

Leicestershire & Rutland Chess Association AGM Minutes

Wednesday May 29th 2013 - at Kirby Muxloe Bowls Club Commencing 7:30pm.

1. Present and apologies for absence.

	<u>Club</u>	<u>Present</u>	<u>Apologies</u>
1	Ashby		
2	Braunstone	Jim Bingham (JTB); Mike Salisbury (MWS); Paul Colburn (PJC)	
3	Heathcote	Graham Booley (GB)	
4	Kirby Castlers	Jim Cowley (JC)	
5	Latimer	Brian Slater (BS)	
6	Loughborough	John Mitchell (JM)	
7	Melton		
8	Oadby	Mike Thornton (MAT)	
9	Red Admiral	Stan Parsons (SP); Paul Findley (PF); Andy Carter (AC)	
10	Syston		Julie Johnson
11	Wigston	Neil Beasley (NB); Iain Dodds (ID); Ben Vaughan (BV)	Andy Morley
12	Willowbrook	John Pattinson (JP); Bob Collins (BC)	

John Pattinson chaired the meeting; Jim Bingham took the minutes.

2. Minutes Of The LRCA Annual General Meeting held on 23rd May 2012

These were taken as read as they had been distributed with the notification of the AGM in the email from the Gen Sec on 8May13. Mike Salisbury proposed that they were an accurate reflection of the 2012 AGM, and Mike Thornton seconded the proposal.

3. Matters Arising

No matters were raised.

4. Officer's Reports.

3.1. Chairman JP started off by thanking JTB for his help in taking on the role of LRCA Chairman, and then mentioned how his first year had been busier than expected, because of the necessity to take over the LRCA MO Administrator's duties from JTB, in view of the latter's illness. However with the cooperation of all the clubs, by the date of the ECF fees-discount deadline there were 193 players successfully joined up with the ECF.

JP went on to thank Kirby Castlers for again providing their excellent premises for the AGM, and also the Latimer club for the use of their premises for the 2012 Charity event. The latter was again very successful, and raised £114 which was donated to Loros. This year the Syston club will be hosting the event and the date has been fixed for Sept. 25th.

One item discussed extensively at last year's AGM was the LRCA's failure to provide more encouragement to junior chess, and JP explained that since then a lot of effort has been expended into developing the junior scene in Leicestershire and more details about this progress will be given in the Junior chairpersons report later. But for now JP said he'd just

like to thank Biopolymer Solutions Ltd for the kind sponsorship they are providing for the juniors this year.

JP then informed the AGM of an event that is to take place at the Curve on 29th June called The Indian Summer Event, at which there will be a friendly chess tournament: and he is particularly excited about the potential this has to increase the involvement of the Indian community in Leicestershire chess. Several LRCA officials intend to be present at this event to provide distribute lists of Leicestershire clubs and other contacts.

Finally JP expressed his thanks to all the LRCA officers for their hard work throughout the year, since it is only by their efforts that Leicestershire chess continues to exist.

3.2. Secretary This item normally included on the Agenda was mistakenly omitted, but the Secretary confirmed that he had nothing specific to report.

3.3. Treasurer Bob Collins started by thanking the previous year's treasurer (JTB) for his help in taking over the reins. He then explained that because of frustrating problems in his attempts to become a signatory on the NatWest account he decided, with Policy Committee's approval, to open a new account with the Unity Trust Bank: with whom he already had satisfactory experience.

However, for the time being it was decided that it would be simplest to leave the Congress A/C with Natwest, as the current signatory arrangements were felt to be perfectly adequate: though a Congress A/C has also been set up with the new bank in readiness for any future changes.

As the interest rate on the LRCA savings account at Nationwide had fallen to virtually zero BC mentioned that this account had now been closed and the monies transferred into the Unity A/C, for simplicity.

BC then mentioned that he decided to use March 31st as the financial year end (as specified in the Constitution) for this year, and in future. He then continued by mentioning that the Congress account summary had been prepared by Sean Hewitt (and had been circulated) and apart from confirming that they seemed satisfactory he was limiting his comments to just the main LRCA accounts: and these were as follows :-

1. League and ECF fees were down on the previous year as clubs mainly pay their ECF fees directly rather than via the LRCA.
2. Similarly, ECF/MCCU fees expenditure is much lower for the same reason as above.
3. Sponsorship monies of £250 were made by Biopolymer Solutions Limited for the development of junior chess over the current season, for which I would like the Association to give a formal vote of thanks.
4. Resulting from the sponsorship, the surplus has increased from £145 to £448, but taking out the sponsorship (which is for a specific purpose) the surplus was £198.
5. The Accounts (excluding the Congress Accounts) show a very healthy balance of £2612.

