



MINUTES

Meeting of the Executive Committee of the Hull and East Riding Chess Association: held in the James Reckitt Reading Room, Hull Central Library. Thursday 16th May, 2024.

Present – Graham Chesters (chair), Keith Porteous, Derek Sheppard, Chris Matthews, Richard Atkinson, David Atkin, Andrew Bettley, Steve Thrower, Bethany Mount, Douglas Vleeshouwer, Tom Tallentire (trustees); Jim Miklevicz (Victoria Dock), John Thackray (St Andrews) for item 3 only (observers).

1. Apologies for absence: Graeme Reid
2. Minutes of the last two meetings – Committee meeting of 15th February 2024. For completeness the full proposed agreement with St Andrews Chess Club forms part of these minutes. The minutes were agreed without amendment.
 - Committee meeting of 21st March 2024. The minutes were agreed without amendment.
3. Decisions made between meetings by electronic means. The text of a resolution document (attached to these minutes) with respect to the dispute with St Andrews was approved by an email vote (30th April – 1st May): 8 for, none against, 3 abstentions. John Thackray reported on his consultation within St Andrews concerning the document: two members only had responded, one to claim that the matter had been “blown out of all proportion”, the other to say that he would make no comment. John thus considers the document accepted, and it is agreed that this concludes the dispute process. It was noted in passing that the four-point penalty has, in the event, made no material difference to promotion or relegation decisions.
4. Matters arising (not otherwise on the agenda)
 - a) Charity Commission registration. Efforts have been made to re-open communication with the CC, following their change of contact arrangements, and it is expected that normal access will be restored in the near future: it is hoped that this will enable the timely submission of the annual report.
 - b) Rule 4.1 and its apparent ambiguity. Following the recent discussions in which this rule figured prominently, some refinement of the rules has been proposed in an effort to remove any lack of clarity. These changes will be addressed at the EGM on May 23rd.
5. Chair’s Business (GC)
 - a) Financial, Investment and Reserves strategies
 - i. Finance Group terms of reference – these were agreed.
 - ii. The revised Investment Strategy – this was agreed.
 - iii. The revised Finance Strategy – this was agreed.
 - iv. A key decision regarding the budget for 2024-25. The above strategies allow for a draw-down of some funds from the investment, the amount being the difference between the current value of the investment (£201000) and the original value, adjusted for inflation (£198000), plus 10% of the inflation-adjusted value

(£19800). The total draw-down is thus £22800. Such a move may become necessary for the maintenance of the chess strategy over the next four years, if income, particularly from grants and sponsorship, turns out to be less than expected. It was agreed to make this notional transfer of £22800 to reserves, within the investment, identified formally in the annually revised Reserves Policy. It is noted that the aim is to return the investment sum to its inflation-adjusted figure, and to maintain our search for grants and sponsorship. These matters will be reported to the AGM.

- b) British Championships. An offer to members has been made, to subsidise their entry fee by £20. To date seven members have applied for this. The wisdom of this offer was questioned, on two grounds. First, many people who are eligible for the subsidy are already established players, and such assistance cannot be seen therefore as promoting the game of chess, as specified in our charitable aims. Second, a move that commits up to £1200 should have been debated by the trustees first. The offer was defended, first by arguing that the subsidy constitutes development of chess (rather than promotion), by encouraging existing players to extend their experience of the game; and second by pointing out that the decision to make the offer came from a sub-group of trustees who were looking at ways in which HERCA could support the Championships. It was also noted that to have a sizeable contingent of local players would strengthen any future attempts to attract sponsorship for HERCA activities.

6. Treasurer's Business (GR/TT)

- a) Financial report, including performance against budgets. A proper report was not available for this meeting: KP will circulate the most up-to-date spreadsheet. **Action – KP**
- b) Current investment performance. It was reported that the current balance of the HERCA investment is over £200000, and growing steadily.
- c) Handover. A recent meeting involving both the outgoing and incoming treasurer allowed for the handing over of key paperwork and cheque-books. The bank mandate is urgent – TT will contact GR to encourage progress. **Action – TT**
- d) Year-end accounts: arrangements for approval by the Executive Committee. The expectation is that the accounts will be made compiled very quickly after May 31st, circulated to trustees for approval (either electronically or in a meeting yet to be arranged), so they can be included with the papers for the AGM. **Action – TT and KP**
- e) Club fees and individual membership fees, 2024-25. It was agreed to recommend to the AGM that these remain unchanged from 2023-24.

7. Competitions (DV)

Reports were made concerning the final positions in the HERCA leagues:

Hull B are winners of the six-board division 1.

The winner of the six-board division 2 is not yet decided.

Hull U are winners of the four-board division 1.

Beverley Knights are winners of the four-board division 2.

East Hull B are winners of the four-board division 3.

The Atkinson Cup is won by Hull FC.

The Ross Cup is won by St Andrews X.

The finals of the individual competitions are to be played at East Hull Chess Club on May 27th.

The team lightning tournament will take place June 27th.

Outstanding success of local teams in the Yorkshire Leagues was noted, with the Hull and East Riding A team winning the Woodhouse Cup, (for the first time in 21 years), and the B team coming second in division 2 (the I M Brown Trophy), and thereby winning promotion to division 1.

