

NORTHERN COUNTIES CHESS UNION

FOUNDED 1899

Minutes of Annual Council meeting held at The Grove Public House on Saturday December 6th 2003

Present: Bryan Bainbridge (NCCU President + Durham representative, in the chair), Gerry Walsh (Cleveland representative), Dave Cole (Cumbrian representative), George Horne (Cumbrian representative and treasurer), Mike O'Hara (BCF delegate + Lancashire representative), Jim Moran (NCCU County Organiser, Merseyside representative), John Wheeler (NCCU correspondence chess + Northumbrian representative), Steve Mann (Yorkshire representative), Bill O'Rourke (General secretary, Lancashire Representative).

1/ Apologies for Absence: Graham Marshall and Graham Matthews (Cleveland representatives), Pat Ridley (Cheshire & North Wales Representative), Dave Farley (Club championships organiser), John Littlewood (Merseyside representative), Paul Bielby (Northumbrian representative), Simon Woodcock (Lancashire representative), Ihor Lewyk (Yorkshire representative).

2/ Minutes of the 2003 AGM held in Leeds 14/6/03 were presented by the Secretary and were agreed without amendment.

3/ Matters arising – Several representatives requested more information from the Club Championship Organiser regards the new repechage system. The secretary will pass this on to Dave Farley.

It was agreed that Mike O'Hara would be the NCCU representative to the BCF Management Board, with Bryan Bainbridge acting as substitute. The BCF was already aware of this change.

The treasurer requested that his new phone number be noted.

4/ Officers reports

a/ President – Brian Bainbridge had approached many players to garner their views on the correct fee to be charged by the BCF should a Direct Membership Scheme be introduced. He was surprised to find that the majority thought £5 unrealistically low, and that £10 was about right. Brian said he wished to push the Direct Membership Scheme in the last six months of his presidency. Brian believed all was running smoothly within the NCCU and thanked the secretary for his help.

b/ General Secretary – Bill O'Rourke reported that the third Chess festival had been held at the Hilton Blackpool Hotel during August as part of the Lancashire Chess Association Chess festival, and had once again been a success. This year the event grew to contain two 10 player all-play-all internationals, the Hilton premier and the Ron Banwell masters. NCCU players Gary Kenworthy and Jeff Horner had come very close to obtaining IM norms, with Stewart Haslinger gaining his third and final IM norm. The NCCU junior championships had also been run at the Hilton. The secretary thanked the NCCU for the financial assistance given to the event.

The secretary reported that Pat Ridley was once again the Cheshire & North Wales secretary, a fact to be welcomed. The secretary had been contacted by several C&NW personnel regards the proposed BCF change to some form of English Association. What effect would this have upon Cheshire & North Wales? Gerry Walsh and Mike O'Hara commented that this had already been discussed with the Welsh Chess Union and there was no problem with C&NW being part of the new association.

c/ **Treasurer** – George Horne reported that the auditor (John Moore of Cumbria) had reviewed the 2002-2003 and had signed them off as a true and accurate record.

The secretary pointed out that Simon Woodcock was the new Lancashire treasurer.

d/ **County Championship Organiser** – Jim said that counties (other than Lancashire and Yorkshire) were still not confirming county team entries on time. As a result Jim is taken the previous year's entries as read and then suffering defaults as a result. Already Merseyside had defaulted one county match 12-0. Mike O'Hara felt it was the responsibility of the County organiser to chase up county captains before the start of the season. The secretary believed that NCCU county representatives should be the first port of call.

John Wheeler questioned whether people still wanted the present format. The secretary said that the events were being very strongly supported by Lancashire and Yorkshire, witnessed by the two counties successes at national level over reason years. After debate, the following actions were agreed:

- a/ BCF to look at sponsorship of the County Championships in order to promote more entries.
- b/ Jim Moran to use County Secretaries to confirm entries (or not) to NCCU County Championships; c/ NCCU representatives to follow up County commitments to avoid defaults.
- d/ Jim Moran to review default rules and bring possible alterations to AGM.
- e/ Unanimously agreed that Counties that enter and then default must still pay their entry fee.
- f/ Game fee to be collected late March, rather than the current system where a guestimate is made at the start of the season followed by corrections at the season end after defaults have occurred.

Mike O'Hara expressed concern that Yorkshire versus Cheshire & North Wales had not yet been organised. The same situation existed last year and very fortunately we had been allowed to progress two teams to the national stages (an incorrect judgement according to the secretary). Jim Moran said he would chase up what was happening again.

e/ **Club Championship and Grand Prix organiser** - The club championships organiser had sent a written report to the Secretary. It reported that 36 teams were competing, one more than the previous year. Elmwood have set a record by having a team compete in all four sections.

Dave Cole said that unfortunately two Cumbrian teams had been drawn against each other in a first round match. The secretary suggested that a section appear on the entry form where clubs can comment whether they would prefer to play local teams or travel in the earlier rounds. The meeting agreed.

f/ **Correspondence Chess Organiser** – John Wheeler reported that Yorkshire and Cumbria had shared the Sinclair shield for 2002/03 with 7.5/12. Yorkshire won the Turner plaque with 9/12. J. Suto and E. Little, both from Yorkshire, had won the Individual trophy (4.5/5). This again entitled Yorkshire to enter a second player next year.