During the subsequent discussions a particularly large, but essential, item of expenditure that will be made in the near future is £720 for clocks. This, however, will not impact on the LRCA main account as there are sufficient funds in the Congress A/C to meet this outlay.

Acceptance of the accounts was then proposed by NB and seconded by GB, and duly passed unanimously.

5. Committee Chairman's Reports

1. County Teams

County 1st Team

Concluding 2011/2012 Season;

Having regained the Midlands title and managed a 10-6 win against Cambridgeshire in the national ¼ finals we endured a tense battle against Essex in the ½ final.

The advantage of having Mark Hebden available eventually proved its worth with Mark's win assured we then secured an unprecedented 14 draws from board 3 down to board 16, this left Brandon Clarke to wrap up the match victory with his win on board 2.

So to the final, once again having to play Hertfordshire for the 4th time in 4 years,

Having lost to them in final, semi & ¼ final in previous 3 meetings, we were still optimistic about this being our turn to win, although we didn't have Mark this meant we could match them on all boards because of the grading average, alas it wasn't to be with everyone making themselves available, this was one of our strongest possible teams, we made the early breakthrough with wins from Rajan Ganger and Mike Salisbury but Herts fought back and eventually secured an 8-8 draw and won on board count.

2012/2013 Season.

What a contrast to the previous season, starting with a 9-7 loss to Lincs the season went down hill at a pace, another 9-7 loss to Derbyshire meant we couldn't qualify for the nationals, we saved face with a draw against Worcestershire before succumbing to a youthful Gtr Manchester 7½-8½ and thus securing the wooden spoon, (this maybe our lowest result in modern county chess, I'll have to check with John Robinson) So hopefully with a summer off we will come back revitalised and raring to go.

We were struggling to put out our best team this season so my thanks to all the lower board players who stood in when needed & also my usual thanks to all the drivers without whom we wouldn't get anywhere.

Moving forward we need 2 new county captains, sections will be dependent upon our grades and also the grading bands available, there are some proposals to change the grading bands and numbers in teams.

Report from Graham Booley.

Other County Teams

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U140 Team

This season started with a disappointing draw against Nottinghamshire, followed by a heavy defeat against Shropshire. A very close match against Warwickshire went against us by 7½ - 8½, which was essentially bad luck. A weakened team crushed Derbyshire 12-4 but we were unable to field a side of any ability against Worcestershire leaving us with another draw against Staffordshire. The loss of 5 of our better players from last season hurt as did the unavailability of some players. My sincere thanks to all who turned out to play, and my best wishes to whosoever takes over next year.

U100 Team

A close win against Warwickshire followed by a loss to Nottinghamshire meant a quarter-final against Lancashire. The clash with the Megafinal left me trying hard to get a team, and with only 8 players available with 24 not available, I conceded defeat and the match. I would like to thank all who played, mostly for the first time. My purpose of initiating players into county chess has been justified.

Comments

I would suggest in the light of this season that next season we examine running an U160 team and an U120 which would maximise the number of players available

As I said last year, this is my swansong running county teams. My best wishes to whoever takes over, and I will give them any assistance they require.

Report from Cyril Johnson.

County Teams discussions :-

JP queried whether there were any expenses associated with running the county teams.

To which BC responded that :-

- Because Cyril Johnson had been unable to field an U140 team in one match there will probably be a £30 fine to pay for defaulting.
- There is a settlement of Cyril's expenses outstanding, and BC is awaiting the invoices supporting Cyril's claim.

GB highlighted the fact that decisions needed making about which teams to run in the coming season, and also the fact that some willing volunteers are going to be required to fill the captains roles.

PF wondered whether the U100s team could become specifically a junior team: and GB agreed that this was a good idea.

SP thought that the difficulties finding sufficient players for some of the matches might be solved by having a matrix drawn up of the matches and available players. But GB explained that most problems occur by players becoming unavailable quite late on. And also the lack of knowledge of the dates for matches in the national stages of the competitions was not a factor (as they are fixed in plenty of time), but there is a problem with clashes of dates with other events (e.g. the mega-finals).

