

## **LINCOLNSHIRE CHESS ASSOCIATION ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2024**

Held at **the** Lincoln Labour Club, Lincoln on Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> of September 2024, 11.30am

### **MINUTES**

Attending: Nigel Birtwistle (Chair), Chris Holt, Andrew Watson, Iulia Covaci, Nick Stead, Denis Georgiou, Peter Sherlock, William Orr, James Kennedy, Ben Mason.

Apologies: Keith Noons

### **Opening Remarks**

The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed back Louth Chess Club, represented by James Kennedy. Barton chess club does not have quite enough members yet to rejoin the league but maybe back next year, Spalding are now playing in the Peterborough league, leaving Grantham as the southernmost club.

### **1. MINUTES OF 2023 AGM**

The minutes of the 2023 AGM were circulated to attendees, and these were voted as an accurate record of the meeting. Proposed by Peter and Seconded by Denis

### **2. MATTERS ARISING**

We resolved last year to buy a new Division 2 trophy as north and south divisions were amalgamated. This was bought by the association and Lincoln paid for the engraving. For future reference: Peter has the old division 2 north and south trophies in his care and Nick currently has the division 1 trophy.

### **3. SECRETARY'S REPORT (Chris Holt)**

It has been a quiet year overall. I attended ECF meetings as the association's representative and a copy of my report is in the minutes.

### **4. TREASURER'S REPORT AND ACCOUNTS (Peter Sherlock)**

- *The accounts are appended to these minutes.*

This season we made a relatively small surplus of £81.01 compared to a surplus of £335.00 in the period 2022/23. The key feature is the expenses incurred by our 3 teams – getting to the national semi finals and final does not come cheap £324.99 compared to £90.00 last season when the Open team were national champions.

On the income side the clubs provided £310 in subscriptions, the same as last season, although Grantham withdrew their team from Division 1 to be replaced by Appleby Frodingham. Louth entering this season should provide an extra £70. The £50 compensation was paid to us when Denis Georgiou apparently made a complaint, perhaps he can tell us

more. There were 30 entries in the County Championship which meant that £511 entry fees exceeded the £365 prize fund and expenses by £146.

Finally, the £100 under trophies was paid for the new Division 2 trophy with Lincoln paying for the £5.99 engraving cost.

Given the surplus for the year and the healthy balance I am recommending that county subscriptions remain unchanged at £40 for Division 1 teams and £30 for teams in Division 2.

The meeting accepted that the accounts were a true and fair representation of the association's affairs. Proposed: Nick Seconded: James

Matters Arising:

There was a discussion on the number of bank signatories and making sure we have sufficient for everyday online processing which requires two people. Chris was added to the mandate but has not gone through the 'know your customer' process. Denis tried to go through the process but complained to NatWest and the association is due £50 compensation.

Nigel talked about trying to share venues for county matches to save costs.

#### **5. MCCU DELEGATE (Peter Sherlock)**

I attended the MCCU AGM in June in my capacity of Lincolnshire representative, County Controller and Grading Director.

The MCCU County Matches took place with only 8 teams taking part from 3 counties these being Lincolnshire, Staffordshire and Worcestershire. At the meeting and in email discussions before hand there were a lot of comments that the current format was no longer fit for purpose.

I therefore decided to stand down as the County Controller (and also the Grading Director as the two responsibilities are now combined) so as to allow a new person with fresh ideas to take over. Stephen Smithson from Staffordshire was appointed in my place.

I am happy to continue to attend the MCCU AGM as the Lincolnshire representative.

#### **6. ECF Delegate (Chris Holt)**

As usual, I attended both the AGM and finance meetings via Zoom. While most delegates seem finally to be getting the hang of using video conferencing, this year's finance meeting was enlivened by one delegate sorting his clothes washing and then disrobing (fortunately caught by the admin before he revealed his shortcomings to the rest of us).

There is the continuing problem with the council being able to hold the executive and officers to account. I think that the processes work fine, but the quality of information, transparency

and challenge could all be improved. I appreciate that delegates are volunteers, but the levels of debate and scrutiny can be much less than a club or county AGM.

