

LINCOLNSHIRE CHESS ASSOCIATION ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2019

Held at Church House, Louth on Sunday 8th September 2019, 1.30pm

MINUTES

Attending: John Grasham, William Orr, Nigel Birtwistle, Peter Sherlock, Francis Bowers, Nick Stead, Andrew Watson, Frank Robinson, Pete Holman, Keith Palmer, Paul Chaplin, John Mainwaring

Apologies: Denis Georgiou, Ian Scott, Keith Noons, Ben Mason

1. MINUTES OF 2018 AGM

The minutes of the 2018 AGM were circulated to attendees before the meeting and these were voted as an accurate record of the 2018 meeting.

2. MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising.

3. SECRETARY'S REPORT (John Grasham)

As you all know, I am stepping down from my roles in the Lincolnshire Chess Association after nine years due to me moving to Leeds. It has been an honour and pleasure to serve the county for this period.

The season opened with the George Renison Memorial Jamboree in September. This was organised by Grimsby Chess Club at the excellent venue of Millfields Hotel in Grimsby. Louth managed to rest the title back inside the county from previous year's winners Newark. For the first time there were teams from Yorkshire playing in the event.

However, this year's event will not be taking place. Louth were due to hold the event but had to cancel as there were only three entries by the deadline. It is a sad state of affairs that there is such a sense of apathy about these tournaments which means they cannot take place.

However, the Alf Newman Memorial Quickplay Chess Tournament was a success again this year with 36 players taking part. This equals the tournament record. Keith and Charles ran another successful tournament at a new venue, The White Horse. Murray Smith won the title with 5.5 out of 6 and Nigel Birtwistle came second. Third place was shared between last year's winner Joe Kilshaw, Raven Morrello and junior player Arya Parnian. The under 150 grading prize was shared between James Irwin, Ian McDonald and John Grasham with the under 120 prize shared between Neil Milson, Cameron Marnoch and Keith Noons. Cameron completed an excellent day for him by winning the Nottingham Shield. Yet again there was another excellent buffet lunch.

This year's County Championships saw a controversial change in format from the previous two years with only one section for all players. Despite this, the entry was up on last year with 24 players taking part. The title was won by James Moreby playing at his first Lincolnshire event ahead of Murray Smith. Francis Bowers and Jason Dilley finished joint third. Thanks go to Peter Sherlock who ran a successful tournament and Herman Kok who provided the venue.

4. LEAGUE SECRETARY'S REPORT (John Grasham)

Grimsby won the Division 1 title for the second year in succession in comfortable fashion having only dropped two points all season. Lincoln beat Louth to second place with Scunthorpe bringing up the rear.

Division 2 North had the fewest teams for many years with only Grimsby, Lincoln, Louth and Scunthorpe entering. The trophy was won by Lincoln. The title hinged on Lincoln's home game against Grimsby with the winner likely to be crowned champions. However, Grimsby did not field a team in this fixture for the second time in three years gifting Lincoln the title. Grimsby again defaulted their last match away at Louth.

Division 2 South was incredibly one sided this season. Lincoln entered two teams and their A team romped to the title only succumbing to one draw all season. However, a competitive battle for second place was narrowing edged by Louth by one point ahead of both Grantham and Spalding. Lincoln's B team gave

valuable experience to players getting their first experience of Lincs League action and I hope more clubs can field teams like this in the future.

It has been very disappointing this year to see an increase in the number of defaulted boards and matches. This and because I want to encourage new players to play in the league, are the reasons behind the survey to increase participation that will be discussed later in the meeting.

5. TREASURER'S REPORT (Peter Sherlock)

This season I am reporting a small loss of £1.87 compared with a small surplus of £3.99 last year – roughly breaking even for the third year in a row. Our balance of £1579.18 remains healthy.

Subscriptions are down by £60 as a result of Horncastle dropping out but the addition of Skegness should add an extra £30.

The county championships made a profit of just over £170 with an entry a couple more than last year. We are fortunate that the Lindum Group provide the venue free of charge, sponsor the event by £100 and Herman Kok returned his £30 prize money as a donation. Without this the event would not be viable with the current level of entry. I encourage players to support this event as it is a valuable source of income for the county.

The county supported 2 teams this season after the withdrawal of the U120 team. The Minor team again reached the final winning the section after Devon had conceded. It was agreed that all players who played for the Minor team throughout the season should receive a trophy so 6 extra trophies have been supplied courtesy of Francis Bowers.

The U140 section had 7 teams compared with 4 last season so expenses were up but overall county expenses were slightly down on last season.

