

LANCASHIRE CHESS ASSOCIATION

Annual General Meeting – Tuesday 9th September 2014

- VENUE:** Atherton Chess Club, The Atherton Arms, 6 Tyldesley Road, Atherton, M46 9DD.
- PRESENT:** Bill O'Rourke (Heywood) – President, U160 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)
Keith Johnston (Urmston)
Tim Plunkett (Urmston)
Phil Raynor (Lytham Ex) – Blackpool and Fylde League
John Reyes (Urmston)
Frank Tanner (Crusaders)
Bob Taylor (Preston) – Central Lancashire League
Sandra Woodcock – Blackpool Congress

Introduction

Bill O'Rourke thanked Steve Fanning for organising the venue.

The meeting noted with sadness that during the past year we had lost four players who had given great service to chess in the North West of England – Barry Bourn, Fred Butterworth, Conrad Jowett and Jim Tennant-Smith.

Apologies for Absence

Apologies had been received from U120 Captain Dave Thorp (Heywood), U100 Captain Phil Shaughnessy (Urmston), John Cooper (Lytham Ex), Steve Mason (Tameside), Malcolm Peacock (Preston) and Paul Timson (Clitheroe).

Minutes of 2013 AGM

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

Matters Arising

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

Officers' Reports

President's Report

Bill O'Rourke thanked the few people who make things happen for Lancashire chess. Most were present at the meeting but others include the junior organisers Ian Hughes and Pete Edhouse.

Bill highlighted two notable Lancashire successes:

- We were the county with most teams at different grading levels reaching the quarter finals of the 2013/14 ECF County Championships. A downside to this success is the difficulty in manning the teams – to support these efforts we need Lancashire clubs to encourage their players to make themselves available for matches.
- We have the same number of affiliated clubs as Kent and this is more than any other county.

We should also be proud that the number of schools involved in Lancashire junior chess is rising rapidly. Last season we held junior congresses at new venues in Bispham and Colne.

Secretary's Report

Steve Fanning reported difficulty in confirming up-to-date contact details with a small number of clubs. It was agreed that in future the various leagues within the county should be approached to provide this information to the LCA Secretary.

Treasurer's Report

Martyn Hamer handed out a copy of the unaudited accounts that he had prepared. These showed a good year financially, primarily due to revenue from the sale of copies of the Lancashire History book. In addition expenses were relatively low because few of our teams had progressed beyond the quarter final stage of the county championships.

Bill O'Rourke asked those in attendance to note the valuable income from ECF memberships via the Lancashire membership scheme. Unfortunately 79 players had joined the scheme after the required date and so we were unable to claim the £1 rebate for each of them. Clubs were asked to make best efforts to submit their membership lists as early as possible.

Bill stated that he was prepared to submit ECF membership requests for any chess club in the North West of England (including those outside the Lancashire boundaries – Cumbria have already expressed a desire to take up this offer).

Martyn stated that next year the Lancashire History book would not make such a significant contribution to revenue and his aim going forward would be to break even.

Reports from County Team Managers

Open Team

Results:

- Lost 7 – 5 to Yorkshire in the NCCU Championship.
- Lost 10 – 6 to Surrey in the quarter final of the ECF Championship.

There are a number of youngsters with grades approaching 200 that may be considered in the future by team captain Mike Conroy.

U180 Team

Results:

- Lost 7½ – 4½ to Yorkshire in the NCCU Championship.
- Lost 9 – 7 to Surrey in the quarter final of the ECF Championship.

U160 Team

Results:

- Lost 7½ – 4½ to Yorkshire in the NCCU Championship.
- Won 8 – 4 against Cumbria in the NCCU Championship.
- Lost 10½ – 5½ to Middlesex in the quarter final of the ECF Championship.

A bonus this year was the discovery of youngster Kit Hopkins whose grade has now risen from nowhere to 174 in one season.

U140 Team

Results:

- Won 8½ – 7½ against Middlesex in the quarter final of the ECF Championship.
- Lost 8½ – 7½ to Hampshire in the semi-final of the ECF Championship.

