

AGM of Oxfordshire Chess Association

Thursday 19 September 2019 at 7.30pm

Rose Hill Methodist Church, Oxford

Present: Ian Bush (Cumnor, Chair), Roger Thetford (Didcot), Gerard O'Reilly (Cowley), Mike Truran (Witney), Kevin Henbest (Oxford University), David Robson (Cowley), Sara Sengenberger (Cowley), John Place (MCS/Blackbirds), Neil Staples (Banbury), Steve Bennett (Cumnor), Will Burt (Cowley), Phil Hayward (Oxford City), Mike Handley (Cowley), Lawrence Barber (Abingdon School)

Abbreviations: OCA = Oxfordshire Chess Association, ECF = English Chess Federation, FWS = Frank Wood Shield, EGM = Extraordinary General Meeting

1. Apologies for Absence: Rod Langham (Oxford City), George Spalding (Wantage), Steve Rumbsy (Banbury), Simon King (Oxford City)

2/3. Minutes of 2018 AGM and Matters Arising: approved by the meeting with no matters arising.

4. Chairman's Report (Ian Bush)

George Spalding was given an ECF President's Award following his retirement after many years holding all the OCA secretarial roles. Indeed some proposals before the meeting tonight are a direct result of these roles now being taken by more than one person. John Place has been appointed to the honorary role of President and presented the trophies at the recent Cowley Blitz.

Thanks are due to our Treasurer Simon King for successfully chasing a large backlog of ECF game fees, with thanks also to the treasurer of the Oxford University club Alex Hardwick for collecting many of these from his members. We also welcome Lawrence Barber to the association, who is taking over from Andrew English at the Abingdon School club.

This season we are losing a club (MCS/Blackbirds) and a team (Didcot 4) which continues a trend of falling numbers in local league chess.

5. Secretary's Report (Roger Thetford)

This has been posted on the OCA website:

http://www.oxfordfusion.com/oca/documents/2019_AGM_Secretary.pdf

There have been no disputes, fewer defaults but some penalties for ineligible players in both league and FWS, despite a reminder to captains about relevant rules at the start of the season.

6. Treasurer's Report (Simon King)

This report and the accounts have been posted on the OCA website:

http://www.oxfordfusion.com/oca/documents/2019_AGM_Treasurer.pdf

http://www.oxfordfusion.com/oca/documents/2018-19_Accounts.pdf

Simon is on holiday so the Chair outlined the report: success in chasing most outstanding debts means we have a surplus. There have been a few extra expenses and some OCA affiliation and ECF game fees are still owing. The debt of £42 from defunct club Cowley Workers from last season is still outstanding and the meeting agreed that we should simply write off this small amount.

It had been decided not to fund a trophy for the Ray Starkie memorial 'best game' award but Gerard O'Reilly said Cowley was willing to buy one and engrave this year's winner. This proposal was accepted.

A typo in the accounts was noted: the OCA affiliation fees owed by the University club are for the last three years, rather than two as stated.

Mike Truran suggested we either reduce affiliation fees or find some purpose for our excess capital. Ian Bush was actioned to consider possible schemes, particularly ones that might halt the decline in league chess Ian noted in his report as Chair.

7. Other Officers' Reports (Various)

The county Open and U150 Teams' reports were presented at the May Committee meeting. Junior chess representative Andrew Varney is currently unwell but will produce report in due course. John Place reported that Andrew says junior chess is prospering. Among numerous successes the Under-11 squad came third nationally. The meeting gave its best wishes for Andrew's speedy recovery.

ECF Representative Mike Truran reported that the move to monthly gradings continues apace and may go live in the 2020/21 season. Grading officers do not have to report monthly but systems should make that straightforward. Our webmaster Roger Thetford noted that our website can produce the grading files required for monthly submission, but would need developing to extract grades monthly and display them appropriately. Reforms to game fees to encourage junior events are also planned.

The 2019 ECF Yearbook is freely available online. An online environment for members to play competitive graded games is being

piloted and may be rolled out soon. Some form of inter-city contest is planned as part of this. Mike also reminded us that ECF members have access to discounts at Chess & Bridge and Chess Direct.

Gerard O'Reilly reported that the County Individual competition was won by Marcus Harvey with Phil Hayward the runner-up.