The change of rules for Game Fee meant that the we were only charged £16 which was for David Bale from Louth.

I am recommending no increase in subscription fees as we have a healthy balance in the bank but will review the situation next year.

Nigel Birtwistle commented that it was good for the association to break even but the County Championships need more entries.

It was reported that the British Chess Championships had moved to a week earlier next season and would clash with the County Championships. Therefore the County Championships would have to move either to the start of July or into August. Peter Sherlock would consult with the venue for appropriate dates.

Keith Palmer reported that Louth had been sent a bill for grading fees by the county which had several players charged for twice. Peter Sherlock explained that if any player played four or more games in any tournament and did not obtain ECF membership, they would face a bill equivalent to bronze membership for each tournament they played in.

Peter Sherlock's proposal to keep subs the same for next season was seconded by Paul Chaplin and carried without a vote.

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

As always Lincolnshire had high ambitions at the start of the season. The aim as usual was to make sure that we played well enough in the MCCU stages to ensure qualification for the national stages of the Minor Counties competition. After that it would come down to a series of knockout matches if we were to make it through to the final for a fourth consecutive season.

We began the season in October with a home match against Nottinghamshire. Lincolnshire has enjoyed a long unbeaten home record at the Atrium but this almost and should have come to an end. We were very fortunate to get away with an 8-8 draw. Our second fixture against Worcestershire in early December was more convincing and we ran out winners by 9½-6½. In the New Year we were back at the Atrium to face Leicestershire. Our matches against them have always been close and this one was no exception. A close finish saw us edge out our opponents by 8½-7½. The final match of the MCCU group stage in February saw

us face Warwickshire. When we slipped to a 9-7 defeat it left our prospects of qualification for the Minor Counties competition in the hands of others. Fortunately, the results went in our favour and we ended up as joint MCCU Champions with Nottinghamshire. So, we had managed to qualify for the national stages yet again, but we had made really hard work of it.

The quarter Finals of the Minor Counties Competition took place in early May. Due to a lack of entries Lincolnshire received a bye through to the Semi Finals. In the Semi Final played at Peterborough our opponents were old rivals Norfolk. The last few seasons have seen some classic matches between the two sides. This one was no exception. Both teams weighed in at just under the 180 grading average required by the rules of the competition. The game swung from one side to the other but in the closing stages Norfolk held the lead. Lincolnshire needed 2½ points from the last three matches to take the match to board count. Here we really showed our character. Chris Dorrington and Joe Kilshaw ground out wins and Paul Cumbers made sure he could not lose the last game in play and held the draw. The match was therefore drawn 8-8 but I had already realised that we would win easily on board count and so we progressed to our fourth consecutive Minor Counties final.

Our opponents in the Final were Devon. Unfortunately, Devon were unable to raise a team and defaulted the match leaving Lincolnshire the winners of the Minor Counties trophy. Apparently, Devon had contacted the ECF quite some time before the final to alert them of difficulty raising a side for the final due to the distance of travel to the Kettering venue. I only became aware of the situation about ten days before the final. The ECF should have contacted me earlier then it might have been possible to sort something out and maybe rearrange the fixture. When I was eventually contacted it was much too late in the day to change everybody's travel plans.

The fact that we won the final by default should not detract from the huge team effort that was required to get to a fourth successive final. Our form was inconsistent in the MCCU stages, but we kept plugging away and showed our true character to win a truly epic Semi Final. Lincolnshire are experienced campaigners at this level and the results we have attained have been no fluke. Over the course of the season I used just 22 players. Our small squad continues to punch above our weight. Next season there is a possibility that we may look at entering the Open competition. We have achieved our targets in the Minor Counties competition and now may be the time to step up a level. We might not progress very far, but I think it is right that we should try. Lincolnshire has never played in the Open section of the County Championships and it would be a great honour for me to be the captain who leads them into that competition next season.

William Orr said that there had been a lot of discussion online regarding the Minor Counties final. Nick Stead said that when entering a tournament such as this you knew the rules in advance so if you couldn't field a team within the rules you shouldn't enter.

7. UNDER 140 TEAM MATCH CAPTAIN'S REPORT (William Orr)

As noted in last year's minutes, the MCCU competitions attracted more entries than previously with 7 teams in both the U140 and U120 sections. This would have meant a total of 12 matches, a schedule that we felt was too much for our players and after some consideration we decided to enter only the U140 competition. As in previous seasons our U140 sides included several U120 players, and nearly everyone who wanted to play had a chance to do so. Of the 95 games played over our six matches, 64 were by U120 players.

