

## **Minutes, 120<sup>th</sup> AGM of the Cumbria Chess Association.**

**Held at 2pm on Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> June 2011 at The Methodist Hall in Kendal.**

**In Attendance;**- 14 members from 6 clubs. D Cole (President) Barrow, S Cassidy (Lge. Cont) Carlisle, T Blower (Barrow), G Horne (Treasurer) Barrow, W Hardwick (Secretary) Carlisle, D Millar (Carlisle), I Mackay (Carlisle), K Southernwood (Penrith), A MacAtear (Penrith), H Austin (Grange), J Kelly (Carlisle), D Phillips (Windermere), I Hewitson (Windermere) and P Gleizon (Cockermouth).

The meeting had been scheduled to be held in the Union Pub but they told us shortly beforehand that the venue would not be available.

**1. Apologies;** - Received from George King, Eggert Fruchtenicht, Mike Mason and Nick Hill.

**2. Presidents Address;** - Dave Cole said that it has been a steady year in terms of membership numbers which have remained a little above the 100 mark. One or two issues had arisen in respect of "nominated players" which were discussed later in the meeting. Dave thanked Eggert for having organised a very successful individual County Championship, which this year had incorporated the NCCU individual Championship as well. He also thanked both Eggert and Robert Patla for staging the "Simultaneous" event at Penrith which was very well received. Looking to the year ahead. There are a number of anticipated changes with Philippe Gleizon having moved to Glasgow and both David and John Jarman expected to move away Cockermouth club will be notably affected. In addition Syd Cassidy's retirement is imminent and Alan Hiatt is standing down as the Grading Officer. However, there seems to be a possibility that Millom could re-enter a team in the league and signs that Workington may be seeking to reform.

Cumbria competed in the County competitions, as did Lancashire and Yorkshire with none of the other 5 northern counties having taken part. Nationally there have been very recent proposals regarding ECF membership which were discussed more fully later in the meeting and gradings are now to be updated on a 6-monthly basis. London will again be staging the "Chess Classic" competition which attracts many top players including Nigel Short who has staged quite a number of "Simultaneous" events in recent months. Apparently in the past he did this in Barrow in 1983 at a cost of £100 but it was felt that his fee would now be rather prohibitive. The South Lakes Congress was again a great success and the "Best Game" from the event was featured recently in the Daily Telegraph. Generally however, Chess remains in decline, basically owing to ageing of players and insufficient new juniors staying with chess. There have been instances of Congresses being called off through lack of entries.

**3. Minutes of the 2010 AGM (Number 119)** – Were accepted as being a true and correct record.

**4. Correspondence;** - None received other than items covered elsewhere.

**5. Secretaries Report;** - **Bill** Hardwick had no issues to report.

**6. Treasurers Report;** - George Horne provided a statement of the 2011 accounts which were accepted as accurate, but are still to be audited and then placed on the Website. George reported a loss this year of £50.57 and a current cash balance of £949.99. In view of this he proposed that we should keep Registration fees at the same level. This was discussed and agreed upon.

The question of covering travelling costs for County matches was raised, notably this years' game against Kent that was staged in Wolverhampton. It was agreed that for the moment the County would continue to cover these costs but it will need to be kept under review as the amounts can be significant. The total cost this year was £169.00.

**7. Membership Secretaries Report;** - Syd Cassidy confirmed that there has been a slight reduction to 110 members from 115 last year. This continues the steady downturn from 200 members some 15 years ago and junior numbers have fallen to 6 from 49 junior members in 1999. It is still a problem affecting most, if not all counties and Dave Cole said that membership numbers in Lancashire and Merseyside are 224 and 227 but only 107 for Cheshire and North Wales. The possibility of Millom and perhaps Workington rejoining would be a big boost. Dave Cole had received a letter in March from Mike Goodwin of Workington saying that they have a number of Chess Sets and asking what they should do with them. It was decided that if the club reforms then obviously they can keep the equipment, otherwise should they wish to then it could be donated to a local school.

**8. League Controllers Report;**- Syd Cassidy reported that all had gone very smoothly with only some minor disputes over board order and nominated players queries. He was pleased to say that once again every league match in the fixture list was fulfilled and all of the Whitaker cup ties.