Having said that, the process of changing the membership levels, and associated fees, was handled poorly. Lots of people were and are unhappy with what happened, the Notts exec wrote to the ECF around several issues. At the AGM delegates appeared to be confused by what they were voting for at each stage. At the finance meeting the issue of raising rates was bound up with the DCMS grant being negotiated by Malcolm Pein and Dominic Lawson when it seemed we were getting somewhere with not amalgamating some of the bands and raising rates on top.

In the end, when it came to a vote, only me, Tim Walker and John Reyes from the MCCU voted to keep the combined silver/gold membership fees uninflated.

I am willing to stand for another year as I combine the same role with Lincolnshire as part of my job as General Secretary.

## **7. LEAGUE SECRETARY'S REPORT (Andrew Watson)**

This past season went very well in comparison to the previous season with no defaults or significant misunderstandings or problems to speak of. This was mainly due to the WhatsApp Group which gave transparency, ease of communication and co-ordination to the Leagues.

Division 2 was won by Lincoln C who attained a total of 17 points followed closely by Appleby Frodingham in 2<sup>nd</sup> place with 15 points. Appleby Frodingham proved to be a strong new team in this Division who were able to field effective, experienced players across all 4 boards giving Lincoln C a run for their money. Grantham came 3<sup>rd</sup> with 12 points, Skegness 4<sup>th</sup> with 7 points, Grimsby 5<sup>th</sup> with 5 points and Lincoln D 6<sup>th</sup> with 4 points.

Notable players in Division 2 were William Orr playing for Lincoln C who won 5 out of 5 games, Jules Brown also playing for Lincoln C won 8.5 out of 9 games. New Lincoln player Alexandr Klimchik seems like a very strong player winning 3.5 out of 4 games. John Mainwaring playing for Appleby Frodingham also won 3.5 out of 4 games.

Division 1 was won by Grimsby with a total of 10 points, in 2<sup>nd</sup> place was Lincoln A with 8 points, 3<sup>rd</sup> was Appleby Frodingham with 6 points and in 4<sup>th</sup> place was Lincoln B with zero points.

Notable players in Division 1 were Andrew Dyce who played for Grimsby winning 5 out of 5 games. Stuart Macdonald also playing for Grimsby won 4.5 out of 6 games. Herman Kok also played well for Lincoln A winning 3 of his 4 games.

There were no matters arising.

## **8. Social Media Report (Andrew Watson)**

Social Media continues to be the main driving force in recruiting new players and spreading the word with regard to chess in Lincolnshire. Some clubs now run their calendar of events via Facebook and generally speaking most club group page memberships have significantly

increased over the past year. Events such as Lincoln Rapidplay are now routinely advertised across this network including the promotional Play Chess in Lincolnshire Group as are League results.

The best way to increase Facebook Group membership and therefore interest in that specific club is to advertise regularly in other larger groups in the surrounding area. This however cannot be done effectively if the Group settings are set to private as interested parties cannot join the group limiting the potential online exposure. Occasionally somebody may have a limited interest themselves but by being able to join online are more likely to tell a friend or relative who is more likely to attend. This is why setting the group to Public is far more likely to grow the club over time.

Facebook events is another effective way to keep group members engaged with what's going on. When an event is created members are notified via Facebook and Facebook Messenger. In addition, a specific chat with regard to that event can also be set up. Members are also reminded shortly prior to the scheduled time via the messenger. Facebook also has some useful tools available including admin assist which has a feature capable of regularly posting automatically weekly or monthly. This can be useful for posting links to events, ECF ratings or League tables cutting down on manual workload whilst keeping members fully informed.

Facebook Guides is another very useful feature which can be used to inform potential new members about the club. A question-and-answer format can help somebody decide whether to attend or not without the barrier of having to call or email to specifically ask a question. When a new member joins online, they can be directed to the Guide by customising the welcome post in the admin assist.

TikTok has rapidly gained popularity recently especially with young people. Recording short videos and posting them in a club TikTok account may also have the effect of boosting online exposure.

