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# Lancashire Chess Association

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*Annual General Meeting – Monday 9<sup>th</sup> September 2013*

Venue: **Rossendale Chess Club, ASDA, St Mary's Way, Rawtenstall, BB4 8EE.**

Present: Bill O'Rourke (Heywood) – President and U160 Captain  
Steve Fanning (Atherton) – Secretary  
Martyn Hamer (Great Harwood) – Treasurer  
John Cooper (Lytham Ex) – U180 Captain  
Phil Shaughnessy (Urmston) – U100 Captain  
Peter Barlass (Rossendale)  
Phil Raynor (Lytham Ex)  
John Reyes (Urmston)  
Frank Talton (Rossendale)

## INTRODUCTION

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Before starting the main business of the meeting, Bill O'Rourke thanked Peter Barlass for organising the venue and the refreshments.

## APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

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Apologies had been received from Congress Treasurer Simon Woodcock (Atherton), U140 Captain Dave Almond (Heywood), U120 Captain Dave Thorp (Heywood), Steve Mason (Tameside) and John Wood.

## MINUTES OF 2012 AGM

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

## MATTERS ARISING

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Peter Barlass noted that it had not been possible to hold a junior event in East Lancashire during the 2012-13 season. This was discussed further under the Report of Junior Organisers agenda item later in the meeting.

At last year's AGM it was suggested that a facility might be added to the website to enable prospective players to easily send a message to the relevant county team captain to express their interest in playing for Lancashire. It was further proposed that a button per team could be considered. Steve Fanning reported that he had investigated this proposal but was unclear how it would improve communications when such volunteers could easily get in touch by using the existing Contact Us form on the website. Peter Barlass commented that his own club Rossendale was out on a limb and many of its members probably don't know anything about county teams. Two actions were agreed:

- Bill O'Rourke to circulate details of Lancashire county teams to all clubs.
- Steve Fanning to include a prominent article on the LCA website about county teams and how Lancastrians can volunteer their playing services.

## OFFICERS' REPORTS

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### President's Report

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Bill O'Rourke again offered thanks to the few people who make things happen for Lancashire chess. He believes that we have the right people in the right jobs, making a good team all round. As a result his job is much easier than it was a few years ago!

### Secretary's Report

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Steve Fanning had nothing of significance to report.

It was noted that Brian Cornish had retired and so an alternative contact will need to be found for the chess club at Lancaster Royal Grammar School. Steve agreed to do this as part of the annual exercise to refresh clubs' contact information.

### Treasurer's Report

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Martyn Hamer handed out a copy of the unaudited accounts that he had prepared for 2012-13. These showed a significant reduction in the balance over the year but there were specific reasons for this, including:

- The season's county team expenses were exceptionally high due to success in the national stages.
- There was a big hit this year on the initial 150 hardback copies of the Lancashire History but this should be clawed back over the next two or three years, with an overall profit anticipated once all copies are sold.
- Bill O'Rourke had expected a slightly larger membership rebate back from the ECF and will look into the exact figures.
- Some clubs had still not paid their subscriptions for the year.

In summary Martyn stated that he was not concerned at this stage and that he would be recommending no change to subscriptions.

The meeting accepted the Treasurer's report.

In discussion of the Lancashire History under this agenda item two actions were raised:

- Bill O'Rourke to investigate making the book available on Amazon and / or eBay.
- Steve Fanning to publicise the book on the LCA website, displaying a scanned image of the cover.

## REPORTS FROM COUNTY TEAM MANAGERS

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### Open Team

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In the NCCU Championship the annual Roses match had ended as a 6 - 6 draw but Yorkshire were victorious by virtue of their better board count. In the national stages Lancashire had a reasonably comfortable 9½ - 5½ win against Somerset in the quarter finals but lost 6 - 10 in the semi-finals to Surrey.

### U180 Team

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In the NCCU Championship Lancashire managed a fairly comfortable 8 - 4 win against a Yorkshire team missing some players. In the national stages Warwickshire were beaten 10 - 6 in the quarter finals despite captain John Cooper struggling for players, although he did manage to get three current county captains into the team - Mike Conroy, himself and Bill O'Rourke. Kent were beaten 11½ - 4½ in the semi-finals, a match that was played the week after the South Lakes Congress which in previous years has been a drain on the team's resources. Despite travel problems on the M6 causing late arrivals and one default, the U180 team ended up comfortable 10½ - 5½ winners in the final against Cambridgeshire to become national champions.

## U160 Team

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After a 5½ - 6½ loss to Cumbria and a 4½ - 7½ defeat by Yorkshire, Lancashire's U160 team finished third out of three in the NCCU Championship. However Cumbria declined their place in the national stages and Lancashire were invited to compete instead. The team's quarter final match with Kent was a close affair with Lancashire eventually progressing by a score of 8½ - 7½. In the semi-finals Lancashire beat Warwickshire by 9½ - 6½. Unfortunately the U160 team couldn't quite surmount the travel difficulties and ended up losing a very close final to Essex by a score of 7½ - 8½.

