

ESSEX CHESS ASSOCIATION

Founded 1898

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD ON 26 JUNE 2012 IN THE RODING ROOM AT WANSTEAD HOUSE, STARTING AT 7.30 P.M.

Present: Bryan Gaze (Chair), John Chapman, Alistair Clark, John Ellis, Dave Hawkins, Ian Hunnable, David Millward, Fin O'Regan, Jef Page, Joe Rosenberg, David Smith, Ivor Smith and Gavin Strachan.

1. Apologies for absence

Steve Abbott, Tom Barton, Malcolm Crane, Aiden Corrish, Ron Franklin, Daniel Hardy-Wallace, Peter Laundy, Arnold Lutton, John Philpott, Steve Wedlock.

2. Minutes of the AGM held on 28 June 2011

These were agreed as a true record and duly accepted.

3. Matters arising from minutes

None

4. Officers' reports

President

Ivor Smith reported that as he was the Captain of Writtle Chess Club as well as the President of the ECA the traditional opening match of the 2011/2012 season was designated "Champions (Writtle) vs The Rest". Ivor thanked Steve Abbott for acting as Captain of "The Rest", and the result was 6-6.

As Writtle won the league title again in 2011/2012, it seems likely that the same will apply this year.

Chairman

Bryan Gaze reported that although he is the ECF/BCF delegate he did not attend any meetings in the year, although John Philpott did. The ECF website provided discussion papers however the only one of significance was the ECF funding which would be later dealt with by Joe Rosenberg.

The outcome of the GPC meeting of 22 May 2012 provided two proposals for the coming season: these are,

- a) Two teams from same club in same division where teams play each other twice per season – to play each other once before playing any other club; and to play the second time before playing other clubs a second time.
- b) Mobile phones: first ring gives rise to a warning, second ring to loss of game. (*note: the issue of texts was raised; this is covered under other rules that prohibit any form of communication that may be construed as cheating or potentially cheating*).

Bryan gave thanks to John Philpott, outgoing General Secretary for doing an excellent job during recent years. Bryan stated that he would be supporting the nomination of John Chapman to Gen. Sec and Steve Wedlock to Asst. Gen Sec under item 6 in the agenda.

General Secretary

In John Philpott's absence, John Chapman (Assistant General Secretary) read out the General Secretary's report:

This is my final report as General Secretary, as I am not seeking re-election to a post that I had only intended to take on temporarily in the first place. I am delighted that John Chapman, who the Executive recently appointed to the vacant position of Assistant General Secretary, is willing to take on this position, and that Steve Wedlock is standing for Assistant General Secretary: apart from the excellent individual qualities that Steve and John will bring to their roles if elected, this will strengthen the links at Officer level between the Association and the Southend & District Chess League. John will helpfully be available to take the minutes of the AGM, which I will have to miss myself as I am currently on holiday in California.

There has been no sign of a revival of the Congress following the late cancellation of the 2011 event. With the North Essex Congress no longer running, it is important that the Southend Easter Congress continues, as this now represents the sole standard play congress within the County.

It remains a source of satisfaction that the County enters teams in all six divisions of the County Championship. In the unfinished business from last year, the U100s retained the title that had been won at the first time of asking in 2010 by defeating Warwickshire 8½ - 3½ in the final at Moat Community College, Leicester on 2 July (the same score against the same opposition as in 2010). In 2011/12, our teams experienced a reasonable campaign in the SCCU qualifying competitions (of which the U120 and U100 were double round):

Open – finished 4th out of 6 teams on tie break with 3 match points and qualified for the Minor Counties Championship.

U180 – finished 5th out of 5 teams with ½ match point.

U160 – finished 5nd out of 5 teams with 1 match point.

U140 – finished 5th out of 6 teams with 1 match point.

U120 – finished 2rd out of 4 teams on tie break with 5 match points, and qualified for the National Stages.

U100 – finished 1st out of 3 teams with 4 match points and qualified for the National Stages.

The Open team's progress in the Minor Counties event ended at the semi-final stage when, after a narrow 8½ - 7½ victory against Lincolnshire, Leicestershire prevailed by 9 – 7: boards 3 to 16 were all drawn, but GM Mark Hebden and rising talent Brandon Clarke proved too strong on boards 1 and 2. However, the U120 team (which defeated Staffordshire Terriers 7½ - 4½ and Warwickshire 8 – 4) and the U100 team (which won by default against Warwickshire and Yorkshire) have both qualified for the final on 7 July, where the opposition will be provided by Hertfordshire and Kent respectively.