**9. Grading Officers Report;** - Alan Hiatt had nothing to report and is now standing down from this position.

**10. Junior Organisers Report;** - Syd Cassidy said that there was a slightly reduced level of activity and numbers competing in local competitions and the County Junior Championships was down. A Secondary Schools League has just been started in the Carlisle area, albeit with only 3 teams at present but the winners were Trinity School.

The Carlisle area Junior League has just not functioned this year, mainly because some teachers had left. Syd is hopeful that this should be able to resume successfully next season and Kevin Southernwood hopes to be able to arrange a similar Junior competition in Penrith, possibly including schools in the Appleby

area as well. Invitations have been sent to 25 schools with 8 acceptances received so far. This has been helped by Kevin having arranged a new venue at Ullswater Community College which is available for 8 to 18 year olds and is free of charge. Kevin has also been looking into funding which may be available for “gifted and talented” juniors.

Drew Millar said that two more Carlisle schools have just started regular chess clubs and it was mentioned that Peter Tipper continues to do a fine job at Seascale. There does not seem to be any “central” reference list of competing schools in the County or contact details. Hilary Austin said that she now has a list of local entrants into Mike Basman’s National competition (past and present) and would be happy to pass these details on.

Hilary said that it would be useful if anyone else could provide some “Chess teaching” at schools as only one person is doing that at the moment in the South of the County. Very few people have the necessary police vetting but she did explain that this is not required if other teachers are present. It would also be helpful if more equipment could be made available to schools. Hers are all currently being loaned to Heversham School, including some “large pavement sets” for outdoor use.

Syd said that when it had been planned to stage an outdoor event in Carlisle recently using one of the large sets there had been a problem over a requirement for Public Liability Insurance cover. Hilary said that she was aware of this but had staged events within the grounds of the Public Library and their insurance did cover this.

It was agreed that clubs need to “advertise” themselves to schools and to juniors. Most schools will have online Bulletin boards on which messages could be placed giving club contact details and perhaps a link to the County Website. Hilary said that Head Teachers also collate details from brochures received for preparing newsletters and website information.

Andy MacAtear provides regular match reports to the Cumberland and Westmoreland Herald that are printed and there was also a good article and photograph in the Westmoreland Gazette about Windermere winning the league this year.

**11. Match Captains Report;** - Philippe Gleizon said that this year’s NCCU tournament should have been a Jamboree event but this did not come about because of a breakdown in the Yorkshire organisation. We instead played Lancashire and although we lost went on to play Kent at a venue in Wolverhampton. At this time, because of his relocation to Glasgow, Philippe had handed on the captaincy to George Horne. George reported that we had to default 5 boards in a 16 board match and still only lost narrowly (5-6).

George said that we usually have strong support on the top boards but find difficulty in recruiting stronger, or in some cases any, players on to the lower boards. Travel

arrangements and costs are always going to be a problem but it was agreed that we should continue to enter teams but perhaps review in which sections once we see the new grading lists to enable us assess the County strengths. It was also agreed that for home games, Lancaster is still a good venue.

**12. Correspondence Captains Report;** - Chris Underhill had sent in a report and the details are available on the Website but overall the results seem to be very favourable although some matches are still ongoing.

**13. ECF Delegates Report;** - See below.

**14. NCCU Delegates Report;**-The NCCU and ECF items were dealt with together with the NCCU AGM Minutes available on the CCA website.

ECF Membership fees have been set at £13.00 and Game fees at 58p with various proposals having been put forward for different methods of charging from September 2012. Syd Cassidy and others, felt that the charges were simply too high when most players only receive a grading and nothing more. A general discussion followed and it was asked whether or not say, the NCCU could organise grading separately so that players need not then have to remain members of the ECF. Dave Cole confirmed that it was a possibility to be considered, if the ECF fees prove to be too high.

The NCCU accounts show a cash balance held of £4,579.13 including £956.13 of ECF membership fees that are to be distributed as a “profit-share”. NCCU still actively support players who wish to compete in the British Championships and who require assistance, as well as funding the entry of the NCCU champion.

Syd Cassidy remarked that NCCU club competition entry fees are high, which in turn led to high prize money and he wondered if the prizes could not be reduced or simply replaced by trophies to allow the entry fees to be cut. For 2011-12, in order to save costs, the Intermediate section has been scrapped, which would save roughly half the deficit in the Club competition.

