

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Sheffield & District Chess Association
The Trades and Labour Club, 200 Duke Street, Sheffield S2 5QQ
Tuesday 2nd September 2025 at 7.30pm

Treasurer John Mercy chaired the opening few items of the meeting

1. Apologies for absence

Geoff Frost, Jonathan Arnott, Daniel Sullivan, Peter Micklethwaite, SASCA & Sheffield Deaf

2. Minutes of the 2024 Annual General Meeting held on Tuesday, 3rd September 2024

These had already been circulated by email and were agreed to be a true record of the meeting

3. Matters arising

No matters arising

4. Treasurer's Report

John Mercy's accounts showed an exceptional income item of £2,105.00 transferred to the Association from the defunct Sheffield Congress.

John is stepping down from the post at this meeting but will help the incoming treasurer by preparing the club invoices ready for the Fixture Meeting in two weeks.

5. Secretaries' Reports

Daniel Sullivan had provided the General Secretary with reports for winter league divisions 1 & 2, and for the summer league. These had not been circulated to clubs before the meeting but will be included with the minutes and posted on the Association website.

6. Election of Officers, Auditors, Archivist & Match Captains

President	Andrew Hards (who now took over chairing the meeting)
General Secretary	Geoff Brown
Treasurer	Pete Micklethwaite (there was a vote of thanks to John Mercy)
Auditors	Nigel Carpino and Dave Latham
Webmaster	Steve Mann
Tournament Controller	Geoff Brown
Division 1 secretary	Oliver Brennan
Division 2 secretary	Oliver Brennan
Division 3 secretary	Phil Beckett
Division 4 Secretary	Phil Beckett
Division 5 Secretary	Phil Beckett
Richardson Cup Secretary	Oliver Brennan
Summer League Secretary	Daniel Sullivan
Vice-Presidents	all re-elected plus John Mercy

7. Election of members to serve on the Executive

Jonathan Arnott, Alan McIntosh, Jamie Woodhouse and Dave Latham

8. Fixing of fees and subscriptions

John Mercy suggested reducing some of the fees, but it was decided to leave them as they are for now. The new Executive Committee might want to consider a reduction for next year.

9. Proposed amendments to the Constitution & Rules (see below)

All the proposed rule changes and additions were passed with big majorities. The sixth proposal, re mobile phones in the playing venue, came with two options. It was the first option, giving a warning for the first offence if a phone sounds, which was the one chosen to go forward.

(i)

Proposed change to Rule 8 (a) from Geoff Brown

To help the Executive Committee deal with complaints or disputes in the Summer League, it should be clear that the Secretary for the Summer League is an ex officio member of the Executive. I therefore propose the following change to the wording:

8(a) The Executive shall consist of The President, the Treasurer, the General Secretary, the Divisional Secretaries, the Summer League Secretary, the Webmaster, the Tournament Controller and four members elected annually by the AGM.

(ii)

Stephen Mann submitted two new Rules to be added after the existing clauses of Rule 19:

19 (f) All games shall be conducted in accordance with the current FIDE Laws of Chess including its associated Appendices and Guidelines except where overridden in these Rules.

19 (g) Results of all eligible games shall be submitted for rating by the ECF.

(iii)

Proposed change to Rule 24 (o) by Mike Smith

"The following teams shall be kept apart in the first round: winners from the last season, the teams finishing in the top five positions in the Davy Trophy from the last season."

(iv)

Proposed change to Rule 25 (h) by Geoff Brown

The current Rule 25 (h), re Summer League registration of players, still has mention of Chair of the Executive, a position that was done away with some years ago.

"Except as provided under Rule 17(c) and 25 (i), registration of players shall be subject to approval by the Executive. If the Executive is not scheduled to meet, the approval shall be by consultation between the General Secretary and the Summer League Secretary/Secretaries."

(v)

Geoff Brown Proposed temporary change to the rules for the Individual Competitions

Entries to the Sheffield Individual Championships have gradually decreased over the years (back in the late 80's we used to have three separate tournaments with a couple of dozen entrants in each; now we're lucky to have twelve players in just one section).

The reasons for the decrease are numerous: difficulties in arranging matches; games played at the opponent's home; on strange chess sets; travelling to out of the way places; providing refreshments when hosting; matches not rated; playing the same players year after year; etc, etc.

The Executive Committee discussed the matter and would like to breathe new life into the tournaments (there are three separate trophies to play for) and have come up with the idea of holding each of the six rounds at a single venue, with everyone playing at the same time on a set night each month (7.30 pm on the last Wednesday of the month at the Sheffield Chess Centre). With homogenous playing conditions for everyone there is no reason why the games cannot be sent for rating.