## U140 Team

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Lancashire's U140 team beat their counterparts from Yorkshire by the score of 8 - 4 in the NCCU Championship. However in the national stages the team were well beaten by Shropshire in the quarter finals after some motorway troubles.

## U120 Team

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In the NCCU Championship Lancashire recorded a close-fought victory over Yorkshire by 6½ - 5½. Unfortunately the team were beaten 5 - 7 in the national stages quarter final match against Essex.

## U100 Team

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Lancashire included seven debutants in the NCCU Championship match against Yorkshire and team captain Phil Shaughnessy was delighted that the team recorded a crushing 10½ - 1½ victory. The team progressed to the semi-finals of the national stages without moving a piece as their opponents Leicestershire defaulted at the quarter final stage. In the semi-final match Lancashire were beaten 9 - 3 by reigning national champions Essex.

## Summary

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Bill O'Rourke congratulated the county teams on this season's success, i.e. four NCCU sections won with all teams into the national stages, one winner and one runner-up. Bill noted that some of this success was undoubtedly down to good captaincy but he also thanked and praised the commitment of all the players involved. He reiterated the point that success came at a cost and this underlined the importance of collecting subscriptions.

Phil Shaughnessy's grade has risen to 104 and so he won't be eligible to play for the U100 team next season. Phil agreed to organise the team for next season's U100 match against Yorkshire in the NCCU Championship and persuade one of the players in the team to take over the reins for the rest of the season.

John Cooper wishes to retire from captaining the U180 team and agreed to a similar arrangement as that for the U100s - John will organise the team for the match against Yorkshire and then hand over to one of the other players.

The meeting noted that the ECF have dropped plans to change the grading bands at the moment.

## REPORT OF CONGRESS ORGANISERS

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Congress Treasurer Simon Woodcock sent the following report to be read at the meeting in his absence:

*"I wish to report that the 2012 Blackpool Congress had 418 entries which was the same as for the 2011 event. However our reduction in sponsorship down to £250 towards the increased prize fund means the event wasn't as successful as earlier years.*

*Blackpool Council had been very generous over the years with donations towards the prize fund and help with the venues.*

*The "un audited" balance sheet shows that over the 2011 -2012 period the congress account funds were reduced.*

*This was due to several things. I purchased a large number of new kit bags to store the chess equipment and make the bags more secure. Purchase of more portable lights for the venue to improve poor lighting.*

*However the reduction in sponsor money by over £1800 accounts for most of it.*

*The 2013 event will be included in the accounts which close in Oct 2013 and I have to report that the event made a considerable loss, this was due to a drop in entries to 302, a large prize fund and again very little sponsorship.*

*With this in mind as the new congress Director I have made various changes ready for the 2014 event.*

*A small amount of sponsorship has been arranged, I have reduced the prize fund to £6250 and adjusted the entry fee which is reduced to simplify the whole entry process.*

*The Puma hotel have assisted the 2014 event with a reduction in room rates which hopefully will increase the number of players taking up the stay at this great venue.*

*The 2014 form is still at the draft stage but I hope to have them in circulation by the end of October.*

*I wish to thank several people who continue to help at the event, Peter Edhouse for his services on the Sunday & Friday who along with the Fanning, Woodcock and Pennington families putting out and laying away the sets. Without this help Geoff and I couldn't cope.*

*I would like to ask the AGM for help on the Friday afternoon and Sunday evening, so anyone who can spare the time come along and help.*

*Many thanks*

*Simon Woodcock"*

Phil Raynor suggested that if Simon emails him with details of what is required with setting up and putting away, he will ask for help from the locals.

Bill O'Rourke added that feedback from players indicated that the falling numbers were largely due to petrol and accommodation costs. It is hoped that we can get back to 350 entrants in 2014.

## **REPORT OF JUNIOR ORGANISERS**

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Bill O'Rourke reported that the Lancashire juniors were in a healthy position, both in terms of chess development and the junior finances. However new blood was needed in the role of Junior Organiser.

Lancashire's U16 team are the current NYCA national champions and the U9 players made huge improvements last year, as evidenced by their results in the EPSCA national finals.

Six junior congress per year are organised – last year two of these were at Heywood but one of those could move to the East Lancashire area if a suitable venue could be found. The meeting discussed the requirements for such a venue, covering the need for enough rectangular tables for 70 – 80 players, a canteen area, areas for parents to sit and maybe some training rooms. Peter Barlass will investigate to see if a suitable venue can be identified and will also try to visit a junior congress at Heywood to see how things work.

Phil Raynor will continue the search for a suitable venue for a junior congress on the Fylde.

## **REPORT FROM WEBSITE EDITOR**

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Steve Fanning stated that the website continued to be updated as promptly as possible with any materials received.