Yorkshire did not enter a team at this level and so Lancashire were declared NCCU Champions without playing a game.

Captain Dave Almond noted that the semi-final match was a very close affair despite two late dropouts and the inclusion of six players graded under 120.

Dave suggested awarding certificates or medals to encourage more players to turn out for the county teams. Bill O'Rourke agreed to look into this idea, particularly for the U100, U120 and U140 teams.

U120 Team

Results:

- Won 6½ – 5½ against Yorkshire in the NCCU Championship.
- Lost 7½ – 4½ to Nottinghamshire in the quarter final of the ECF Championship.

Many thanks to Phil Shaughnessy for helping Dave Thorp with the running of this team.

U100 Team

Results:

- Won 6½ – 5½ against Yorkshire in the NCCU Championship.
- Lost 8 – 4 to Kent in the semi-final of the ECF Championship.

Reports of Congress Organisers

Blackpool

Congress Treasurer Simon Woodcock provided a report on the Blackpool Congress. As expected there was a significant loss in 2012-13. Although this year's accounts were not complete at the time of the meeting, they will show only a small loss.

The approach of taking no late entries had worked well and will be continued.

The entry form for the 2015 event was available for inspection at the meeting and dates have been provisionally agreed for 2016 and 2017 with the Imperial. Simon reported that there was an increase in entries via the website in 2014 and this could impact on the number of entry forms printed in future years.

The hotel will be full next year as the Imperial is also hosting another event simultaneously. Those attending were advised that if they wish to stay at the venue then book early!

We will have a different set of playing rooms next year and the congress has invested £1500 in portable lighting to ensure the best possible playing conditions.

Bob Taylor noted two issues relating to the 2014 congress:

- [1] There was a problem with players turning the spotlights off in the corner of the main room on Friday evening. People should be informed that these lights are needed.
- [2] It was noticed that people continue to take their own refreshments into the venue. Simon commented that we did our best to inform people of the relevant rules but the hotel are responsible for policing it.

Preston

Bob Taylor reported that the Preston Congress is going through some hard times with venue costs on the increase and the number of entrants going down.

The congress organisers were very grateful to Julian Clissold, Rod Middleton and Matthew Carr for acting as arbiters for the 2013 event – it is hoped that Peter Purland and David Welch will return to their normal roles this year.

Bob took the opportunity to remind entrants that a charge is levied on Friday evening for parking at the venue (parking is free on Saturday and Sunday).

Heywood

Bill O'Rourke reported that the Heywood Congress is going well although it is hard keeping the numbers up and he is aware that the local council would like to increase the cost of the venue.

Bill expressed his thanks to all who help and play at the event.

Salford Rapidplay

John Reyes reported on the inaugural Salford Chess Rapidplay organised through Urmston and held in the Grosvenor Casino Salford. It was a good event that broke even despite having no juniors due to casino rules. There were some parking issues but these were resolved.

John is currently considering dates for a similar event next year.

Report of Junior Organisers

Bill O'Rourke reported that the Lancashire junior setup continues to show healthy growth.

There were six junior congresses last year with training throughout the day from Lancashire's more experienced stronger junior players. Pete Edhouse now leads the junior congress organisation activities. Extra helpers are always welcome and future dates will be published on the LCA website. Bill hopes that gradually we will increase congress numbers up towards 100 players.

As usual teams competed in the various NYCA and EPSCA events.

Phil Raynor reported that Cleveleys junior chess club is continuing to flourish and it is hoped that more of these youngsters will be able to attend junior congresses around Lancashire.

Report from Website Editor

Steve Fanning stated that the website continued to be updated as promptly as possible with any materials received. However he noted that little information was provided direct to him and he requested that everybody try to generate some additional articles that he would be very happy to receive and add to the website.

Reports from Lancashire Leagues and Clubs

Central Lancashire League

Bob Taylor reported that the Central Lancashire League currently comprises two divisions, with Heywood 'A' and Crusaders 'B' winning the 1st and 2nd divisions respectively last season. Heywood 'A' also won the John Birchall Cup while Heywood 'B' won the Vaux Trophy.

