

Shropshire Chess Association
2022 Annual General Meeting
Monday 24th July 2023 – Maddocks Club, Telford
President: Matthew Clark

Minutes

Present — Matthew Clark, Tony Preece, Chris Lewis, Nat Paul, Jon Smith, Paul Billington, Dennis Bonner, Steve Sz wajkun, Richard Sz wajkun, Roger Brown, Steve Wilson, Shane Sweeney, Francis Best, John Bashall, Graham Shepherd, Charles Higgle, Peter Kitchen, Dan Hilditch-Love, Phil Love, Martin Ayres, Cesar Pileggi, Fred Bench

Agenda

1. **Apologies** – Glyn Pugh, Kate Walker, Nick Rutter, Gary Slegg, Richard Thompson, Mark Smith, Nick Holmes, John Casewell.
2. **Minutes of the 2022 AGM** – agreed as true record of that meeting.
3. **Presidents Report** – Matthew Clark
4. **Other Officers Reports** – including trophy presentation
 - a. **League Controller** – Tony Preece (acting).

Thanks to Tony for taking on the role on a temporary basis.
 - b. **Rapidplay League Controller**

Rapidplay League 2022/23

Division 2:

TEAMS	PLAYED	WON	DRAWN	LOST	FOR	AGAINST	POINTS
Telepost B	12	9	3	0	36.5	11.5	21
Maddocks C	12	4	6	2	28	20	14
Telford B	12	4	3	5	24.5	23.5	11
Newport B	12	3	3	6	15	32	6
Telepost C	12	1	3	8	15	32	5

As last season there were insufficient teams to run the 2nd division the league controller experimented this year by grade restricting division 2. Only players with an August rating below 1640 were allowed to compete. This successfully resulted in resurrecting division 2 although there were still a large number of defaults in the early rounds. Telepost B comfortably won the division, not losing a single match and finishing 7 points clear of their nearest rival. A special mention for Kate Walker who won 11/11 games, a perfect 100% record.

Division 1:

TEAMS	PLAYED	WON	DRAWN	LOST	FOR	AGAINST	POINTS
Maddocks A	15	11	2	2	42	18	24
Newport A	15	10	3	2	40	20	23
Telepost A	15	9	4	2	38	22	22
Shrewsbury A	15	5	3	7	27.5	32.5	13
Telford A	15	2	2	11	16.5	43.5	6
Maddocks B	15	0	2	13	16	44	2

Division 1 had one of the closest seasons on memory. Heading into the final round of matches Maddocks, Newport and Telepost could all win if the results went their way. Missing Athar but strengthened by new players Phil Bull and the return of Bill Bates it was Maddocks who held off their rivals to finish top on 24 points, with Newport on 23 points and Telepost on 22. 2

Both divisions ran extremely smoothly with no issues arising for the league controller.

Congratulations to the 22/23 league winners – Telepost B and Maddocks A.

c. **Online League Controller** – Charles Higgie (acting)

d. **County Individual** – thanks to Nick Rutter for keeping the gradings updated.

e. **Minor County Individual** – Chris Lewis

Minor Individual 2022-23

This year the event was held over the board for the first time since 2020. 21 entrants competed smashing last year's record entry of 17 players. 3 players established themselves as the contenders – James Holyhead, Rob Green and Joe Greenwood. James only lost 1 match, to Rob, whilst Rob didn't lose any at all but drew twice. Joe was knocked out of contention by James in the final round leaving James and Rob tied on 6 points.

This year we introduced new playoff rules meaning in the event of a tie a 2 game play-off is held. The rules stated if it is level after the games then the player with the highest tiebreak wins. The first play-off was held last week and thanks to Phil Love was broadcast live. James established dominance over the board at an early stage and managed to convert that advantage into a multi-pawn advantage winning the match. Under the rules James won the title but showing tremendous sportsmanship James has agreed to play the 2nd playoff. If Rob can level the match the players will share the title.

The 3 rating prizes were won by:

U1500 Rating Prize: Dennis Bonner

U1400 Rating Prize: John Casewell

U1300 Rating Prize: Martin Ayres

Finally, I am stepping down as controller after 6 years. With the growth of junior chess, I am struggling to balance all of my roles and give the minor individual the attention it deserves. I am nominating Dan Hilditch-Love to succeed me.

f. Cox & Minor Trophies – Tony Preece (acting)

Well done to Tony for organising these competitions. All matches have been played on time and the Minor final involves two Telford teams who will play using live boards.

g. Summer Quickplay – Toby Neal

A great competition, with 6 teams taking part – Oswestry, Shrewsbury, Maddocks, Newport, Telepost and Telford, creating a competitive league structure. Newport won on board count. Fred won 11 out of 11 matches and Nick was outstanding on Board 1.

h. Junior Organiser – Chris Lewis

Junior Chess 2022-23

22/23 has been the most incredible year for junior chess. There have been new clubs popping up all over the county and this has been the year the juniors have started to enter the leagues.