With the Open final being Middlesex v Sussex, the issue of central venues for Finals day is likely to be debated at the SCCU AGM on 14 July. If anybody has strong views on the subject, please let me know as I will be one of the Association's representatives at this meeting.

The ECF Counties Team Rapid play event was held at Wanstead House in September. 2011 Two teams were entered, and not only did the first team retain its title, but the second team won the handicap event. However, the SCCU U185 and U135 titles were both relinquished in what turned out to be head to head matches rather than jamborees in April 2012.

The 2010/11 County & District Correspondence Chess Championships turned out well, with the Ward-Higgs team finishing an honourable joint second on 15/22, a point behind defending champions Sussex, and the Sinclair team retaining its title. Unfortunately the 2011/12 event failed to get off the ground as a result of proving one task too many for the controller (yours truly), and the competition will be under new management for next season.

There was good Essex representation at the British Championships in Sheffield in July/August 2011, with 17 competitors including two in the Championship itself (Richard Pert, and George O'Toole). Pride of place goes to Aditya Verma who won the U8 championship, while Ivan Myall finished 2nd in the Seniors event.

One special item on the agenda for the AGM is consideration of the report by the funding sub-committee which was appointed by the GPC, following the recommendation by the meeting that ECF membership should be mandatory for participation in ECA activities. The sub-committee has come up with a series of proposals that will give effect to this, but with some suggested concessions in respect of individuals playing three or fewer games. I commend this report to the meeting.

Assistant General Secretary

John Chapman had nothing to report, having been in the position for one month only.

Treasurer

Joe Rosenberg reported that the accounts for the year ended 30th April 2012 show an overall deficit of £306 after the deduction of £75 for depreciation on our digital chess clocks. This compares with a deficit of £31 the previous year.

This deficit was largely due to two factors; the loss of the £200 deposit in respect of the cancelled 2011 congress in the Hornchurch area, and an unbudgeted contribution of £180 to the Essex Junior Chess Association. However, this was mitigated by an increase of approximately £100 in donations, thanks largely to certain Hon. Life Members, and, although for the wrong reasons, the cancellation of the inter-county correspondence tournaments resulting in no expenditure in this area.

In spite of this deficit, the Association's finances remain in a healthy state with net assets of £2,147. This is as a result of surpluses made in previous years.

It has been my normal practice to include in my report the proposed rates for subscriptions and affiliation fees for the coming year. However, as many of you are aware, the ECF has decided to replace the game fee with a membership scheme, and this will have an impact on both the structure and rates of our fees. At the recent GPC meeting a sub-committee was appointed to develop detailed proposals for consideration at the AGM, and full details will be circulated shortly.

Finally, I would like to thank both clubs and individuals for settling their accounts promptly and the officers of the Association for submitting details of their income and expenditure in good time to enable me to prepare these accounts.

The full accounts with notes are available elsewhere.

Acceptance of the accounts was proposed by David Millward and seconded by David Smith.

Match Captain

Ivor Smith reported that In September 2011 Essex entered two teams of 12 for the ECF Counties Rapid play, played over 4 four rounds. This event, held at Wanstead House, was poorly supported with just two other teams, Middlesex and Surrey, taking part. However we did extremely well, retaining the title that

we had won in 2010 and on this occasion our second team also did well, taking the Handicap prize. There were some excellent individual performances, notably David Haydon who won all four games on board 1. Unfortunately this was David's only appearance for Essex during the season. He is not alone, particularly amongst younger players, in shunning standard play events that are not FIDE rated.

Our first match in the Open Championship, away to Sussex, was most disappointing. With a weakened team we were well beaten. We had a much stronger team for our home match against Hertfordshire and we secured a very convincing win. We then travelled the short distance to Dartford and despite being outgraded secured an important win against Kent. However, any hopes of finishing in the top three were dashed when we lost at home to Middlesex on a day when several of our leading players were not available. We finished the season with a win at home against a below strength Surrey team. Surrey had already taken the title but are easily capable of fielding teams with an average grade of over 200, at least 10 points more than Essex can possibly hope to field.

Finishing equal second on match points against teams with far more 180+ players available than we have was nevertheless an excellent performance, our best for several years. Fourth place on tiebreak meant that we qualified for the Minor Counties event (where teams are required have an average grade of less than 180).

Our decision to play in Minor Counties event for the very first time was possible because our Under 180s had failed to qualify themselves after many successful years.

The match against Lincolnshire (a team that we have never played before) was won by the narrowest of margins but we lost 9-7 in the semi final against a very impressive Leicestershire team with Grandmaster Mark Hebden on board 1.

