

# **Lancashire Chess Association – Annual General Meeting**

**1<sup>st</sup> August 2007 – St Richard’s Parish Club, Atherton**

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## **1 Present**

Bill O’Rourke, Simon Woodcock, Steve Fanning, John Cooper and Phil Raynor.

## **2 Minutes of 2006 AGM**

The minutes of last year’s AGM were reviewed and accepted as an accurate record of the meeting.

## **3 Matters Arising**

Steve had been unable to acquire minutes of previous AGMs for posting on the website. Bill agreed to supply Steve with minutes covering AGMs since 1995.

## **4 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies had been received from Peter Edhouse and Dave Gaston.

## **5 Officers’ Reports**

### ***5.1 President’s Report***

Bill summarised a very successful season, crowned by the fantastic achievement of victories for the Open and U150 teams in the ECF National County Championships early in July. Particular plaudits were offered to captain Mike Conroy as the Open team won at this level for the first time since 1977; Mike has stuck with his quest for success through thick and thin. Congratulations were offered to all players involved in both teams throughout the campaign. Bill commented that he had organised for commemorative photographs to be provided to all involved in Finals Day at the cost of £20.

In addition Lancashire’s clubs had achieved unprecedented success in the NCCU Club Championships with Crusaders winning the Minor, Atherton winning the Intermediate and Major and Heywood finishing runners-up in both Open and Major sections.

Bill expressed his thanks to all involved in bringing these successes to Lancashire.

Looking ahead Bill noted that the new ECF Grading List appeared to leave all of our county teams with promising squads for 2007/2008; he suggested that we aim for a target of three national titles next season! Steve noted that the U100 captain had experienced problems this season because there was no NCCU competition, which made it hard to generate interest or team spirit. It was suggested that should this occur again, efforts be made to organise friendly matches (e.g. U100 players from the Blackpool and Fylde League vs. those from the Central Lancashire League, etc).

### ***5.2 Secretary’s Report***

No report was made - the previous Minutes Secretary had resigned and was not present at the meeting. Steve had previously agreed to take the minutes.

### ***5.3 Treasurer’s Report***

The overall conclusion was that the county’s finances were in a very sound state.

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## Main Account

Simon handed out details (not yet audited) of the Main Account for the year to December 2006, showing a healthy balance of £2,530. Simon noted that Bill had recently submitted a substantial claim for expenses covering a three year period (relating to his captaincy of the U150 team) and this would appear in this year's accounts. Simon also commented that two clubs had so far failed to pay their subscriptions but this should be rectified when the treasurers of those clubs return from their holidays.

Bill re-iterated that we have much in-house experience of cost-effective neutral venues suitable for county team matches and we should not need to utilise out-of-the-way venues such as those around Syston. Bill would be happy to provide information to any of our team captains at any time.

## Congress Account

Simon handed out details of the Congress Account for the year to October 2006 and these had been audited. The following points were noted:

- Blackpool made a good surplus in 2007 and there is a healthy balance at the moment.
- The Chorley Congress will not take place in 2007 or subsequently. However a late payment of £650 for the venue for the 2006 Chorley Congress will appear in the next accounting period.
- Lancashire's store of equipment has been refreshed this year; we now own 50 digital clocks and a total of 100 (working!) analogue clocks.
- The Bradford & Bingley Savings account had been closed, with the proceeds transferred to the Yorkshire Current Account.

Leyland Chess Club have organised a three day congress to replace the previous Chorley Congress, and LCA have made a donation to this event by paying for the entry forms. Bill stated that this sets a precedent - should any other new congresses start up within Lancashire, then LCA will fund the entry forms for the first year of the event.

## Junior Account

Bill stated that the junior set-up continues to prosper and that control of the finances is currently being transferred from Carl Tillotson to Bill himself.

## Chessfest Account

Bill stated that there is currently a surplus of £350.

## **6 Reports from County Team Captains**

Successes at the national level were covered under the President's report (Section 5.1).

The Open, U150 and U100 teams were NCCU Champions.

