

**NORTHERN COUNTIES CHESS UNION  
FOUNDED 1899**

**Minutes of the NCCU Annual General Meeting 2014**

Held on Saturday May 31<sup>st</sup> 2014, at the Latvian Club, 5 Clifton Villas,  
Manningham Lane, Bradford, BD8 7BY Tel: 01274 546235

**PRESENT**

Bill Metcalfe (President and Cleveland representative)  
Dave Cole (General Secretary and Cumbria representative)  
George Horne (Treasurer and Cumbria representative)  
Ihor Lewyk (Yorkshire representative)  
Rupert Jones (Yorkshire representative)  
Bill O'Rourke (Lancashire representative)  
Simon Woodcock (Lancashire representative)  
Paul Bielby (Northumberland representative)  
Bryan Bainbridge (Durham representative)  
Dave Welch (Merseyside representative)

The meeting opened with a tribute to Jim Tennant-Smith who died on 2<sup>nd</sup> of April 2014 at the age of 86. Jim was a stalwart of Heywood club, Lancashire chess and a Treasurer of the NCCU. A very strong chess player who at one time had a grade of over 200 was a great inspiration and coach for many youngsters in the North.

**1. Apologies for Absence**

Graham Matthews, Keith Smith, Pat Ridley, Graham Bromley, John Wheeler, Jim Moran.

**2. Minutes of the 7th December 2013 NCCU Council Meeting**

The minutes were accepted as a true and correct record.

**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 stated that most of his report would cover ECF issues and would comment in the ECF delegates report.

b) Report of the General Secretary

The Secretary reported that a proposal from Manchester had been received, to be discussed later. Alex McFarlane had sent a report in from the ECF April Council meeting. Two NCCU Officers had resigned and would need replacing: the Grader and the Club Championship organiser. The new John Littlewood NCCU Seniors Trophy had been purchased and would be played for annually at a rotating Northern congress.

c) Report of the Treasurer

George Horne reported that the NCCU had a balance of £2557.40 in the bank. The Club Championship lost £190, with outstanding entry fees still owed from last season by Idle and Leeds clubs of £15 each. It was agreed that Affiliation fees remain the same at £75 per County. It was also agreed that support for NCCU players at the British Championships would continue, assessed on a case by case basis. Although it was recommended that if players were struggling financially to attend the British, they should be advised to apply to the ECF Hardship Fund.

A discussion ensued on how to support Northern junior players in events abroad. In particular the World and European Junior championships were considered the only events worth supporting. Although it was

stated that The John Robinson Fund had ceased to support juniors in these events, juniors could apply for hardship funding. Rupert Jones mentioned a junior who requires support and is gathering funds through Yorkshire, but needs further funding in order to represent the ECF.

*Action: Contact Loz Cooper, ECF Junior Director on details of funding requirements for juniors representing England.*

d) Report of the County Championship Organiser

Jim Moran sent his apologies in at the last minute, so no report was received.

Open winners: Yorkshire

U180: Yorkshire

U160: Yorkshire

U140: Lancashire

U120: Lancashire

U100: Lancashire

Yorkshire has reached the semi-finals at the National Stages in the Open and U160. Lancashire has reached the semi-finals in the U100 and U140.

There was concern expressed by Yorkshire that the County final dates clash with the Leeds Congress, but that priority by players would be to play in the finals if they reached them.

Suggestions were made as to how to promote more County chess such as an E2E4 type weekend, but the difficulties of raising enough players would be a problem. A County Rapidplay event was mooted and could be a possible new event next season, if enough interest is shown.

*Action: reps to canvas clubs for possible interest.*

Given the difficulties of raising enough players it was suggested the NCCU reduce their board numbers from 12 to either 10 or 8 in the NCCU stage. It was also agreed to continue to press for a change in player numbers at the National stage from 16 to 12 and to reduce the number of sections from 5 to 6.

*Action: contact Andrew Zigmond, ECF Controller and the other Unions for support.*

e) Report of the Club Championship Organiser

Keith Smith sent in a report that the club championship had reached the following final stages:

Open: Bradford v Heywood

Major: Heywood v R2 D2

Minor: Penrith v Skelmersdale

Due to ill-health Keith has stepped down from the post. The meeting thanked him for his work and wished Keith well.

It was decided that the prize money for the three sections would remain the same, but a new senior's club section event would be advertised for a 4 player team with an average age of 55.

*The actual title of the section is to be agreed.*

f) Report of the Correspondence Chess Organiser

No report.

g) Report of the Grading Officer

No report; although Mike Creaney expressed difficulties in obtaining County results and has stood down as grader.

h) Report of Trophy Officer

The whereabouts of the U180 and U100 Trophies are unconfirmed, but Ihor Lewyk would confirm if Yorkshire had them. Bill O'Rourke would confirm if Lancashire had the U120 Mike O'Hara trophy.