## REPORTS FROM LANCASHIRE LEAGUES AND CLUBS

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### East Lancashire Chess Association

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Burnley 'A' beat Great Harwood 'A' in the play-off for the Division 1 title and Burnley 'B' beat Clitheroe 'B' in the play-off for the Division 2 title. Burnley 'A' also won the Lucas Shield while Crusaders 'B' won the Subsidiary Team Knockout.

Clitheroe look to have a strong squad now and are likely to put in a stiffer challenge in Division 1. Like Rossendale, Burnley's 'B' team are moving to a new venue at their local ASDA store. The league is reverting to three divisions for 2013/2014.

Despite the demise of the NW ELO grading list, the ELCA AGM did not support the idea of joining the ECF membership scheme. Bill O'Rourke commented that as a county we are disadvantaging ourselves by not having everybody ECF graded at the cost of around 25 pence per week and this is clearly evident when the national stages of the County Championship come around and our captains struggle to get grades accepted for people who are not members.

### Blackpool and Fylde Chess League

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Preston '1' won Division A, Bispham '1' won Division B and Lytham '3' won Division C.

Although numbers of clubs in the league had dwindled over the years (currently only five), it is felt that the people still participating are very enthusiastic and there is far less bickering these days!

Cleveleys regularly have around 20 juniors at the moment and they are likely to move on to Poulton or maybe Lytham as they get a little older. These players should be encouraged to attend as many Lancashire junior congresses as possible.

### Central Lancashire League

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Preston 'A' won Division 1, Preston B won Division 2 and Crusaders 'C' won Division 3. Heywood 'A' won the John Birchall Cup and Chorley 'B' won the Vaux Trophy. The league will play over two divisions in season 2013/2014 with all the games ECF graded.

### Bury and Rochdale League

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Oldham 'A' won Division A and Tameside won Division B. Oldham 'A' also won the Division A Cup and Oldham 'B' won the Division B Cup. All games in the league will be ECF graded next season. Bill O'Rourke reported that after a few years of decline, the league is strengthening again.

### Urmston Chess Club

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Urmston reported that following an influx of strong players, their first team won Division B last season and they hope to be stronger still this season, able to perform well in the top division. Urmston '1' also won the Wahl Tuch Trophy. Phil Shaughnessy and John Reyes believe that after a period in the doldrums, membership and strength is growing and the outlook for the club is now very positive.

## ELECTION OF OFFICERS

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

<b>President</b>		Bill O'Rourke
<b>Secretary</b>		Steve Fanning
<b>Treasurer</b>		Martyn Hamer
<b>Team Captains</b>	<b>Open</b>	Mike Conroy
	<b>U180</b>	John Cooper (only for Yorkshire match)
	<b>U160</b>	Bill O'Rourke
	<b>U140</b>	Dave Almond
	<b>U120</b>	Dave Thorp
	<b>U100</b>	Phil Shaughnessy (only for Yorkshire match)
<b>Junior Organiser</b>		Bill O'Rourke (until somebody else can be found)
<b>Web Editor</b>		Steve Fanning
<b>Congress Director</b>		Simon Woodcock
<b>ECF Representative</b>		Bill O'Rourke
<b>NCCU Representative</b>		Dave Almond, Jim Tennant-Smith, Simon Woodcock

## APPOINTMENT OF AUDITOR

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Martyn Hamer agreed to approach Dave Thorp of Heywood (who has accounting qualifications) to ask whether he would be prepared to audit the accounts.

## SUBSCRIPTIONS PROPOSALS FOR 2014

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The meeting agreed to leave subscriptions unchanged for season 2013/2014 at £20 for smaller clubs (14 or less members) and £25 for larger clubs (15 or more members).

## ECF MEMBERSHIP 2013-2014

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The meeting agreed that the Lancashire Chess Association should again run an ECF membership scheme in season 2013/2014. It benefits the county to get a rebate of £1 per member back from the ECF.

## ANY OTHER BUSINESS

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### Bradford Chesstival in the Park

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Bill O'Rourke reminded the meeting that this event would be taking place on Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> September and was to include a Yorkshire vs. Lancashire match involving players of all levels. Anybody interested in playing should contact Bill for more details.

### Salford Rapidplay

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John Reyes provided information about the 1<sup>st</sup> Salford Chess Rapidplay to be held in Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> May 2014 at the Grosvenor Casino Salford Riverside.

Lancashire clubs were asked to help publicise the event. Steve Fanning agreed to enable LCA website visitors to download an entry form and also agreed to provide John Reyes with details of the contacts for the various Lancashire leagues, so that John can get in touch with them to request that they circulate details to their constituent clubs.

## DATE OF NEXT AGM

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It was agreed that next year's AGM should be held on approximately the same date in September 2014. It was suggested that a central venue might be utilised next year and it was agreed that Chorley should be approached.