**15. Matters Arising;-**

Issues were all covered later under “Any Other Business”

**16. Proposals;-**

No specific proposals had been received but a discussion took place concerning the rules for “Nominated Players”. No conclusions were reached and Dave Cole said that this matter should be addressed by the new League Controller who may wish to consult with clubs and decide whether not the existing rules need to be clarified or amended. We would then need to ensure that the Constitution is brought up date as necessary.

Syd Cassidy pointed out that the existing "5-point rule" (for board order) which is generally adopted is not actually included in the Constitution at present and should be added. Again this can be considered by the new League Controller and the Constitution can be amended as required.

The new League Controller will also need to consider the application of the new half-yearly grading lists. It is assumed that initial gradings will be used for League matches and Nominated players but the most up to date grades would be used for subsequent Congresses and Tournaments and the Constitution rules will need to be checked to see if any amendments are needed.

#### **17. Prize Giving;-**

Dave Cole spoke for everyone when he thanked Syd Cassidy for his enormous contribution to Cumbria Chess over nearly 20 years and the phenomenal amount of work that he has undertaken in many different roles including all aspects of Junior Chess in the County. In view of his forthcoming retirement, when he will be returning home to Ireland, Dave presented Syd with a retirement present from the County of a lap-top computer, ready loaded with chess software including "Fritz" and also an inscribed pewter mug.

Dave went on to tell Syd that we have nominated him for the ECF President's Award this year and read from some of the many letters of commendation that had been submitted from players throughout the County. The award is to be announced and presented at the ECF AGM in October.

The Division One trophy was presented to David Phillips on behalf of Windermere Chess Club. What was formerly the Division Three trophy was presented to Andy MacAtear on behalf of Penrith "B" team as winners of Division Two (North). The Division Two trophy was given to George Horne on behalf of Barrow "B" as winners of Division Two (South) and overall Division Two winners.

John Kelly was presented with the Whitaker Cup on behalf of Carlisle Chess club.

#### **18. Election of Officers and Committee:-**

**President:** D Cole - unanimous.

**Secretary:** W Hardwick

**Treasurer:** G Horne

**League Controller:** In his absence, Eggert Fruchtenicht was nominated and seconded for this role. Should he decline the offer, then Dave Cole will take up the position.

**Membership Secretary:** D Cole (new)

**Grading Officer:** Currently vacant - Mike Creaney of Cleveland to be approached, otherwise Dave Cole will undertake the grading duties.

**Junior Organiser:** Kevin Southernwood (new)

**Assistant Junior Organisers:** H Austin and Drew Millar (new)

**Match Captain:** George Horne (confirming his temporary appointment during last season)

**Assistant Match Captain:** Vacant

**Correspondence Captain:** C Underhill

**Auditor:** N Foxcroft

**Press Officer:** D Cole

**NCCU Delegates (2):** D Cole and G Horne

**ECF Delegate:** G Horne

**Website Organiser:** John Kelly (new)

**19. County Championships 2012 - Date and Venue:** To be held in Barrow on 24/25/26<sup>th</sup> February 2012, or on suitable alternative dates.

**20. Next AGM 2011 - Date and Venue:** Proposed for Penrith in June 2012 probably at the Crown Hotel in Eamont Bridge if available – currently they make no charge to Penrith club for the use of rooms. Alternatively if necessary, Barrow club would be happy to stage this. Secretary to arrange.

### **21. Any other business:**

John Kelly explained how he hopes to redesign the Cumbria Website, hopefully by August, so that all existing content will remain but there will be an added facility of a “Forum” for which each member will have a log-in account. Any player can post details of their games on the site and there will be facilities for setting up “groups” for playing on-line games or for “live-chat”. There will be links to other sites such as “Chess.com”. Juniors will be fully included as it is a “safe and secure environment”.

John explained that where for instance the Match Secretary may wish to advise everyone of forthcoming County matches and to invite players to take part, it will only require a message to be placed on the Website instead of e.mailing everyone individually. John will be circulating this information and seeking feedback and suggestions very shortly.

Following this year’s County Individual Championships, Robert Patla as County Champion volunteered to play a “Simultaneous” event in Penrith, with Eggert’s assistance, to raise funds for charity. It was most a most enjoyable day and very successful. Eggert has now suggested that our County Champion should be invited each year to hold a similar event and it was fully agreed that this is a good idea and should be continued.

Thanks to all.

Meeting closed.

Bill Hardwick  
(Secretary)