

LINCOLNSHIRE CHESS ASSOCIATION ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2016

Held at Church House, Louth on Sunday 11th September 2016, 3.10pm

MINUTES

Attending: John Grasham, Nigel Birtwistle, Peter Sherlock, James Irwin, Wilf Watson, Francis Bowers, Ben Mason, David Mills, Robert Stokes, James Smith, Nick Stead

Apologies: Denis Georgiou, David Carew, Keith Noons, William Orr

As both the chair and vice chair were absent, Nigel Birtwistle volunteered to chair the meeting.

1. MINUTES OF 2015 AGM

The minutes of the 2015 AGM were circulated to attendees before the meeting and these were voted as an accurate record of the 2015 meeting.

2. MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising.

3. SECRETARY'S REPORT (John Grasham)

The season opened with the George Renison Memorial Jamboree which had been moved from June to September in the hope of attracting more entries. This appeared to have worked with 8 entries in the adult section and 4 in the junior section. The adult section was won by Grantham with 16 out of 16 and the junior section by the Yellow Bellied Knights with 14 out of 16. Thanks go to Gary Scott and QEGS, Horncastle for providing the room, Myers Bakery for providing the food and Horncastle Chess Club for running the event.

The Alf Newman Memorial Quickplay Chess Tournament was a success again this year with 27 players taking part. Nick Stead took the trophy with 5 ½ / 6 with Joe Kilshaw making it a Grimsby one two and Nick Louth, Denis Georgiou and Stuart MacDonald sharing third. Adam Robinson won the Under 145 grading prize and Peter Damms and William Orr won the under 115 grading prize. Arya Parnian won the junior prize, William Orr won the book prize for the most draws and Peter Damms won the Nottingham Shield. The event was notable this year as Alf Newman's daughters, Nicola and Emma presented the prizes.

This year's County Championships saw a turnout of 18 players, which is significantly lower than in previous years. Particularly noticeable was that only two players graded below 120 entered. I think we need to look at ways of incentivising players with a lower grade to take part. Jason Dilley won the title for the first time and Denis Georgiou, Peter Cusick, Ray Ilett and Harry Russell finished joint second. The quilter trophy was shared between Stuart MacDonald, Richard Stokes and Qais Karimi. Thanks go to Peter Sherlock who ran a successful tournament and Herman Kok who provided the venue.

I had high hopes for the Lincolnshire Schools' Chess Association when it was reformed this time last year. However out of the six people who attended the first meeting back in August of last year, only two of them are still involved with the organisation. The committee now consists of myself, Rob Matson and Ian Scott. I believe that in order for the organisation to flourish the committee needs to consist of at least six members who are willing to contribute to attending some events and not of two or three who almost have to attend all events. If this situation is not rectified soon, I believe that Lincolnshire under 18 chess may not exist in any form in the next one to two years.

4. LEAGUE SECRETARY'S REPORT (John Grasham)

In Division 1 this season Grimsby again ran away with the title but a draw with Scunthorpe meant they were unable to do so with a 100% record. Division 2 North was won comfortably by Lincoln ahead of Grimsby 1875 in second. Division 2 South was a two horse race between Lincoln and Grantham. Grantham's undoing was their inability to beat Spalding handing Lincoln the title. Horncastle finished in their highest ever position of third.

Unfortunately two teams have pulled out of Division 2 North for next season. Barton and one of the Grimsby teams will not take part, however this is mitigated by Horncastle fielding a team in the division next year.

5. TREASURER'S REPORT (Peter Sherlock)

I am pleased to report a surplus of £72.86 slightly larger than last year's surplus of £28.52 adding to our already healthy balance of £1,578.60.

The county championship again contributed to the coffers despite the low entry of 18 compared with 21 last season but the surplus was helped by donations of £100 from Lindum as well as providing the venue free of charge and a £50 donation from Graham Ladds.

This season we fielded three county teams and their varying successes came at a price - £326 compared with £191 – however, in my view it is a price worth paying.

On the other hand last year's expenses included a new trophy for the Junior Jamboree and a donation of £100 to the junior event in Grantham which did not occur this time round.

Given the healthy balance at the bank I see no reason to increase subscriptions at this time although we need to ensure that we do not incur unnecessary expenditure in the coming year.

Robert Stokes asked why such a large balance was kept. Peter Sherlock said this was for any unforeseen expenditure.

John Grasham noted that we had paid for the yearbooks from the ECF and had not received them.

