

# HERTS CHESS ASSOCIATION

## Executive meeting, 2 September 2026, St Albans Chess Club

Meeting started at 7.45pm (waiting for late arrivals)

Those present –

|                                                                                                                                  |                   |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|
| Jeremy Fraser-Mitchell (President), in the chair<br>Ray Claret<br>Matt Kortekaas (minute-taker, in the absence of the Secretary) | St Albans         |
| Steve Law (League Secretary)                                                                                                     | Hemel Hempstead   |
| Chris Cook (ECF Rep)                                                                                                             | Little Heath      |
| Nick Harrington (Treasurer)<br>Adam Hirst (Newsletter)                                                                           | Bishops Stortford |
| Ernie Bradwell (Succession Planning)                                                                                             | Stevenage         |
| Andrew du Boulay<br>Duncan Marshall                                                                                              | Hertford          |
| Ian Mutton<br>Nigel Wright                                                                                                       | Letchworth        |
| Raghav Ramesh                                                                                                                    | Rothamsted        |
| Andrew Roderick (Webmaster)<br>Andrew Smith (U1450 team captain & Old Puller Cup organizer)                                      | Welwyn Hatfield   |

### Clubs not represented

Borehamwood, Enfield, Hoddesdon, Rothamsted, Royston, Watford

### 1. Apologies for Absence

Received from – Andrew Kent (Borehamwood), Alan Brewis (Hertford), Chris Pines, Martin Hill (St Albans)

### 2. Minutes of last meeting

Minutes of the meeting on 25 November 2025 were approved nem con.

*(No record of proposer / seconder?)*

### 3. Matters Arising

**ACTION (Martin Hill)** – to produce an uncorrupted version of the minutes of the September Exec, and circulate.

This has not been possible. Action closed.

**ACTION (Matt Fletcher)** – to approach Letchworth players to fill remaining vacancies.

Ongoing?

**ACTION (Martin Hill)** – Specifically contact all clubs not present at this meeting, urge them to attend in future. Note that clubs can nominate 2 delegates to attend meetings, and substitutes are allowed.

Done.

**ACTION (Steve Law)** – Ensure that HCA delegates are listed on the “Club contacts” page of the e2-e4 website.

Ongoing (clubs to advise delegate contact details).

**ACTION (Steve Law / Martin Hill)** – To not accept any team nominations until HCA delegate contact details have been received, and to advise clubs of this requirement.

Done – HCA Constitutional rules revised to include this requirement.

**ACTION (Jeremy Fraser-Mitchell)** – Draft a presentation that promotes the activities of the HCA, that can be shared with clubs (e.g. at their AGM).

Done – see 2026 Newsletter.

**ACTION (Jeremy Fraser-Mitchell / Martin Hill)** – provide Andrew du Boulay (Trophies officer) with contact details for all trophy holders.

Not done (HCA currently does not have a trophies officer).

#### 4. Treasurer’s Report

The new Treasurer, Nick Harrington, gave a verbal report:

- Will continue to shadow in role.
- Now has access to bank.
- Now familiar with previous format of reporting
- Will verify who access to bank account.
- Will change contact details on records (bank etc.)
- Will update insurance and club contacts.
- Mentions £8000 surplus. He will actively look for alternate interest-bearing accounts, or cheaper options.

#### 5. Rule changes

Matters presented in blocks referencing rule numbers for approval and discussion (in no specified order):

First Block – general tidy-up

The rules affected (using the draft v.27 numbering) are:

- 1.5

- 3.1.2
- 3.3.1
- 3.3.7
- 4 (preamble)
- 4.1.1
  - Amendment 1: to remove the redundant wording “or the latest revision if Sept is unavailable”
  - Amendment 2: to clarify that ECF ratings for September would also apply where new players join a club mid-season.
- 4.2.1
- 4.2.3
- 4.3.1
- 4.4.2
- 4.5.1

Proposal to accept the changes (including amendments to 4.1.1): Ray Claret, seconded Duncan Marshall

Vote: Nem con.

Post-meeting note: Andrew du Boulay reminded Jeremy Fraser-Mitchell of an email he had sent identifying a number of tidy-up issues (e.g. redundant clauses, errors in cross-referencing rules). These will be reviewed and amended as appropriate.

### Second Block - Match Defaults

The discussion was focussed on the issue of whole matches being defaulted, rather than individual boards. This is relevant to the main League, and potential also the U1650 and U1450 Leagues, but not the Knockouts.

Match defaults generally occur when the defaulting team cannot get enough players.

It was noted the League Rules currently permit clubs to mutually agree a postponement (though unavailability of players does not constitute “exceptional circumstances” which would allow a club to unilaterally demand a postponement). This can work to the disadvantage of the non-defaulting team if they then cannot agree a postponement date.

A financial penalty for a defaulted match was suggested, but this idea was not pursued (though might be considered in future if nothing else solves the problem).

It was suggested that the penalty for a team defaulting a second match could be automatic relegation to the next division down. This was not pursued, although a proposed amendment (see below) was carried (8 in favour, with 1 in favour of draft v.27 and 2 in favour of keeping rule unchanged i.e. v.26).

It was suggested that the play-up allowance could be increased to reduce the chance of match defaults. However the consensus of the discussion was that the allowance is OK, and this idea was not pursued.

A suggestion that there should be a “clean slate” in respect of match default penalties incurred last season was deferred to AOB, as this was not relevant to the rules going forward.

