

**NORTHERN COUNTIES CHESS UNION
FOUNDED 1899**

Minutes of the NCCU Council Meeting 2015

Held on Saturday December 5th 2015, at the Latvian Club, 5 Clifton Villas,
Manningham Lane, Bradford, BD8 7BY Tel: 01274 546235

PRESENT

George Horne (President, Treasurer and Cumbria representative)
Dave Cole (General Secretary and Cumbria representative)
Ihor Lewyk (Yorkshire representative)
Paul Bielby (Northumberland representative)
Simon Woodcock (Lancashire representative)
John Reyes (NCCU ECF representative)
Martin Gawne (NCCU Grader)

1. Apologies for Absence

John Wheeler, Dave Welch, Bryan Bainbridge, Jim Moran, Dave Almond, K Smith.

2. Minutes of the 6th December 2014 NCCU Council Meeting

The minutes were accepted as a true and correct record. – There was one correction on the Pennine Cup section where Malola Pradesh was from Durham, not Northumberland.

3. Matters Arising (including matters not covered in the Agenda)

There were no matters arising.

4. Officers Reports

a) Report of the President

The President had nothing to report; but it was acknowledged that his email had not been functioning for nearly six months prior to this meeting.

b) Report of the General Secretary

The Secretary reported that he hadn't received any feedback for the ECF Constitutional and Governance Commission.

The ECF were contacted on the voting entitlements in the NCCU area, following a review of Northern County/Congresses and organisations that had votes or had the potential to vote, but did not currently have them. (See the ECF report on voting).

In email exchanges with Keith Smith, a new set of draft NCCU Club Rules were drawn up. – These will be passed to Bryan Bainbridge for consideration.

c) Report of the Treasurer

George Horne reported that the NCCU had purchased twenty digital chess clocks (£876) to be used as prizes for the NCCU Club Championships over the next 5 years. A British Championship entrant, Steven Jones, had received NCCU support of £100. There were entry fees from the Club Championship outstanding from 2012/13 of £30; but it was decided to write off the £15 owed by Idle club, but that Rupert Jones be asked to action the Leeds club for £15. The balance in the bank at 30/11/15 was £1445.43.

The audited accounts for the last financial year were presented, but not signed. (This was an oversight by the Auditor).

Ihor requested clarification on NCCU income and it was confirmed that apart from Club entry fees, the affiliation fee of £75pa by each County was the only other income.

d) Report of the County Championship Organiser
No report was received.

A discussion ensued as to the problems in the National Stages of the County Championship. The Minute from the 2015 AGM was reinforced: *'Given the difficulties of raising enough players it was again suggested the NCCU continue to press for a change in player numbers at the National stage from 16 to 12. There was general disquiet at the meeting on the intransigence experienced in other chess circles on enforcing the rules in difficult circumstances trying to raise teams and getting players to turn out. This is seen in Yorkshire unable to field teams in four regional sections. It was feared that the situation will only get worse if nothing is done at National level. It was suggested that NCCU enter combined teams in the lower sections to overcome problems of player availability.'*

The Grading Bands also need to be reviewed and ideally reduced from 5 to 4 sections. Paul Bielby's view was that grading limited sections were killing chess in this country, whereas on the continent 'open' tournaments were thriving. The counter argument was that in the UK weekend tournaments were the norm and necessitated graded sections.

Action: Draft a proposal to the ECF on the option for reduced boards and graded sections.

e) Report of the Club Championship Organiser
No report was received.

2015 Winners

Open: Bradford

Major: Heywood

Minor: Penrith

Senior: Bradford & Heywood – Joint Winners

Action: Bryan Bainbridge to kick off the 2016 event with a flyer and the new draft rules finalised and published. – Secretary to contact Bryan.

(Subsequent to this, Bryan confirmed he will not be organizing the Club Championship – further details to be announced).

f) Report of the Correspondence Chess Organiser
No report was received.

Action: Secretary to contact Chris Underhill on results.

g) Report of the Grading Officer

Martin Gawne reported that all the results he had received had gone in for grading. There was however a communication problem in that he wasn't receiving the results directly. He had to search the various websites for the County and Club results.

