



Minutes of Meeting - Hertfordshire Chess Association (HCA)

Held Friday 3rd March 2017 from 19.30 hrs

Chauncy Room, Hertford Club, Bull Plain, Hertford, SG14 1DT

Present

Barnet	Malcolm Harding	President
Stevenage	Chris Majer	ECF Delegate
	Mike Price	Treasurer
Hertford	Alan Brewis	Secretary
Welwyn Hatfield	Kidge Elder	Congress Organiser
St Albans	Michael Flatt	SCCU Representative
	Peter Baker	U120 Team Captain
	Jeremy Fraser-Mitchell	

Note – The low number attending resulted in this meeting not being quorate.

1 Apologies for Absence

Paul Littlefair, Steve Law, Kevin Clark, Mike Boyce, Steve Banks

2 Minutes of the previous meeting held 18th November 2016

The minutes were approved.

3 Matters Arising

ECF Yearbook This was published in February and Alan will purchase a copy.

Daytime Chess U3A's in the area are providing the opportunity to play chess, virtually FOC. Adam Raouf has organised a *new* weekday rapidplay (Tues 28th February in Muswell Hill).

Allenbury's For the time being it was agreed that Allenbury's will be given Honorary affiliation of the HCA with their fee written off.

Chess Results Website Work on the new web server is progressing. Mark Harris to advise.

Archiving Our webmaster has kept the door open for the hertschess.com website to hold some archiving material.

4 Treasurer's Report – Mike Price

Game fees from 2015-16 season have now been paid to ECF. This covers all HCA competitions, but clubs should note that they could face further game fee from last season's Herts & District League competitions.

Barnet have not paid their game fees, nor their affiliation and entry fees for this season, and will be deemed a debtor club barred from future HCA competitions whilst their debts continue to be unpaid.

Herts Congress is currently showing a small surplus of just over £200, although there may be outstanding expenses. All Herts Congress prize winners have been paid bar one.

EACU affiliation and entry fees have now been paid.

Only eight vice-presidents have paid their fees for this season. Ten remain outstanding.

Recommendation that £5,000 from current account should be placed into an instant access deposit account with HSBC. This was approved.

£300 has been paid to Mark Harris in support of new website server.

5 **Secretary's Report**

HCA Newsletter Consideration will be given to incorporating the Minutes of Meetings into a Newsletter that might be a more interesting read than the current format. Whilst it would carefully highlight details of decisions made it could also have content of general interest to the Herts chess community.

Herts Congress Venue The quotation received from Elior at Hertford's County Hall for hosting this year's congress in November has seen a huge increase – from £700 to £3,712.88. Although this was reduced following negotiation to £2,620.75, it is still unrealistically high. A more realistic fee of £1,500 for a new venue is now expected. A maximum of £2,000 was approved. (The £700 fee for the November 2016 congress has been offered to Elior but has not been collected).

Digital Clocks Watford are to purchase digital clocks that support Fischer timing. They've suggested combining with other clubs in the expectation that a discount would be applicable.

6 **Officer's Reports**

Hertfordshire U160 Team - Mike Price

After the successful results back in October when we won both our matches, I had hoped that success might act as a spur to other players to take part, and ensure that momentum was maintained that would see us qualify for the ECF stages of the County Championships. We welcomed four new players to their first matches for Herts U160 - Paul Walton, Andrew Smith, Francois Swiegers and Ger Reilly, but with an average grade of under 136, our team was statistically the weakest team we have fielded since we joined the EACU in 2012.

We had a good start to our morning match against Suffolk with an early win for Ger Reilly, which was followed by wins for the other debutants Andrew Smith and Francois Swiegers, and a win for Andrew Maclaren which for the second season in succession completed a county award performance from him of three wins without intervening defeat. Outside the middle boards it was carnage, as we lost the top six boards and the bottom four boards for a comprehensive defeat by 5 - 11.

We were rather fortunate in October that Norfolk had travel problems which gave us an easy win. Apart from that success, our results against Norfolk have been poor in recent seasons, and this was no different. Although Paul Walton recorded a win on his debut for the county, our only other winners were Corinne Mountford and Mir Wali as we subsided to a 7 - 9 defeat.