Of the other teams in the competition, Nottinghamshire and Worcestershire always put out strong sides, but I thought the other counties might be beatable. So, the result of our first match against Derbyshire was something of a shock, losing by a 7 point margin. As we all know, controversies and cockups and been the lot of team captains in recent seasons, so in an attempt to pre-empt this and accept my quota voluntarily I claimed a draw under the 2-minute rule. This was something of a surprise to my opponent at the time, and later myself when my claim was upheld. It's possibly one of my few escapes from time trouble.

Our second match was away to Leicestershire and was played at the Old School Rooms in Rothley, a venue that was new to us. Parking was tricky, but the hall turned out to be a decent size and generally met with approval. I was somewhat relieved by this as our usual venues around Thurmaston were unavailable on any of our match dates, and I had taken a chance by block-booking the hall at Rothley based only on photos, while simultaneously negotiating a reasonable fee. One of my better moves of the season. Unfortunately, I could not repeat my performance on the board, where I needed to win the last game in play to tie the match score. I eventually had to concede that an obviously drawn position was in fact a draw, and we therefore lost the match by a single point.

Next up was an away match against Nottinghamshire, and with a surfeit of willing volunteers I was able to drop myself from the team and watch the action. It proved to be an engrossing match, still in doubt with two boards remaining. But thanks to cool and collected performances at the end from Graeme Rae who forced a draw in a rooks-and-pawns ending while in time trouble twice in the same game, and David Scott who calmly converted a winning position, Lincolnshire won the match by a single point.

The next opponents were a very strong Worcestershire side. Lincolnshire produced three quick wins, courtesy of Neil Roberts, Adam Cook and myself. Unfortunately, this was the high point of our performance, and though the Worcestershire captain later admitted his concerns, his players responded well and went on to turn the match around, eventually winning by 10 points to 6.

Next up was Warwickshire, a match that seemed in some doubt for a few weeks as they seemed to have run into organisational problems and had to default their match against Leicestershire. When the match finally went ahead there were 4 boards in default, 3 on the Warwickshire side and 1 on ours. The eventual match was score of 8.5 – 7.5 in Lincolnshire's favour, a somewhat fortunate result for us.

Finally, Staffordshire, and a match where we weren't grossly out graded. Lincolnshire won by a 3 point margin making a pleasing end to the season. This left us with 6 points from our 6 matches and a respectable 4th place from the 7 counties in the competition.

This year I tried to collect our winning games, and most of these are on the LCA website, alongside the match reports. It's not a full collection: the games are un-annotated, and there were some well-defended draws that also deserved publication, but we might be able to improve that aspect of the reports this year. I'd like to record my thanks to everyone who played and supported the team during the season and I'm sure that we'll see the same commitment in the matches ahead.

Finally, although the team did not reach the ECF stages of the competition, that was always an unlikely outcome for a squad of our size. However, we were not entirely unrepresented for I noted that on finals day my good friend and former team-mate John Grasham was there to help Yorkshire to victory over Worcestershire.

There will remain an under 140 team next season with no under 120 team.

8. GRADING OFFICER'S REPORT (Peter Sherlock)

Results were forwarded for grading for

Lincolnshire League
County Championship
Scunthorpe & District League
Internal club results for Lincoln, Louth, Grimsby, Scunthorpe & Skegness.

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

9. NEWSLETTER EDITOR'S REPORT (Peter Sherlock)

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

10. 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). Due to technical difficulties the tournament started a couple of months late. Currently we lie in 2nd place on 10 points with 1 games still outstanding. Harry Russell, Joe Kilshaw and Peter Sherlock all won both their games.

Harry Russell	2.0
Joe Kilshaw	2.0
Herman Kok	1.0
Ian Scott	0.5
James Irwin	1.0 (1 game yet to finish)
Alex Ashworth	0.0
Peter Sherlock	2.0
Paul Fischer	1.5

Essex C have a unassailable lead on 14 points. Surrey D are in 3rd place on 7½ points with 2 games left so they cannot stop us retaining second place and thus be promoted.

Harry Russell has decided to stand down so I will be looking for new team members in the near future.

