

CAMBRIDGESHIRE COUNTY CHESS ASSOCIATION

Minutes of the AGM held on Zoom on 14th July 2021

1. Attendance

Due to the coronavirus pandemic this meeting was held online via Zoom. Thirteen members of the association attended: Paul Kemp, Paul Hanks, Colin Emery, Stephen Pride, Andy Rankine, Paul McMahon, Neil Greenwood, Jimmy Blair, Kevin Clark, Peter Baddeley, Andy Rankine, Francis Bowers and Chris Russell. The chairman opened the meeting at 8.06pm and thanked everyone for attending. He pointed out that the meeting was being recorded to aid the minutes.

2. Obituaries

It was noted with sadness that Patrick Ribbands had died last January. Patrick served the association in a number of capacities, most notably both as county second team captain and grading officer for many years. Paul Kemp gave a tribute to Patrick as both player and as an innovative and indefatigable administrator. He was grading officer for the EACU and founded the EACU team championship. As organiser he always arranged prizes to encourage juniors and weaker players. Stephen Pride added that he was also a valued member of Cambridge Chess Club, for whom he did a great deal, rising to become president of the club. He was also fixture secretary for the Bury league. Stephen also remembered Patrick as a real enthusiast for the English opening. He was a unique character and will be greatly missed.

Paul Kemp said that he had produced an obituary for Patrick in the ECF newsletter. Chris promised to forward this to Phil for inclusion on our website. It was also reported that Steve Wozniak, a stalwart supporter of New England club, had sadly died last year.

3. Apologies for absence

Apologies had been received from Phil Turp.

4. Minutes of the previous AGM held on 2nd September, 2020

The previous minutes had been circulated by Chris Russell. This meeting had also been recorded to aid his minute taking and anyone was welcome to a copy.

5. Matters arising

1. Paul Hanks noted that the minutes reported that the EACU grading website would be retired this year, but he understood that this was now not to be the case. Chris said that at the EACU AGM he had talked to John Wickham, who said that due to the pandemic, Dave Wild had been persuaded to run it for one more year. Chris had sent an email to Dave to ask if we could also still use it while we learned the ECF LMS system.
2. Paul Hanks said that it had been agreed at the last AGM to award league titles from the results on a points per game basis. However, he had seen no official announcement from the league secretary. Paul had made his own assessment and had reported these in the New England October 2020 newsletter, so they could be found there by anyone who was interested.

There were no other matters arising. Paul Hanks proposed adoption of the minutes as a true record. This was agreed.

6. Reports of Association officers for 2019/20

Paul hanks said that as most reports would say that nothing happened in the last year, he would dispense with formal reporting and just ask if anyone had anything that they wished to feed back.

ECF Delegate: Jimmy Blair had attended the ECF financial meeting as our delegate, and reported that they had agreed to keep membership costs the same as last year (though it was highly that they would rise next year because of reduced income during the pandemic.) Revised 4-digit grading bands were agreed for county competitions. Also, as a result of the pandemic, online organisations are now to have a vote in ECF council meetings.

It was asked whether players could still play up to 4 games in ECF competitions before needing to be a member. Chris said that he thought that the existing rules would still apply once OTB chess restarted, so club fines would be issued for non-ECF members after the 4th game.

Jimmy is unable to attend the ECF AGM in October so a volunteer will be needed.

Website Manager: Phil Turp was not present but had submitted a report (attached). . Phil was happy to remain in his post. Chris noted we will use Dave Wild's EACU website again this year, as a safety net, while attempting to transition to the new LMS system.

Rapidplay Organiser: As Ollie Lenton was not present, Paul Kemp reported that although there had been no Rapidplay last year, one had been arranged for Saturday, 25th September at Whittlesford. This plan was made in the Spring when the pandemic looked to be easing, and Paul was trying to contact Ollie to determine whether he still wished to proceed. A decision would need to be made soon to allow entry forms to be circulated. The venue can be cancelled at no risk, but Whittlesford is a small venue, so in the event that we do proceed, we will need to reduce entry numbers to allow for covid measures, perhaps by 25%. While the event is not yet certain to go ahead, Paul recommended pencilling the date into people's diaries. Paul Hanks suggested that feedback from the meeting may help influence the decision to proceed.