The response to this round of matches was dismal. We had only six players in our team graded above 140, another new low. Back in 2012, we were fielding 15 players graded 140

and above, and only the odd player graded under 140 would play. We are sometimes able to punch above our weight, as we did in October when we beat Cambridgeshire, but the U140 players are not going to be able to bail the team out every time. However, it is too simplistic to blame these defeats on absent players, and I will point an accusing finger at the ECF, who have failed to deal with the inherent faults within the grading system. A number of those players who were graded above 140 in 2012 are now graded below 140. They might be worse players than in 2012, or maybe they are not. Mathematicians among you will be aware that the "dragging down effect" increasingly affects players from grades of 160 downwards. We are not alone in this, and all U160 and U140 county teams are affected by this. A more accurate barometer is probably how we compare with Suffolk. Historically Cambridgeshire have been a bit stronger than us, Norfolk a bit weaker, and Suffolk about the same. On Sunday, Suffolk were a far stronger side than we were.

At the end of last season, I indicated that I would need to review my position as captain. I can now confirm I shall be standing down as captain of Herts U160 at the end of this season. If someone else can be found to take over the reins, in the short term I will offer administrative assistance if required, but as a player, I shall be retiring from whole Sundays spent at Newmarket. I have taken on fresh responsibilities within HCA as Treasurer, and outside of chess which conflict with availability on a Sunday. I have been captain of the Herts U150 and subsequently U160 teams since 2003, and the time has come for me to move on. We do however have a further round of matches on Sunday 12th March 2017 to consider – 10.00 am Herts v Cambridgeshire; 2.30 pm Suffolk v Herts

All matches are at Turner Hall, Newmarket. First named team has white on the odd boards. Rate of play is 36 moves in 80 minutes, followed by 10 minutes to finish, with an increment of 15 seconds per move from move one. Please remember board fee is £2.50.

Those of you graded under 140 may wish to note that there is an U140 match scheduled for Saturday 11th March, so I hope that we may have a better response from the players graded above 140, who of course do not have that prior commitment. All is not lost, and we can still qualify for the ECF stages with good results in March.

Hertfordshire U140 Team - Steve Dicks

Steve has indicated he will take a 'sabbatical' next season and will not be available to captain this team.

ECF Representative - Chris Majer

Chris invited the meeting to indicate the HCA's response to two ECF proposals:

Voting Reform - ECF Directors acknowledge the concern that the existing constitutional arrangements do not adequately reflect the interests of Direct Members and proposed the Council should decide whether voting reform was required. The main idea involves Direct Members having voting rights. The HCA expressed no interest in its ECF members having no direct vote.

Game Fee - The HCA voted against an ECF proposal to abolish the Game Fee. For further details see <http://www.englishchess.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/Abolition-of-Game-Fee.pdf>.

7 CCCR Proposal

- 7.1 Proposed new CCC Rule: 3.1.8 Clubs wishing to withdraw a team(s) shall only withdraw from the lowest division(s) excepting where the League Secretary is satisfied that there is insufficient strength to support a team(s) in a higher division(s). Proposed by Mike Price.

This was carried with 6 for, 1 against and one abstention.

- 7.2 Proposed new CCC Rule 3.8.5 Where Fischer Timing is in operation (3.7.3), at any time after 2 hours 40 minutes play has elapsed (at least 60 moves, if recorded):-

- a) either player may call a halt to play,
- b) either team captain may call a halt on all boards still in play.

In either case the player\team calling a halt must make the final move on the board. The position shall then be sent for adjudication (3.12) if no result has been agreed.

Proposed by Kevin Clark.

The current Rule 3.8.5 is:

Where Fischer Timing is in operation (3.7.3) whichever team calls for play to cease, after 2 hours 40 minutes (3.6.2), then their player shall make the final move on the board and the game shall be sent for adjudication (3.12).

This was not carried with 0 for, 7 against and 1 abstention.

8 Any Other Business

Meeting closed at 10:10 p.m.