6. OPEN TEAM MATCH CAPTAIN'S REPORT (Nigel Birtwistle)

At the start of each county season I always set a minimum target for the Lincolnshire team to achieve which is to reach the National stages of the Minor Counties Competition. Our season didn't get off to the best of starts when we visited Nottinghamshire on October 31st. Several late withdrawals hit us hard and I was unable to attend due to a family bereavement on the evening before the match. The team slumped to an 11-5 defeat which was the heaviest loss during my tenure as captain. A week later we visited Leicestershire and when we arrived at the venue it didn't look too promising for Lincolnshire. A quick glance at the team sheet showed us being out rated by an average of ten points per board. However the team dug in and took the match right down to the final game but eventually lost 8½-7½. This meant that we had a lot of work to do to qualify for National stages. We would have to win both of our remaining matches.

Encouraged by our efforts against Leicestershire we had to wait until February for our next match against Warwickshire. We were able to field a much stronger team for this match and we roared back in to the qualifying mix with an emphatic 12-4 victory. Our next match against Worcestershire in March was a winner take all encounter with the victor grabbing a spot in the preliminary round of the National stages. After a hard fought match Lincolnshire emerged winners by a 9-7 margin. As the draw for the national stages had already been made I knew that our next match would involve a substantial amount of travelling as we would be paired with a team from the West of England.

Through various contacts I managed to find an excellent venue in Bristol for our next match against Cornwall. The response from the Lincolnshire players was tremendous with some players opting to stay overnight and the rest of the team arranging transport with each other to make sure that we fielded a competitive side. After such a long and tiring journey the team was still in excellent spirits and confidently won the match 10.5-5.5.

Our opponents in the Quarter Final were Essex who were the holders of the trophy and had also beaten us on three previous occasions. However this time we were not to be denied and prevailed 8½-7½. There was now a real sense that we could get to the final and maybe achieve even more. Cambridgeshire were our semifinal opponents and in a match that was tense from start to finish we held our nerve to win another nail biting encounter 8½-7½. We were through to the Minor Counties final for the first time since 1990.

Lincolnshire were almost at full strength when they travelled to Warwick for finals day in early July. In particular I would like to thank Stuart MacDonald of Grimsby Chess Club who travelled as a reserve for the final despite knowing that if everything went to plan he probably wouldn't be playing in the match. We are extremely lucky that we normally have a couple of players who are prepared to act as reserves for our matches and are prepared to be on standby right up until the morning of the match. On this occasion I didn't want to take any chances and I was very grateful that Stuart was able to provide cover for the day.

Our opponents Norfolk had like ourselves only just scraped in to the knockout stages from their regional qualifier but had improved as the competition unfolded. Unfortunately this match was one too many for Lincolnshire and we went down to a 9-7 defeat. We were always chasing the match and despite the team fighting extremely hard Norfolk thoroughly deserved their victory. If the top board encounter had been won by us we would have tied the match at 8-8 but the board count would have been in our favour. But to be honest we didn't really deserve to win.

So it was a little disappointing to lose in the final after the team had worked so hard to get there but we must remember the reason why the team made it to the final in the first place. We could have almost given up after losing the first two MCCU matches but we didn't. Our team spirit and never say die attitude kept us alive.

There is a lot of support from people behind the scenes that many people are unaware of and deserve a mention. Peter Sherlock our treasurer is realistic enough to know that the further we progress in to the national stages the more the expense will be I have tried to keep the costs as low as possible and have been helped in this respect by Herman Kok of Lincoln Chess Club who has provided us with a superb free home venue at North Hykeham as well as being able to suggest alternative venues in other parts of the country. Finally John Grasham has been very generous in allowing the digital chess clocks belonging to Louth Chess Club to be used by the various county teams in matches. The contribution of these people combined with an enthusiastic bunch of committed players drives me on to continue as captain and I am prepared to continue in the role for the 2016-17 season if asked to do so.

Peter Sherlock complemented Nigel and his team for reaching the final.

7. UNDER 140 TEAM MATCH CAPTAIN'S REPORT (John Grasham)

A new season means a new team for Lincolnshire this season but with ten of last year's under 120 team plus the captain playing it was a familiar looking line up for Lincolnshire in their first match against Derbyshire. A late withdrawal meant that Jagadeesan Murugesch was forced to play on board 12. However, quick defeats for him, Cameron Marnoch and Frank Robinson left us with a mountain to climb. A succession of draws slowly edged Derbyshire towards the win with Adam Robinson, Kishore Murugesch, Chris Cumbers, debutant Graeme Rae, Paul Fischer, William Orr and Mark Newstead all having to accept half a point. David Scott got us our first win after his opponent missed a tactical trick but it was all over after Bill Egan lost. We were however able to make the score respectable with wins for Behzad Parnian, myself being helped by an extra queen and bishop and youngster Andy Pollock playing his first senior game after he was able to convert a king, rook and pawn v king and rook endgame. Lincolnshire are next in action against Warwickshire on Saturday 21st November.

