the quality of their players and their strength in depth. Well done to Maddocks as well for winning the Rapid Play League and to Maddocks B for coming in 3rd place.

3) I want to congratulate Glyn Pugh on being crowned County Champion for the 2 nd time. Glyn previous won the Shropshire title in 1985 and it is particularly impressive to win the title again 37 years later.

4) I want to thank Chris for all his hard work with the Juniors. It is significant progress for Shropshire Chess that he has organised regular sessions for juniors at the Nerdy Café in Shrewsbury. I want to congratulate Chris for his organisation of the Shropshire Mega Final at Charlton School with more than 50 junior players. Congratulations as well to the Shropshire Junior team for their promotion in the Junior 4NCL Online League.

5) Other recent achievements by Shropshire players include Charles Higgle's impressive results representing Wales and drawing against a Grandmaster. Congratulations to Oswestry for winning the Shropshire Online League.

6) I want to thank all Shropshire and club officials. I particularly thank Chris for all his hard work as treasurer and junior organiser, Adrian for his superb work as League controller. Nick Rutter for his work as Grading Officer and organising

the County Championship and Nick Holmes for all the work on the Shropshire website. I also want to thank Tony for his hard work and support as Secretary and to thank Alison as well.

7) I am delighted to pay tribute to Toby who stepped down as Publicity Officer this season. Toby brought a wonderful sense of humour to his articles that we have all enjoyed. They have provided a wonderful chronicle for Shropshire Chess on the website over the last 16 years. We are also very grateful to Toby for running the Summer Rapid Play Competition. Many Thanks to Toby for everything he has done for Shropshire Chess and we wish Peter Kitchen the very best as he takes on the role.

8) Some sad news this year was that Dave Gostelow suffered a stroke which has had serious effects on his health. Dave has been one of the strongest and most enthusiastic Chess players in the county for many years. We wish him all the best with his recovery.

4. **Other Officers Reports** – including trophy presentation

a. **League Controller**

b. **Rapidplay League Controller**

TEAMS	PLAYED	WON	DRAWN	LOST	FOR	AGAINST	POINTS
Maddocks A	15	12	1	2	41.5	18.5	25
Telepost A	15	5	5	5	29.5	30.5	14
Maddocks B	15	6	2	7	27	33	14
Telford A	15	7	0	8	28	32	13
Shrewsbury A	15	4	3	8	28.5	31.5	11
Newport A	15	4	3	8	25.5	34.5	10

- The rapidplay league controller noted that Omicron resulted in the league kicking off very late in the season with most games taking place in June. There were only sufficient teams to run a single division.
- COVID resulted in 3 match nights where 1 club was unable to field a team at all.
- The fight for 2nd spot was close, but in the end Telepost tied with Maddocks B on 14 points but just inched it on goal difference.
- Previous titans Newport A struggled finishing bottom of the league.
- There was only one clear winner in the end. Maddocks A won the league with 25 points, 9 points clear of their nearest rivals and the controller congratulated Athar, Adrian, Andy and Tony.
- The league controller is considering holding the 21/22 division 2 as a one-day event in September just to ensure the trophy gets given away. The teams might be grade restricted (around 1640) to give the 3rd division players a chance to compete. If this gets a healthy turnout the league controller will consider grade restricting div 2 next season and seeing if that attracts sufficient entrants to run a 2nd division.

c. Online League Controller

d. County Individual

e. Minor County Individual

- The controller noted the event was once again held online. Last year there were 17 entries which was the highest number of entries ever.
- Phil Love established an early lead which he never relinquished and finished on 6.5 out of 7.

- The fight for 2nd place was closer but Dave Lovegrove snuck up from behind to clinch it on 5.5 points ahead of Richard Thompson on 5.
- Grading prizes went to Richard Thompson, Ian Jamieson and Martin Ayres.

Name	Grade	Played	Wins	Draws	Losses	Byes	Points
Phil Love	1630	7	6	1	0	0	6.5
Dave Lovegrove	1488	7	5	1	1	0	5.5
Richard Thompson	1503	7	5	0	2	0	5
Ian Jamieson	1398	7	3	3	1	0	4.5
Jonathan Smith	1413	7	3	2	2	0	4
Tony Purser	1443	7	2	2	2	1	4
Martin Ayres	1255	7	3	0	3	1	4
Stephen Tulett	1390	7	2	2	2	1	4
Nick Holmes	1540	7	3	1	3	0	3.5
Willie Gormley	1420	7	2	1	3	1	3.5
Andy Jones	1503	7	3	0	4	0	3
Dennis Bonner	1480	7	1	4	2	0	3
Ivor Salter	1555	7	2	2	3	0	3
Colin Parker	UG	7	2	0	4	1	3
Malcolm Price	1398	7	2	1	4	0	2.5
John Casewell	1300	7	1	0	5	1	2
Alf Evans	1368	7	1	0	5	1	2