7. Report of the Treasurer and Adoption of the 2019/20 Accounts

Paul Kemp had submitted a report (attached), and said that there had only been one transaction during the year, which was the renewal of our website hosting costs of circa £86. Consequently, we currently have a healthy balance of £2760. In view of this and the risk of higher costs for clubs (rent rises, membership reductions, etc.) Paul recommended levying no fees on clubs in the new 2021 season. He also thought that there was a risk of an interrupted season, so this would be the simplest solution. However, he would forward any fines to clubs that used players that were not properly ECF registered, as he had done in previous years. As auditor Norman Hutchinson had approved the accounts.

Paul Hanks thought that waiving fees would be popular with clubs and the proposal was endorsed without dissent.

(Trophies normally presented here: As the 2019/20 season was void no trophies were presented at the meeting.)

8. Coronavirus issues

Paul Hanks asked for feedback as to whether clubs were intending to restart soon or waiting to see how the pandemic develops. He said that New England was moving to a new venue and all of our members that attended our AGM last week were keen to start OTB chess soon. So, (pandemic permitting), we intended to begin meeting again in September. We will enter a teams in league as before, except we may not have enough players for a second 550 team.

For Warboys, Peter Baddeley said that they had yet to hold their AGM but most members were keen to return to OTB chess, probably in September, subject to the Covid situation. They normally hold some preseason friendly competitions through August in local pubs but had not started these yet. Teams as before except they will only enter one team in division 2.

Colin Emery reported that the St Neots players he had spoken to were keen to restart OTB chess in September, but he had been unable to reach some members. The local Conservative club would host them as before. They will enter teams as before lockdown.

Kevin Clark said that Royston had lost a number of stronger players and would only be able to enter the grade limited competition. The community centre where they meet reopened in April and they were planning to reassemble in mid-September to discuss options, dependent on the pandemic.

Stephen Pride said that only about half the Cambridge membership responded to a questionnaire asking if they wanted to play, so they could be down on numbers. As their rent was high, to help with costs he asked if all their home matches could be before the end of April.

Francis Bowers said that Peterborough would start to meet again from 5th August. Their rent had potentially doubled due to extra cleaning for covid. He hoped that most of the membership would return as the pandemic eased.

Andy Rankine said that Godmanchester now had access to their venue and would start meeting from Monday 26th July. They wished to participate in 550 league as normal. Their club room was small so they would need confirmation from visiting teams that they were happy to play there.

Paul Kemp represented Linton, but they did not participate in Cambridgeshire events other than the Jamboree, due to travelling distances. No-one from Spalding was present. Chris said that he would contact Richard Coats for details.

Likely league formation:

Div,1: Cambridge, New England, Peterborough, St Neots, Warboys

Div,2: New England, Peterborough, Spalding, St Neots, Warboys

Team 550N: New England (2 teams?), Peterborough, Spalding, Warboys

Team 550S: Cambridge, Godmanchester, Royston, St Neots, Warboys

Paul Hanks said that it looked hopeful that we all will be back to playing in September. However, he pointed out that there may be covid restrictions that we could be required to follow, notably those imposed by our venues. As September was a little way off, and the level of covid rules uncertain, it was suggested that clubs notify all visiting teams of any requirements in good time before the start of the season.

Paul said that the New England AGM had agreed to minimum covid guidelines that required the club to designate a covid contact (in the event of transmission), to provide hand sanitiser and keep a record of club visitors. He suggested adopting a similar protocol for our association (see appendix). A general discussion ensued. Advice on masks in cars was proposed, but this was generally thought to be a matter between the driver and his passengers. Some thought the proposals would put an onerous burden on clubs, but others thought that we should adopt some measures as a common-sense approach to encourage the more nervous players to get back to playing chess. With several differing opinions it was eventually proposed that we adopt the key points of Paul's protocol as sensible advice only, with home captains being responsible for communicating local covid rules at their venue. This was agreed by the meeting.

Forthcoming season: Discussion then took place on when the season should start, with mid to late September being the favoured option. It was pointed out that any specific club requirements (e.g. on start date) could be communicated to the fixture secretary. (Most leagues will have an odd number of teams this year, meaning one team sitting out each fixture week anyway.) With this agreed, the season is to start on w/c 20th September.