8. Election of Officers for 2019/20

Sara Sengenberger stood for the position of Treasurer in place of Simon King. The captains of the county teams, elected at the May Committee meeting, are Oxford City's Rod Langham (Open) and Banbury's Steve Rumsby (U150). All other officers were willing to stand again this year. There were no other candidates and the meeting unanimously elected the following:

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| Chair: | Ian Bush (Cumnor) |
| Vice-Chair: | Kevin Henbest (University) |
| Secretary: | Roger Thetford (Didcot) |
| Treasurer: | Sara Sengenberger (Cowley) |
| Minutes Secretary: | Will Burt (Cowley) |
| Fixtures Secretary: | Asif Hameed (Cowley) |
| Grading Officer: | Peter Hemmings (Wantage) |
| ECF Representative: | Mike Truran (Witney) |
| Junior Liaison Officer: | Andrew Varney (Cumnor) |
| Webmaster: | Roger Thetford (Didcot) |
| County Individual Championship Organiser: | Gerard O'Reilly (Cowley) |
| University Representative: | Kevin Henbest (University) |

9. Treasurer's Recommendations for 2019/20

These were included in item 6, the Treasurer's Report.

10. Formation of the League for 2019/20

The recent EGM decided Witney 2 may drop to Division II instead of relegating Didcot 1. Didcot have also decided they need to drop one team and wish to retain their Division IV team to help provide entry level chess. Sara Sengenberger supported this, noting the importance of a similar 'development' team at Cowley. This can be achieved by relegating Didcot 3 from Division III alongside bottom placed Cumnor 2.

The Chair explained that, when planning this, he had forgotten that MCS/Blackbirds were also dropping out of the local league. This gives an 8/8/6/7 structure and it is planned to relegate two teams from Division II next year to give an 8/7/7/7 structure. The meeting agreed to this plan.

There was some mention of the possibility of using a Swiss system in Division IV, possibly with smaller teams. This could be discussed further at the May Committee meeting next year.

11. Proposals for Changes to OCA Constitution and Rules

The Chair outlined some of the reasons for the long list of proposals, which have been posted on the OCA website here:

http://www.oxfordfusion.com/oca/documents/2019_AGM_proposals_issue2.pdf

ECF compliance issues

These are proposals 11 and 12 but were dealt with first, as they are required for local games to be ECF-graded. Both were passed without objection.

The first specifies the procedure we use for quick-play finishes and the second states that our match arrangements take account of ECF guidelines on the treatment of disabled players.

The meeting discussed whether we should add in an obligation for clubs to give notice of their disabled players' needs but this was deemed unnecessary. The Secretary will contact clubs to encourage communication on these issues between clubs and team captains and also the inclusion of relevant information about venues on the OCA website.

1. Minor modifications to the Constitution and Rules

The May Committee meeting recognised that there were a number of small errors and inconsistencies in the OCA Constitution and Rules. A subcommittee (Ian Bush, Roger Thetford, Gerard O'Reilly) has proposed changes to clarify issues, including which post the word 'secretary' refers to. These have been available for inspection for some time and were adopted unanimously.

2. Timing of proposals to the AGM

This relaxes to 24 August the deadline for these to reach the Secretary, who will then circulate them by the end of that month. This was approved unanimously.

3. Officers

This brings titles and responsibilities in line with current practice, abolishing the posts of Auditor and Press Officer and adding in the currently missing Fixtures Secretary and the duties of that role. The Treasurer is to present accounts to the Chair who will sign them off—it was noted that this is a legally sufficient auditing procedure.

A minor amendment (proposed by Mike Truran and seconded by Phil Hayward) was made to say that the fixtures list should be published “by no later than 30 September” and the proposal was passed unanimously.

4. Determining the league structure

To give more time to finalise fixtures the main responsibility for this is to be moved to the May Committee meeting, with the AGM able to make late changes as required. It was noted that this requires clubs to give best estimates of how many teams they can run in advance of the May meeting —nonetheless it was agreed that this new approach was reasonable and there were no objections to the proposal. [Note: because paragraph 1.1 of the Constitution was amended at the recent EGM this proposal will have to be merged with that revised wording.]

5. Tie-breaks

Ian Bush was asked by the May Committee meeting to develop a new system for these. The proposal changes the priority to overall game point difference, fewest defaults then drawing lots. The meeting recommended, in order to avoid drawing lots, including extra layers in the following order of priority: matches won, individual games won, match points between the tied teams, game-point difference in matches between the tied teams, lowest number of defaulted games.