Shropshire Junior Chess Club (Nerdy)

The club at nerdy is still going strong. Every week during term time we're coaching on average 14 kids with an average age of 9½. The club remains heavily oversubscribed with 20 kids currently on our waiting list. Our turnover has somewhat stabilised with 40 kids attending the club at least once this year compared to 55 kids last year. We were one of very few junior clubs in the country to be recognised on the ECF development pathway as a level 2 club giving us official ECF recognition. We recently had a small scare as rising cost pressures meant Nerdy threatened to shut its doors for good. We had identified 3 suitable backup venues and so if Nerdy were to shut we can transition very quickly but our weekly hire will rise from £10 to £40. Luckily Nerdy has been bought out by new owners and we've been welcomed back on our current very favourable terms.

As last year a huge thank you must be given to both Francis Best and Dan Hilditch-Love. I would not have been able to run the club without them. As Francis is moving, I have been looking for his replacement. He's kind of irreplaceable but Rob Green has volunteered to somewhat step into his shoes. I'm always on the lookout for new volunteers and so if anyone feels they can commit some of their time on Saturdays please do let me know. I won't tie anyone 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.

Telepost Juniors

Around Christmas 3 of our members "aged out" of the junior club as our maximum age is 13. I have anticipated this for a while and my plan was transition these 3 friends to a Shrewsbury club at the same time thinking this gives the best chance of keeping them interested in chess. I chose Telepost because at the time Shrewsbury was only running its club once a fortnight. One of these juniors

chose to become inactive but Sam and Charlie are now fully integrated members of Telepost Chess Club. What I didn't anticipate is how much Telepost would seize on this new opportunity. They very quickly expanded their junior section from these 2 juniors and now have 13 active juniors including a few more that I have sent from Nerdy. I am being selective as to which juniors I send to Telepost ensuring they are both strong enough players and mature enough to play chess in an adult environment.

I think a special mention must go to Paul Billington here who has devoted his time and efforts to making these new juniors feel welcome and included. Paul is doing a fantastic job of growing junior chess in Shrewsbury.

Junior Tournaments

We held 2 more junior tournaments this year. In March we held the Shropshire Junior Chess Congress and then in June we held the Shropshire Megafinal, both at Charlton School. I made an extra effort to target local Shropshire kids to enter these tournaments and to that end before both tournaments I took a day off work to trundle up and down Shropshire leafletting every library and town hall. I don't know how successful this was but at our first tournament in 2022 we had 56 entries. We increased this number to 74 entries in March and then increased it again to a whopping 116 entries at the Megafinal, more than doubling last year's number of entries. Once again, we attracted entrants from far and wide including Blackpool, Gloucestershire and Middlesbrough. At both tournaments Phil Love ran the live boards, broadcasting the top boards in each section to the parents' downstairs. We then had local commentators explaining the games to both the parents and the kids. I'm pretty sure we're one of only a very small number to provide live commentary at a junior rapidplay tournament.

There is evidence that off the back of these tournaments' juniors have discovered our clubs and started to compete in the league.

The level of entries means the tournaments are now self-funding and I anticipate the tournament numbers continuing to grow and the tournaments to make surpluses next year.

I want to take this opportunity to thank all the volunteers who have made these tournaments possible.

- Phil Love for running the Live Boards
- Rudy van Kemenade, Thalia Holmes and FM Jonathan Blackburn for providing excellent commentary
- My arbiter team including Dan Hilditch-Love, Francis Best, Andrew McCumiskey, Chris Hankey, Jamie Handscomb and Paul Billington
- Kate Walker for providing excellent refreshments
- A special thank you to those who have helped set up the events and so thank you to Paul & Mark Billington, Ian Jamieson, Glyn Pugh, Athar Ansari and especially Phil Love who it should be noted puts in a bigger shift than anyone at these events.

I am still sticking to my plan of running 2 junior tournaments each year with the junior congress scheduled to return in spring 2023.

