

Lancashire Chess Association – Annual General Meeting

2nd September 2009 – St Richard's Parish Club, Atherton

1 Present

Steve Fanning, Geoff Jones, Bill O'Rourke and Simon Woodcock.

The meeting noted that Tony McKiernan of Atherton had passed away during the previous year; this was especially poignant because the meeting was held at the venue of the Atherton Rapidplay and Tony had been responsible for securing the use of that venue for chess activities. Sadly we have also lost Charles Cooper from the Blackpool and Fylde League at the grand old age of 94. Charles was a regular at Blackpool Chess Congress and Lytham matches.

2 Minutes of 2008 AGM

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

3 Matters Arising

As a result of an action placed at last year's AGM, an enjoyable challenge match had taken place in December 2008 between U100 teams representing the Blackpool & Fylde and Central Lancashire Leagues. A full report of the Blackpool & Fylde League team's victory was published in the Online Bulletin area of the LCA website.

4 Apologies for Absence

Apologies had been received from John Cooper, Pete Edhouse, Dave Gaston and Phil Raynor.

5 Officers' Reports

5.1 *President's Report*

Bill gave a short report, remarking on our success in getting teams through to the national stages of the ECF County Championships but noting with disappointment that no Lancashire team was able to go on and become champions this year. He also commented that the LCA had provided more coaching for junior players during the previous year than ever before.

Bill offered particular thanks to the relatively small group of people who make things happen for Lancashire chess.

5.2 *Minute Secretary's Report*

There was nothing to report.

5.3 *Treasurer's Report*

The overall conclusion was that the county's finances were again in a very sound state. However there was concern that the county's expenses generally exceed its income, mostly because of county success, and in the long term this would be untenable.

Main Account

Simon handed out details of the Main Account for the year Jan-08 to Dec-08. Although the final bank balance was still healthy at £4530, a large proportion of this figure represents the Mike O'Hara legacy that appeared in the 2008 accounts. Without this legacy, the balance in the Main Account would have suffered a significant loss over the year.

It was noted that only three clubs have paid their 2009 affiliation fee to date, i.e. Blackpool, Knights United and Urmston. Bill agreed to email other clubs to request prompt payment.

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Bill agreed to investigate whether Mike Conroy was benefitting from the loan of the laptop that had been purchased by the county.

Congress Account

Simon presented details of the Congress Account. It was noted that there is not only a healthy balance at the moment but also significant assets being built up in the form of equipment, such as electronic digital clocks together with good quality sets and boards.

There was some discussion about some monies owed to the Congress Account and it was agreed the Bill should follow this up to suggest a payment plan agreeable to both parties.

Junior Account

Bill presented a statement of the junior finances for the 2008/2009 season and commented that the junior set-up continues to prosper thanks to the group of volunteer organisers involved. A grant had been received from the ECF John Robinson Youth Chess Trust to support Lancashire's junior chess training activities and this had been much appreciated by the county.

It was agreed that a £100 contribution to the county's Congress Insurance should be made annually from the Junior Account, since this insurance covers junior activities.

6 Reports from County Team Captains

The Open team were NCCU Champions and made it to the National Final only to lose 9 - 7 to Yorkshire, who enjoyed unprecedented success this year at all grading levels. Captain Mike Conroy's team selection for the final was difficult as a number of "first choice" players were unavailable to play.

The U175 team were also NCCU Champions but also lost to Yorkshire in the National Final.

The U150 team were comfortably beaten by Yorkshire at the semi-final stage of the National Championships.

The U125 team were beaten by Kent at the semi-final stage of the National Championships.

As the only county who entered the NCCU U100 County Championships, Lancashire were declared NCCU Champions and invited to enter two teams in the national stages. Sadly both teams lost very close-fought quarter-final matches by 5½ - 6½.

A few comments have been raised by Lancashire players over arrangements for the National Championships Finals Day and Bill agreed to raise these privately with the organiser Cyril Johnson.

Bill reported that the grading bands for next season's ECF County Championships would be Open, U180, U160, U140, U120 and U100. Although concern was expressed over this change, the meeting agreed to attempt to enter a team at every level next season providing that suitable captains could be found. This decision would be reviewed again next year once the grading system stabilises and the overall costs of entering these teams are better understood.