Action: All County and Club captain's to be requested to submit all results to Martin as well as the NCCU Competition Controllers.

A discussion on a possible NCCU Player list be set up on the NCCU website to encourage more use of the site. **The Secretary said he would arrange to publish one on the site, with links to other Northern websites.**

h) Report of Trophy Officer

The whereabouts of the U180 and U100 Trophies are still unconfirmed.

Action: The Secretary to send a photograph of each shield to Ihor who will investigate in Yorkshire.

The Spencer Chalice (NCCU Junior Individual) is with Max Turner and will need to be retrieved from Berwick-upon-Tweed before June 2016 and the South Lakes Congress (SLC).

Actions:

- 1. Paul Bielby to obtain contact details of Max and inform the Secretary.**
- 2. The Secretary to arrange for the Wahltuch Rose Bowl and the John Littlewood Senior Trophy to be sent to the SLC.**

i) Report of ECF Delegates

John Reyes reported on the ECF AGM in October where he had 22 votes after canvassing Northern Counties and congresses. In all the North had 44 votes, which was a considerable improvement on past ECF meetings. Reports presented at the meeting can be found on the ECF website, but in terms of organisation the ECF appears dysfunctional with posts unfulfilled and the meeting descending into a 'who could work with who' debate. The elections proved the point when 'none of the above' carried in the day in various votes.

Although membership of the ECF has gone down, membership rates have gone up. John proposed a Bronze membership decrease of £2 in order to encourage the grass roots and take up of new members. Although this was defeated at the ECF meeting, the NCCU thought this was a good idea and to go even further and propose a flat Bronze membership of £10 for a number of years (with a cap on Silver membership rate rises) in order to encourage new players to join and also be an incentive to non-ECF Leagues in Yorkshire and Lancashire to sign up. It was also thought that to encourage Junior's further, the one-year free membership be at Silver level (if it's not already). John stated that he is the Silver Members Representative on the ECF and that Malola Pradesh is in charge of the new EC junior Academy.

No NCCU proposals were discussed at the ECF meeting.

It was thought by the NCCU that ECF membership cards should be re-introduced as players then feel 'included' in an organisation that still seems too remote for many chess players. The Pearson Report on OMOV would be presented at the April or October ECF meetings.

Action: Submit proposals to the ECF Finance meeting in April.

5. U16 Pennine Cup

Paul Bielby issued a flyer for the cup to be held in Newcastle, Northumberland on Sunday 27th March 2016, for a 12 player County teams.

Actions:

- 1. Paul to send .pdf flyer to NCCU Secretary for distribution.**
- 2. Reps to contact Junior Organisers and contact Paul to enter teams.**
- 3. Reps to confirm that their own County Junior organisers are correct on ECF website**
- 4. Yorkshire to bring/send Pennine Cup Trophy to the event.**

6. Schools Awards 2015/16

BCET Awards – Nominations required from Cumbria and Lancashire before March 2016.

NCCU Award – Northumberland nominated St Paul's Middle School, Alnwick, for which a citation was received. It was agreed that St Paul's be granted the award forthwith.

Action: Secretary to arrange board, set and clock to go to the school via Paul Bielby.

7. Presentation of Trophies

No trophies were presented, although Ihor brought the County and Club Open trophies.

8. 2015/16 British Championship Qualifying Congress

NCCU Individual Champion and 1 other place.

The South Lakes Congress 3-5th June 2016 in Cumbria will host the NCCU Championships:

1. The Individual Championship – The Wahl Tuch Trophy
2. The Junior Championship – The Spencer Chalice
3. The Senior Championship – The John Littlewood Trophy

Only the NCCU Individual Champion will be awarded free entry. *(If already qualified, no entry fee will be paid, but the place will be awarded to the next eligible player).*

9. 2015/16 British Championship Places x2

Two further places for a Northern Congress – **Action: Durham (contact Lara Barnes)**

10. Nomination of the NCCU President 2106-18 – Durham (contact Bryan Bainbridge)

11. Time and date of next Meeting 4th of June (at SLC in Grange) or 11th June in Bradford.

12. Any other Business

There was no other business and the meeting was declared closed.

Dave Cole
General Secretary