Lowest average rating was also considered but rejected as too complex. The rule should be presented as a bulleted list and Ian Bush was actioned to produce appropriate wording to implement this.

6. Board order

[Note: this proposal refers to rules 7.9 and 7.10 but the addition of an ECF compliance rule as 7.6 means that the final version agreed will appear in the Rules as 7.10 and 7.11.]

Gerard O’Reilly outlined his proposal which will bar a player rated more than ten points above another player from playing on a lower board than that other player. He pointed out that he had intended to include the example from the FWS rule 9.8.1 in his 7.9, and 7.9.1 in his proposal refers to such an example. The meeting agreed the proposal in general with some amendments to clarify and correct detail as outlined below.

The term “Fide Elo rating” is imprecise and should be replaced in 7.9.1 with “FIDE or (failing that) national rating” and “FIDE or national rating” in 7.9.2. In 7.9.1 the phrase “may be converted” should be strengthened to “is to be converted”. The typo at the start of 7.9.3 “For players with without ...” needs correcting. It was suggested 7.9.4 may be redundant but the meeting felt it did no harm. At the start of 7.9.5 “If a listed member of a team at the start of a match ...” should be redrafted to

“If a listed team member ...”.

In 7.9.5 the meeting felt that permission from the opposing captain to use an ineligible replacement was only necessary if their rating was too high, so “by having too high a grading” should be inserted after the words “board-order rule”. Such arrangements should simply be noted rather than informing the League Secretary. Thus in place of “should notify the League Secretary of this agreement after the match” the phrase “are to make a note of this agreement when entering the result on the website” should be inserted.

This rule also requires the updating of 7.10 so that gradings appear on team lists exchanged at the start of a match. The meeting clarified and simplified the proposal. The sentence “These lists will give not only the names of the players” was amended to “These lists will give the names and gradings of the players”. The remainder of the rule was shortened by referring to the revised rule 7.9 as follows: “For players without an A–E ECF grading, their actual or estimated grade should be given in accordance with Rules 7.9.1 to 7.9.3.”

With these amendments the proposal was passed unanimously.

7. Frank Wood Shield – start date

The Chair explained that the current new year start has led to an unsatisfactorily late finish. The meeting noted that the December start may fall outside Oxford University’s term so “in December” was amended to “before the end of the University Michaelmas Term”. With this change the proposal was passed and it was noted arrangements for the draw (currently at the Cowley Christmas Blitz) will need to be revised.

8. Ineligible players

Gerard O’Reilly explained that this amends the penalties and procedures for games involving ineligible players, allowing a technically ineligible replacement to give someone a game, without the usual match point penalty for fielding an ineligible player. Mike Truran remarked that he considered the match point penalty draconian, but there is no proposal on the table at this AGM to change this penalty.

The meeting suggested that, in the first paragraph of this rule, it would make more sense to refer to “after the game has started” rather than “after the game has finished”. Also, in the second paragraph the phrase “at the start of a match” is redundant. To avoid games provided for by this rule affecting eligibility for other matches the sentence “Such a game shall not count as a league game” should be added. With these changes the proposal was accepted without objections.

9. Digital clocks

This proposal is to mandate the use of digital clocks where enough are available for every board in a match and was passed unanimously.

10. Time limits

Gerard O'Reilly outlined the advantages of using an incremental time limit noting that the ECF or FIDE may, in due course, mandate their use. The proposal applies only to Division I and, as clubs appear to have enough digital clocks, discussion centred around the proposed time limit of 75 minutes plus 10 seconds increment per move from move 1.

There was considerable opinion in favour of changing this to 80 minutes plus 10 seconds per move from move 1. Neil Staples noted the mostly successful adoption of this time limit in the Leamington League. There were also reports of satisfactory trials of this time limit in Berkshire and Birmingham.

There was some discussion of transport problems caused by the change but it was felt these occasional difficulties could be sorted out. Two votes were held, the first to agree to incremental time limits in Division I, which was passed unanimously. The second was to decide whether to adopt 75 or 80 minutes as the main time limit and the majority supported the 80 minutes option.

Ian Bush was actioned to ensure updates to the guidance for captains in the light of this decision. There was also some discussion as whether more matches, currently played at 75 minutes for all moves, could be played with 90 minutes, although this would require a proposal to a subsequent general meeting.

12. Any Other Business

There were no items of further business and the meeting closed at 10.03pm.

Will Burt (Minutes Secretary)

19 October 2019, revised 20 & 26 October 2019