

Lancashire Chess Association

Annual General Meeting – Tuesday 8th September 2015

Venue: Lytham Ex-Service and Social Club, Chapel Street, Lytham St Annes, FY8 5ND.

Present: Bill O'Rourke (Heywood) – President, U160/U180 Captain and Bury & Rochdale League
Steve Fanning (Atherton) – Secretary
Martyn Hamer (Great Harwood) – Treasurer
Simon Woodcock (Atherton) – Congress Organiser
Dave Almond (Heywood) – U140 Captain
Peter Barlass (Rossendale) – East Lancashire League
John Cooper (Lytham Ex) – part-time
Marjorie Ellison (Poulton)
Blaine McGrady (Bispham)
Phil Raynor (Lytham Ex) – Blackpool & Fylde League
John Regan (Lytham Ex) – part-time observer

1 Introduction

Bill O'Rourke thanked John Cooper for organising the venue.

The meeting noted with sadness that during the past year we had lost George Ellison, who had given great service to chess in the North West of England.

2 Apologies for Absence

Apologies had been received from U120 Captain Dave Thorp (Heywood) and Open Captain Mike Conroy (Burnley).

3 Minutes of 2014 AGM

The meeting accepted the minutes of last year's AGM.

4 Matters Arising

There were no matters arising from last year's minutes.

5 Officers' Reports

5.1 President's Report

Lancashire is proud that we had teams in all sections of the ECF County Championships last season. Bill commented that the teams don't run themselves and offered his thanks to all the captains involved. Lancashire won the U160 section, although Bill is going to propose to the ECF that they provide a new trophy to award to future winners of this section. The existing trophy has seen better days.

The junior organisers have continued their fantastic work with six junior congresses and six training days. The highlight of the year was probably the success of the U18 team, becoming national champions in September but teams at other age groups did well throughout the season.

The Blackpool Congress continues to flourish and Bill congratulated Simon Woodcock on his efforts.

Once again Bill thanked the small band of people who make things happen for Lancashire chess.

5.2 Secretary's Report

Steve Fanning had nothing significant to report. He confirmed that he would be standing down as Secretary once the minutes of this meeting were published due to his other commitments.

5.3 Treasurer's Report

Martyn Hamer reported that the county's finances were healthy, with the bank balance increased from last year. This increase was mainly due to two factors, i.e.

- 1) Income from the history book. Bill commented that there were only 47 remaining and that these would disappear soon! An overall surplus of around £800 is anticipated on the history books.
- 2) A very generous donation from Jim Tennant-Smith's estate. Bill commented that this donation had only been received recently but that he and others would visit Jim's wife Annette to offer personal thanks.

Martyn also reported that there was currently a little uncertainty over the income from the ECF but that this would be resolved on receipt of the next bank statement. Bill stated that the ECF give us £1 for everyone who joins through the county, before a specified date, and this amounted to around £160 last year. He will soon be emailing all Lancashire clubs about ECF memberships for 2015/16 and he requested that all respond promptly.

6 Reports from County Team Managers

6.1 Open Team

The Open team was drawn to play Middlesex in the quarter finals. Because of our success in getting all teams through the national stages of the competition, 7 weeks before the match we requested that it be moved to another day. The Middlesex captain would not agree to this request and so for the first time in living memory our Open team was unable to fulfil a fixture.

Bill O'Rourke noted that the ECF has seen sense so that next year the Open, U160 and U120 teams will play on different days to the U180, U140 and U100 teams.

6.2 U180 Team

The U180 team put in a great effort this season, beating Essex on board count in the quarter finals but losing to Devon on board count in the semi-finals.

6.3 U160 Team

The U160 team had a fantastic run, ending up as national champions. Quarter final opponents Kent withdrew, the team beat Middlesex 9 – 7 in the semi-finals and then comfortably beat Essex 11½ – 4½ in a one-sided final.