2. **Congress** With the tournament organiser, Andy Morley, away on holiday the meeting had to just resort to a general discussion about the Congress. BV, together with others, provided the feedback that the Congress was again well-organised and very successful, and the fact that large numbers of the entrants re-appear each year was a good indication that everything was very satisfactory.
3. **Juniors.** JM explained that during his year as the "unofficial Junior Chairman" he been pleased to find that there was an increasing amount of activity of the junior scene: albeit fairly independent of the LRCA. However he convened a meeting of the main activists in this area on May 7th, and an increased level of coordination is going to be the outcome. He mentioned that the decision was taken at this meeting to designate 3 separate areas of responsibility and to install a junior director for each of them, as follows :-
 1. Paul Findley - Junior Director (Schools)
 2. Paul Colburn - Junior Director (County)
 3. John Mitchell - Junior Director (Clubs)

JM then asked each of these directors to provide a brief summary of their roles: and JTB added that most of the information so given could be found in the minutes of the May 7th which had been circulated to all the club secretaries and LRCA officials.

One important new point that emerged from these discussions was the need for more kit to be available for junior events. PF reckoned that there is probably a need for around 80 sets, boards and clocks. GB pointed out that the LRCA had sufficient kit for 40 games, and that there wouldn't normally be a problem at our Congress as the book shop would be willing to provide plenty of sets. Anyway, it was eventually concluded that the JM would contact all the club secretaries about donating kit that has fallen into disuse over the years, and the Junior Directors would also put in a request for a suitable grant from the LRCA: for approval by the Treasurer and subsequently the LRCA Executive. In the discussion regarding unused kit, BV undertook to liaise with PF about spare sets and clocks that the Wigston club pass on for junior usage.

At this point JP raised his idea about the possibility of an informal tournament similar to the Harrod Cup which might be worth organising for juniors and other less-strong players to take part in.

6. League Secretary's Report

MWS reported that the season had been a considerable success with all the fixtures in all 5 divisions being completed on time and with virtually no last minute defaults. The League Cups also ran smoothly.

There were 41 teams entered in the league and these were equally spread across 5 divisions. This year there was only one occasion when a team defaulted, and there were also 9 boards defaulted across all 41 teams in 5 divisions – a remarkably low number compared to previous years. There have been problems with the “barred players” rules and their interpretation. A more formal process needs to be put in place with automatic penalties for these rules to work properly.

Thanks must be paid to Michael Fraser for all his hard work in running the league results website - in terms of up to date results and information it is superb.

Congratulations to the winners of the divisions and league cups:

- Division 1 – Wigston 1
- Division 2 – Willowbrook 1
- Division 3 – Syston 1
- Division 4 – Syston 2
- Division 5 – Wigston 5
- Major League Cup -Braunstone 1
- Minor League Cup – Braunstone 3

In a discussion about the apparent decrease in the amount of troublesome issues that MWS has had to deal with, Mike explained that he tried to avoid taking up issues which were essentially just players “having a moan”. And it also transpired that the responsibility for the resolution of some issues were sometimes taken by ID or Mike Fraser, when that was applicable.

Some disputes that MWS admitted he did often to get involved with, was when clubs illegally played barred players – usually inadvertently. It seems that this was partially due to the fact that

Mike Fraser had not put a barred players list on the website – one view on this being that Mike believes that this would only be useful if updating the list could be done automatically.

A lively discussion then took place about the amount of effort that the officials should make in trying to identify when violations occur, and whether punishment should be imposed even when the infringements were unintentional, and had little significance on the position of teams in the divisions. To bring the discussion to an end JP suggested that this thorny problem should be passed over, yet again, to the League Management Committee (LMC): possibly with the view to revising the barred players rules.

The meeting then turned to the debate on time controls which has recently been the subject of numerous emails: and as a result of show of hands suggested by MT there appeared to be a consensus in favour of just having a single time control. So this became another recommendation from the AGM to be considered by the LMC.

Another regular issue for discussion under this Agenda item was then raised by GB, and this was the occasional unsatisfactory results of teams following the published fixture lists. What he had noticed last year was that there were particular times when there was an unacceptable disparity between the total number of matches played by the teams in one division. In response MT explained that he tried to organise the fixtures in accordance with particular priorities; and an example of which would be the need to avoid adjacent teams from one club having matches on the same night. He then often discovers that the resulting fixture lists have various unsatisfactory anomalies; such as one team having a long period with no matches. Trying to resolve these situations was a thankless task and he mentioned that he would willingly relinquish this difficult job to another volunteer or, failing that, take heed of any comments that he receives about his assumed priorities.

To overcome these problems, MWS wondered if there might be software available which can generate fixture lists: and after some discussion it was decided that Mike, himself, and/or JP would look into this possibility.

One final partly-related point raised by MWS was whether there was any good reason to continue holding the League Cup competitions. His argument being that the level of interest in them had reached an all-time-low: and this was especially true of the stronger clubs, so the competitions initial objective of providing extra games for the stronger players had ceased to have any relevance. So Mike proposed that these competitions be discontinued next year, and this would give make some extra days available for League matches and thereby help with the fixture list problems. This proposal was duly seconded and then passed.