Assistant Match Captain

David Smith had attended most matches and booked Wanstead House venue for them. Ivor thanked David and Jane for their support and provision of refreshments at these events. Malcolm Crane has taken over the U-120 team while Fin O'Regan has been ill. He gave thanks to Fin for his leadership over the past several years. Malcolm Crane also continues to run the U-100 team, and is willing to continue to run both. The meeting was pleased to note that both the U-100 and U-120 team had progressed to the National Finals, on 7 July 2012.

U180 / U160 Captain

David Brock did not submit a report; however this information is contained in the General Secretary's report, above.

U140 Captain

Simon Moth did not submit a report; however this information is contained in the General Secretary's report, above.

U120 Captain

Fin O'Regan has been deputised by Malcolm Crane during his hospitalisation, and the information is contained in the General Secretaries report above.

U100 Captain

Malcolm Crane did not submit a report however this information is contained in the General Secretary's report, above.

Correspondence Match Captain

Steve Abbott was not present and did not submit a report. Ivor Smith questioned whether correspondence chess was obsolete in the present day and age. Bryan Gaze said he will talk to Steve Abbott about this. It was noted, that if people wish to play Correspondence Chess there should be no reason to stop it.

Tournament Secretary

Gavin Strachan reported that Adam Taylor won the 2011 event. In 2012 the time controls will be 20 minutes for all moves plus 10 seconds per move increment. There are four sections:

Open, U-180, U-150 and U-120. The event will take place at Bardeswell Social Club, Brentwood, on Sunday 15 July.

Essex Knockout Controller

Ian Hunnable reported that ten clubs participated in 2011, five of which had more than one team. Barking won the final against Writtle on 2nd tie break rule, eliminating boards 5 and 6: Writtle 3.5 - 4.5 Barking.

Ten teams have entered the 2012 event, links and results are on the web page.

The change of controller reflects the outcome of the May 2011 GPC meeting when some member clubs indicated the wish to have a Controller with email contact. Thanks were given to Colin Ramage for his work in running the Knockout since 2003.

League Secretary/ Grader

David Millward reported that League results are on the web. A new record has been set, as Writtle were equal with Leyton with six consecutive wins, however Writtle have now moved ahead with seven consecutive wins.

Of the 308 players registered, 230 actually played. An unknown factor here is how many of these players will register as ECF members next season.

As Grader, David reported this had been the first year that Standard Play grades had been published twice yearly and are now in line with Rapid Play Grades. There are some interim updates as well. The July (or August updated list) is the one that will be used for year round events; the January list is for post January events only.

Junior Organiser

Dave Hawkins provided the following report:

DOMESTIC SEASON

As in recent years, we held 5 Grand Prix tournaments this year – Ingatestone, Basildon (run by Basildon Chess Club), Colchester, South Woodham Ferrers and Saffron Walden. Entries ranged from 42 to 100 players. Sections are U9, U11, U14 and (for the first time in recent history) U18. The latter was due to a number of players who had started playing for the county at U9 8 years ago and progressed 'through the top' of the U14s.

Total numbers of players in each section throughout the season were U9-42, U11-67, U14-40 and U18-11, a total of 160. However, a familiar trend is discernible here. There was no U18 section in GP5 due to lack of entries. EJCA are very grateful to ECA for putting up the prize money for the U18 sections this year.

Grand Prix points are awarded according to score and sections entered, and form the basis for deciding the Essex champions in each age group. This year's champions are U9 Aditya Verma (Ilford), U11 Daniel Gallagher (Maldon), U 14 Naomi Wei (Ilford) and U18 Siddharth Chandrasekaran (Ilford). A discernible trend here also!

COACHING ACTIVITIES

Three successful coaching events were held during the year, in Writtle (U9s and Girls), Wanstead and Gidea Park. Players were coached by Dave Rumens, Jerzy Dybowski, Lawrence Trent and Ivor Smith. In excess of 50 juniors attended these events, which were received very enthusiastically.

COMPETITIVE SEASON

Not our finest season, and a dip on last year's encouraging performances. U9s and U11s play in the EPSCA Inter-Association Championships. 25 Associations are affiliated.

Under 9s – managed by Dave Hawkins – Team of 12. Essex Hosted the East of England zone at Brentwood Prep School. Essex qualified in 5th – last of the qualifying places. At the finals in Northampton we finished 16th of 18, not helped by the fact that our Board 3 was away playing in the Polish U8 Championship.

Under 11s – managed by Mark McCallum – Team of 20. 3rd of 6 teams in the zonal round. 9th of 15 in the finals in Northampton. Board 1 unavailable for both these matches.

Under 11 Girls – managed by Dave Hawkins – Team of 12. Final in Nottingham, 9th of 10 teams. Note that only 10 of the 25 associations were able to field a girls' team. Match v Herts – won 13-7. Two-thirds of the team are still U10s or U9s.