The U125 team had a poor season, due to difficulties experienced with getting players to turn out. Steve and Bill to assist Phil with the identification of U125 players for the coming season's campaign.

Bill stressed the need for all captains to ask for any help that they require from other LCA officers.

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Bill to send publicity e-mail to attempt to increase the number of players available for Lancashire’s correspondence chess teams.

## **7 Report from Congress Organisers**

### Blackpool

Simon stated that entry forms for next year’s event will be available much earlier than in previous years. Unfortunately Bob Conroy had moved on from the Southbank Hotel and so their sponsorship had been lost. Prize money has been increased by approximately £700 and both Open and Challengers events will be FIDE rated. Grandmasters will be able to enter free (providing that they do so sufficiently early) and the late entry fees have been staggered dependent on how late.

Blackpool Council is very interested in entrants from the Fylde Coast in general and Blackpool in particular. Bill will approach Steve Lamb with the aim of identifying an entrant from the Blackpool area who would be willing to point out local players for photographs, etc.

Simon requested that committee members be available on the Friday evening to help with any urgent matters that arise.

It was agreed that some Lancashire youngsters be approached to assist between rounds with setting up boards and clocks, putting out scoresheets, etc. They will receive a small cash payment for their efforts.

Simon is attempting to organise someone to take good quality photographs that can be placed directly on the Blackpool Congress website, rather than relying on acquiring copies of photographs that have been posted on other sites.

### Lancashire Championships

The Lancashire Championships will take place within the Leyland Congress in August 2007. After that they will be allocated to congresses within Lancashire on a rota basis, excluding the Blackpool Congress. Future new congresses will host the Lancashire Championships in their first year and join the rota thereafter.

## **8 Report from Chessfest Organisers**

Bill reported that planning for this year’s event is well advanced, with the junior event on Saturday, a blitz competition on Saturday evening and the rapidplay event on Sunday.

Bill stated that he is considering changing the format next year so that the rapidplay event is run on two days over eleven rounds (finishing at about 16:30 on the Sunday). The NCCU junior event could be held on Monday (and thus avoid a possible clash with the UK Chess Challenge Terafinal). With reasonable prize money, it is thought that this format might attract a good entry. Phil and John will make soundings in the area to help assess whether this would be a good idea.

## **9 Report from Junior Organisers**

Steve reported on junior activities, as follows.

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Three junior congresses had been held during the 2006/2007 season, Heywood (October), Aughton (January) and Darwen Vale (June). Unfortunately a congress planned for Darwen Vale in November was cancelled at relatively short notice due to unforeseen circumstances. It is hoped that five junior congresses will be arranged next season, the first will be held on 6<sup>th</sup> October in Skelmersdale. Bill to check with John Parrott of Skelmersdale whether parents are adequately catered for at this new venue. It was noted that new junior players appeared at the June congress from schools that had received free NCCU sets and from schools that were first contacted during Lancashire’s recent Primary Schools Initiative. Bill stated that we should target attendances of 150 players at junior congresses.

Junior team results were mixed, as follows:

- The U9 and U11 teams failed to progress beyond the zonal stages of the EPSCA competitions.
- The U11 girls won the Whitehead Cup.
- The U14 girls won the Northern Region Cup.
- The U14 team struggled in the NYCA competition.
- The U16 team were runners-up in the NCCU Pennine Cup.
- A depleted U18 team struggled in the NCCU Championship.

It was agreed that some coaching should be provided to small groups of our more promising players, funded from the LCA Junior Account. Jeff Horner had already been approached and it may be possible to involve Bob Newton for those in the North of the county.

Steve to investigate status of CRB clearance for those involved in LCA junior organisation and coaching.

## **10 Report from Website Editor**

Steve reported that every effort was being made to update the website regularly and promptly. There had been some expansion this season, including the addition of the Online Bulletin (as agreed at last year’s AGM). Recent additions had included the Calendar and an archive section of results from past Chorley Congresses.

Steve requested that more authors contribute articles for the Bulletin. Bill to include this request in a publicity e-mail.