11. ECF DELEGATE'S REPORT (Francis Bowers)

I attended the AGM October 2018 at a hotel in Birmingham I travelled from Peterborough to Birmingham return by train. I proposed and supported Adrian Elwin to become Director of Home Chess. Adrian managed to win the election and Tim Wall was a close second. Tim Wall's car broke down on the motorway, so the meeting order was delay. We have agreed a 3 year strategy for the ECF and membership will slightly increase over the next 3 years. Running costs of the ECF office and on-stage events like the County Championship Final in Kettering, British Chess Championships 2019 and 2020 in Torquay as well promoting English women's chess and international chess. Grading going be done monthly and a new 4 digit codes is the aim of the Grading Team over the next few years. I left the meeting at 6pm to catch my train back. due to the meeting dragging on an extension to end the meeting at 6.30pm.

Finance meeting in April 2019. I sent Robert Richmond from Nottingham there while I was working in Nottingham that day, which was held in Birmingham. The proposal of putting females in county team was only just defeated by a hand full of votes, further details can be checked on the ECF website.

I am willing to Stand again as ECF delegate and will be attending the meeting in October.

Paul Chaplin asked why the ECF wanted to change to monthly grading, which was to follow Wales and run in line with FIDE. John Grasham asked if this meant we would all have to be FIDE members and this is not the case.

Peter Sherlock said that monthly grading lists would put a heavier workload on volunteer graders who were unwilling to carry out this extra burden.

12. MCCU DELEGATE'S REPORT (Peter Sherlock)

John Grasham and myself attended the MCCU AGM held on June 15 at the Rolls Royce Chess Club in Derby, I attended as Lincolnshire representative, Grading Director and Controller of the Inter Counties competition.

Ray Dolan reported that a rapidplay held under the MCCU banner has finished up losing over £1000.

Andrew Leadbetter, the treasurer, reported that the loss reported by Ray had been taken out of reserves so was able to recommend no change in the levy at £7 per point.

I presented my Grading Directors report which showed a significant increase in the number of games played with 52 games being graded compared to 45 last year and 36 the year before. I also presented a list of players who had not joined the ECF.

I also gave my report as Counties Controller with non of the controversy from last year being repeated and the Beast from the East stayed away. Apart from there being more games to look after there were no disputes to resolve.

At the start of the campaign, when receiving the entries from other counties it transpired that Leicestershire, Staffordshire and Warwickshire had entered the U140 section meaning that there were 7 counties in both the U140 and U120 sections. I felt that, as there were a number of players who played in both the Lincolnshire U120 and U140 teams that asking them to play 12 matches was too much so I suggested to John and William that the U140 team be withdrawn. However, John and William suggested that it would be better to withdraw the U120 team instead, which we have done with William taking over the captaincy of the U140 team.

The rule changes put forward by Leicestershire to amend the time controls to Fischer timings on clocks was accepted meaning that they will be similar to those currently used in the National stages.

I was re-elected as both Grading officer and County Controller. At the time of writing no-one had come forward to replace John Grasham as MCCU Secretary.

13. ELECTION OF OFFICERS FOR 2019 – 2020 SEASON

President:	Nigel Birtwistle
Honorary Secretary:	Denis Georgiou
League Secretary:	John Mainwaring
Honorary Treasurer:	Peter Sherlock
Open Team Match Captain:	Nigel Birtwistle
Under 140 Team Match Captain:	William Orr
Grading Officer:	Peter Sherlock
Newsletter Editor:	Peter Sherlock
Correspondence Secretary:	Peter Sherlock
ECF Delegate:	Francis Bowers
MCCU Delegates:	Peter Sherlock (MCCU1), Ian Scott (MCCU2), William Orr (MCCU3)
Webmaster:	David Coates
Life Members:	Mike Colebrook, Robert Dale, Keith Palmer

14. PROGRAMME FOR 2019 – 2020

Jamboree Hosts	Event not taking place due to lack of interest
County Championships	Lincoln – July or August 2020
Louth Quickplay	Louth – June 2020
County AGM	13/9/20
MCCU AGM	13/6/20

15. FEEDBACK FROM LINCOLNSHIRE LEAGUE SURVEY AND PROPOSALS RESULTING

The list of proposals below was circulated by John Grasham before the meeting.