7. Report of ECF Delegate

In the absence of the ECF delegate (Sean Hewitt), JP mentioned that the only relevant points that Sean had emailed him about, was :-

1. that the plan to change the county teams competitions had not been put into effect; so they would just stay as they had been in previous years

2. as the ECF financial position had been declared to be satisfactory at its AGM, the membership fees would remain the same as for 2012-13.

8. Report from MCCU Delegate

A joint report had been received from the MCCU delegates (Cyril & Julie Johnson) as follows :-

The MCCU AGM takes place about a month after the LRCA AGM; hence the last Union AGM was 11 mths ago. The draft minutes of that meeting may be found on the MCCU website. The Union decided to leave ECF membership schemes to counties/leagues to organize, rather than apply for a Union scheme. However, the Union encouraged counties to consider becoming MOs. That said, it was decided that non-members would be eligible to play in the Union county team competitions. It was felt that to do otherwise risked a reduction in team entries and/or an increase in defaults. The tie-break mechanisms for the county team event were amended so that wins by concession are far less likely to impact on the outcome of titles or qualification for the National stages.

An all email version of the individual correspondence event, to run alongside the mixed email/postal event was mooted. This was because some players had indicated they were unwilling to support an event where some players still insisted on the postal option. This was agreed. However, the proposed event received little support & did not run.

The make up of the Union may change after 2012/13 as Manchester are seeking to join the NCCU. The position of Northamptonshire was queried, they have not attended meeting for several years & little response has been received by the CEO to correspondence. However, the county has not indicated a withdrawal so must still be considered members of the Union. It was later confirmed that the county does indeed still consider itself part of the Union. There was some discussion regarding Oxfordshire, which does not appear to be a member of any Union. The CEO was asked to invite them to join the MCCU. Such an invitation was issued but received no response.

There was some consternation caused by the report of the Junior Director David Levens. This had been circulated less than 24hrs before the meeting. Delegates did not feel that the critical comments regarding junior officers of some member counties was appropriate and voted to reject the report.

The only change brought about by the elections was that Andrew Farthing became the ECF delegate. The situation will be rather different at the forthcoming AGM as the current LRCA delegates will not be standing for re-election to their current Union posts. This will mean that others will be needed to fill the posts of CEO, Meetings Chairman & Events Director. The non-elected post of County teams controller will also need to be filled.

There was some support for reviving the Midlands Open Congress as an event run by a constituent county or a third party. The meeting voted to allow the MCCU to provide a subsidy in the first year and asked the Board to look at this further. Unfortunately, lack of agreement on the way forward, and a combination of illness and work commitments on the part of the CEO mean that matters have not gone forward as far as hoped.

There was a recent teleconference involving Union representatives and the Director of Home Chess. This arose out of the fact that County Team rule changes tabled for the April ECF Council meeting were not discussed as time ran out. The NCCU had made some proposals that would have allowed 12 a side instead of 16, plus a return to 25 point grading bands. The Home Director made various proposals, including 20 a side in the Open & changes to the grading bands. A reduction in the number of sections would have resulted from both sets of proposals. The NCCU did not provide a representative for the phone in so the rationale behind their proposals was not known. The feeling

of the meeting was that perhaps there was 1 section too many, however, each Union had a different view on which section should go. There was no real support for doing anything other than retaining the status quo. It is therefore likely that the Home Chess Director will not seek to table his proposals again at the ECF AGM. It will be for the NCCU to decide whether to do the same.

It is not yet clear what proposals will be before the Union AGM as the deadline for these has not yet passed. The CEO is however giving consideration to making a proposal for a change in the ECF county rules. The rules have for some time allowed for fines for matches and boards not played in the Nationals stages, however these have historically only been applied where a captain has either failed to give proper notice to his opposite number, or has given less than 48hrs notice of conceding a match. The rule was intended to be used with discretion by the controller. The current controller has decided to apply the fines in all cases, irrespective of the circumstances. The ECF quarterfinal matches played 18/19th May were held the same weekend as a swathe of UK Chess Challenge regional finals, something that was not evident from the ECF chess calendar & affected the availability of a number of juniors and their parents. A return to a more a pragmatic use of the rule as it stands may be sought, or a change in the wording to limit the situations in which a fine is imposed may be proposed.

9. Report from Grading Officer

There was no written report from Stewart Gordon, and in his absence comments were invited by JTB about Stewart's competence in the role, following some scepticism at the 2012 AGM when Stewart was given the job, despite being absent then too. Fortunately there was general agreement that Stewart had managed the job perfectly well, and as there had not been any indication that he did not wish to continue, the assumption was made that he would do so.