*Action: The Secretary to send a photo of this trophy to Bill.*

The new NCCU Seniors Trophy was passed over to Paul Bielby for the Northumberland Congress to compete for it. A Yorkshire Congress to hold the Seniors event in 2015.

i) Report of ECF Delegates

Bill Metcalfe reported on the April ECF Council meeting and the turmoil of directors resigning and the fact that the ECF now has no President, although Phil Ehr is now CEO. Bill also reported that he is now one of three people on the ECF Awards Committee and urged reps to submit candidates for Club of the year, small club of the year, congress of the year, chess website and chess magazine of the year; nominations to be in by June 2015 for next year's awards. Particular note was made of nominations for the President's Award for Chess and urged reps to send citations for deserving candidates to Stewart Rueben.

General disquiet as to the state, direction and malaise of the ECF was expressed by a number of reps at the meeting.

One area where the ECF was found wanting was in the issue of game fee invoices to congresses and the slowness of updating the membership list when players upgraded, as congresses were unsure whether a player had been upgraded or took the £6 pay-to-play.

*Action: NCCU to contact Dave Thomas/John Philpott on this issue.*

The issue on County Championship sections was mentioned and demanded urgent action before the October ECF AGM to have the backing of other Unions and the ECF to reduce grading bands from 6 to 5 before the start of next season. This was a pressing concern given that Lancashire and Yorkshire are struggling to get players out on a weekend due to other chess commitments and apathy. Yorkshire in particular has declined to participate in the National stages in a number of sections. A reduction in bands around 160-180 grades was thought desirable. Given this, numbers in teams at the Union stage could be cut to reflect interest and going forward consideration was to be given to submitting Union rather than County names to the ECF when the National stages began in the New Year.

*(See County report for actions).*

**5. U16 Pennine Cup**

This was due to take place in April/May, but nothing has happened so far, after an offer from Malola Prasath in Northumberland to organize it.

**6. Schools Awards 2013/14**

BCET Awards – Nomination from Northumberland submitted.

*Action: Yorkshire to submit nomination by mid-June and submitted.*

NCCU Award – A nomination was received from Bill O'Rourke and the Lancashire school Highfield Priory in Preston was awarded the prize.

*Action: Secretary to arrange the Board, Set and clock to Bill O'Rourke.*

**7. Schools Awards 2014/15**

BCET Awards – Nominations at December meeting required from C&NW and Cleveland

NCCU Award – Merseyside

**8. Presentation of Trophies**

The Open County Trophy was presented to Ihor Lewyk.

The U160 County Trophy was presented to Rupert Jones.

*The Minor Club Trophy was handed to the Secretary to pass to Penrith/Skelmersdale*

**9. Election of Officers**

President: George Horne

General Secretary: Dave Cole

Treasurer: George Horne

County Championships Organiser: Jim Moran

Club Championship Organiser: Bryan Bainbridge

Correspondence Chess Organiser: Chris Underhill

Grading Officer: Martin Gawne

Trophy Officer: Dave Cole

NCCU Webmaster: Steve Henderson

ECF Delegates: George Horne (Reserves: Bill Metcalfe/Rupert Jones)  
Vice-Presidents to Council: Bill Metcalfe and Rupert Jones

**10. Appointment of Auditor**

Neil Foxcroft was reappointed.

**11. 2014/15 British Championship Qualifying Congress**

NCCU Individual Champion and 1 other place to be decided by Yorkshire. 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).*

**12. 2014/15 British Championship Places x2**

Two further places for a Northern Congress – *Action: Cleveland*

**13. Proposals**

**A proposal was received from Greater Manchester to join the NCCU**

A paper was submitted from the MCF tabled before the meeting outlining why they should join and Lancashire submitted a key points paper on the February meeting with the MCF.

Although since the last application the MCF had gone through the protocol of consulting other Counties and had met Lancashire in February, nothing happened between the intervening three months when the MCF said they would come back to Lancashire with their views on how to resolve the issues. The meeting took a dim view that the MCF had not done this and then applied to join the NCCU without further discussion.

Although most at the meeting saw merit in Manchester players playing inside the NCCU, the fact remained that territorial issues over players had not been resolved and given the pressures outlined in the above reports on County match concerns, it seemed folly to dilute the Lancashire pool of players even further. It was further remarked that one of reasons C&NW did not have a County team may be due to lack of player availability. After a long discussion on the merits and demerits of the application, a vote was taken and the meeting decided to reject the application on Greater Manchester joining the NCCU.

**14. Time and date of next Meeting Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> December 2014.**

**15. Any other Business**

Bill Metcalfe was thanked for his two years as President.

The meeting closed at 17.10.

**Dave Cole**  
**General Secretary**