

Oxfordshire Chess Association Committee Meeting

7.30pm, Thursday 16 May 2019

Rose Hill Methodist Church, Oxford

Present: Ian Bush (Chair), Roger Thetford (Secretary/Webmaster), Will Burt (Minutes Secretary), Gerard O'Reilly (County Individual Competition Organiser), Steve Rumsby (U150 Team Captain), Rod Langham (Open Team Captain), Mike Truran (ECF Representative), Simon King (Treasurer), Asif Hameed (Fixtures Secretary), Kevin Henbest (University Representative)

1. Apologies for Absence: Peter Hemmings, Matt Rose

2. Minutes of 2018 Committee Meeting: Approved

3. Fixtures List

This discussion was brought forward as Asif has to leave early. Banbury are changing venue and their club night will move to Thursday. Their Leamington League fixtures are not yet known but it is actually easier to plan the Oxfordshire ones first. Our fixtures list is now produced by running an algorithm based on work by Cowley's David Robson.

Other issues discussed: difficult to get a good alternation of home/away fixtures while avoiding adjacent teams from one club playing on the same day; Frank Wood Shield (FWS) scheduling, especially as the committee may recommend the start of the FWS be moved forward. There was a brief discussion of a suggestion that round one of the FWS take place as a single event at a large enough venue. Also could this meeting decide the composition of the league? It would help with the fixtures list but would require a change to the constitution. Rod Langham may bring forward such a proposal to the AGM.

4. County Matters

Both captains reported briefly on the season. The Open team won the trophy this season while the U150 team fared less well, having narrowly lost in two of their matches. Full reports have been posted on the OCA website. The Chair thanked Rod Langham and Steve Rumsby for captaining these teams.

5. League Matters

The Secretary circulated his report, noting that there had been no disputes and fewer defaults than the previous year (which had been particularly bad). There were some penalties for ineligible players—there was discussion as to whether the loss of a match point is unduly harsh. Mike Truran may bring a proposal to alter this to the AGM.

There were several requests for postponements of matches last season and, where both captains agreed, the Secretary consented to these. The question

of whether captains could also agree to allow technically ineligible players was mooted—such a proposal would need to go to the AGM.

6. ECF Issues

ECF representative Mike Truran reported that the federation is still waiting on feedback over its proposal for a monthly grading list. The main issue for our association is the timing of any change and how we handle this in our match rules, which mention players' gradings in several places. Also this would need to be accommodated in rules regarding board order.

7. Committee Selections for 2019/20

Only the appointing of Chiltern League captains is discussed at this meeting. The current captains are willing to continue and, since there are no other candidates, they were reappointed with the committee's thanks. There was also some discussion about the future of county level chess.

8. Venue/Date for AGM

This is provisionally scheduled for the evening of Thursday 19 September at the Cowley club's venue Rose Hill Methodist Church.

9. Possible Rule Changes

A general discussion only as formal proposals, to be received by 31 July, will be considered at the AGM.

Digital clocks and incremental time limits: The issues of their use and the precise timings/increments should be kept separate. The Chiltern League has a rule saying digital clocks are to be used if available and we could adopt a similar rule rather than forcing use—many clubs have such equipment but some (e.g. Cumnor) do not. Loan of Kidlington tournament equipment may be feasible.

The issue of introducing incremental time limits was discussed: should it be trialled in just one or two divisions? If so it should be used throughout the selected division(s). Could it be encouraged in all competitions, including FWS, but only mandatory in the top division? Mike Truran and Gerard O'Reilly to formulate proposals to go to the AGM.

Administration of ECF membership: Once a non-member has played four games fees are due if they do not join the ECF, leading to a substantial administrative burden on the OCA treasurer. There was discussion of who should have the job of persuading such players to take out membership—should it be team captains? Or club treasurers? Also discussed was the best way to ascertain if a player is an ECF member.

Could we introduce penalties if non-ECF members play four or more games? There was some support for this—Simon King to draft a proposal for the AGM.

Rules for tie-breaks and board order: At present rules only apply to separating two teams, which could be generalised to several teams, considering all the matches between tied teams as a sort of mini-league. Currently game points take precedence over match points and it appears logical to reverse this. Ian Bush will draft a suitable proposal for the AGM. It was decided not to push forward with rules for board order as this is dependent on likely forthcoming changes to the ECF grading system.

10. Any Other Business

Ray Starkie memorial award: This is for the best game in OCA events and has been awarded to Will Burt. The meeting made no plans for any prize, except for the honour of the award and the game being posted on the OCA website.

Earlier start to the Frank Wood Shield: The committee recommended this with a view to a December start. It was noted that the FWS eligibility rules require contestants to have played at least two league games, a criterion which will therefore be slightly harder to fulfil, but the committee did not consider this a significant difficulty.

Various honours: The Chair has drafted a letter to recommend an ECF President's award for George Spalding for his long service to chess in Oxfordshire. The committee gave their approval. The honorary position of OCA President is vacant and in the gift of this committee. It appointed John Place, in acknowledgement of his many years encouraging and supporting chess at Magdalen College School.

ECF rules: Some OCA rules are not in alignment with these. Gerard O'Reilly, Ian Bush and Roger Thetford were appointed to form a subcommittee to make suitable proposals to the AGM to deal with this. We also need to note which rules may need changing if and when the ECF brings in significant changes to its grading system.

Cowley Summer Blitz: Gerard O'Reilly announced that this popular event will be held on Monday 24 June at its venue in Rose Hill Methodist Church and will be happy to host the presentation of OCA trophies. Simon King remarked that, according to the church's caretaker, there has been an adverse structural report on the building and Gerard will seek clarification of this news.

OCA Treasurer: Simon King is considering standing down and enquired as to who might take over.

The meeting closed at 9.40pm