Prizewinners

- 1st: Phil Love
 2nd: Dave Lovegrove
 U1510 Grading Prize: Richard Thompson
 U1430 Grading Prize: Ian Jamieson
 U1395 Grading Prize: Martin Ayres (*on sum of progressive scores*)

- The controller mentioned that next season he is minded to switch the format back to over-the-board (which may lose some players but also attract back others) and then possibly the following season switching back to online again and then keep on switching the format each year.

f. Cox & Minor Trophies

g. Summer Quickplay

h. Junior Organiser

- The Junior Chess Organiser delivered his report on junior activities last season.
- He started by explaining the junior club at the Nerdy Cafe in Shrewsbury opened in September last year and every Saturday during term time between 11am-1pm Chris, Francis and Dan have been teaching around 16 kids. It was noted they can't accommodate more as Nerdy does limit them on space.
- There are currently 28 active members, mainly from Shrewsbury and the surrounding areas, and the average turnout over the past year has been 14 kids. There is a waiting list and there are currently another 7 kids on there. The current age range is 7-13 with an average age of 10.
- On a typical day the kids play friendlies, the volunteers set up a puzzle on the demonstration board and the kids challenge one another on the ladder. The volunteers also give short 1-1 tuition to the kids with the content determined by their ability. The junior organiser explained he is following a series of books called a step-by-step guide of how to teach children chess where in the first lessons he typically shows them how to mate queen and king and tries to discourage any of them from starting h4 rh3. For some of the stronger children the volunteers have been going into more advanced concepts.
- The club charges all the kids £2/week and pay Nerdy £10/week for the table hire.
- The club does have a high turnover but as the club has matured the turnover of kids has somewhat stabilised.
- Over the past 10 months there have been 55 kids attending the club at least once. Some of those only lasted a week, some a few weeks before stopping and some have stuck around since the beginning.
- The club has different standards from total beginners to some players who are fast growing into club-level players. The most promising talent is an 8 year old junior who the other week was showing a volunteer the theory of the Kings Indian 10 moves deep. Most of the strongest children do now have an OTB rapid rating which anyone can find by searching for Shropshire Juniors on the ECF rating database.
- The junior organiser noted the club would not be possible without his fellow volunteers being Francis and Dan, both of whom have been with him nearly every week. He noted they've been absolute rocks and so the AGM gave them a round of applause.
- The organiser explained he is always on the lookout for new volunteers and so if anyone feels they can commit some of their time on Saturdays please let him know. He explained the club doesn't tie its volunteers and so even if you can only do a few dates each term, that might mean you can provide cover if one of the other volunteers is unavailable.
- The organiser explained the club will run in the same way next year and noted the biggest challenge for the club is what to do when the kids start to turn 14 and "age out" of the club. He explained one potential idea is to attempt to transition them straight from the club into a junior team in the Shropshire league attached to Shrewsbury club and that might even compete this year.
- The junior organiser also gave a summary of the junior tournament held in June, the Shropshire Megafinal which is part of the UK Chess Challenge. This was held at Charlton school in Wellington and attracted 55 entrants.
- The organiser noted 9 entrants came from the junior club and then another 11 from schools across Shropshire. The majority of players came from outside Shropshire including 9 from Newcastle-under-Lyme school, 7 from Birmingham and then we had players as far away as Cardiff, Grantham, Liverpool and London.
- The organiser explained the tournament went really well and all the kids appeared to really enjoy it. Thanks were given to Peter Kitchen for his write-up in the Shropshire star recently. He also thanked the volunteers without whom it wouldn't have been possible including Francis Best, Dan Hilditch-Love, Joe Greenwood, Kate Walker and Andrew McCumiskey.