The suggestion is to try this format for the 2025-26 season before committing to it for ever, hence the following proposal for a temporary change to Rules 26 to 29 inclusive.

TEMPORARY RULES FOR INDIVIDUAL COMPETITIONS – FOR SEASON 2025-26 ONLY

26.

SHEFFIELD CHAMPIONSHIP

(a) A Sheffield Individual Championship tournament shall be held annually. If there are sufficient entrants, then the format will be a six-round Swiss system tournament. If the number of entrants is low then the Tournament Controller can alter the tournament format.

(b) The winner shall hold, until the end of the following season, the title of "Sheffield Chess Champion" and the Bruce Trophy.

(c) **Entry shall be open to any member of the Association but note that ECF membership, at Bronze level or above, should be held and still in place on 30th June 2026.**

(d) (i) The Tournament Controller shall 'seed' the six highest rated players before play begins. If fewer than 18 players compete, then one third of the entrants shall be seeded. The highest placed player not included in this list of seeds shall hold the Holroyd Trophy until the end of the following season.

(ii) The Tournament Controller shall 'seed' the six next highest rated players before play begins. If fewer than 18 players compete, then one third of the entrants shall be seeded. The highest placed player not included in either list of seeds shall hold the Shapero Trophy until the end of the following season.

27.

CONDUCT OF TOURNAMENTS

(a) **Entries shall be sent to the controller. The treasurer will make arrangements to collect the ECF game fee (£21.00 from 1st September 2025) from entrants without at least Bronze ECF membership.**

(b) The closing date for entries shall be October 15th.

(c) **Matches will be played at the Sheffield Chess Centre, 329A Coleford Road, Darnall, Sheffield S9 5NT, starting at 7.30pm, on the final Wednesday in October, November, January, February, March and April (i.e. 29th October, 26th November, 28th January, 25th February, 25th March and 29th April).**

(d) **The draw for successive rounds shall be made by the Tournament Controller as soon as possible after 15th of each relevant month. Players may request a half-point bye in any round as long as they notify the controller by 15th day of the month of that round.**

(e) Should a tie-break be required to determine an outright winner in any of the sections then tie-break systems will be applied in the following order: (i) Direct Encounter (where the tie-break is required to separate only two players on the same score) (ii) Buchholz Cut 1 (iii) Buchholz (iv) Sonneborn-Berger

28.

CONDUCT OF TOURNAMENT GAMES

(a) The time limit for the individual tournament shall be 60 minutes per player plus 15 seconds per move.

29.

DEFAULTING OPPONENTS

(a) The Controller shall have the authority to disqualify players who default more than one game.

(b) The Controller's decision shall be final in the event of any dispute.

(vi)

Rule addition proposal re mobile phones and other electronic devices prepared by Alan McIntosh

At the S&DCA Fixture meeting in 2023 it was agreed to adopt, at our 2024 AGM, a rule regarding mobile phones and other electronic devices. Unfortunately, this was forgotten about, and it remains as just advice. We are therefore supposed to be following FIDE rules, which are much stricter than we need and adhere to (see 11.3). Regarding unapproved electronic devices, rule 11.3.2.2 states that...If it is evident that a player has such a device on their person in the playing venue, the player shall lose the game. The opponent shall win. The regulations of an event may specify a different, less severe, penalty.

In the event of a phone going off I think a warning should be given, but I know some prefer that it be an immediate loss, and our current advice is that it should be. I have therefore come up with two

possibilities to be voted on, in the assumption that one will be adopted.

Either

Mobile phones and other electronic devices capable of suggesting moves are allowed into the playing area but must be switched off. Ideally these devices should be left on the table, beside the board, but as space may be at a premium they can be left on the player's person but should not leave the playing area during the game. A mobile phone can be exempted if, for example, the player is 'on call' and both captains agree to the exemption. If a player's non-exempted phone or device makes a sound during the game, that player shall receive a warning. On a further instance of a sound from the same device or any other device belonging to that player, they shall forfeit the game. If a player has a non-exempted phone or device switched on and in use during their game, that player shall immediately forfeit the game. This would be the case if, for example, a player was seen scrolling through texts or answering their phone.

Or

Mobile phones and other electronic devices capable of suggesting moves are allowed into the playing area but must be switched off. Ideally these devices should be left on the table, beside the board, but as space may be at a premium they can be left on the player's person but should not leave the playing area during the game. A mobile phone can be exempted if, for example, the player is 'on call' and both captains agree to the exemption. If a player's non-exempted phone or device makes a sound during the game, they shall forfeit the game. If a player has a non-exempted phone or device switched on and in use during their game, that player will forfeit the game. This would be the case if, for example, a player was seen scrolling through texts or answering their phone.