Newport Junior Chess Club

I have also set up a dedicated junior club at Newport which came as a slight surprise to those competing in the cox final expecting Newport to be a nice quiet venue for the big match. This club is targeted at an older age demographic than Nerdy with us only advertising for kids older than 10. We start at 6.30pm and then it is followed by the adult Newport club allowing a seamless transition. In just 6 weeks our membership has already grown to 16 juniors with some very promising talent. Both Newport and Telepost are eyeing entering junior teams in the league next year.

With the popularity of chess, it has never been easier to open a successful junior club and so I would encourage all clubs to consider starting a junior section in the hour before their main club. This does require someone willing to invest their time running this club but the payoff is definitely worth it if you want your club to grow.

Schools Project

Through our school's equipment project the association has set up 4 new junior clubs and helped another club expand. Ludlow Junior Club runs at Ludlow Library on Wednesday afternoons. The club is run by a couple of the older kids and coaching is provided by Jamie Handscomb, a former teacher and Wolverhampton player. The association provided all of the equipment to get the club off the ground as they are unable to charge subs. This club is thriving with I believe around 20 members. Jamie's provides a lot of classroom style teaching and these kids are developing and are potentially ready to start entering the league. We will continue to support them going forwards. Ludlow have played one friendly junior match against the Nerdy Club. They did beat us and we are looking forward to a rematch at Ludlow in the new term.

Market Drayton Library Chess Club was established a few months ago. Unfortunately, a recent restructure of library staff means the original organiser is no longer working there and so this club is on shaky ground. When work allows, I support it with coaching on an irregular basis but I can't take on any larger organising role.

I have visited 2 schools in the South of Shropshire to set up new clubs and also Shrewsbury Colleges which have an ambition of setting up clubs on every campus. I am in contact with primary schools in Prees and Market Drayton and am hopeful to set up 2 new clubs at the start of next term.

County Teams

We have continued to field a county team in the 4NCL online league. In season 6 the team got promoted to division 3 and then in season 7 the team finished 3rd in their group. The team's future is in question next season as Telepost will be fielding their own junior team and we would need new players to field a Shropshire team. I have yet to make the decision whether to drop the Shropshire team.

Last month I organised a county match against Potteries Junior Chess Club from Stoke-on-Trent. The event was held at my house and Paul Billington did an excellent job running a BBQ for the players. We lost an extremely close match but a great day was had by all.

Tournament Success

Shropshire Juniors have had considerable success in tournaments this year. It started when Sam Hollands placed 1st in the Minor Section of the Shropshire Congress. After that our juniors have been entering and placing highly in the junior tournaments all year. At the recent Megafinal four Shropshire Juniors scored 1st place in their respective sections, outperforming their rivals in neighbouring counties.

Schools League

I have continued to struggle to establish contact with local schools in order to set up a Shropshire Schools League. My attempts to mailshot the schools with updates on junior chess in Shropshire has had very limited success.

I am in contact with a few schools and I have settled on a format for the league. We will host 4 zonals in Shrewsbury, Telford, North and South Shropshire through which school teams can qualify for a grand final. I have a clearer picture now which schools already have an established chess club and

would be most likely to agree to host their zonal. I am looking to progress the schools league and play the zonals in the Autumn school term.

Other Developments

I have made a big push this year to establish connections with junior organisers in neighbouring counties. I have established contacts with Staffordshire, Cheshire, Herefordshire, Warwickshire and Lancashire and we are mutually supporting each other's events and sharing ideas. I have acted as an arbiter at Staffordshire Junior Congress, Warwickshire Junior Events, the Northern Gigafinal and ran the live boards at Herefordshire. I am also on friendly terms with many of the parents on the junior congress circuit.

I've set up Steve Tarr to provide his services to a couple of local schools in the new term, running new chess clubs and also offering 1-1 coaching to anyone who wants it. Nat is also coaching a couple of juniors. The more juniors receiving coaching the better so a page has been created on the Shropshire site so that if anyone is offering coaching for schools or 1-1, you can advertise yourselves to parents through the Shropshire site.

I have recently been in contact with Shrewsbury Library. Over the summer I will be running a couple of half-day sessions where kids can learn how to play chess.

I have also been in contact with Hadley Learning Centre where there were a number of players who qualified for the Gigafinals. In the new term I have arranged to give a coaching session to their school chess club.

Later in the year I will be supporting South District Scouts to host their annual competition and they may be the first scout group in the country to host a tournament on live boards.

Junior Committee

Taking all of the above into account Junior chess has grown this year at a rate beyond my wildest ambitions. I am struggling to manage all the different directions it is going and I'm in desperate need of further help. I am therefore proposing later on the agenda that a junior committee is established. Members of this committee will then be able to assist me or taking over some elements of my current role as we continue to expand junior chess in Shropshire.