This year's events (2003/4) have now started and are progressing smoothly.

g/ **Grading Officer** – Dave Cole reported that the BCF had not accepted all the results he had forwarded because the results were not inputted in a form the BCF required – county results were OK

but Club Championship results will appear next year. Dave said he is currently fathoming out the new BCF 'result checker' to ensure results will be forwarded in the desired format next year.

h/ BCF Delegates –Mike O'Hara reported that the BCF management board Meeting of 8/11/03 had recognised the big vote in favour of the BCF becoming 'something like the English Chess Federation', a vote that had been recorded at the 27/02/03 Council meeting.

Mike also believed The Management Board thought now that a Direct Membership Scheme is the way to go. He also informed the meeting that Rupert Jones had been elected International Director.

Gerry Walsh reported that a government scheme had resulted in 8 schools being sponsored to the tune of approximately £1k each; the schools will become beacons for development of chess in schools.

Gerry reported that there will probably be a special Council meeting in September 2004 to launch either the English Chess Federation, the English Chess Association or Chess England. Gerry has approached English heritage to try to obtain a grant of £15 to assist the transition.

Gerry commented that it was the Council that had voted for the 3p increase in game fee, the Management Board had sought a 2p increase. Still the financial situation of the BCF was still very tight. The BCF now has only one sponsor, Smith and Williamson.

Gerry said he had attended Mind Sports and was elected Chairperson.

Mike suggested that the NCCU should respond to the BCF questionnaire that requested input on the new 'English' chess federation. Discussion followed and it was agreed that:

a/ The NCCU broadly supports the principle to change the name from the BCF to the English Chess Federation

b/ But the NCCU believes this must be linked with a major review of the constitution

c/ The NCCU also believes that this move should include the introduction of a Direct Membership Scheme on 1st January 2005.

Mike O'Hara will relay the above answers to the BCF.

The meeting also agreed that Mike should pull together the NCCU collective proxy vote letter as soon as possible. Mike hoped to do this in January.

Finally Gerry Walsh reported that there was a MCCU proposal coming forward to streamline the BCF management board meeting, with the results that ALL the chess Unions together would only have one seat on the board, and with the number of Directors being reduced.

5/ Presentation of Correspondence Chess Trophies – John Wheeler summarised this year's results and presented the Turner plaque and the Individual board (the secretary retained the pieces) to Steve Mann who took them away for presentation to the Yorkshire players. Dave Cole accepted the Sinclair Shield for Cumbria and will return the trophy to the NCCU AGM for Yorkshire to take away for the other six months of the year. Dave will have the trophy engraved for both Cumbria and Yorkshire. John Wheeler offered to write up some rules for correspondence competition. The meeting agreed.

6/ Proposals for Schools awards – The secretary reported that after being behind 6 years in BCET awards, apparently we are now six months ahead! John Wickham of the BCET award committee has

told the secretary that our last recipients, Dawpool Primary, received their award six months too early. Therefore the Northumbrian Junior Chess Association, our nominee for 2003-2004, will not be considered until April 2004. Consequently Yorkshire will be asked to bring their nomination for the 2004-2005 season to the NCCU 2004 AGM for award in 2005.

The NCCU School award nominee for 2003-2004 from Cleveland is Ormesby Secondary School. Gerry Walsh will send a written citation to the NCCU Secretary and the award will then be made at the 2004 AGM. The award for 2004-2005 will be made to a Cumbrian School.

7/ U18 Junior Jamboree and U16 Pennine Cup - The 2004 NCCU U18 jamboree would be played at Darlington on March 6th 2004.

8/ NCCU individual Championships 2003/04 – This year's championships are to be held this season in Cumbria, at the South Lakes Congress June 4-6th 2004. The Individual & Junior Individual trophies can be obtained through Graham Marshall (01429 426374). The 2004/5 event will be held in Durham.

9/ NCCU 2002/03 British Championship Qualifying congress - For 2003-04 the qualifying event with two qualifying places was held within Merseyside at Liverpool in September. The two qualifiers were Adam Ashton and Steven Gordon. Northumberland will host the 2004-05 qualifier.

10/ U16 Pennine Cup - The postponed November 2003 Pennine Cup will be played in Darlington on February 28th 2004.

11/ BCF Centenary - The Secretary reported that he had identified 8 trophies as requested at the 2003 AGM to be played for within each county to celebrate the BCF Centenary. However after discussion it was agreed that it appeared ridiculous celebrating the coming demise of the BCF in favour of a new Federation. It was agreed that the £400 would be held over to celebrate the birth of the new body. Perhaps £200 of this would go to beefing up the NCCU Club Championships for one season.

12/ Time + date of next meeting - AGM, June 12th 2004, The Grove, Leeds, 12 noon.

13/ Any Other Business – The Secretary asked that it be noted that on the back of the web site and live games that he organised at the Hilton Chess festival, he had now been asked to provide similar at the Gibraltar Chess festival in January 2004.

Dave Cole reported that time controls for allegro finishes have been abolished in Cumbria with all moves having to be made in one specified time.

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