The meeting chose the first of these options as the one to be voted on and, as mentioned earlier, was carried by a large majority. There will now be a warning given to a player for a first offence regarding a phone/electronic device transgression. It will only be on the second instance that the game would be forfeited.

10. Approval of Clubs seeking membership to the league

The re-election of Clay Cross club was approved

11. Organisation of teams into Divisions

Jonathan Arnott had submitted a request that SASCA C should be allowed to decline promotion from Division 3 to Division 2. Following a discussion and vote, this request was turned down.

In any case, SASCA were dropping a team, and Clay Cross were now entering one team. So with 37 teams again it was agreed that we go with five divisions as last year but attempt to increase Div 4 to seven teams, with six in Div 5 (last year six in Div 4 and seven in Div 5). There was also discussion about whether Hillsborough could manage two teams in Div 4. In the end they decided it should be okay.

Division 1 – SASCA A, Ecclesall A, Chesterfield A, Nomads A, Woodseats A, Hillsborough A, Worksop A and Darnall & Handsworth A

Division 2 – Barnsley A, Nomads B, SASCA B, Rotherham, Ecclesall B, Hillsborough B, Barnsley B, SASCA C

Division 3 – University A, Chesterfield B, Woodseats B, Darnall & Handsworth B, Nomads C, Worksop B, Barnsley C and Woodseats C

Division 4 – Chesterfield C, University B, Ecclesall C, Hillsborough C, Hillsborough D, Darnall & Handsworth C and Woodseats D

Division 5 – SASCA D, Darnall & Handsworth D, Ravenfield, Sheffield Deaf, Barnsley D and Clay Cross

12. Any Other Business

- (a) The inaugural Paul Blackman Memorial team blitz event will take place at The Chess Centre on Monday, 15th September 2025
- (b) Alan McIntosh asked what other clubs do about their banking arrangements. Ecclesall have found that they are now being charged on their old bank account. This seemed to be a common theme around the various clubs and some ideas for non-charging accounts were given. Jon Nelson directed interested parties to the ECF Forum discussion re this topic at [Message to clubs regarding bank activity - English Chess Forum](#)
- (c) Geoff Brown is now taking entries to the Sheffield Individuals. He will send out a flyer.
- (d) John Mercy and Pete Micklethwaite will be issuing invoices, and taking payments, for league fees at the Fixture Meeting.
- (e) Sheffield's Yorkshire League captains are still Mike Handley and Geoff Brown
- (f) Jon Nelson informed the meeting about the current health of Chris Shephard

League Secretary Report – Division One, Division Two, Richardson Cup and Sam Haystead Memorial Trophy

Defending champions SASCA A won the Davy Trophy, finishing one match point of Ecclesall A, who interestingly had negative game points for much of the season, despite pushing for the title!

Newly promoted Barnsley A and Sheffield Nomads B were both relegated.

In the Weston Trophy Worksop A and Darnall and Handsworth A, both relegated from the Davy last season, finished first and second, although were pushed by SASCA B for much of the season.

Defaults played a part in determining the relegation spots, with Sheffield University A and Chesterfield B both going down into the Batley-Meek.

The Richardson Cup was won by Sheffield Nomads 1, beating SASCA 1 in the final. SASCA 1 reached the final following consecutive 3-3 draws with Hillsborough 1 and Chesterfield 1.

The Sam Haystead Memorial was won by Sheffield Nomads 2, who definitely rode their luck – defeating Woodseats 1 with only five players, and drawing over the board in the final with Darnall and Handsworth 1, but winning on the second tiebreak (board elimination). This gives Sheffield Nomads the rare Cup/Plate double – I believe only done once before in 2006....by Sheffield Nomads.

Daniel Sullivan

Division One/Two League Secretary and Cup/Plate Competition Controller 2024/5

23rd August 2025

League Secretary Report – Summer League

Twenty two teams entered the summer league and were spread across four divisions.

Almost 40% of the matches featured more than four boards too.

As ever, teams in the summer league can vary quite dramatically in terms of strength – both from that anticipated by their captains at the start of the summer and compared with the winter league. So, hopefully nobody was too dissatisfied with the final allocation of teams to the respective divisions.

Division One was won by Worksop A, who steamrolled their way through the opposition, winning every match and averaging 3-1 wins across the season!

Division Two was won by a strong Hillsborough team, three match points clear of second placed Woodseats A.

Division Three was won by Woodseats B, in what was the closest division – just four match points separating the champions from the team who finished in bottom place.

Division Four was won by Chesterfield B, in another close division, with the top four teams finishing within two match points of each other.

Daniel Sullivan

Summer League Secretary 2025

27th August 2025