6.4 U140 Team

The U140 team won the last four boards in play to beat Surrey 9½ – 6½ in the quarter finals. However, needing one point from the final five boards in play, the team contrived to lose all those games to lose the match 7 – 9 to Kent in the semi-finals. Captain Dave Almond reported that during the semi-final match there was an unsatisfactory incident involving one of our less experienced players but that he hadn't been informed until it was too late to do anything about it.

6.5 U120 Team

The U120 team received a bye in the quarter finals and lost 3 – 9 to Hertfordshire in the semi-finals.

6.6 U100 Team

The U100 team lost 5½ – 6½ in the quarter finals to a Nottinghamshire team that had a strong junior element. Steve Crook of Chorley Chess Club, whose son plays for the team, has kindly taken over as captain.

7 Report from Congress Organiser

Simon Woodcock circulated a draft copy of the entry form for the 2016 Blackpool Chess Conference. As it will be the congress's 40th year, adjustments have been made to the prize fund structure in an attempt to attract some "big fish" and increase the overall numbers.

The playing rooms will be the same as in 2015. Simon has visited the Imperial and inspected the new lighting arrangements in the Washington Suite and reported a great improvement. The congress's investment in LED lights over the last two years will improve the lighting further.

No comments were raised by the meeting on the plans for next year's event.

The meeting discussed the assets that were held in the form of chess equipment purchased for the Blackpool Congress (sets, boards, clocks, lighting, etc.). These assets enable the congress to be largely self-sufficient. Concern was expressed that most of this equipment is currently stored in one location. Martyn Hamer agreed to investigate what needs to be done from the accounting perspective with regards to recording the value of the assets. Simon Woodcock agreed to check the details of the current insurance cover.

8 Report of Junior Organisers

Bill O'Rourke stated that there had been six junior congresses last season and best efforts had been made to spread these around the county. Phil Raynor acknowledged that there had been a few difficulties last season with regards to running an event on the Fylde but confirmed that the local junior organisation team were keen for a junior congress to take place in that part of the county next season. Peter Wallace of Bispham Chess Club should be able to help secure the Bispham Community Centre as a venue – he is also the chairman of the Community Centre.

Bill stated that the players involved in the U9, U11, U12 and U14 teams are all improving.

An online congress has been organised over the summer with 42 junior participants. Bill will provide a report for the website on completion of the tournament.

Bill also reported on the junior finances, which are in a satisfactory state.

The meeting offered congratulations to all the Lancashire junior organisers for their efforts and success.

9 Report from Website Editor

Steve Fanning had nothing significant to report. Martyn Hamer agreed to give the website “a plug” when he emails all clubs to request payment of fees.

10 Report from Leagues and Clubs

10.1 Blackpool & Fylde League

Phil Raynor reported that the league is stable and thriving. A few players had been acquired from Internet play. Malcolm Peacock does the league's website and the match results are entered online.

Competition winners in 2014/15 were:

- Division 'A' – Preston '2'
- Division 'B' – Preston '3'
- Division 'C' – Morecambe '2'
- Challenge Cup – Preston
- Rapidplay Cup – Poulton '1'
- Rapidplay Cup Plate – Bispham

10.2 East Lancashire League

Peter Barlass reported that the league had suffered a few organisational problems last season and one of the competitions was not yet completed. However it is hoped that after the league's recent AGM, things would be back on a level footing. Peter is the new Secretary of the league while Stephen Ward of Rossendale is the new Fixtures Secretary and Mike Conroy is the Chairman. Bill encouraged Stephen Ward to liaise with Malcolm Peacock regarding the league's website.

Peter considers that the league's biggest challenge ahead is overcoming the scarcity of junior players in the clubs. Bill noted that there are promising junior players in the league's catchment area who attend Lancashire junior congresses and training days.