- The organiser noted a number of the clubs juniors qualified for the Gigafinals stage which was played 2 weeks prior to the AGM. Most scored around 50% so they did well but none of them qualified for the Terafinals.
- The tournament received grant funding from the Wrekin Housing Group of £600 to pay for the venue and so the organiser reported it made quite a hefty profit of around £400.
- Lastly, the organiser noted the venue will welcome us back anytime and so he outlined his plan to run 2 junior tournaments a year starting with the Shropshire Junior Open tournament at some point before Christmas and then another Megafinal in the spring and then just keep rotating those 2 tournaments every 6 months.
- The junior organiser reported Shropshire had entered a team in the Junior 4NCL online league division 4. Out of 7 games the team won 4, drew 1 and lost 2. This scored the team 9 points which was sufficient to see the team promoted into division 3. The new season starts in September.
- The organiser has also been in contact with a guy called Jamie Handscomb in Ludlow. He is setting up his own junior chess club in Ludlow Library on Wednesday afternoons and the association has lent him some sets to get him going.
- And finally, in the new school term the organiser outlined his plan to possibly set up an intra-school league. He explained there are school chess clubs out there and his aim next year is to get them talking to each other.
 - i. **4NCL Team** – one team only despite heroic efforts from Charles Higgle. Credit was given to Charles for all his hard work and tenacity in trying to field two teams.

j. 4NCL Online Team

k. Treasurer Report

Profit and Loss

- The treasurer presented the accounts which last year showed a profit of £71.07, compared to a loss of £8.48 the previous year and explained we're breaking even which is exactly where we want to be.
- The activities were then broken down into different revenue streams:
- The league administration made a profit of £52. This includes the sale of 5 of the association's clocks to Telepost although they are still available for congresses, offset by the write-offs of debts that were incurred pre-covid and a reduction in league fees arising from a fall in the number of teams in the league.
- All the individuals broke even or made a small profit.
- The 4NCL team made a loss of £207. The treasurer explained this arose from the difficulties pulling together teams and so the association incurred wildcard fees and default penalties as a result. Next season we are likely to drop one of the teams and this loss hopefully won't then be incurred.
- Junior chess activities made a profit of £276 because the club takes in around £30 each week and only pays £10 for the table hire.
- Finally, there is a depreciation charge of £68, higher than the previous year because the junior club purchased some equipment.

Balance Sheet

- The increase in asset value is the purchase of a demonstration board for the junior club which cost £102.
- At the end of the season the association was still owed £48 in 4NCL online subs but as some of these are owed by players outside of the county the treasurer explained how a provision was made that assumes the association will only collect 50% of that.
- The size of this year's prepayments figure is explained by the £600 paid to Charlton School in advance for the Shropshire Megafinal.
- It was noted the creditors were also significantly higher than normal as at the end of May SCA owed refund of subs to some of our 4NCL players, we may or may not incur further fines for the 4NCL team and junior chess owes table hire to Nerdy.
- The treasurer noted the bank balances decreased by £199 in the year although explained £600 relates to the venue hire of the Shropshire Megafinal, the income which wasn't received until the new financial year. The association ended the year sitting on the healthy cash balance of £5,115.95.
- The accounts were proposed and accepted unanimously.
- The treasurer then explained that in January the SCA bank account was switched to a dual authorised signatory with the president as the 2nd signatory. This is working well and adds that extra level of control but he explained he was struggling to up the general secretary as a 3rd signatory.

Proposal 8 - League Fees

- The treasurer noted that the only recurring league costs are the website fee and any trophy engravings although both of these costs are increasing. The website fees have increased from £92/year to £180/year and engraving from £50 to £60. All the other activities should be self-funding.
- Through a combination of OTB and online league fees we need to raise (£240+£60 depn)= approx £300 each season from subs in order to stand still. Last season we raised half that although there will hopefully be more teams this season. However there is the possibility of the congress or junior chess generating a surplus next season.
- The treasurer noted that in the past the AGM agreed to maintain our reserves around the £5,000 mark.
- After a short discussion it was agreed that given the uncertainty as to the number of entries the league fees per team next year would be set at £300 divided by the number of teams (OTB + Online), rounded up to the nearest £.

Note from Secretary – an additional proposal was made by Mark Smith, seconded by Tony Preece, that any teams who withdraw after the fixture list has been produced by the league controller will not have their entry fee refunded. **Carried unanimously.**

- I. **Auditor** – accounts audited by Richard Thompson.

m. **Publicity Officer** – thanks given to Toby Neal and Peter Kitchen introduced as new Publicity Officer. Peter would like to hear about the ‘human’ aspects of chess and welcomes articles on the characters of chess as well as results. Thanks to Peter from Chris Lewis for his work publicising the Megafinal and thanks from Matt for Peter’s work so far this season.

n. **Grading Officer**

o. **Website Editor** – Peter welcomes any articles and offered to help clubs with their own websites.

p. **ECF Delegate**

q. **Congress Organiser**

r. **Best Game Prize** (Colin Roberts trophy) – there were 9 entries. An honourable mention goes to Francis Best and the winner was Glyn Pugh.