Dennis thanked Chris for all his work promoting and expanding junior chess in Shropshire and beyond.

Junior Chess in 2022/23

Junior Clubs	Active Members
Newport	16
Telepost	13
Telford	4
Shropshire (Nerdy)	16
Ludlow Library	20
Market Drayton Library	5

Opened 6 new junior/school clubs!

Sold/donated subsidised sets to schools and libraries!

Subsidised Equipment Sold/Donated

Highley School	10 Sets
Childe Lacon School	10 Sets
Shrewsbury Colleges	18 Sets, Clocks
Market Drayton Library	2 Clocks, Ladder
Ludlow Library	Demo Board, 10 Sets, 3 Clocks, Ladder



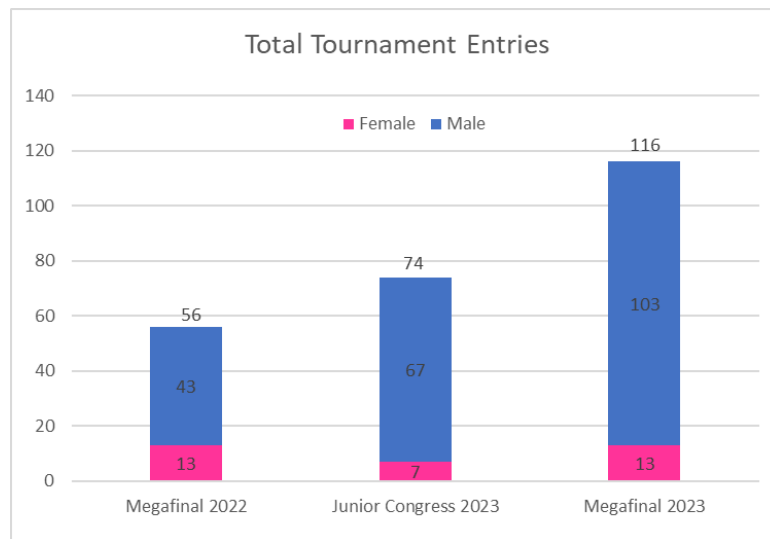
Shropshire Junior Chess Club was one of the very first to be recognised on the ECF development pathway

Notable Results

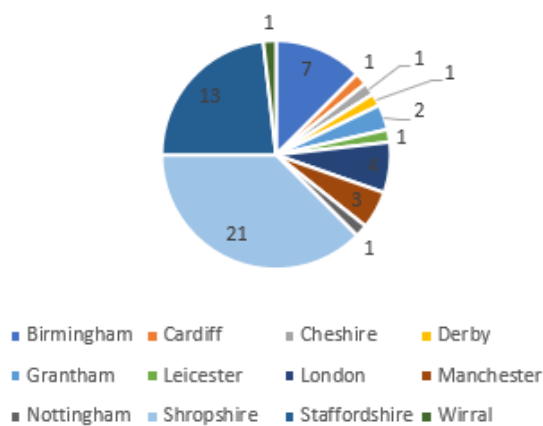
Sam Hollands	1st Place - Shropshire Congress Minor Section
Rudi Bedford	1st Place - U9's Nottingham Junior Rapidplay
Rudi Bedford	2nd Place - U10's Hereford Megafinal 2023
Henry Bedford	2nd Place - U12's - Hereford Megafinal 2023
Krish Thimmegowda	2nd Place - U14's Hereford Megafinal 2023
Rudi Bedford	2nd Place - U10's Shropshire Junior Chess Congress 2023
Merry Curtis	2nd Place - U12's Shropshire Junior Chess Congress 2023
Rhys Macmillan	2nd Place - U14's Shropshire Junior Chess Congress 2023
Rudi Bedford	1st Place - U10's Shropshire Megafinal 2023
Ellick Spiers	2nd Place - U12's Shropshire Megafinal 2023
Merry Curtis	1st Place - U11's Shropshire Megafinal 2023
Krish Thimmegowda	2nd Place - U14's Shropshire Megafinal 2023
Archie Flavell	1st Place - U18's Shropshire Megafinal 2023
Ryan Barton	1st Place - U16's Shropshire Megafinal 2023
Rudi Bedford	10th Place - U12 UKCC Blitz Final
Charlie Bethune	Drew with Matt Clark - Shrewsbury Town Championship