All the above results are combined on a 'points for places' basis into a Grand Prix score. Essex finished 13th of 25, down from last year's 6th place.

Under 14s – managed by Trevor Dickerson . Lost several players this year due to being above either the age or 130 limits. SCCU competition (team of 12) – lost narrowly to Kent, and more substantially to Surrey and Sussex. SCCU jamboree (teams of 6) – Won U18 minor. Joint 1st with Kent & Surrey in U14 Open- placed 2nd on tie-break. Entering ECF U13 and U18 this weekend.

REPRESENTATIVE HONOURS

Dion Huang selected for England squad. Aditya Verma, Gorak Rajesh, Naomi Wei and Adam C Taylor all selected for England team in the European Championships in Prague in the summer and the World Championships in Slovenia in the autumn. Very expensive for parents at over £4000 for the two, so some are only attending one.

OVERVIEW

The Junior scene in Essex is in reasonable health, and growing year on year.

- We are solvent
- The overall standard of chess is rising year on year
- The new junior club started last year (Knights of Gidea Park) is going from strength to strength
- We have a growing team of keen volunteers which currently includes a Catering Co-ordinator, a Coaching Organiser, a Grading Officer, 3 Team managers (soon to be 4), a team of Board Stewards and computer operators for tournaments, a Website Manager, a Chairman, a Treasurer and a Kit Manager. The vision is to create a situation where the loss of any one individual does not lead to the collapse of the whole system.

Our most pressing need at present is for more coaches to teach chess in schools at lunchtime or in after-school clubs, particularly with younger players such as U8s.

Several members thanked Dave for providing a detailed report, something which has been missing for several years.

Publicity Officer / Webmaster

Ian Hunnable described the process of moving the Essex chess website from the original ISP (ndo/namesco) to a new host. This commenced eleven months ago. The main reason was functional, to gain more interactivity which was at the time not offered by the original ISP. Ian was also conscious that lower cost alternatives were available and wished to reduce the Associations outlay on the site. The principle feature is the transfer of the site to a server side editing environment. In this case the application selected was "Joomla!", which is free to use. Joomla! represented an entirely new approach to website production for Ian so he had a steep learning curve.

The system is now well bedded in and enables David Millward (League Secretary) to upload results himself.

Chessex and Chessexonline have ceased. It is hoped to build a mailing list and Newsletter production from within the website, this remains on the "to do" list.

Next features in line will be reporting the Essex Rapid play on 15 July and blogging from North Shields for "Essex at the British" (24 July – 4 August). The EatB pages are running and Roving Reporter 1 has made his first entry:

<http://www.essexchess.org.uk/index/php/activities/mm-eatb12> and

<http://www.essexchess.org.uk/index/php/activities/mm-eatb12/mm-eatb2012blog>

5. Presentation of Trophies

Ivor Smith, President, presented the trophies.

6. Election of Officers and other members of the Executive

Bryan Gaze proposed that John Chapman becomes General Secretary and Steve Wedlock becomes Assistant General Secretary. Both were accepted without opposition. All other Officers were re-elected on bloc.

7. Appointment of Auditor

Joe Rosenberg informed the meeting that the current Auditor, Syd Kalinsky, had not mentioned any intention to relinquish this position, so David Millward proposed that he be retained. This was seconded by Ian Hunnable and agreed without opposition.

8. Action to be taken in response to the ECF funding changes

Joe Rosenberg presented a paper prepared by the ECF-funding sub-committee. This recommended that:

- a) All those playing in ECA matches must be members.
- b) Any players who are not members, must pay £2 a half-game for up to and including three games; thereafter membership is required.

Exceptions to this are:

- a) Speed events
- b) Correspondence chess
- c) Essex Rapid play, as (pay to play event)

These proposals were accepted without opposition.

9. Subscriptions, Game Fees and surcharges for 2012/2013

Joe Rosenberg proposed the following, which had been the consensus of the ECF-Funding sub-committee:

Club affiliation:	£20	(last season was £15)
League Affiliation:	£25	(last season was £20)
Individual:	£5 & £2.50	juniors (last season was £2.50 & £1.25 jnrs)

It was noted that the game fee of 73p per half-game, of which 58p went to the ECF, was no longer payable. A lengthy discussion took place.

Joe Rosenberg's proposal was seconded by David Smith and accepted without opposition.

10. Any other business

Gavin Strachan informed the meeting that next season, as of 1 September 2012 Brentwood Chess Club would meet at Brentwood Baptist Church.

The meeting closed at 10.20 p.m.

John Chapman
General Secretary
18 July 2012