#### Matters Arising

A good discussion about the state of club's social media presence and what drives membership engagement from different platforms. A few points:

1. Every club should try and ensure that they have a social media officer.
2. If they have a Facebook account, they should make it public.
3. The Lincolnshire chess.com and Lichess groups are still active but dormant.
4. Andrew is willing to help clubs with their presence and as a point of contact for good practice.

#### **8. OPEN TEAM MATCH CAPTAIN'S REPORT (Nigel Birtwistle)**

This season only two teams entered the Open section of the MCCU competition which was very disappointing. So, Lincolnshire just had one match to play against Worcestershire with both teams already assured of a place in the National Stages of the Minor Counties competition. But there was still an MCCU title at stake when the two sides met at Sharnford in Leicestershire in December 2023. Worcestershire fielded WGM Katarzyna Toma on board 1

but it wasn't enough to prevent Lincolnshire securing the MCCU title with a 9-7 victory. We then had to wait almost six months until the second week of May for our next match when we were drawn against Bedfordshire in the Quarter Finals of the Minor Counties Competition. The match was played at Peterborough, but we were able to field a very strong side and ran out 13-3 winners.

Our next Opponents at the Semi Final stage were Somerset. This match was a logistical nightmare both in terms of finding a venue and putting together a team. After contacting, at least, a dozen venues I eventually found a great venue at Bearley near Stratford Upon Avon. Getting a team for this match was not easy as Lincolnshire also had teams playing in the U1650 & U1850 Semi Finals on the same day. A bit of creativity was needed between myself and William Orr as both of his teams were playing miles away from our match in Sheffield. Some last-minute juggling of players was required on the night before the matches but eventually 48 players represented Lincolnshire on Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> June which was a tremendous achievement. Despite not being at full strength we still managed a comfortable 10.5-5.5 victory against Somerset. Unfortunately, both of William's teams lost narrowly to two Strong Greater Manchester teams in their respective Semi Finals.

Our opponents in the final in early July were Sussex. We knew this would be a difficult match and we started the match as underdogs. But matches are not won on paper and a tight battle ensued. The match swung back and forth right until the very end and the match was tied at 8-8. But board count was not in our favour and Sussex took the title home with them. I was very proud of all the players that played for us during the season. We managed to add two or three new faces to the squad which has always had a tremendous team spirit and determination to win. I will be happy to continue in my role as captain for the 2024-25 season.

### **9. U1850 and U1650 Captain's Report (William Orr)**

About a year ago I mentioned to Peter Sherlock that, as the last person to organise a county team in a rating-limited section of the MCCU competition in the era before Covid, I ought to at least try to get a Lincolnshire side up and running again. When Peter told me that there was only one other entrant in each of the U1850 and U1650 sections my reaction was "let's enter a team in each. It's only two matches and I can easily organise that". I might even have quoted Jeremy Clarkson and said, "How hard can it be?"

First up was the U1650 match against Worcestershire at the neutral venue of East Goscote. By a curious coincidence the last match I organised was just before Covid put a temporary end to over-the-board chess and was against the same opponents and at the same venue. On that occasion I finally won my game after a long endgame and retired to the kitchen for some much needed sustenance, only to discover that some despicable person (surely not a Lincolnshire player?) had scoffed my sandwiches. So, for this match I kept them safely within my sight at all times. Fortunately, I had no need to fear for the sandwiches or the result, as the team won comfortably by 9½ to 6½

A few weeks later we were back in East Goscote for the U1850 match against Staffordshire. The top half of the previous U1650 team were also back, now forming the bottom half of the U1850 side. Fortunately for us Staffordshire fielded a side with a similar rating profile, and we

were evenly matched by grade on all boards. The final score was 8-8, but Herman Kok's win on board 2 was enough to leave us winners on board count.

Amazingly, we had won an MCCU double and were champions in two sections! They may have been rather small sections, but at least now I had an inkling of how Pep Guardiola must sometimes feel! I unwrapped a celebratory cigar and was just about to strike a light when Peter Sherlock said, "that's both teams in the national stages". That gave me pause for thought: I might have to find more players. The cigar went back into the LCA humidor while we waited for the quarter-final draw.