The rules affected (using the draft v.27 numbering) are:

- 3.4.2
- 3.4.3
  - Amendment 1: the penalty for the first match default to be 2MP and 5GP (i.e. as in the draft v.27). The penalty for the second match default to be 4MP and 10GP.
- 3.4.4

Proposal to accept the changes (including amendment to 3.4.3): Ernie Bradwell, seconded Steve Law

Vote: carried (1 against)

### Third Block – Playing Strength, Team Nominations and Board Order

The discussion mainly concerned the use of current ECF rating (as opposed to estimated “current playing strength”). It was recognised that the e2-e4 website used to administer the HCA competitions was not ideally suited to tracking a player’s current rating as well as their September rating (which determines eligibility for certain competitions). An amendment to rule 2.2.1 was carried (with 4 voting against)

The limit of 5 to the number of play-ups was discussed again, but there was no strong inclination to alter this.

The rules affected (using the draft v.27 numbering) are:

- 2.1.1
  - Amendment 1: to use September ratings throughout the season, rather than current ratings.
- 3.3.2
- 3.3.3
- 3.3.4
- 3.3.5
- 3.3.6

Proposal to accept the changes (including amendments to 2.1.1): Ray Claret, seconded Andrew Smith

Vote: carried (2 against)

**ACTION: Jeremy Fraser-Mitchell** to update Rules v.27 (draft) as detailed above, and circulate to clubs ready for the new season.

## **6. Newsletter**

Adam Hirst stated that the Newsletter covering the 2025-26 season is now available (from [www.hertschess.com](http://www.hertschess.com)). He thanked those who helped to supply information and proofread the document.

Jeremy Fraser-Mitchell commended Adam for his production of the Newsletter (after a gap of nearly 20 years!).

## **7. Trophies**

The St Albans Congress needs a volunteer to present the HCA trophies as JFM will not be there. The volunteer needs to be present for Sunday Round 5, to check the eligibility of those in contention for trophies, to check that the winner of each trophy has been correctly determined (including any tiebreaks), and to present the trophies as the representative of HCA at the end of the Congress.

No volunteer came forward at the meeting, so the search continues. This is not so urgent, and might be better to decide nearer the time of the Congress, when a potential volunteer will be able to make a more definite commitment.

There was discussion of whether trophies should continue to be engraved (cost, and space on the trophy for further entries were both concerns), or whether to just update digital records of trophy winners.

**ACTION: Secretary** to add item for discussion at next Exec meeting.

## **8. Any Other Business.**

The HCA needs a secretary, as Martin Hill's changed circumstances make it impossible for him to continue in the role. It is critical to fill this post as soon as possible, the HCA cannot continue without a Secretary.

**ACTION: All clubs**, to find a suitable volunteer.

All clubs are reminded of the new requirement to supply contact details of at least one HCA delegate, before they are eligible to play in HCA competitions.

**ACTION: All clubs**, to supply the requested details. In the absence of a Secretary, these should go to the League Secretary for now.

Steve Law presented an intricate team relegation/promotion decision problem, which nobody was able to follow or understand, so it is decided Steve Law implements whatever he thinks is best, while considering precedent or best practice.

**ACTION: Steve Law** to determine League structure and promotion / relegation slots.

There was a suggestion from Chris Cook, that there should be a clean slate to start the season with any match default penalties acquired from the previous season being ignored.

Proposal to start with a clean slate: Steve Law, seconded Ian Mutton

Vote: not carried (2 in favour, rest against).

It was confirmed that penalties given for the previous season AND this season will add together.

There was a request to consider Rule 1.4: “Debtor Players’ and members of a ‘Debtor Club’ who are not ECF Members shall be ineligible to participate in any HCA competitions and County Teams”. This will be covered in the next Exec Meeting

**ACTION: Secretary** to add item for discussion at next Exec meeting.

With no other business, the meeting closed at 22.07.

#### Appendix – List of Officers, and posts vacant

| Title                              | Incumbent                 | Incumbent's club   |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------|
| President                          | J Fraser-Mitchell         | St Albans          |
| <b>Secretary</b>                   | <b>VACANT</b>             |                    |
| Treasurer                          | Nick Harrington           | Bishop's Stortford |
| League Secretary                   | Steve Law                 | Hemel Hempstead    |
| KO Competitions organiser          | Steve Law                 | Hemel Hempstead    |
| County U1900 team captain          | Matt Ball                 | St Albans          |
| County U1650 team captain          | Ewan Davids               | Watford            |
| County U1450 team captain          | Andrew Smith              | Welwyn Hatfield    |
| Old Puller Cup organiser           | Andrew Smith              | Welwyn Hatfield    |
| Capel, Burn & Bunce organiser      | Jeremy Fraser-Mitchell    | St Albans          |
| <b>Congress trophies organiser</b> | <b>VACANT</b>             |                    |
| <b>Venues Secretary</b>            | <b>VACANT</b>             |                    |
| Webmaster                          | Andrew Roderick           | Welwyn Hatfield    |
| Magazine editor                    | Adam Hirst                | Bishops Stortford  |
| Archives                           | Alan Brewis               | Hertford           |
| Equipment Secretary                | Martin Hill               | St Albans          |
| <b>Trophies organiser</b>          | <b>VACANT / REDUNDANT</b> |                    |
| Rating (grading) Secretary         | Steve Law                 | Hemel Hempstead    |
| <b>Junior Chess Liaison</b>        | <b>VACANT</b>             |                    |
| Rules & Appeals Committee chair    | Jeremy Fraser-Mitchell    | St Albans          |
| ECF liaison                        | Chris Cook                | Little Heath       |
| SCCU liaison                       | Mike Flatt                | St Albans          |
| EACU liaison                       | Matt Ball                 | St Albans          |
| Succession Planning Secretary      | Ernie Bradwell            | Stevenage          |