For season 2014/15 Atherton have entered a second team in the league.

Bury & Rochdale League

Bill O'Rourke reported that the Bury & Rochdale League is getting stronger, with 3Cs entering for the coming season. Rochdale teams finished top of both divisions last season.

Manchester League

Since a number of Lancashire-affiliated clubs play in the Manchester League, Keith Johnston provided a short report. The top division remains very strong, with 3Cs '1' winning both Division 'A' and the Reyner Trophy last season. Urmston '1' finished fourth while Heywood '1' avoided relegation by a narrow margin.

Rochdale and Oldham have combined their Manchester League resources for the coming season and will play as The Blue Club.

Keith commented that the challenge remains to get people off their computers and into a chess club.

East Lancashire Chess Association

Peter Barlass reported that Burnley had a good 2013/14 season, winning the League Championship and the Lucas Shield.

Blackburn and Crusaders have re-merged but this pooling of resources would not lead to an extra team next season.

At the time of the LCA AGM, Peter was unsure of the status of the Stonyhurst College team.

Blackpool and Fylde Chess League

Phil Raynor reported that the very long serving Denis Lane was retiring from the committee, having reached the age of 90! Phil will collate a report that can be put on the Lancashire website.

The league is reasonably healthy and last season's main prize winners were:

- Poulton '1' won Division 'A' for the first time in a while.
- Lytham '2' won Division 'B'.
- Bispham '2' won Division 'C'.
- Preston won the Challenge Cup.
- Roy Ellames won the Fylde Individual Championship.
- Jordan Lewis was the Fylde Junior Champion.

It is expected that the same teams / clubs will play this season as participated in 2013/14.

The junior club at Cleveleys continues and as a result of his work there, Phil has now taken on the wider role of junior organiser for all the league.

Election of Officers

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

President		Bill O'Rourke
Secretary		Steve Fanning
Treasurer		Martyn Hamer
Team Captains	Open	Mike Conroy
	U180	Bill O'Rourke
	U160	TBA
	U140	Dave Almond
	U120	Dave Thorp
	U100	TBA
Junior Organisers		Pete Edhouse, Bill O'Rourke, Ian Hughes and Steve Lamb
Web Editor		Steve Fanning
Congress Director		Simon Woodcock
ECF Representative		John Reyes
NCCU Representatives		Simon Woodcock and John Reyes

Under this agenda item there was a discussion which began with Bob Taylor seeking clarification about the role of the LCA's NCCU representatives; Bill O'Rourke confirmed that occupants of these positions would be expected to cast their votes at NCCU meetings in accordance with the LCA's policy on the issue under discussion. It is not intended that the county's NCCU representatives should vote in accordance with their own feelings when these contradict the stance of the association.

This lead on to a discussion of the LCA's policy with regards to the Manchester Chess Federation's application to join the NCCU. Bill O'Rourke stated that the current policy has not changed for many years, since the agreement of 1975. However he added that the LCA is a democratic organisation and hence it would be possible to review this, as with any other policy, if correctly raised as a motion. Providing that such a review is done properly and democratically then the LCA will abide with whatever decision is taken. Such a review was not on the agenda for this AGM.

Appointment of Auditor

Martyn Hamer will arrange for the accounts to be audited as soon as possible.

Subscriptions Proposals for 2014

The meeting agreed to leave subscriptions unchanged for season 2014/15 at £20 for smaller clubs (14 or less members) and £25 for larger clubs (15 or more members).

ECF Membership 2014-15

The meeting agreed that the Lancashire Chess Association should again run an ECF membership scheme in season 2014/15. It benefits the county to get a rebate of £1 per member back from the ECF.

Any Other Business

Bill O'Rourke stated that the Manchester team in the 4NCL had asked that any Lancastrians willing to play should get in touch with them.

Date of Next AGM

It was agreed that next year's AGM should be held on approximately the same date in September 2015. It was suggested that a Fylde venue might be utilised next year and it was agreed that Phil Raynor would be the local point of contact.