

Oxfordshire Chess Association
May Committee Meeting
Held at Rose Hill Methodist Church
7.30pm, Wednesday 19 May 2022

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

Present: Nigel Moyse (Chair), James Cole (Secretary), Roger Thetford (Webmaster), Ian Bush (Online Chess Officer), Steve Rumsby (Open Team Captain), Gerard O'Reilly (County Individual Championship Organiser), John Place (President), Kevin Henbest (Vice-chair and University Representative), Will Burt (Minutes Secretary)

1. Apologies for Absence: Sara Sengenberger (Treasurer), Mike Truran (ECF Representative), Andrew Varney (Junior Liaison Officer)

2. Minutes of the May 2021 Committee Meeting: these were accepted as the record of last year's meeting.

3. Secretary's Report and Allocation of Prizes

The Secretary reported on a successful return to over-the-board league chess, albeit with reduced numbers and some Covid-19 related absences. Only one fixture failed to take place at all. He announced the winners of the team and individual trophies, which are also listed on the OCA website. We hope participation will increase but Ian Bush informed the committee that the Bicester club has now been disbanded.

4. County Team Captain's Report on the Chiltern Cup Season

Steve Rumsby has posted his report on the OCA website (under tournament results). He said there was only an open team competition this season, narrowly won by Oxfordshire. The Chair asked thanks be recorded to Steve for his efforts.

5. Election of County Captain: Steve Rumsby was reappointed for the 2022/23 season.

6. University Representative

Kevin Henbest remains in this role. He reported that an Oxford University congress may return but probably not this year. John Place asked if the annual Town v Gown matches might resume. Gerard O'Reilly, who has previously organised the Town team, said he might be able to do so again.

7. Formation of the League 2022/23 and the Frank Wood Shield

Secretary James Cole gave his thoughts about future league structure and there was some discussion. Inquiries were made as to how many teams clubs might field next season. Cowley plans to field three, Banbury hopes to increase to two, Cumnor cannot quite stretch to three, Oxford City expects to run at least three and Ian Bush reported that a team from Oxford Brookes University is also a real possibility.

Secretary James Cole will make a further request for feedback from clubs on participation, as his recent email on the subject did not elicit much response.

The presence of a lower division team in the FWS final suggests the current handicapping system is working but participation remains low. Ian Bush raised the possibility of making this an online competition.

8. Potential Rule Changes for the 2022/23 Season

The committee recommended that the temporary relaxation of starrng and eligibility rules in 2021/22 be continued. This will require a formal proposal to the AGM this September.

There have been some disputes this season arising from captains pointing out illegal moves. The OCA's official guidance asks captains to take on the functions of an arbiter where this is practicable. Gerard O'Reilly, who maintains the official guidance document, asked for further details so that he can update the guidance appropriately. Ian Bush added that there has been some flouting of the board order rules and suggested clubs be reminded of those regulations.

9. Any Other Business

The Secretary noted that ECF representative Mike Truran has passed on documents about more flexible ECF membership and game fees—Gerard O'Reilly suggested these be posted on the OCA website.

Andrew Varney (Junior Liaison Officer) has asked that clubs let him know what facilities they have for junior chess and coaching, as he has regular enquiries about such matters. He has also passed on news of continuing success for Oxfordshire juniors at various levels of competition.

Gerard O'Reilly (County Individual Championship Organiser) said that he hopes that the Kidlington Congress will resume in February 2023 and thus also the County Individual title, which is based on results at Kidlington alongside the Witney Congress.

John Place noted that his three years as honorary President end this year. He also asked if the OCA might make a presentation to Priscilla Morris on her retirement, after many years as an arbiter at events in the county. It was agreed to ask the Treasurer to organise something suitable. John also asked if we could send some small gift/greeting to Kelly Riley

who has had to enter residential care. Will Burt updated the committee on Kelly's situation and will enquire into what would be appropriate.

The Chair asked and obtained permission to give away the county team's now redundant analogue clocks. Gerard O'Reilly reminded the committee that the Kidlington Congress can loan from its large supply of digital clocks. The possibility was raised of having a named OCA committee member contact to facilitate this.

Ian Bush reminded the committee that, shortly before the pandemic, the OCA had discussed using its surplus funds to promote chess in the county. The Chair and Secretary were actioned to agree an amount with the Treasurer, which would be allocated for this purpose. An item to discuss the matter further will be included on the agenda at the AGM.

The meeting closed at 9.04pm

Will Burt (Minutes Secretary)

Tuesday 7 June 2022