10. Election Of Officers

Before reaching the stage of having a proposal for this item, there was a short discussion on the following points :-

1. Whether Cyril and Julie Johnson had actually made their intentions clear regarding their roles as MCCU Reps. Ultimately it was decided that if there were sufficient volunteers to occupy the 4 positions on the MCCU, and they were people who would probably attend any meetings (particularly the LRCA AGM), then these people should stand for the positions. JP then added the rider that although he was prepared to stand, he would not displace Julie if she wished to continue.
2. JP identified the need for him to provide Stewart Gordon and Mike Fraser with the latest ECF-MO membership list before the new season, because of the addition of several new players.
3. The new arrangements re the management of the junior chess ought to be reflected in composition of the Policy Committee. (as a P.S. by JTB; this suggests that the Constitution will presumably need updating)

JP then proposed that having taken the above points into account, the election of the officers can be made en bloc. This motion was seconded by PJC and then passed unanimously: which means that the elected officers for the coming year are :-

LRCA Policy Committee		
Position	Appointed	Previous incumbent
Chairman	John Pattinson	John Pattinson
General Secretary	Jim Bingham	Jim Bingham

Treasurer	Bob Collins	Bob Collins
League Secretary	Mike Salisbury	Mike Salisbury
LRCA Policy Committee (contd.)		
Position	Appointed	Previous incumbent
<u>Committee Chairmen</u>		
Congress	Andy Morley	Andy Morley
League	Mike Thornton	Mike Thornton
County teams	Graham Booley	Graham Booley
Publicity	vacant	vacant
Junior Chess Directors :-		
- Clubs (& Chairman)	John Mitchell	John Mitchell
- Schools	Paul Findley	N/A
- County	Paul Colburn	N/A
Delegates and other officers		
MCCU delegates	Graham Booley; John Mitchell; Sean Hewitt ; John Pattinson	Julie Johnson, Cyril Johnson; Sean Hewitt
ECF delegate	Sean Hewitt	Sean Hewitt
<u>County Teams</u>		
Chairman	Graham Booley	Graham Booley
Delegates	Pete Harrison & David Reynolds ?	Pete Harrison & David Reynolds
Grading Officer	Stewart Gordon	Stewart Gordon
Webmasters	Mike Salisbury - information content Mike Fraser - results	Mike Salisbury - information content Mike Fraser - results
Independent Auditor	Martin Burrows	Martin Burrows

11. Subscriptions for 2012-2013

In the light of our current healthy financial situation Bob Collins proposed that all the fees should be kept as they are. So they will be follows :-

League - Top Divs : 5 player teams : £14.00 per team

League - Lower Divs : 4 player teams : £11.20 per team

Summer Cup Competitions : £6 per team

This proposal was passed unanimously.

12. Any Other Business

Firstly the proposal that was formulated at the Junior Chess meeting on May7th, was discussed: and although some problems were raised about the practicalities of supporting junior chess at some of the clubs, there was general approval of the idea. As a result the proposal for clubs to be encouraged to nominate a representative to be their point of contact for junior players in their area, was passed.

JM then said that he would circulate all the club secretaries about this development, and PF indicated his willingness to give the club-designated contacts with any advice they might need. Following on from the latter GB queried what actions were planned for the June 29th event in order to maximise the opportunity

for advancing the cause of junior chess in Leics. JP said he would make available to those attending the Indian Summer event, a list of all the LRCA Clubs and useful contacts.

In a discussion about the naming of cups the fact that the League Cup competitions are to be discontinued meant that the two cups would no longer be required, and could, for example, be reallocated for possible use in junior events. However, it was felt that this should not impact on the decision taken at an earlier AGM to include a reference to George Winterton on the Minor League Cup; so this intention ought still to be put into effect. It was also decided that these various responsibilities associated with the now-redundant cups would lie with the LMC.

As a result of a comment made about some frustrations relating to the league fixtures a discussion took place about how matters might be improved, and this was brought to a conclusion when MWS and JP said they would investigate whether any computer software might be available for generating fixture lists automatically.

13. Date of Next Meeting

As there was a feeling that holding this year's AGM just before the May bank holiday had probably adversely affected the attendance, there was a suggestion that next year's AGM this should be scheduled to avoid this problem. However, the counter view was also expressed that some people are likely to be away when the schools are closed during the bank holiday.

So it was ultimately decided that the AGM should be held on a suitable day in late May 2014 (t.b.c. nearer the time); with the above points being taken into consideration.