The 550 league is to be renamed to use 4-digit ratings. (The exact conversion is 6925.) It was therefore proposed to rename the league as the '7000 league'. So we will organise Division 1, Division 2, 7000 League, and an Open and under-7000 Fenland KO cups. There was some discussion on skewing the fixtures to favour completion of certain competitions, but given that there will be one less team in both Div1 and 2 (Royston, Warboys) this was thought unnecessary.

County teams are likely to be 12 boards next season. This has yet to be endorsed by the EACU but both Paul (Open) and Neil (U1850) team captains preferred this option. The normal venue of Turner Hall is small for social distancing, but should be adequate for this reduced number of boards. Paul Kemp said that an alternate venue was possible if we adopted 12 board matches. Neil thought that he might struggle to get 12 boards and asked if clubs could encourage any new U1850 players to contact him.

9. Election of Officers for 2021/22

Paul Hanks as chairman, Chris Russell, as vice-chairman/secretary and Paul Kemp as treasurer, were all prepared to stand again, for the new season. League secretary John Beck was not present, but was expected to resume playing chess, so it was possible he would stand. Peter Baddeley and Neil Greenwood agreed to raise the matter with him. (John Beck later confirmed his agreement to stand.)

Francis Bowers resigned last season as tournament secretary, due to covid, but was prepared to take the job on again this year.

Ollie Lenton was not present so Paul Kemp was asked if he knew whether Ollie intended stand as rapid-play organiser. Paul said he would chase Ollie to find out. If they were to run the rapid-play in September, as proposed, we will need to confirm an organiser soon. (Ollie was later confirmed as organiser, and invitations have been issued.)

Paul said that with Patrick dying, this meant that his grading officer job was now vacant. There were no volunteers forthcoming, but Chris pointed out that we would need a new, younger tech-savvy recruit to secure our future grading administration needs. The new LMS system provides a web-based input for grading data, rather like Dave Wild's database, but we will now have to provide the local administrator that performed Dave's function, setting up local competitions, user access and input structures ourselves. Chris said that he would carry on for now but believed it was best run as a 2 man team to ensure that more than one person knew how to run it.

Jimmy Blair was prepared to stand as ECF delegate but cannot attend the AGM in October. Paul Kemp suggested that we ask John Wickham if he will act as our delegate for this meeting. This was agreed.

With everybody prepared to stand again (in the hope and expectation that those not present would stand), with a couple of vacancies, it was agreed to re-elect the committee en-block as follows:

Position	Proposed (and voted into office)
Chairman	Paul Hanks
Vice-Chairman	Chris Russell
Secretary	Chris Russell
Treasurer	Paul Kemp
League Secretary / Team 550 Organiser / FKO organiser	John Beck (TBC)
Rapidplay	Ollie Lenton / Paul Kemp, John Wickham
Tournament Organiser (County Championship/ Jamboree)	Francis Bowers
Junior Organiser	Open to volunteer
Match Captains:	Open Paul McMahan U160 Neil Greenwood
Website Co-ordinator	Phil Turp
Grading Officer	Chris Russell
Auditor	Norman Hutchinson
ECF Delegate	Jimmy Blair
EACU Delegates	Chris Russell, Paul Hanks
Disputes Committee	Paul Hanks (Chairman) plus one volunteer from each club (to be asked as necessary)

8. Any Other Business

Paul Kemp said that at the EACU AGM he was persuaded to replace Patrick and organise the EACU team championship. He was planning to do this in November, so asked that Francis did not arrange the county individual to conflict on dates. He was proposing a slightly different format this year, from 2 games at county time controls to 3 games (60minutes plus 10s increment), with pairing on Jamboree basis (all play all) He thought that this should speed up the event organisation on the day and lead to more chess. He asked for feedback, the meeting generally agreed that his proposals were sensible.

Peter Baddeley asked if we could rename a tournament in Patrick's memory. Paul Kemp said that the EACU team championship was going to be renamed to the Patrick Ribbands Memorial trophy. Patrick instituted and ran this event for 14 years, so it was thought to be a fitting tribute.

There being no further business the chairman closed the meeting at 10.03pm.