After the Warwickshire game was cancelled, we were back in action against a strong Nottinghamshire side. When the teamsheets were exchanged we realised the size of our task, with Notts having all twelve of the highest graded players. We were up against it early on with Peter Sherlock losing early and Phil Gutcher and Frank Robinson losing soon after. We did manage to impact on the scoreboard with a series of draws for Bill Egan, Mike Comben, Phill Beckett and Keith Noons and a very good win for Mike Dew over the Nottinghamshire captain. However defeats for myself from what should have been a drawn position, Andy Pollock who was a pawn up and Graeme Rae meant we had to win the final five matches to get a draw. A win for Chris Cumbers kept us in contention but draws for Frank Birkbeck and David Scott left the result beyond us. Paul Fischer then managed to lose a dead drawn position and despite William Orr hanging on for grim death in his game he lost also. However an 11-5 defeat is no disgrace against very strong opponents. Lincolnshire are back in action against Worcestershire on Saturday 20th February.

Unfortunately I was unable to make the trip to Leicester for our last match of the season against Worcestershire but left the team in the very capable hands of the Under 120 captain, William Orr. However in a close match Lincolnshire were edged out by a score of 9-7. The match however was notable for wins for county debutants Peter Metcalfe and 12 year old Adam Cook.

I would again like to thank everyone who played for the team this year, especially those who provided transport and look forward to captaining the team again and welcoming both new and returning players for next season.

8. UNDER 120 TEAM MATCH CAPTAIN'S REPORT (William Orr)

William Orr was not at the meeting and provided no report. John Grasham said that the team made the national quarter final after beating Kent when one of the Kent players was disqualified. He also reported the incident against Warwickshire which resulted in Andrew Watson losing his game.

9. GRADING OFFICER'S REPORT (Peter Sherlock)

Results were forwarded for grading for

Lincolnshire League
County Championship
U-18 Rapidplay events
Scunthorpe & District League
Internal club results for Horncastle, Lincoln, Louth, Grimsby & Scunthorpe.
Louth Quickplay

Results were submitted in December and June in line with the twice yearly grading lists.

10. NEWSLETTER EDITOR'S REPORT (Peter Sherlock)

The county newsletter was published at the end of July after the County Championship.

11. CORRESPONDENCE SECRETARY'S REPORT (Peter Sherlock)

Lincolnshire again entered a team in the national correspondence chess competition organised by the ICCF (International Correspondence Chess Federation). We finished 8th out of 10 in Division 2 with 6.5 points just above the relegation places. Our position in Division 2 was still in doubt up to the last minute when Ian Scott's opponent defaulted on time. The breakdown of scores as following.

Harry Russell	1.0
Herman Kok	0.0
Ian Scott	2.0
James Irwin	1.5
Behzad Parnian	0.0
Mike Colebrook	0.5
Peter Sherlock	0.5
Paul Fischer	1.0
Total	6.5

The Division was won by West Wales (13.5 points) with Hertfordshire A (10.5 points) also being promoted to Division 1 to be replaced by Suffolk and Staffordshire. Just below Lincolnshire Essex C (5.5 points) and Warwickshire B (2.5) were relegated with East Glamorgan and Worcestershire A being promoted from Division 3.

All players have indicated their willingness to play again next year so the team will be unchanged.

12. ECF DELEGATE'S REPORT (Peter Sherlock)

I attended the AGM in October 2015 and the Finance meeting in April 2016 both taking place in London.

There was a significant lack of progress in terms of any strategic direction due mainly to a clash of personalities between the Chief Executive Phil Ehr on one side and the International Director David Openshaw and the Finance Director David Eustace on the other. Virtually the whole meeting was taken up with both sides accusing the other for the lack of progress.

The only beacon of light was the report given by the Junior Director, Traci Whitfield, who had set about establishing the Junior Academy and aims to improve junior chess particularly at grass routes level.

When the election of officers came around it was significant that in the result of the Chief Executive vote was Phil Ehr 121 Not this candidate 173 with 15 absentions forcing Phil Ehr to resign as a board member. This meant that the 6 months between the AGM and the Finance meeting the board was able to come up with a number of initiatives these were –

The International Director put forward initiatives to improve the competitiveness of the International teams. The Junior Director put forward a number of proposals in junior coaching and events. League management software was proposed to enable grades to be updated on a monthly basis. The Publicity Director put forward ideas to raise the profile of chess in the community and on the internet. The board had recommended that these initiatives be funded by a significant increase in membership fees. Fortunately, common sense prevailed in that the delegates voted that there should be no increase in membership fees and that the required funding be taken out of reserves which currently stands at £100,000.