At this point I need to explain the issue facing the county captains. In an ideal county we would have lots of players available. Nigel would be able to call on enough players above 1850 for his minor team. The U1850 side would be filled with players between 1650 and 1850. And the U1650 side would have all the county's U1650 players to choose from. In reality we don't have enough players to do this, so Nigel has to call on a few players from the top end of the U1850 group to play on the lower boards of the minor team. Of course, that both weakens and reduces the number of players available for the U1850 side, but fortunately their embattled captain can fill his own lower boards with players from the top end of the U1650 side, while hoping that he doesn't unduly weaken that team. Fortunately, Nigel and I cooperated rather well but as captain of two teams I was destined to spend many hours disagreeing with myself.

So the publication of the quarter final draw came as something of a relief, as the U1650 team had been assigned a bye and would not play until the semi-final round. The U1850 team had a quarter-final match in May against Suffolk. The minor county team had a match on the same day, and a venue in Peterborough was organised that could accommodate both, thanks to Francis Bowers. Several U1850 players joined Nigel's minor counties team for their match, but an influx of strong Grantham players gave my team a new look with only a few U1650 players making up the numbers. With the match underway our lower boards racked up a series of wins that left us in a good position, with Peter Sherlock winning his game in record time and leaving to watch the cricket. Unfortunately, things didn't go our way on the top boards and Suffolk fought their way back into the match. Late wins for Richard Chillcott and Grenville Wollerton eventually got us to the winning post and we finished with a satisfying winning score of 91/2 – 61/2.

On to the semi-final round, when Lincolnshire would have 3 teams all playing on the same day, 48 players in total. The U1850 and U1650 teams would both play Greater Manchester sides on the same day in June. This meant we could use the same venue for both matches and ended up at the Sheffield Chess Centre run by Jonathan Arnott. Jonathan took care of all the arrangements, equipment, refreshments etc. so all the captains had to do was find enough players for 3 teams. I'm indebted to Nigel for sharing his extensive list of contacts, and with his help we eventually finalised our team lists with a few days to spare. Greater Manchester faced no such problems of course, and with a seemingly endless list of players to choose from they fielded two strong teams. However, when match day arrived it did seem as though they had some problems with their childcare arrangements, as many of them had brought their tiny children with them. Once the teams were seated my mistake was apparent: yes, the children were playing, and they soon showed that they didn't lack ability. Our U1650 team lost by 91/2 – 61/2. The U1850 match was more closely contested and still in doubt with

two boards still in play, but Greater Manchester were too strong for us and won by 9-7. I had my head down over my pieces and missed most of the action, which makes for poor reporting.

That was the end of our county chess campaign. I started out hoping that we could generate enough enthusiasm to sustain a team, and we ended up in two national semi-finals. Our limited number of players meant that our playing strengths were spread across two teams. If we had one team in the semi-finals then we could have concentrated our strength and possibly reached the final.

I had a lot of assistance along the way, with Nigel helping more than I can say. In addition, John Pocock helped me keep in touch with players at Grantham, and Jo Hutchinson at Appleby-Frodingham and Craig Robinson at Spalding helped round up players from their clubs.

For the coming season the MCCU format has changed and teams of 12 will contest the matches instead of 16. At time of writing, there are 5 other sides in the U1650 section, which should make for a decent competition, but only one opponent for the U1850 team. Predictions are difficult, especially when they are about the future, but I hope we can produce some more decent results and perhaps the captain might even avoid an end-of-season sacking.

## **10. ELECTION OF OFFICERS FOR 2023 – 2024 SEASON**

<b>President:</b>	Nigel Birtwistle
<b>General Secretary:</b>	Chris Holt
<b>League Secretary:</b>	Andrew Watson
<b>Honorary Treasurer:</b>	Peter Sherlock
<b>Open Team Match Captain:</b>	Nigel Birtwistle
<b>U1650 and U1850 Captain:</b>	William Orr
<b>Social Media Officer:</b>	Andrew Watson
<b>ECF Delegate:</b>	Chris Holt
<b>MCCU Delegates:</b>	Peter Sherlock (MCCU1), Ben Mason (MCCU2)
<b>Webmaster:</b>	David Coates
<b>Life Members:</b>	Robert Dale, Keith Palmer

This was taken unopposed en bloc, proposed by Nigel and seconded by Denis.