Shropshire Juniors have achieved recent tournament success

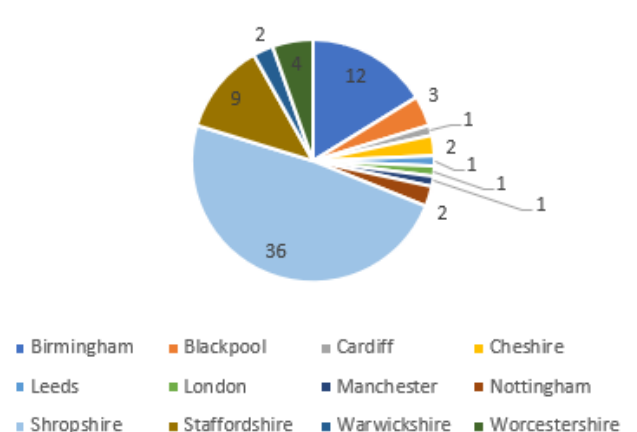
Shropshire hosted 2 more junior tournaments!



Megafinal 2022 Entries by County

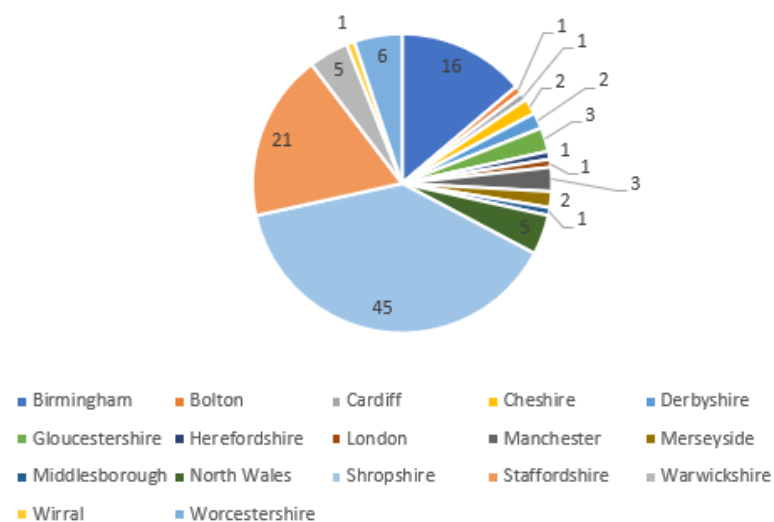


Congress 2023 Entries by County



i.

Megafinal 2023 Entries by County



j. **4NCL** - Charles Higgle

Problem with the matches being so far away so difficult to get both sides out.
Team finished bottom of the league but in future the league will be adjusted so there will be more matches in Shropshire.

k. **4NCL Online Team** – Matt Clark

There were 4 online teams spread over the 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 5th divisions. The County Captain position needs to be filled and Charles offered to take it on which was accepted.

l. **Treasurer Report** – Chris Lewis

Treasurer's Report 2022-23

Profit and Loss

Last year was one of Shropshire Chess Associations most exciting years and this is reflected in the accounts. The turnover of the association saw a near 500% increase, rising from £1,838 to £9,031 which reflects how there were more opportunities to play chess in the county than ever before. The association's surplus increased from £71 to £455. If we break our activities down into the different revenue streams:

- The league administration made a surplus of £128 before depreciation. This was the first year we charged rapid and online teams as well as standard play teams, all teams being charged £9. The subs were set to break even the league administration costs plus the £87 depreciation charge of equipment.
- The higher number of entries in the minor individual resulted in a surplus of £78.
- The 4NCL team broke even.
- The Shropshire congress made a surplus of £445.
- Junior chess activities made a surplus of £653. The club at Nerdy made a surplus of £301 because the club takes in around £30 each week and only pays £10 for the table hire. The tournaments reported in the accounts are the 2022 megafinal and the 2023 junior chess congress (but not the recent 2023 megafinal). The 2022 megafinal made a surplus of £416 thanks to £600 grant funding we received from the Wrekin Housing Group. The Junior Congress made a small loss of £64.
- Shropshire Chess received a donation from Hereford Megafinal of £110. This was a thank you after Shropshire provided live boards at the event.
- A tax charge of £139 was incurred. This is tax payable on the congresses where surpluses are not protected by the mutual trading rules. Now that the charity conversion has gone through any future tournament surpluses are not taxable.
- Shropshire Chess Association provided subsidised equipment to schools and other junior clubs. The equipment was purchased at a 20% discount and then sold at half price or in some cases donated for free. The total cost to the association of these donations last year was £725 and we anticipate a similar level of donation next year. The association still holds half the equipment in stock and our offer of discounted sets is still running.