Competition winners in 2014/15 were:

- Division '1' (Sinkinson Cup) – Crusaders Blackburn 'A'
- Division '2' – Crusaders Blackburn 'B'
- Division '2' – Rossendale 'C'
- Lucas Shield – Great Harwood 'A'
- Denis Otter Trophy – not yet completed
- Hamilton Cup – Scott Riley (beat Andrew Clarkson)
- Subsidiary – S. Whitehead (beat B. Smith)
- Division '1' Player of the Season – Andrew Clarkson
- Division '2' Player of the Season – Stephen Ward
- Division '3' Player of the Season – not yet awarded

10.3 Central Lancashire League

Bill O'Rourke stated that the league seems to be going well, with a very strong first division. Wigan Chess Club has entered a team for the coming season.

Competition winners in 2014/15 were:

- Division '1' – Preston 'A'
- Division '2' – Chorley 'A'
- John Birchall Cup – Crusaders 'A'
- Vaux Trophy – Crusaders 'B'

10.4 Other Leagues

No detailed information was available about the Lancaster, Morecambe & District or the Bury & Rochdale chess leagues.

10.5 Clubs

Peter Barlass reported that Clitheroe Chess Club appears to have suffered a crisis during the past 12 months but things seem to have stabilised now.

It was suggested that Martyn Hamer should request a subscription off Stonyhurst College as it was felt that they might be prepared to affiliate to the county association.

Phil Raynor stated that Cleveleys Chess Club has improved its organisation and now has a management committee.

Bill O'Rourke reported that Heywood had won the Minor section of the NCCU Club Championship and shared the Seniors section. He urged all clubs to support these competitions.

11 Election of Officers

The following officers / posts were elected / re-elected at the meeting.

President	Bill O'Rourke	
Secretary	Peter Barlass	
Treasurer	Martyn Hamer	
Team Captains	Open	Mike Conroy
	U180	Bill O'Rourke (provisional only – team members to be asked)
	U160	Bill O'Rourke
	U140	Dave Almond
	U120	Dave Thorp
	U100	Steve Crook
Junior Organisers	As 2014/15, i.e. Ian Hughes, Pete Edhouse, Steve Lamb, Bill O'Rourke, Malcolm Birks, Matthew Walsh and James Walsh	
Web Editor	Steve Fanning	
Congress Director	Simon Woodcock	
ECF Representative	John Reyes is now the NCCU's ECF representative. The President was asked by the meeting to approach Gareth Ellis with regards to the possibility of him being our ECF representative, as he will be attending the meetings anyway and is also heavily involved with Lancashire's juniors.	
NCCU Representatives	Simon Woodcock and Dave Almond	

12 Appointment of Auditor

Martyn Hamer will check that Dave Thorp is willing to audit the accounts.

13 Subscriptions Proposals for 2015/16

The meeting agreed to leave subscriptions unchanged for season 2015/16 at £20 for smaller clubs (14 or less members) and £25 for larger clubs (15 or more members).

14 ECF Membership 2015/16

The meeting agreed that the Lancashire Chess Association should again run an ECF membership scheme in season 2015/16. It benefits the county to get a rebate of £1 per member back from the ECF.

Although John Reyes was not present at the meeting he had asked for a discussion to be held on the various ECF votes that were available across Lancashire. The ECF motion to increase fees was passed on a tiny majority but John was concerned that not all votes owned by people across Lancashire (and the North generally) appeared to have been used. The meeting agreed that we

should attempt to mobilise all votes but that the votes cast must represent their owners' views democratically. The first step will be for Bill O'Rourke to contact John Philpott at the ECF to determine who currently holds relevant votes and then there should be a consultation for stake holders to agree how to proceed.

15 Any Other Business

None.

16 Date of Next Meeting

It was agreed that next year's AGM should be held on approximately the same date in September 2016 (provisionally 6th September 2016). It was agreed that a suitable venue would be Asda Rawtenstall Superstore (home of Rossendale Chess Club) and Peter Barlass will investigate.