

**Oxfordshire Chess Association**  
**May Committee Meeting**  
**Held at Rose Hill Methodist Church**  
**7.30pm, Thursday 23 May 2024**

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

**Present:** Nalin Kadodwala (Chair), John Carter (Secretary), Sara Sengenberger (Treasurer), Will Burt (Minutes Secretary), Roger Thetford (Fixtures Secretary & Webmaster), Peter Hemmings (Grading Officer), Mike Truran (ECF Representative), Ashvin Sivakumar (Oxford University), Priscilla Morris (Honorary President), Nigel Moyse (outgoing County Captain), Tony Burcham (incoming County Captain), Paul Bizzell (new Online Chess Officer)

**1. Apologies for Absence:** Keith Freshwater (County Individual Championship Organiser), Tom O’Gorman (University Representative)

**2. Minutes of the May 2023 Committee Meeting:** these were accepted as the record of last year’s meeting (a small typo will be corrected)

**3. Brief Updates from Chair, League Secretary and Treasurer**

**Nalin Kadodwala (Chair)** said he had followed emails about disputes and proposals and had nothing further to add. He noted the increased junior participation over the past season.

**John Carter (League Secretary)** named the winners of the league divisions and FWS. He has also posted them on the OCA website. In particular, Wantage 1 edged Oxford City 2 to win Division II on the tiebreaker of most matches won, while newcomers Watlington won Division III. The season ran fairly smoothly. A few disputes were handled, with none of the resulting decisions appealed. Some questions were raised regarding the new ECF P-category ratings.

Roger Thetford remarked that it was disappointing that Magdalen College School could not play last season. They have been invited to consider entering a team next season (for other potential teams, see item five below).

**Sara Sengenberger (Treasurer)** said our situation has not significantly changed this year and proposed affiliation fees remain £10/team. While £1,800 allocated for development remains unspent, she recently received a request from Wantage for £60 to increase prize levels for its junior

competitions. Sara has suggested they apply for a larger sum, if they can find a use for it in this important work. This could be approved at our AGM. Peter Hemmings briefly outlined his club's extensive programme for juniors.

The meeting discussed how to expedite such disbursements. It was agreed that a subcommittee (Chair, Secretary and Treasurer) could authorise amounts up to £50. The committee (via email) could authorise up to £250, with larger sums requiring approval at a general meeting.

John Carter said there was an opportunity for the OCA to obtain high quality DGT clocks via an ECF promotion. He wants to use £1,200 of the development funds for this. This was discussed further under Any Other Business (item eight below).

#### **4. County Captain for the 2024/25 Season**

Outgoing captain Nigel Moyses handed around a short report on the last two seasons, saying that he felt his main contribution was to grow the squad of players over this time. Nigel has handed a surplus £84 (match fees less venue costs) to Tony Burcham. John Carter thanked Nigel and the meeting approved Tony as captain. There is currently no Chiltern League U1700 competition but Paul Bizzell expressed willingness to captain such a team.

Grading Officer Peter Hemmings mentioned the competitions for which he has submitted results (including the Chiltern Cup) as per his report on the OCA website. He added that, although our Constitution says that he should submit the Kidlington Congress results, the congress has submitted its own results for many years.

At this juncture, the meeting also confirmed the appointment of Paul Bizzell to the vacant position of Online Chess Officer.

#### **5. 2024/25 Season**

John Carter reported that there may be three extra teams to accommodate in the league: Bicester returning with a single team, a workplace based team called Tubney Woods and a possible third Wantage team. John mentioned that his recent survey (discussed in item seven below) revealed that, in general, local players want more league chess. Thus it makes sense to keep a three division structure.

Wantage 1 won promotion to Division I and we need an extra team. John proposed either also promoting Oxford City 2 or not relegating Didcot 1, who were last in Division I. By seven votes to three, the meeting opted to retain Didcot 1 in the top division.

For Division II, as well as the promotion of Division III winners Watlington, John proposed not relegating bottom placed Cumnor 2. The three new teams would then be added to Division III. This was agreed by

the meeting, resulting in a 9/9/10 formation of the league as follows:

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

There was some discussion of other ways of running Division III, but it was noted such changes would require approval at a general meeting. Roger Thetford (Fixtures Secretary) asked John to find out when the home match nights would be for the new teams. In addition there was some discussion of how we might reinvigorate the FWS, which has seen low levels of participation recently.

## **6. Safeguarding Officers for OCA**

John Carter has already circulated correspondence with the ECF, who had asked about our Safeguarding arrangements. They expect that we would have two such officers. John mentioned that Andrew Varney plans to speak to three possible candidates soon. Our constitution would need updating to include these new roles.

## **7. Working Party, Survey and Websites**

### Working Party

This consists of John Carter and Nalin Kadodwala and was established at our last AGM. It has circulated proposals for minor changes to our constitution:

- Amending rules for this committee meeting, so that it will now take place within four weeks of the final fixture of the season.
- Changing item 2.11 to allow clubs who cannot send a representative to the AGM to register voting intentions
- Removing the role of County Individual Championship Organiser

In discussion, it was noted that the revised 2.11 is about allowing proxy voting at an AGM. It is anticipated that the County Individual Championship will be decided along similar lines to currently, including the proposed OCA tournament alongside the Witney and Kidlington congresses. Also noted was that we should change Grading Officer to Ratings Officer and (as noted above in item four) remove the reference to submitting results from the Kidlington congress. The new Safeguarding roles, discussed above in item six above, also need to be added to our constitution.

### Survey undertaken between March and May 2024

John Carter briefly described the findings of his survey. He said there was considerable interest in the proposed OCA tournaments in 2025 and 2026. As noted in item five above, most respondents were keen to have more league games each season. Also mentioned was the possibility of having an OCA newsletter.

### Websites

John Carter recommended that we pay Roger Thetford for allowing the OCA to use his [oxfordfusion.com](http://oxfordfusion.com) platform. Roger confirmed that, at the rates he currently charges, the cost to the OCA would be about £75/year. John also raised maintaining a separate website for the proposed OCA tournament, suggesting expenditure of £200/year—possibly a computer science student, looking for experience writing websites, could be attracted. The meeting approved these levels of funding for websites.

## **8. Any Other Business**

Mike Truran asked what people thought about the ECF newsletter ‘Chess Moves’—feedback was generally positive.

As noted in item three above, John Carter wants to spend £1,200 of development funds on DGT clocks for the OCA, which would give the county team a set. We could also rent clocks to new clubs. The special offer deadline is 21 June 2024, so this cannot wait until a general meeting. Mike Truran proposed that we recommend this expenditure and circulate the plan to clubs to ask if they are happy with this. The meeting endorsed this approach.

Paul Bizzell, our new Online Chess Officer explained that he was already running two local teams on [chess.com](http://chess.com) ... one in a county competition and also an Oxford team in a World City league. He suggested updating the role in our constitution to reflect this. John Carter asked Paul to let him know in detail what he thinks the job description should say.

Will Burt reminded the meeting about the Cowley Summer Blitz. Finally, as the date of our AGM had not been discussed, the meeting agreed that this would take place during the week Monday 9 to Friday 13 September, with further details to be confirmed.

The meeting closed at 9.45pm.

Will Burt (Minutes Secretary)

7 July 2024