Balance Sheet

- The increase in fixed asset value arises from the purchase of WIFI Dongles. These are necessary as the congress venues have next generation WIFI. Not showing in the accounts is 3 second hand laptops we have recently been gifted to aid in displaying the live boards.
- The association held stock of £1,370 at the end of the year. This figure included 52 sets and 6 clocks being held as part of our discounted equipment for school's project. There were also leftover medals and refreshments from the junior congress that can be used at next year's tournament.
- At the end of the season the association was owed £197 from Shrewsbury College for the sale of discounted equipment. This debt is now cleared.
- The prepayment figure was again very high as at the end of the year £750 was paid in advance to Charlton School for the Shropshire Megafinal.
- The association owed £505 to various creditors including prizes for the individuals and its tax liability.

- Although we made a surplus our bank balance decreased by £1,526 as £750 was paid in advance for the venue hire of the Shropshire Megafinal and £2,000 was spent upfront purchasing the junior equipment for the schools project. The trustees made the decision to invest this year to take advantage of the once-in-a-generation interest in chess. The balance at the end of the year was £3,589.54. When the income from the megafinal is received and the remaining equipment is sold at half price the balance should rise back up to £5,000.

League Fees

Last year the AGM agreed to set the league fees by taking the league costs plus depreciation charge and dividing it by the number of teams entering the different leagues in order to break even. Through this combination of OTB and online league fees we need to raise (£240+£60 depn)= approx £300 each season from league subs in order to stand still. The treasurer proposes the league fees are once again set when the number of entries are known at a level so that the league fees raise £300.

- l. **Auditor** – accounts have been signed off by Richard Thompson. Proposal to accept the accounts by Charles, seconded by Tony.

- m. **Publicity Officer** – Peter Kitchen

Report of a positive year with regular columns on social media and in the Shropshire Star. A change of job for Peter has meant it has taken a bit of a backseat but if anyone has any news or events to publicise, please let him know.

- n. **Grading Officer** – Nick Rutter

- o. **Website Editor** – Nick Holmes

Thanks to Nick.

- p. **ECF Delegate**

- q. **MCCU Delegates** – Glyn Pugh & Roger Brown

Difficult to get large teams and loss of treasurer/finance officer.

r. **Congress Organiser** – Phil Love & Daniel Hilditch-Love

The Congress returned after a two-year break with a new arbiter team and a redesigned website. New entry forms were used and it was also possible to enter online where the entry list was regularly updated. Payment was also taken online although there was still the option to pay in cash on the day. However, this caused some issues trying to collect money and was difficult to police. Live boards were used. The event was well advertised and attracted 141 entrants, including some from the South and East coast, Crewe, Birmingham, Staffordshire and Worcestershire. There was a date clash with the 4NCL so these numbers were particularly impressive. The event ran smoothly with the Housing Trust providing the catering. Despite losing a £1k donation, an increase in venue hire fees and an increase in prizes, the event still made a profit of £450. Phil regaled us with some 'It'll be Alright on the Night' stories! There was a suggestion to bring the date forward next year.

s. **Best Game Prize** (Colin Roberts trophy) – still to be decided

5. Nomination of New Officers

- League Controller – Daniel Hilditch Love proposed by Chris Lewis, seconded by Tony Preece
- Online League Controller – Charles Higgin proposed by Matt Clark, seconded by ?
- Cox & Minor Trophies Controller – Daniel Hilditch Love proposed by Chris Lewis, seconded by Tony Preece
- County Captain - proposed by Matt Clark, seconded by Nat Paul
- Additional Congress Organisers – to be discussed nearer the time
- All other positions remain the same. Proposed by Steve Wilson and seconded by Steve Szjakun.

6. Proposals

A) Adoption of the new general rules for the leagues & competitions

The successful registration of Shropshire Chess Association as a charity means there are currently two constitutions in direct conflict with each other. This proposal is in 2 parts:

- 1) Abolition of the existing constitution which has now been superseded by our charity constitution
- 2) Adoption of "Part 1" – Rules Governing all Shropshire Chess Competitions which fills in the governance gaps of the various leagues and competitions not covered by the charity constitution. Every league and competition rules will be split into Part 1 and Part 2. For every competition Part 1 will read "this competition will be governed in accordance with the competition rules of the Shropshire Chess Association" with hyperlink to those rules (see **appendix b**). Part 2 will then be the specific rules for that competition.