## **11. PROGRAMME FOR 2024 – 2025**

### **A. League for 2024/25**

Adding Louth into the league, generated a discussion about rule 1 (f) as there are now 7 teams:

“If a division has 2 or 3 teams, they shall play each other home and away twice during the season. If a division has 4, 5 or 6 teams they shall play each other home and away once during the season. If a division has 7 or more teams, they shall play each other once during a season and must not play two or more home games than away games and vice versa during the season. (2011)”

There was no proposal to change the rule by the AGM deadline, but it was also felt by those present that they would like to keep the rule for now because of the use of half-way venues and their availability.

B. The County Championship will take place the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> of July 2025

C. County Teams. There will be an open, U1850 and U1650 teams as last year. Given the parlous state of other counties, even with 12 boards this season, the first U1850 match is unlikely to be before May 2025.

## **12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

There was no other business.

The next AGM will take place on the 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> weekend of September 2025, to be arranged (this should also be the scheduled fixture meeting). Venue to be agreed.

The meeting was closed by the Chair at 13:22pm

*Chris Holt*

*Secretary*

**LINCOLNSHIRE CHESS ASSOCIATION**

**ACCOUNTS FOR YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024**

<b>2022/23 INCOME</b>	<b>2023/24</b>	<b>2022/23 EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>2023/24</b>
<b>Subscriptions</b>		<b>Levies</b>	
70.00 Grantham	30.00	- Game Fees	-
70.00 Grimsby	70.00	- MCCU Levy	-
100.00 Lincoln	100.00	<b>0.00 Total</b>	<b>0.00</b>
- Louth	-		
40.00 Appleby Frodingham	70.00	<b>Expenses</b>	
30.00 Skegness	30.00	90.00 Minor	-
- Spalding	-	- All teams	<b>-310.00</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>310.00</b>	<b>90.00 Total</b>	<b>324.99</b>
<b>Game Fees</b>		<b>Bank Charges</b>	
- Barton	-	-	-
18.00 Boston	-	- ECF Yearbook	-
- Grimsby	-	- AGM Venue	-
- Lincoln	-	<b>50.00 Donations</b>	-
- Louth	-	- Correspondence Team	-
- Scunthorpe	-	- Web-site	-
- Skegness	-	<b>County Championship</b>	
- Spalding	-	345.00 Prizes	345.00
- Minor	-	20.00 Expenses	20.00
<b>18.00 Total</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>365.00 Total</b>	<b>365.00</b>
- Compensation	50.00		
<b>County Championship</b>		<b>Trophies</b>	
Entry fees/donations	511.00	4.00 Trophies	100.00 512.00
Sponsorship	-	- Extra Minor trophies	-
		<b>4.00 Total</b>	<b>100.00</b>
<b>512.00 Total</b>	<b>511.00</b>		
<b>0.00 Interest</b>		<b>Officers</b>	
		- P.Sherlock (Treas)	-
		- Total	-
840.00 General Fund	871.00	505.00 General Fund	789.99
- Special Fund	-	- Special Fund	- 840.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>871.00</b>	<b>505.00 Total</b>	<b>789.99</b>

**LINCOLNSHIRE CHESS ASSOCIATION**

**BALANCE SHEET as at 31 AUGUST 2024**

	<b><u>2022/23</u></b>	<b><u>2023/24</u></b>
Balance B/F	1920.60	2255.60
General Fund – Income	840.00	871.00
- Expenditure	505.00	789.99
Profit/(Loss) for year	335.00	81.01
Balance C/F	2255.60	2336.61
Balance made up of		
Current Balance at Bank		
Current Account	2255.60	2343.27
Deposit Account	0.00	0.00
Total	2255.60	2343.27
Less Debtors	-	6.66
Plus Creditors	-	-
Total	2255.60	2336.61

P.G.Sherlock  
Hon Treasurer

21 September 2024