Bill to provide Steve with an electronic copy of the LCA logo to use on the website (use of the current “old man” logo may infringe copyright).

## **11 Reports from Lancashire Leagues and Clubs**

Preston won Division A of the Central Lancashire League, Heywood finished runners-up. The league was felt to be healthy and applications had been received from other clubs who may wish to join.

The Blackpool and Fylde League currently consists of three divisions and comprises 15 teams in total (albeit a relatively small number of clubs). Blackpool won Division A, Lytham were second, Preston ‘1’ third and Preston ‘2’ fourth.

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No specific news was available from the East Lancashire League.

## 12 Election of Officers

The following officers were elected unopposed:

President		Bill O’Rourke
Minutes Secretary		Steve Fanning
Treasurer		Simon Woodcock
Team Captains	Open	Mike Conroy
	U175	John Cooper
	U150	Bill O’Rourke
	U125	Phil Raynor
	U100	Mike Horne
Correspondence Organiser		Andrew Clarkson
Junior Coordinator		Steve Fanning
Junior Team Managers	U18	Bill O’Rourke
	U16	Bill O’Rourke
	U14	Peter Edhouse
	U12	Peter Edhouse
	U11	Dave Gaston
	U9	Dave Gaston
	Girls	Ian Hughes
Congress Director		Simon Woodcock
Grading Coordinator		Geoff Jones
ECF Representative		Bill O’Rourke <sup>1</sup>
NCCU Representatives		Simon Woodcock / Phil Raynor <sup>2</sup>
Web Authors		Steve Fanning / Carl Tillotson
Auditor		Peter Howarth

### Notes:

- [1] It was agreed that normal practice would be for Lancashire to assign their proxy votes to someone deemed trustworthy (e.g. the NCCU President or the ECF Chief Executive). Only if a meeting agenda includes items of specific interest would Lancashire’s ECF Representative expect to attend in person.
- [2] Phil agreed to stand-in as an NCCU representative in exceptional circumstances.

## 13 Appointment of Auditor

Peter Howarth was re-elected, see Section 12 above.

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## **14 Subscriptions Proposal for 2008**

Simon stated that club fees do not currently cover the expenditure of the county (e.g. running county teams and paying for associated venue costs), with an approximate shortfall of £200 this year. An anomaly was noted that when a player who is not a member of an affiliated club plays for a county team, the county is funding his/her fees. After some discussion it was agreed that club fees should be raised from £15/£20 to £20/£25 (smaller clubs pay the lower figure).

It was also noted that the number of Vice Presidents had dropped. It was agreed that the fee for a Vice President should be £20 (without an ECF Year Book) or £30 (with a Year Book). During the meeting both John and Bill offered to become Vice Presidents.

Bill to publicise these new rates to clubs via e-mail, stressing that increases are on the back of our success. Steve to list Vice Presidents on the website.

## **15 Memberships Schemes (2006/2007 and 2007/2008)**

Bill reported that peace appeared to be breaking out after the disharmony of recent years concerning membership schemes. He commented that the current organisation team at the ECF deserve support. It was agreed that Lancashire will again join the NCCU scheme next season, with Bill co-ordinating for Lancashire.

## **16 Any Other Business**

### ***16.1 Honorary Vice-Presidents***

The meeting unanimously agreed that Mike Conroy should be offered the title of Honorary Vice-President in recognition of his exceptional service to Lancashire chess over many years.

Mike joins existing Honorary Vice-Presidents Peter Furlong, David Lees, Jim Tennant-Smith, Ken Gorman and Geoff Jones. Steve to ensure that all Honorary Vice-Presidents are listed on the website.

### ***16.2 Lancashire Club Team Blitz Event***

Simon agreed to investigate the feasibility of resurrecting such an event.

### ***16.3 History of Lancashire Chess***

Bill mentioned that a new book on the history of Lancashire chess should be available in September.

## **17 Date of Next AGM**

It was agreed that next year's AGM should be held on Wednesday 31<sup>st</sup> July 2008 at the same venue (St Richard's Parish Club in Atherton).