Another plus was that the British Go Association had received a legacy which proposed using with the ECF and the British Bridge Association to buy and develop and building to accommodate all three areas. The meeting agreed to support this.

13. MCCU DELEGATE'S REPORT (Peter Sherlock)

John Grasham and myself attended the MCCU AGM held on June 25 at the Rolls Royce Chess Club in Derby, John in his capacity as Secretary of the MCCU and myself as Lincolnshire representative, Grading Director and Controller of the Inter Counties competition.

John Pakenham, the elected chairman, was absent due to illness so Neil Graham from Nottinghamshire took the chair. The meeting started by paying tribute to Cyril Johnson, an MCCU past chairman, who passed away earlier in the year. Ray Dolan announced that the MCCU Congress would be held in Walsall in August. This turned out to be a successful event. John reported that the ECF Yearbook had not been updated despite the amendments being forwarded in good time. Andrew Leadbetter, the treasurer, reported no significant items of expenditure and recommended no change in the levy at £7 per point.

David Levens, the Junior Director, reported that junior academies had been set up around the country and a coaching scheme was being developed. David was asked to put in place a Child Protection Officer, this being a requirement for Indemnity Insurance. However, when it came to the elections David narrowly lost his position to Andrew Davies from Staffordshire so this task will fall to him.

I presented my Grading Directors report which showed yet another small reduction in the number of games played. I also presented a list of players who had not joined the ECF. I also gave my report as Counties Controller. It was noted that Staffordshire had elected to enter the Open section and went through to the ECF stages by default as the only entry. I had offered them a place in a combined Open/Minor section in the MCCU stages but they had declined. Furthermore, they also withdrew from their first match in the ECF stages and incurred a fine as a result – which Staffordshire agreed to pay on behalf of the MCCU.

Nottinghamshire had put forward several changes to the County Championship rules, the main one being the introduction of a combined Open/Minor section in the MCCU stages with counties electing which section they would like to go forward to on December 31.

Both John Grasham and myself were re-elected in our respective roles.

14. ELECTION OF OFFICERS FOR 2016 – 2017 SEASON

President:	Denis Georgiou
Vice-President:	David Carew
Honorary Secretary:	John Grasham
League Secretary:	John Grasham
Honorary Treasurer:	Peter Sherlock
Open Team Match Captain:	Nigel Birtwistle
Under 140 Team Match Captain:	John Grasham
Under 120 Team Match Captain:	William Orr
Grading Officer:	Peter Sherlock
Newsletter Editor:	Peter Sherlock
Correspondence Secretary:	Peter Sherlock
ECF Delegates:	Peter Sherlock, Francis Bowers (reserve)
MCCU Delegates:	Peter Sherlock, John Grasham (reserve)
Webmaster:	David Coates
Life Members:	Mike Colebrook, Robert Dale

15. PROGRAMME FOR 2016 – 2017

Jamboree Hosts	Scunthorpe in 2017
County Championships	Lincoln – July
Louth Quickplay	Louth – early June
County AGM	10/9/17

16. ANY PROPOSALS

The proposal for changes to time controls for the Lincs League will have three options.

a) To remain unchanged from last year.

b) To be 90 minutes each with no quickplay finish. (Proposed by Grantham CC)

c) To introduce Fischer time controls with 70 minutes for the game with 15 second increments. (Proposed by Spalding CC)

The proposal produced a lot of discussion. Robert Stokes said that many Scunthorpe players were against changing the timings and would not play in the Lincolnshire League if the timings were changed. Peter Sherlock reported that Lincoln did not have digital clocks which are necessary for option c and even though they could buy them they had no plans to. This resulted in option c being withdrawn from consideration.

There was more discussion about players not realising their flag had fallen when using a digital clock and players invoking the 2 minute rule erroneously if there was not a time increment.

The proposal to keep the timings the same was carried by 5 votes to 4.

17. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- It was raised that the County Championships would have more entrants if there were two sections instead of one.
- The Quilter Trophy could be used as the U150 trophy if the County Championships was split into two sections or if not people could win it again due to the lack of eligible players.
- The issue of one club one vote or one attendee one vote was raised. Discussion on this was deferred to the next AGM.

18. TROPHY PRESENTATION

Nigel Birtwistle presented the Division 1 trophy to Nick Stead (Grimsby), the Division 2 North Trophy to Peter Sherlock (Lincoln) and the Division 2 South Trophy to James Irwin (Lincoln)

The meeting was closed at 5.10pm.