7 Report from Congress Organisers

Blackpool

Simon reported on the 2009 Blackpool Chess Conference held at Blackpool Football Club. Despite difficulties in holding a large congress at a "one-off" venue, the event went very well and made a surplus over venue costs. Bill congratulated the organisation team on this achievement. The 2010 event will be held at the Blackpool Imperial Hotel, with entry forms already in circulation and planning well underway.

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It was noted that the various items of congress equipment are currently stored at a number of locations, mostly in people's houses, garages or sheds. It was suggested that it might prove cost-effective to utilise a commercial self storage centre – Geoff / Simon to investigate further.

Lancashire Championships

The Lancashire Championships took place within the Preston Congress in November 2008. The next Lancashire Championships are due to take place at the Heywood Congress in June 2010 where cash prizes, funded by the Mike O'Hara legacy, will again be awarded to the Lancashire Champions (£50 for the Open, £25 for the Major and £25 for the Minor).

Other Congresses

Bill reported that numbers had been up at the Heywood Congress in June but so had costs. A management change at the Heywood Civic Centre may cause costs to increase further.

Simon and Geoff had attended the Leyland Congress over the weekend prior to the meeting and they understood that numbers were slightly up on the previous year.

8 Report from Junior Organisers

Six successful junior congresses had been held during the season at Heywood (October and February), Parbold (November), Audley (January and April) and Barton (June). Seven are planned for the coming season, including a new venture at Formby on 19th September in conjunction with Cathy Rothwell, Merseyside Junior Organiser.

Junior team results were mixed, as follows:

- The U9 team struggled in their U9 EPSCA zonal, finishing ninth overall. However the players did enjoy (and win!) a friendly match against neighbours Tameside. A priority this season is to find more U9 players so that the team can progress.
- The U11 team performed well, out-scoring some tough opposition, to qualify for the EPSCA National Final again. The final, held in High Wycombe, gave the players a long journey and some great experience – although they enjoyed their day out they didn't threaten the stronger counties.
- Some of Lancashire's girls helped Liverpool's U11 Girls team to a very respectable 5th place in the EPSCA National Final.
- The U12 team finished a hugely creditable 3rd in the NYCA competition. An excellent performance by those involved, especially taking into account that some of our strongest players in the age group were not available.
- The U14 girls shared the ECGCF Northern Region Trophy with Yorkshire.
- The U14 team achieved a brilliant result in the NYCA competition, finishing second and winning three individual board prizes along the way.
- The U16 team finished in the middle of the field in the NYCA competition but this disguises a great performance by players well under the age limit who will be available for the same team again this season.
- The U18 team produced a solid performance but finished just out of the medals in the NYCA competition.

The NCCU have recently confirmed their eligibility rules for junior events and the meeting agreed that Lancashire should make every effort to enter such competitions during the 2009/2010 season (specifically the U16 Pennine Cup and U18 Jamboree).

Further coaching sessions had been organised for small groups of our more promising junior players. These sessions, taken by Malcolm Peacock and Bob Newton, were a great success; it was hoped that Keith Arkell would be able to complete his 2008/2009

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sessions with our strongest junior players before he moves out of the area. It was agreed that Bill and Steve should seek feedback from the coaches and group organisers before Bill carries out any detailed planning for this season’s coaching.

A revised Child Protection Policy had been circulated before the meeting and it was agreed at the meeting that this new policy should be adopted with immediate effect and published on the website. Bill reported that the process of obtaining CRB clearance for relevant personnel had begun, through the Lancashire Youth Association umbrella body.

Steve had previously indicated that he would be unable to continue in the role of Junior Coordinator beyond the 2008/2009 season. Bill stated that he would be prepared to coordinate both the group training and junior team management aspects. Since Steve was willing to continue to help with junior congress organisation, the meeting felt that we could proceed without a Junior Coordinator for the coming season (unless one came forward!).

A note from Dave Gaston was circulated at the meeting, reporting on the successful Blackburn Schools Chess League. There are a number of strong junior players at Audley Primary School – their ‘A’ team won the league and their ‘B’ team finished second. It is hoped that more players from Audley can be encouraged to play for Lancashire’s teams.