- *proposed by Matthew Clark, Tony Preece, Christopher Lewis*

- Seconded by Steve Szjakun.
- Adopted unanimously.

B) Determination of Rating for Board Order

Rule 13 reads as follows

"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 interchangeable the captain can use either the Autumn rating list as published on the Shropshire rating website, or they can use the latest rating list published on the ECF rating database as at the date of the match."

It is not logical to have 2 interpretations of ratings for the whole season. With one rule nobody can manipulate this rule by using 1 rule 1 week and another rule the next week and so we either need to use the grades at the start of the season or the latest grade as released each month. Suggest it to be changed to:

"Use the latest rating list published on the ECF database as at the date of the match"

This is clear and does not allow any other interpretation.

- *proposed by Dennis Bonner*

- Amendment suggested to use August ratings – defeated.
- Original proposal passed 10 in favour, 8 against, after a recount.

C) Determination of Rating for substitutes/multiple clubs

Small tweak to rules 8 & 9 & 13 so that when they refer to the rating at the start of the season, they all refer to the same one. All 3 rules will refer to the "published August rating at the start

of the season”.

Rule 8 currently reads:

8. If a team in the second or third division uses a player who normally plays for another Shropshire club in a higher division during that season, then it is permitted only on condition that the player has a current July rating of below 1710 for Div 2 and below 1560 for Div 3.

Proposal:

Amend “current July rating” to “published August rating at the start of the season” to make it consistent with Rule 13.

Rule 9 currently reads:

9. A reserve may be drawn from a lower team, as follows:- any players regardless of whether they are nominated or tied to one team may be used as reserves for a higher team as follows (rules 9a to 9e). Players who are not nominated to a team may also play for a lower team.

a) Players rated below 1710 can play for any of their club’s teams in Division 1 without restriction, providing that the lower team, for which the player normally appears, and the higher team for which the player wishes to appear as a reserve, are not both in Division 1, in which case the restriction in sub – paragraph d will apply.

b) Players rated below 1600 can play up into any of their club’s teams in Divisions 1 and 2 without restriction, providing that the lower team, for which the player normally appears, and the higher team for which the player wishes to appear as a reserve, are not both in the same Division, in which case the restriction in sub – paragraph d will apply.

c) Players rated below 1450 can play up into any of their club’s teams in Division 1 and 2 without restriction.

d) Where a player is used more than three times for a higher team, then (unless sub – paragraphs a, b or c apply) he / she becomes a member of the senior team on the fourth occasion for the remainder of the season. Where a reserve wins by default the result will count as an appearance for the senior team.

Proposal:

Add new rule 9e:

All references to rating in this rule refer to the published August rating at the start of the season.

Unless amended above rule 13 currently reads:

To determine whether 2 players are interchangeable the captain can use either the Autumn rating list as published on the Shropshire rating website, or they can use the latest rating list published on the ECF rating database as at the date of the match.”

Proposal:

Amend “Autumn rating list as published on the Shropshire rating website” to

“published August rating at the start of the season”.

- proposed by Chris Lewis

- Seconded by Dennis
- Adopted unanimously.

D) Unrated Players

The league rules do not reflect the new frequency with which ratings are released. New unrated players with no playing history currently have total flexibility for the full season regardless of how strong they are, even when actual ratings are available.

Rules 13 currently reads:

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.

Replace the above rule with a new rule 6 that reads:

6. For the purposes of rule 9 and 13 if a player is currently unrated but had a rating in the previous 10 years, that last known rating is to be used provisionally until a new rating is obtained. If the player has no rating history or only a provisional “P” rating they have maximum flexibility subject to the league controller’s approval. Once an unrated player obtains a “K” or “A” rating then that player must use either the latest rating list published on the ECF rating database as at the date of the match or, if/when that player obtains an August “K” or “A” rating, the published August rating at the start of the season.

- proposed by Chris Lewis

- Seconded by Dennis
- Adopted unanimously.

E) Blue Badge Holders

The rule related to blue badge holders, 13B is as follows:

"Blue Badge holders may request to play any of their matches online. This request must be sent via their captain to the opposing captain 48 hours prior to the match. The match cannot be played online without the agreement of the opposing captain. The opposing captain should endeavour to find a player willing to play online and may select any of their eligible players to play against the blue badge holder. If the opposing captain is unable to find a player willing to play online all games must be played over-the-board. For the purposes of rule 13 the opposing player selected to play online can be played outside of the usual board order"

This completely discriminates against Blue badge holders as the opposing captain need not find a player to play the blue badge holder online and instead insist that the game be played over the board.