1. Structure of Division 2 North and South
 - a. Merge Division 2 North and South and play long distance matches at neutral venues. (Grantham)
 - b. Split on an east west basis rather than a north south basis. (Skegness)
 - c. Remain the same.
2. Time Controls in the Lincolnshire League
 - a. 80 minutes with 10 seconds per move (Fischer timing) (Grantham)
 - b. 70 minutes with 15 seconds per move (Fischer timing) (Spalding)
 - c. Remain the same
3. Use the ECF LMS for the reporting of results in conjunction with the system already in place. (Spalding, Barton & Appleby Frodingham)
4. Home teams should have white in both divisions. (Grimsby)
5. The creation of a working group to consider ways of revitalising the leagues. (Appleby Frodingham)
6. Publication of the results of the survey on the Lincs Chess Website. (Secretary)

1. The three alternatives were discussed in detail. The alternatives would work out as follows with Skegness electing to join Division 2 North to even the numbers.
 - a. An 8 team division with each team playing each other once. The teams would be Grimsby, Scunthorpe, Lincoln A, Lincoln B, Louth, Skegness, Spalding and Grantham.
 - b. An Eastern division consisting of Grimsby, Lincoln, Skegness, Louth and Spalding and a Western division consisting of Scunthorpe, Lincoln A, Lincoln B and Grantham.
 - c. A Northern division consisting of Grimsby, Scunthorpe, Skegness, Lincoln and Louth and a Southern division consisting of Lincoln A, Lincoln B, Grantham, Spalding and Louth.

There was lots of discussion regarding the logistics of the alternatives with how the neutral venue matches would work and how many games each team would play compared to how many games they expected to play. The result was to keep the format the same for next season and then review the situation at the next AGM.

2. Nick Stead said the average length of a game was 45 moves and calculated the length of games after this number of moves. Option A would give 87.5 minute games, Option B would give 80.5

minute games and Option C would give 90 minute games. It was decided that it was the way forward to use Fischer timing as most other leagues, tournaments and congresses used Fischer timings and that it was a good idea to give players the opportunity to win games while in time trouble. The meeting also favoured the longer time controls. The result of the vote was 6 for Option A, 2 for Option B and 2 for Option C. Further clarification on the rules were given for the start time of matches, which is 7.30pm unless agreement is reached before the match between both captains and the league secretary is informed and that in Fischer timings when the clock goes below 5 minutes you no longer need to write down the moves even if the clock goes above 5 minutes later on. Denis Georgiou's amendment was defeated and all matches will be played to a finish.

3. It was reported that the ECF LMS system is accessed through a password and that one team captain would enter the result and the other team captain would verify its accuracy. If all players in the league are assigned to a club, then the captains could select them from a drop down menu. As not all team captains were familiar with this system it was proposed that Denis Georgiou and John Mainwaring would operate the system this year and test it to report back to the AGM next year so that the system could be introduced. This was agreed by the meeting.
4. It was decided that this anomaly in the rules should be removed and that it should be the same in both divisions. The vote that took place was 4 votes for white on odd boards for all away teams and 6 votes for white on even boards for all away teams.
5. It was agreed by the meeting that all clubs were crying out for new players to join their clubs. Appleby Frodingham Chess Club had already set up a working group to improve the numbers at the club especially younger players as John Mainwaring revealed he was the second youngest at the club at the age of 61. He said that social media was the way to get new players into the clubs. The clubs in Lincolnshire that have their own Facebook pages were Louth, Lincoln and Skegness. Andrew Watson said that Google Business allowed a free website to be used for a chess club and pictures could be sent directly to the website. Nigel Birtwistle asked Andrew to send details about this to all clubs which he agreed to do. Nigel also asked if Stamford could be contacted to get them more involved in the association. John Grasham said that Barton would like to enter a team in the league, but they didn't have enough players to make it sustainable.
6. John Grasham explained that the results would be submitted to the website with just a club name and no personal details would be included. This was passed without the need for a vote.

16. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Andrew Watson asked for confirmation of the grading limit in Division 2 North and South which is 155 and under.

Peter Sherlock presented the outgoing secretary, John Grasham, with a crystal trophy for his nine years' service to the association and read out the following message from Denis Georgiou. "I would like to apologise to the meeting for not being able to attend the AGM. Especially to John Grasham as it will be his last AGM. John has been both the General and League Secretary for the last 9 years. Prior to John these roles were always filled by separate individuals and it is a testament to John's efficiency and commitment that he has done both jobs, and more, with precision and good humour. I have shared some enjoyable car journeys with John, always with stimulating conversation and entertained by his challengingly dry, indeed arid, sense of humour. You really must dredge the depths of your intellect to catch the drift of his quips. The strength of John is his clear thinking, apparently in all situations. In recent conversations with him about the survey he initiated and my more radical ideas, he has steered me towards more pragmatic suggestions. I certainly will miss John as an officer of the Association, as, I am sure, all of you will. No doubt, in the future, we shall all still have occasion to meet John. I certainly will relish that.

I wish John all the best for the future and thank him for all he has done for our Association.

There was a round of applause for John Grasham

17. 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 was not present.

The meeting was closed at 4.12pm