Mid Sussex Chess League

Annual General Meeting

22/7/25

Draft Minutes

Attendees

Jeffrey Boardman – Chair (non-voting)

Julie Denning – Fixtures (non-voting)

Robert Wall – Treasurer (non-voting)

(League Officers may have held voting rights on behalf of their clubs)

James Mansson	Horsham	Roland Rattray	Haywards Heath
Daniel Miller	Horsham	Jim Wheeler	Hastings
Robert Counsell	Brighton & Hove	Marc Bryant	Hastings
Brian Stockham	Uckfield	Bill Tracey	Bexhill
Graham Ewens	Haywards Heath	Michael Hayward	Bexhill
Feliks Kwiatkowski	Haywards Heath	Russell Granat	Worthing
Peter Larwood	Worthing	Chris Jones	Worthing
David Fryer	Crowborough	Richard Welford	Lewes
Matthew Britnell	Lewes		

Hoonam Honorvarmahalati Sussex University

Apologies: John Pye (East Grinstead Book Shop)

1.Chairman's Opening Remarks and Apologies for Absence

The Chairman said he was quite pleased to address a full room.

The Chairman thanked everyone for their interest in Sussex Chess and said the total of 37 teams was the highest level of interest in over a decade which was a great advertisement for local chess.

The Chairman was very grateful as to the good spirit games were played in as he could not remember a season with so few disputes. It goes to show the rule changes including the move away from adjournments (while still technically possible) has smoothed over difficulties

The Chairman said it was difficult to find volunteers and extended a round of applause to Julie managing the match fixtures to a high standard despite a September Holiday.

The Chairman was also very grateful for Robert Wall and his support in organising the finances of the league including trying to source a new bank account. The Chairman requested that others consider becoming volunteers to join the committee to assist in the smooth running as fresh blood is needed to ensure the league continues to function.

Various trophies remain missing and the Chairman not wanting to single any clubs out wished to pursue the missing trophies, but currently 2 Best Player tankards – Divisions 3 & 4 and one trophy is reported missing Division 3 and therefore additional trophies may need to be purchased

2. Review of Last Year's Minutes.

The minutes of last year's meeting were circulated some time previous and some members did not recall having received copies. David Fryer advised that a copy of the minutes were stored on the league website. The minutes were recommended adopted by Marc Bryant and seconded by David Fryer.

3. Secretary's Report and Matters Arising

Currently there is an open position to act as the new league secretary and the position remains vacant. No report was given.

4. Treasurers Report and Matters Arising.

There was a review of the accounts revealing a reasonably healthy balance sheet with net assets of £803 and a surplus for the year of £183. The accounts are attached to these minutes.

4.1 Approval of change of bank to Zempler Bank

This was approved in the meeting – proposed by Chris Jones seconded by Matthew Britnall

The Treasurer was asked to add a second signatory to the bank account.

4.2 – Proposed increase in fees to £7 was varied to £10 per team proposed by Marc Bryant of Hastings, seconded by Daniel Miller of Horsham allowed by the chairman. Vote was carried to increase fees to £10.

4.3 – Proposed penalty/Administration fees of £10 per club where clubs are subject to a fee from ECF for playing unregistered players.

Discussions ensued involving excess and unnecessary administration to the treasurer involved in recharging ECF fees to clubs and how if at all/ how best this could be avoided.

A rule change was approved to penalise clubs a penalty/administration fee for playing unregistered players. The Treasurer will advise clubs of the penalty fee and give clubs 30 days to validate or challenge the ECF penalty fee for playing unregistered player. If the ECF penalty fee is correct, then the Sussex League will add the £10 administration fee onto the ECF penalty fee to be charged to the club which played the unregistered player(s).

4.4 – Approval of accounts

Accounts were approved discussion on the basis of the committee looking into buying trophies.

David Fryer mentioned that a Junior Rapid Play trophy was not needed as there were only a handful of teams entering at best.

4.5 Discussion of a possible merger.

Agreed it was for the committees of both leagues to get together to discuss first and then put discussions to the room. It was reported that Sussex County Chess had not recently been in touch and there was no indication that they were seeking a merger.

Currently the feeling in the room was that Sussex County Chess was in decline, whilst the league is doing reasonably well. The question was what would a merger add to the Sussex Chess League? That said an added influx of committee members would be beneficial to better pool resources.

8. Election of Officers

Current officers were re-elected on a show of hands with thanks to David Fryer for the website.

Julie mentioned for personal reasons she would be stepping down from playing chess, but would still make herself available for fixtures secretary if no other volunteers came forward.

There is a vacancy of Secretary which needs to be filled. Currently there were no volunteers from the meeting.

All existing committee members were re-elected.

9. County Adjudication Secretary's Report and Matters Arising

There had been no formal adjudications, whilst some matches did become adjourned these were all resolved amicably by agreement.

10. SCCA Matters relating to the League (and ECF)

Peter Farr was not in attendance, and there was nothing to report. It was discussed that there had been some political changes throughout the year, with a renewal of the ECF Board including greater levels of female representation. The new parties getting involved seemed to have energy and it will be seen how this progresses but there was nothing of note to report on currently.

There were brief discussions on merger of Silver/ Gold memberships but this was not seen to have a big impact worthy of discussion in the meeting.

11.a Review of current arrangements on Team Size, and a proposal to keep the team size for a further 2 years.

This was debated on club lines with reasoned arguments delivered by those that felt it was best to revert to 5 player teams coming particularly from Horsham. However some of the smaller clubs such as Uckfield requested we keep teams at 4 to enable them to fully commit for another season.