Proposal:

Delete the sentence " *If the opposing captain is unable to find a player willing to play online all games must be played over-the-board.*"

Also replace "should" in the sentence below with "must".

" *The opposing captain **should** endeavour to find a player willing to play online and may select any of their eligible players to play against the blue badge holder. If the opposing team is unable to field a player, they default that board.*

- *proposed by Dennis Bonner*

- Amendment proposed to change wording to:

" *The opposing captain **should** endeavour to find a player willing to play online or at the BBH's venue of choice (including their home) within Shropshire and may select any of their eligible players to play against the blue badge holder. If the opposing team is unable to field a player, they default that board.*"

- Also, an amendment to the time from 48 hours prior to the match to 1 week prior.
- 15 in favour of proposal with both amendments, therefore carried unanimously.
-

F) Knockout Competition Dates

For some time, the Cox and Minor competitions, which were initially intended to extend the Shropshire chess season into early summer, have been diluted by teams being unable or struggling to field a team after the league season finishes.

Rule 1 currently reads:

"1. *The competition will be held immediately following the completion of the league programme*"

Proposal:

Replace rule 1 with " *The controller will publish in advance at the start of the season the weeks during which each knockout round must be played and as the pairings become known they will publish the exact dates. The controller should ensure the knockout concludes immediately after the league season. Matches must be played on the appointed date unless in exceptional circumstances another date is agreed by the controller*"

The idea being that the exact fixture dates will be at the controllers discretion but generally the

first round should be towards the end of the first half of fixtures and the finals to be as an event quite quickly after the conclusion of the main league.

The current rules allow considerable flexibility for bringing in strong players from outside the Shropshire League during crucial matches.

Proposal:

Amend rule 4 to read:

"A player can only play for a team if they were so eligible to play for that team in a standardplay league fixture. Additionally, to be eligible:- prior to round 1 a player must have played at least 1 game for their club in the standardplay league. Prior to round 2 a player must have played a total of at least 2 games for their club taking the sum of their games in the knockout trophy and/or the standardplay league. Prior to round 3 a player must have played at least 3 games for their club taking the sum of their games in the knockout trophy and/or the standardplay league. If applicable, prior to round 4 (or 5) a player must have played at least 4 (or 5) games for their club taking the sum of their games in the knockout trophy and/or the standardplay league."

Although this rule is convoluted it is simple to understand and prevents ringers from playing in the knockout cup whilst allowing flexibility for teams to draw on their usual reserves.

- proposed by Nick Holmes & Chris Lewis

- Roger spoke out against the proposal.
- Proposal carried unanimously with 15 votes in favour and 1 against.
- An amendment to be added regarding team flexibility and taking into account ungraded players.

G) Creation of new officials

There is a once in a generation opportunity for the association to expand. I propose we attempt to take full advantage of this by creating additional posts.

- Head of Senior Chess – to promote outreach at the opposite end of the scale to junior chess by introducing chess to older people through outreach into retirement homes etc.
- Head of Amateur Chess – with responsibility for outreach to players who aren't necessarily ready to commit to competitive chess. This could include running small scale amateur tournaments OTB or online or advertising through board game cafes etc.
- Outreach Committee – a committee with responsibility for setting up clubs in other Shropshire towns financially supported by Shropshire Chess. Market Drayton and Ludlow are both already primed to open new clubs if the association could set them up and then step away.

- Change of title of Junior Organiser to Head of Junior Chess – only because I find it really awkward to explain to parents and teachers who I am when I’m fulfilling the part of the role that isn’t organising (i.e., setting up new clubs).
- Junior Committee – establishment of a junior committee to assist the Head of Junior Chess who is struggling to manage a continually expanding role. Members could include both players and parents.
- ChessFest Committee – to organise an annual event similar to the Darwin Centre and thus reach out to new members
- Head of Women’s Chess
- Rapidplay Tournament Organisers – in the hopes that Shropshire can one day organise its own rapidplay tournament
- Safeguarding Officer – with the influx of juniors into the league this post needs to be filled ASAP. They would also take the lead in developing our safeguarding policies.

I don’t expect all of these posts to be immediately filled (maybe none will be) but my hope is that by creating them we show our ambition to grow chess in Shropshire.

- proposed by Chris Lewis

- Seconded by Tony Preece.
- Carried unanimously.
- Positions will be filled over the next few months.

7. AOB

- Election of Safeguarding Officer – urgent. Anyone interested should email Matt Clark.

Meeting closed at 10.20pm.