5. Proposals

Charity Conversion

1) To apply to the charity commissioner to register Shropshire Chess Association as a charity - proposed by Chris Lewis. Seconded by Francis Best. **Unanimous decision ‘For’.**

Future of the online leagues

2) We end the online leagues. Those most vulnerable to COVID can continue to play their OTB

league matches online - proposed by Chris Lewis, seconded by Dennis Bonner. **F – 3, A – 10, Abstentions – 7. Proposal rejected.**

3) The first fixtures in the over-the-board league run in September, October and November. We then have a break from over-the-board and play our online matches in December, January and February, when there is the worst weather, the shortest days and the most colds about. We then return to play all the return fixtures in the over-the-board league in March, April and May - proposed by Charles Higgin

A discussion followed regarding the future of online chess alongside the proposal of a winter break. The following amendment was put forward to cover both proposals.

"Any team may elect at the start of the season to have a 'winter break'. Elections must be notified to the league controller prior to the release of the fixtures. The nature and duration of the winter break will be at the discretion of the league controller." **F – 13, A – 3, Abstentions – 4. Proposal accepted.**

Structure of the Shropshire OTB Leagues

4) The OTB 2nd and 3rd divisions should be combined into a new 2nd division. The current 1st division of 5 teams can then be increased by 2 teams to accommodate the winner/ runners up for the 21/22 season. Then the remaining 5 teams from division 2 would combine with the current division 3 of 4 teams to make 9 teams for the new division 2. Leave the rule of promotion the same from division 2 to division 1 (2 teams up and down) - proposed by Dennis Bonner

5) In addition to the proposal for 2 divisions above, the divisions should include a third place play-off, third from bottom of Div 1 playing third placed in Div 2 with a home and away match. Also, Division 2 should be increased to 5 players per team - proposed by Steve Wilson

After discussion of both the proposals it was agreed that no decision could be made until it was known how many teams would be entering the leagues and discretion should be given to the league controller.

Grading List

6) The league rules state that players must be ordered according to rule 13:

13. Players must be arranged in order of playing strength according to the latest E.C.F. rating list published on the Shropshire website; except that players whose rating differs by no more than 75 points shall be regarded as interchangeable for the purposes of this rule. The grading officer shall publish the August rating list and the January rating list on the website each year.

This list was not updated on the Shropshire site mid season meaning we were still technically bound by July's grading list at the end of the season. Does this rule need amending? - proposed by Chris Lewis. Seconded by Tony Preece. **F – 13, A – 4, Abstentions – 3. Proposal accepted.**

Amend rule 13 to read:

13. Players must be arranged in order of playing strength except that players whose rating differs by no more than 75 points shall be regarded as interchangeable for the purposes of this rule. To determine whether 2 players are interchanged the captain can either use the August rating list as published on the Shropshire website, or they can use the latest rating list published on the ECF rating database as at the date of the match. When establishing board order the captain must use the same rating list for their entire team. The grading officer shall publish the August rating list on the website each year. Penalties for breaches of this rule are specified at rule 26. Unrated players – if they have

past history, the last known rating is to be used provisionally. If not, the player has the maximum flexibility subject to league controller's approval and a provisional rating will not be given if the last historic rating is older than five years.

League Fees for next Season

7) If online chess is played then fees need to be paid for online teams the same as OTB - proposed by Glyn Pugh, seconded by Tony. **Carried unanimously.**

8) League fees for next season - Chris Lewis – see Treasurers report.

Rapidplay Proposals

9) Teams should be docked a point per match for defaulting rapid matches not a point per night - proposed by Glyn Pugh.

An amendment to rule 6 was proposed as per below:

"If a team fails to field at least half the number of boards (they only field 1 player on the night), that default will result in a 1 point deduction for each match on the night the team fails to field at least half the number of boards. No warnings will be given."

F – 11, A – 4, Abstentions – 5. Proposal carried.

10) Change the rapidplay time limit from 20 minutes to 20 minutes + 10 seconds increment - proposed by Richard Parry. **F – 1, A – 14, Abstentions – 5. Proposal rejected.**

It was agreed that players should be reminded of the rule that if they think an opponent is not playing to win they can stop the clock and take a photo of the board positions for a decision to be made by the league controller.

6. **AOB** – none.

Meeting closed at 10.20pm.