- a) Congress 2024. It was reported that the accommodation is booked, and that entries are already being received. The capacity is likely to be similar to last year, although there are ways in which an increase could be managed.
- b) M H Brown Summer league (DS). Section 1 has seven teams, and will be played as a normal summer league. Section 2 has twelve teams, and will therefore be run as a five-round Swiss tournament.

8. Junior Academy. It was reported that:

- a) The club league is nearing completion, with the final matches during the coming week.
- b) The Primary School League has been won by Beverley Minster Primary School.
- c) The Secondary School League has been won by Hymers School.
- d) The finals of the two individual junior competitions will take place on May 27th, at East Hull Chess Club, alongside the senior finals. As there are only three electronic boards, the two junior games will be played one after the other, so that all four can be streamed and commented on.
- e) Entry into the British Championships by junior players is being encouraged by offering some financial support, in a similar way to the scheme for senior events.
- f) The junior rapid play event will take place on July 7th at Princes Quay.
- g) HERCA is managing four school contracts for Chess in Schools and the Community. An email to 200 primary schools will be circulated imminently, inviting participation in the CSC scheme.
- h) The annual summer school is planned for August 28th to 30th, taking place at Hymers College.

9. Chess in the community

- a) Play Chess Festival. Work is under way in preparation for this summer's events, co-ordinated with the British Championships.
- b) Payment of club development funds. It was noted that Withernsea Chess Club has attracted a handful of junior members recently, and the club is encouraged to spend its allocation of HERCA funds on their support. The club secretary is keen to purchase books and other teaching materials. The clarification was made that the Hull University Chess Club is not supported by HERCA funds, as it is anyway in receipt of monies from the Hull University Union.

10. Governance

- a) Update on affiliation process (KP). It was noted that East Hull Chess Club has formally affiliated to HERCA; Victoria Dock is ready to do so; Hull Chess Club is expected to approve affiliation at its AGM on June 14th; Beverley Chess Club is working on individual membership for players, and KP is to contact their secretary to emphasise the urgency of club affiliation; St Andrews should now be in a position to pursue affiliation, given the final resolution of the dispute with HERCA, and KP will pursue this; Hull University Chess Club will address the matter properly after their AGM in June; and Withernsea Chess Club has been encouraged to affiliate, as part of the recent communication (see 9. above). **Action - KP**

- b) HERCA Assets Register. It was decided that the plan for TT to take responsibility for the compiling of the assets register needed to be revised. A call for a volunteer to take on this task drew no response.

The process of gathering trophies in preparation for this year's presentation evening was considered, and the need for some new trophies, to replace missing ones and to cover new events and awards, was identified.

- c) Election of officers and trustees (the term of office for GR, RA and DV comes to an end this year.) It was noted that GR has declared his wish to resign and has been replaced by TT., RA very much wants to reduce his HERCA workload, but is willing to continue as a trustee and Head of Governance, and DV is also willing to continue in his current role and is currently supporting DA as the latter takes responsibility for LMS. These continuations, as well as confirmation of the appointment of TT as trustee and treasurer, will be considered at the AGM. [Post meeting note: these posts of Governance Lead and Competitions Lead will be open to other nominations.] As there is a vacancy on the board of trustees, members will be invited to stand, or nominate a colleague, for the position: KP to communicate this to members. **Action – KP**

(BM left the meeting.)

11. AGM and presentation event, June 18th.

- a) Construction of the annual report. The annual report to the Charity Commission, and a related report to HERCA members at the AGM, were considered. KP is to compile the reports, with help from other key trustees in the areas of their own expertise.
- b) Organisation of the presentation event. Some progress was made with this matter.
- c) Recommendations from the Ex Comm. These have been reported above, as appropriate.

12. Any other notified business. None.

13. Date of next meeting: tbd.

Resolution of the dispute between Hull & East Riding Chess Association and St Andrews Chess Club: a final summary

The penalty of points deduction on all St Andrews teams taking part in the HERCA winter leagues in the season 2023-24.

The penalty was in response to the deliberate refusal, announced at the St Andrews AGM in June 2023, to pay the competition fees for 2022-23. The competition fees were then paid by a specified deadline. The fees for 2023-24 were paid promptly.

After protracted attempts to reach an agreement on the dispute around the extent of the penalty and process, both parties decided that the original penalty should stand.

Background issues

St Andrews have apologised for allowing their Club Secretary to use the AGM as a platform to air from the Chair personal grievances against the Association and for the disrespectful way in which this was done in the presence of two trustee-guests. They have recognised that the arguments put forward to challenge the penalty in the summer of 2023 had the effect of prolonging the dispute. Areas of potential agreement began to emerge at the beginning of 2024 when the Club adopted a more emollient tone.

Out of this episode has emerged some positive reflection by the Club on how they operate constitutionally. Both parties have also identified the need for the Association to revisit its Constitution and Bye-laws to bring formal clarity to the relationship between the Association and one of its affiliated organisations when there is a disagreement.

The Club and Association have committed to a genuine effort to rebuild a cordial relationship (which does not exclude constructive criticism expressed with normal levels of courtesy and based on correct information).