9 Report from Website Editor

Steve reported that every effort was being made to update the website regularly and promptly but expressed disappointment that there were so few contributors (www.lancashirechess.org.uk).

10 Reports from Lancashire Leagues and Clubs

Phil Raynor had provided a written report for the Blackpool & Fylde League. The main points were:

- Details of Blackpool and Fylde Chess League results can be picked up from the website at www.blackpoolandfyldechess.org.uk.
- The league has introduced an electronic match card system successfully which enables online entry of results on the website by club officials. This system has been developed by Malcolm Peacock and is accessed through links provided in the main website (at the URL above).

The Central Lancashire League continues to expand and will comprise four divisions of six teams each next season. Dave Clayton had been working on an improved website which will be hosted in Leyland Chess Club’s web space (www.leylandchess.org.uk/league/).

It is understood that the number of teams participating in the East Lancashire League will be unchanged next season – twenty in total (www.elca.org.uk).

It was noted that once again Lancashire clubs were well represented in the final stages of the NCCU Club Championships and the county was very successful. Heywood beat Atherton in the Open final; Rochdale were runners-up in the Major to Wallasey; Heywood beat Crusaders in the Intermediate final; Heywood won the Minor against Hartlepool.

11 Election of Officers

The following officers were elected:

President	Bill O’Rourke
Minutes Secretary	Steve Fanning
Treasurer	Simon Woodcock
Team Captains	Open Mike Conroy

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	U180	John Cooper
	U160	Bill O'Rourke ¹
	U140	TBA ²
	U120	TBA ²
	U100	TBA ²
Correspondence Organiser		Andrew Clarkson
Junior Coordinator		Vacant
Junior Team Managers	U18	Bill O'Rourke
	U16	TBA ³
	U14	TBA ³
	U12	TBA ³
	U11	TBA ³
	U9	Colin Greenwood
	Girls	TBA ³
Congress Director		Geoff Jones
Grading Coordinator		Geoff Jones
ECF Representative		Bill O'Rourke ⁴
NCCU Representatives		Simon Woodcock / Jim Tennant-Smith
Web Authors		Steve Fanning / Carl Tillotson
Auditor		Peter Howarth

Notes:

- [1] Although Bill is above the grading limit for the U160 team and will not be able to play, he agreed to perform all organisation needed before each match. Steve Fanning agreed to act as match captain on the day.
- [2] Bill agreed to approach suitable candidates to fill the vacant team manager roles for the adult teams.
- [3] Bill agreed to approach suitable parents to fill the vacant manager roles for the various junior teams.
- [4] It was agreed that normal practice would be for Lancashire to assign their proxy votes to someone deemed trustworthy (e.g. a fellow North West NCCU chess association). Only if a meeting agenda includes items of specific interest would Lancashire's ECF Representative expect to attend in person.

12 Appointment of Auditor

Peter Howarth had confirmed he would continue to act as auditor, see Section 11 above.

Geoff stated that the CAA had been advised that use of the term Auditor had become inappropriate for organisations such as ours, suggesting that Compliance Officer might be more appropriate. Geoff to confirm reason for change and preferred title.

13 Subscriptions Proposal for 2009

It was agreed that club subscriptions should be £20 for small clubs (14 or less members) and £25 for larger clubs (15 or more members) from January 2010.

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It was further agreed that individuals who are not members of a Lancashire club could continue to affiliate for £1 (hence becoming eligible for Lancashire Champion trophies and prize money, eligible to play for Lancashire county teams, etc).

14 Membership Schemes

It was agreed that Lancashire will again join the NCCU MO scheme next season, with Bill co-ordinating for Lancashire.

15 Any Other Business

15.1 Honorary Vice Presidents

It was agreed that Frank Rushworth and George Ellison should be invited to become Honorary Vice-Presidents in recognition of their services to Lancashire chess.

15.2 Junior Grading

Geoff suggested that it might be possible to utilise existing software to run a grading system for our juniors, distinct from the ECF system but more representative than the simplistic “rating system” that we currently use. Bill to provide contact details for administrator of Yorkshire junior grading system and Steve to investigate further.

16 Date of Next AGM

It was agreed that next year’s AGM should be held on Wednesday 1st September 2010 at the same venue (St Richard’s Parish Club in Atherton). A further meeting should be held in February in advance of the Blackpool Conference.