Concerns were raised about travelling in cars with 5 adults and whether some clubs would have enough drivers for away fixtures. It was reported that there were a low level of defaults this season in relation to other seasons where 5 player teams were the norm.

Some of the larger clubs spoke that the reversion to 5 players would give more club players a chance to play. However, Bexhill advised that it may result in a reduction in the number of overall teams in the league in some divisions. A discussion was had to review some of the higher leagues teams as opposed to lower league teams to address these concerns. However these proposals were not put to clubs in advance of the meeting and it was discussed by the Chairman as these reflect fundamental rule changes to the league they could not be heard.

The vote to retain the existing arrangement was carried by a small margin 13 to 7.

It was discussed that the rule of teams could be heard at next year's AGM and this was not a veto against more discussion over the next few years, but more thought and consideration ought to be given in advance so clubs could consider proposals.

Proposed Rule Changes – Team order of strength

(a) 11 a Team Order of strength

Proposal (Crowborough) Current Rule

5.2 In each match a team must play in descending order of current playing strength. It is recognised for many reasons a players rating may not be the best guide to current form and reasonable discretion is allowed in this area. Nevertheless for K-ratings players should play in order of decreasing rating, subject to an allowable difference of 100 rating points*.

For P-ratings the Tournament Controller may require a team captain to justify his team order and should he/ she be satisfied that the provisions of this rule have been clearly disregarded to the detriment of the opposing team he/ she shall refer to the Management Committee who may adjust the match result as it seems appropriate.

Where * is the Official Revised Monthly Rating set by the ECF for each player.

5.2 In each match a team must play in descending order of current playing strength. The ratings used are the Official Revised Monthly Rating as published on the day of the match by the ECF.

Match Captains are recommended to write the ratings down of each player on the match card prior to the match to avoid unnecessary confusion.

A and K rated players should play in order of decreasing rating subject to an allowable difference of 100 rating points. P rated players should be treated the same as unrated players and played in the order of their estimated playing strength.

An exception to this rule is if a team substitutes after the start of the match, a later player with a reserve. If requested to do so by the opposing captain the team captain will be required to justify their team order to the satisfaction of the Tournament Controller.

A minor amendment was agreed to the proposed rule, is that either the opposing captain, the Fixtures Secretary, Tournament Controller or other member of the committee would be able to raise discrepancies in team selection. No other parties could raise this as an issue. Another minor amendment was that we were to include best practice guidelines for team captains to write down the ratings of team members on the team sheet in advance of the fixture. This would alleviate most of the perceived inadvertent rule breaches.

Overall there was significant debate over the merits of the new rules as to whether they were needed and how on several occasions teams had point deductions during the year due to inadvertent rule breaches with fast improving juniors.

The motion was passed by significant majority on the basis of the minor inclusions.

11c **Sussex University Proposal – Enforcement of FIDE rules in regards to electronic devices in all competitions run by Sussex County Chess.**

There was discussions about an incident that affected Sussex University and the advantages of adopting FIDE rules in all competitions for clarity. Various discussions ensued about whether captains are geared up to implement FIDE rules, what are the Fide rules and how this would apply?

Members of the Worthing advised there was a medical need to keep a phone on during the game and how this would impact genuine cases of hardship. It was discussed, if this were the case, the genuine reason would be advised to captains/ opponents in advance and the recommended protocol would be that phone would be kept on silent to not disturb other players.

Questions about whether phones still actually disturb players and whether the FIDE rules were there to police cheating and whether this was actually a problem in the league.

It was agreed that due to a lack of detail on the actual rules to be implemented in the proposal the league committee would not be able to adopt the proposal in the current year. It was agreed that Sussex University would review the existing rules, FIDE rules and make specific suggestions for improvements for inclusion in the rules.

No vote was held on the specific proposal as the proposer agreed it lack the detail to be put for a vote this year.

(b) The Playing Session

Proposal (Crowborough)

8.1.2 Where the FIDE Laws of Chess require the intervention of an arbiter the clock should be stopped and the players should quietly resolve the issue between themselves. If this is not possible then they should retire from the playing area and consult an appropriate member of the home club. (the intention is to avoid the disturbance to other players caused by any dispute regarding the Laws of Chess. By appropriate member I mean an experienced player who knows the rules or can look them up and preferably someone who is not currently playing a game in the match.)

A long discussion of the merits ensued or having other pre-nominated persons. Smaller clubs may have issues with the rules. Proposal was withdrawn.

12. Location for 2026 AGM

Lewes venue seemed ideal, and subject to availability agreed that Lewes is most suitable.

Lewes club made the point that due to St Mary's Supporters club opening hours the meeting ought to start at 7:45pm, not 7:30pm and it ought to be noted that this time is essential to allow the club to open properly.

The venue was proposed by Lewes and there were no dissentions in the room to this being the venue for the forthcoming year.

13. Any other business

There was discussion over the missing trophies and it was agreed that the committee members would continue investigations with the relevant club to obtain the trophies, and whether clubs could be liable if trophies go missing, and whether trophies should be retained at a central cabinet to avoid them going missing.

It was agreed that Committee members would look into sourcing a replacement trophy.

Hooman of Sussex University outlined a new Sussex University IM norm tournament/ Open tournament he was organising on the second May bank Holiday and was seeking sponsorship. It was discussed this type of expenditure would be a matter for the committee and would not need to be put for a club vote.

Post meeting note - Sussex Chess league agreed to sponsor the best Sussex player £100 in the open.

Further details are awaited from Sussex University Club on the missing trophies.

Meeting closed at 10 pm.