

Oxfordshire Chess Association AGM

7.30pm on Thursday 12 September 2024

Held at Rose Hill Methodist Church

Present: Nalin Kadodwala (Cumnor, Chair), John Carter (Wantage, Secretary), Will Burt (Cowley, Minutes Secretary), Gerard O'Reilly (Cowley), David Robson (Cowley), Steve Bennett (Cumnor), Paul Bizzell (Didcot, Online Chess Officer), Keith Freshwater (Banbury, County Individual Championship Organiser), Alan Gentry (Witney), Dougal Main (Oxford City), Duncan Reith (Oxford City), Tony Burcham (Bicester, County Captain), Roger Thetford (Webmaster and Fixtures Secretary)

Abbreviations: OCA = Oxfordshire Chess Association, ECF = English Chess Federation, FWS = Frank Wood Shield

1. Apologies: Mike Truran, Peter Hemmings, Sara Sengenberger.

2. Minutes from 2023 AGM: these were approved as the record of last year's AGM.

3(a). Chair's Report (Nalin Kadodwala)

Nalin thanked League Secretary John Carter for the smooth running of the League and FWS and for settling the few minor disputes which arose.

3(b). League Secretary's Report (John Carter)

The winners of the League divisions were respectively: Oxford University 1, Wantage 1 and Watlington. Individual awards were respectively: Connor Clarke (Oxford University 1), Daniel Sparkes (Wantage 1) and Andrew Humphrey (Watlington). Shambavi Hariharan (Oxford City) won the Lester Millin trophy. The Ray Starkie best game trophy should be adjudicated this month by IM Robert Ris, who will also make a YouTube video about the five submitted games.

The few disputes were resolved, without appeal to the OCA Committee. Five starred players (from three clubs) did not play the requisite four games required by Rule 2.3.

The FWS was won, as last year, by Cumnor Six Horsemen of the Apocalypse, but there was a disappointing entry of just seven teams. Cumnor did not receive their trophy last year but it should reach them soon.

3(c). Treasurer's Report/Recommendations (Sara Sengenberger)

Affiliation fees may increase in 2025/26, but are unchanged this year.

3(d). Ratings Officer's Report (Peter Hemmings)

This will be posted on the OCA website in due course.

3(e). Other Officers' Reports

No further reports were presented to this meeting.

4. Notes from the May Committee Meeting

Tony Burcham was elected county captain at the May meeting. He introduced himself, thanking previous captain Nigel Moyse. Tony has contacted known players and club representatives. The Chiltern Cup format is unchanged, our home venue remains Cumnor Old School with home match fees £4/board. The first match is at Buckinghamshire on Saturday 19 October. The time control remains 120 minutes for all moves.

At the May meeting Paul Bizzell offered to run a county second team. Paul briefed the meeting on progress: the format, team size and time control remain to be determined. The rating restriction will probably be U1750, or maybe an average rating cap. Buckinghamshire have not confirmed their participation and Wiltshire may compete instead. Teams will be smaller than in the first team competition, so it is possible that multiple teams can be hosted at a single venue. Paul enquired about the cost of our home venue Cumnor Old School (which is £60).

5. Working Party Consultations and Proposals

John Carter circulated the changes to the Constitution proposed by the Working Party, which are in three areas:

- Since the final League fixture is typically in May, the May Committee meeting to be renamed the End of Season meeting and held within four weeks of the final League fixture.
- Paragraph 2.11 (concerning clubs not sending a representative to an AGM) to be amended so that such clubs can give their position on votes, rather than on how many teams they can field.
- The position of County Individual Championship Organiser to be abolished and the trophy to be determined on the basis of local events including the new OCA event.

Gerard O'Reilly raised issues from the Cowley club. The change to 2.11 removes a final chance to check on the numbers of teams clubs can field, while allowing clubs to give opinions on proposals without exposure to arguments and information presented at the AGM (the latter point also made by Duncan Reith). He noted that the reform of the County Individual trophy would depend on an event which is yet to be scheduled. Meanwhile the next Witney Congress, which takes place in November, has already publicised our current arrangements as the basis for the 2024/25

individual trophy.

John withdrew the second and third parts of the proposal. Gerard pointed out some small typos and possible ambiguities as follows:

- in 2.7 the word “in” should be removed, likewise “by” in 2.8
- the phrase “on the website” will become ambiguous if the proposed sister website for engagement is approved
- the phrase “end of the season” in section 2 is not explicitly connected with the final League fixture (as per the amended 3.2.1)

With the contested proposals dropped, the meeting passed the remaining proposed changes to the Constitution unanimously.