Minutes Prepared by:

Minutes Signed by:

C. J. Russell

P. Hanks

Secretary

Chairman

Appendix: Cambridgeshire OTB Covid-19 Prevention Protocol (proposed by Paul Hanks and adopted as advice only)

Every Cambridgeshire Club shall designate two members as principal and reserve points of contact for matters concerning the Covid-19 pandemic. These nominees shall: -

- liaise with the venue operators about any local procedures
- stay abreast of developments in recognisable symptoms
- circulate venue compliance measures, the symptoms and any subsequent changes to the membership
- mandate members displaying symptoms, awaiting a test result or required to quarantine or self-isolate, not to attend club events
- be able to pass on information about testing and vaccination
- notify the County Association of their contact details and responsibilities for onward forwarding to similar appointees at other clubs. See <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19>
- provide hand sanitiser for use on entry to the playing area
- maintain a register of everyone entering the playing area including contact details for visitors
- require members to inform the Covid designates immediately should they test positive for Covid-19 or strongly suspect infection due to their symptoms
- broadcast the potential for infection to all possible contacts on the register for the appropriate session and the Covid designate for any visiting team.

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Measures not included: -

Risk assessment and publication

Knowledge of cleaning and sanitisation schedule at the venue especially for common touch points e.g. handrails, door handles and table tops

Mitigation procedures in the playing area e.g. limiting numbers, one-way systems, barriers/screens, social distancing, side-by-side play, face covering, fresh air/ventilation, no raised voices, staggered starting, fixed subdivision bubbles

Restrictions for high-risk groups e.g. clinically extremely vulnerable, ...

Sharing common facilities e.g. scoresheets, pens

Reduced surface contact e.g. tidying your own litter and glasses

Separate travel

Paul Hanks

Chairman

CAMBRIDGESHIRE COUNTY CHESS ASSOCIATION

Treasurer's Report 2020/21

There is so little to report this year with most chess activity suspended that I have agreed with Norman Hutchinson, the auditor, that I should replace the pro-forma accounts with a brief statement.

The Association started the financial year with a balance of £2848.46. The only expense has been the website costs (£86.25) and the only income the derisory interest paid on our bank deposits (£2.54). The deficit for the year is £83.71 and the balance at 31 May therefore stands at £2764.75.

At the time of writing (early June) it is hoped that League chess will resume in September and that the Cambridgeshire Rapidplay will be able to be held on Saturday 25 September. However, I propose that the Association makes no levy on clubs for the 2021/22 season. The Association has healthy reserves whereas club finances are often stretched, and may be put under further strain if not all members return.

Should the ECF impose any levies in respect of non-members playing in ECF rated events (and this includes online chess, such as the East Anglian Club Championship played at Christmas) the costs will be passed on to clubs.

PAUL KEMP

Treasurer

Cambridgeshire Chess Association Website Report

The Hosting contract has just been renewed for a further 2 years with GoDaddy.com.

During the Covid lockdown the website has been redesigned to be fully responsive and easier to maintain. Once the source is decided for the results for next season be it the c4results site or the new ECF League Management System I will finish the design work and publish the new version of the site.

In anticipation of the eventual closure of the c4results site I have saved all the available results from previous years and these will be available as downloadable PDF files.

If there is anything specific anyone wants added to the site please let me know.

I am happy to continue if needed.

Phil Turp

PATRICK RIBBANDS

Patrick Ribbands, who died suddenly at the end of January, was a stalwart of Cambridgeshire chess for as long as anyone can remember. He played and captained teams for Linton in the Bury League for the past decade, and played a similar role for Royston in the Cambs and Herts Leagues. Before that he played for Cambridge City and was club president. He was a regular at local Congresses and also in the supporting events at the British Championships.

It will be as an indefatigable administrator that he will be best remembered and most missed. Among many other roles he captained the Cambridgeshire county second team for 30 years and was grading officer for 22 years. For the East Anglian Chess Union he was County Match Controller for 22 years and grading officer for 15 years. He initiated and ran the East Anglian Club Championship from 2008. At the time of his death he had just completed this season's event online and had planned an East Anglian online League for this spring. He had been Match Secretary in the Bury League.

Patrick was a kindly and gentle soul, who always made sure that there were plenty of opportunities for the lower-graded and junior players in events that he organised. He had a long history of coaching juniors, who have themselves paid tribute to the influence he had on them when they were starting out. He was always full of ideas, as evidenced by the Ribbands pairing system which he devised as an alternative to Swiss pairings, organising rapidplay tournaments to try it out! He will be greatly missed: as a club member always willing to fill a gap in the team sheet, as an organiser prepared to take most things on, and as a friend.

Paul Kemp