A proposal at the 2021 AGM to update references to “grades” or “gradings” to “ratings” did not get implemented. The meeting unanimously approved updating the Rules to correct this oversight.

The final proposal was to set up a sister website for engagement and running OCA events, for which the May Committee meeting has already approved £200/year funding. Roger Thetford described relevant facilities available on our current site. The meeting passed this proposal unanimously.

6. Proposals Submitted to the League Secretary

The first three proposals had been submitted by Gerard O’Reilly. Gerard withdrew his first proposal. He introduced his second proposal, which aims to clarify the relationship between the End of Season committee meeting and the AGM, particularly regarding formation of the League. This proposal was passed.

Gerard said his third proposal was to improve the wording of Rule 2.4.6, explaining why this was desirable. It was passed by the meeting.

The fourth proposal was presented by John Carter, who said it came from further discussions by the Working Party. It aims to facilitate involvement in decision making, by introducing a much earlier deadline (31 December) for proposals to change the Rules or Constitution. These would then be published on the new engagement website, with significant time for comments and discussions. The Committee would then give their views before the proposals went to the AGM.

Steve Bennett raised the issue of how this might affect proposals required to return the League to four divisions. Gerard O’Reilly gave Cowley’s take: while the current deadline (24 August) leaves limited time before the AGM, nothing prevents earlier submission and circulation of proposals. Also the proposed deadline would mean issues arising from the completed season could not be addressed.

The meeting discussed adopting this proposal but with less stringent time constraints. An initial deadline of 31 March was suggested, with the engagement period running until the End of Season committee

meeting, which could then make further proposals. This amended version of the proposal was passed by the meeting.

All these changes will be updated on the OCA website shortly. [Note: indeed the new versions of these documents were posted on Friday 20 September 2024]

7. Election and Confirmation of Officers for 2024/25

Priscilla Morris continues in the final year of her term as Honorary President. Tony Burcham (County Team Captain) was appointed by the May Committee meeting. The post of Junior Liaison Officer remains vacant, but the OCA will accept the recommendation of the Ojays committee. The new Safeguarding role is to be discussed in item 9 below.

Gerard O'Reilly proposed a vote of thanks to Will Burt (outgoing Minutes Secretary), seconded by Steve Bennett and approved by the meeting. Keith Freshwater confirmed that he was willing to continue as County Individual Championship Organiser. With no contested positions, the following were elected:

Chairman:	Nalin Kadodwala (Cumnor)
Vice-Chairman:	Vacant
League Secretary:	John Carter (Wantage)
Treasurer:	Sara Sengenberger (Cowley)
Ratings Officer:	Peter Hemmings (Wantage)
Fixtures Secretary:	Roger Thetford
Minutes Secretary:	Vacant
Online Chess Officer:	Paul Bizzell (Didcot)
OCA Representative to ECF:	Mike Truran (Witney)
Webmaster:	Roger Thetford
County Individual Championship Organiser:	Keith Freshwater (Banbury)

8. Formation of the League for the 2024/25 Season

The May Committee Meeting recommended a structure with up to three new teams joining in Division III. Two of them will not be joining the League this season, but we welcome back Bicester giving the following structure:

- Division I: Oxford University 1, Oxford City 1, Witney 1, Cowley 1, Banbury 1, Oxford University 2, Cumnor 1, Didcot 1, Wantage 1
- Division II: Oxford City 2, Witney 2, Cowley 2, Cowley 3, Banbury 2, Didcot 2, Abingdon School, Cumnor 2, Watlington
- Division III: Oxford City 3, Oxford City 4, Oxford University 3, Cowley 4, Didcot 3, Witney 3, Wantage 2, Bicester

This was approved unanimously by the meeting.

9. Safeguarding Officer for the OCA

The ECF expects its affiliate county associations to have Safeguarding officers. The OCA is now attempting to recruit such an individual.

10. Summer 2025 OCA Chess Congress/Festival (John Carter)

It is hoped that this will take place for the first time next year, with details to be confirmed in due course.

11. Any Other Business

John Carter mentioned the possibility of altering the administrative responsibilities of the League and Minutes Secretaries—for example to avoid conflict of interest when the League Secretary's club is a party to a dispute.

The meeting closed at 9.40pm

Will Burt (outgoing Minutes Secretary)

Latest updated: 3 October 2024