

LINCOLNSHIRE CHESS ASSOCIATION ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2017

Held at Church House, Louth on Sunday 10th September 2017, 3pm

MINUTES

Attending: John Grasham, Peter Sherlock, Nigel Birtwistle, Ian Scott, William Orr, Andrew Watson, Paul Chaplin, Mike Colebrook, Frank Robinson, Francis Bowers, Nick Stead, Denis Georgiou

Apologies: Keith Noons, David Mills, Ben Mason, David Carew

1. MINUTES OF 2016 AGM

The minutes of the 2016 AGM were circulated to attendees before the meeting and these were voted as an accurate record of the 2016 meeting.

2. MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising.

3. SECRETARY'S REPORT (John Grasham)

The season opened with the George Renison Memorial Jamboree in September. This was organised by Grimsby Chess Club. It was a very close finish with both Grimsby and Louth vying for the title. This was eventually won by the Louth team of Sam Milson, Harry Russell, Keith Palmer and Peter Damms after Grimsby's board 1 unexpectedly lost in the final round.

The Alf Newman Memorial Quickplay Chess Tournament was a success again this year with 26 players taking part. News of the tournament spread far and wide with entrants from both the U.S.A. and India taking part. Nigel Birtwistle took the trophy with 5 / 6 with Joe Kilshaw and Harry Russell sharing second place. Jules Brown and James Irwin shared the Under 155 grading prize and Neil Milson and Peter Damms shared the Under 130 grading prize. Amogh Pilani won the Nottingham Shield and Arya Parnian won the junior prize. Thanks go to Keith Palmer who ran a successful tournament.

This year's County Championships saw a trial of a new format at the county championships. There was an open section which attracted 10 entrants and an under 150 section that saw 16 players take part. Chris Dorrington regained his county championship title with 4.5 out of 5 in the open section while Adam Robinson beat Jules Brown in the final round to ensure they shared the first ever under 150 title. My opinion is that the new format proved a success and hope that it will continue next year. Thanks go to Peter Sherlock who ran a successful tournament and Herman Kok who provided the venue.

On a personal note, I have stood down from my role as treasurer of the Lincolnshire Schools' Chess Association and am no longer formally involved with the organization. Sadly one person can only do so much. I hope the LCA and LSCA can continue to have a close relationship as the junior players of today are the adult players (and organisers) of tomorrow.

I will be happy to continue as secretary next season.

4. LEAGUE SECRETARY'S REPORT (John Grasham)

Division 1 this season saw possibly the closest finish ever in the Lincs League. Louth got off to a slow start against Lincoln when I had to step in and organise a team with only 24 hours notice, however pulling off a draw was only the start. Grimsby as defending champions were the team to beat but Louth travelling there with an under strength team managed to pull off an unlikely 3-2 victory with both Neil Milson and John Grasham beating players graded significantly higher than them. Louth were able to bring out the big guns in later matches but Grimsby were still hot on their heels leaving them only 2 points behind with the two teams playing each other in the final match. Louth's superior board difference meant that a win, draw or even a 3-2 defeat would be good enough to take the title but Grimsby would take the trophy if they got 3.5 points or more. Arya Parnian got a win over Nick Louth on bottom board and three of the top four boards were shared leaving Keith Palmer playing Stuart MacDonald for the title. Keith managed to hold on for the draw in time trouble despite having a won game meaning Grimsby won the match but Louth won the title for the first time in their history.

Grimsby had no such trouble in winning Division 2 North at a canter. Their margin of victory may have been greater had they not defaulted a match against Lincoln earlier in the season. Grantham made light work of Division 2 South winning by a margin of 5 points. Louth had a dreadful season gaining the lowest total of any team in that division for the last 15 years by picking up one point from eight games.

There was an incident this year with both Louth teams in Division 2 North and South having to rearrange home league games. The Louth v Grantham game was due to take place in December and the Louth v Scunthorpe A match in January. By the end of February neither match had been rearranged despite the league rules being clear on the matter. This caused me to become involved putting pressure on the captains to sort this out. Both teams did rearrange the games in question, to be played on the same night. This meant I had to become involved again, moving one of the matches and then deciding the date on which it was to be played. This is why I have proposed a re-writing of the rules on postponed matches which will be discussed later in the meeting.

5. TREASURER'S REPORT (Peter Sherlock)

This season I am reporting a small loss of £1.54 compared with a surplus of £72.86 last season. However our balance of £1,577.06 remains healthy.

The subscriptions were slightly down by £30 with Barton dropping out of the league and Grimsby having 1 team in Division 2 compensated by Horncastle entering a second team.

The ECF charged £310 game fee covering the 2015/16 and 2016/17 seasons which was paid by the county with all the clubs repaying the game fees for their members. The figure had been higher with Grimsby initially being charged £230 but a recalculation by the ECF brought this figure down to just over £100.

The county championships again made a healthy profit of over £100 with the split into 2 sections attracting 16 players under 150 grade. The field of 10 players over 150 was a bit disappointing.

The county is happy to support 3 teams in the inter counties competition, particularly the Minor team with their victory in the final. The county also paid £56.71 for 8 extra medals for the players who did not play in the final but turned out in earlier rounds. The U140 and U120 teams were unable to qualify for the ECF final stages and as a result the overall expenses were slightly down on last year.

Given the healthy balance at the bank I see no reason to increase subscriptions at this time although we need to ensure that we do not incur unnecessary expenditure in the coming year.

Denis Georgiou observed that there was a reserve of £1,500. Peter Sherlock said this was for emergencies. William Orr said the reserve could be used for setting up a new club with sets and boards. Ian Scott suggested that the county could buy sets and boards for use in county games. Nigel Birtwistle said this was not needed. Peter Sherlock said the county would be willing to support junior chess if financial support was requested.

6. OPEN TEAM MATCH CAPTAIN'S REPORT (Nigel Birtwistle)

The experience of playing at Finals day at Warwick last season had showed that Lincolnshire are a force to be reckoned with in the Minor Counties Competition and although we were defeated at the final hurdle it convinced myself and the rest of the team that we were more than capable of winning the trophy. However if we were to be successful in this competition for the first time since 1989 there would be many tough matches ahead of us and the path to glory would not be easy.

In our first MCCU fixture of the season we hosted Nottinghamshire at the Lindum Atrium at North Hykeham in the first week of October. Almost everybody was available to play and we fielded a very strong side storming to an emphatic 13-3 victory which I am sure is Lincolnshire's best ever victory over Nottinghamshire. However we were brought crashing back down to earth just before Christmas when we travelled to a new venue at Frolesworth in Leicestershire to play Worcestershire and ended up on the wrong end of a narrow 8½ -7½ defeat. This meant that we would probably have to win our two remaining group games to qualify for the national stages of the Minor Counties Competition. We accomplished the first part of this task late in January when we defeated Warwickshire at Syston in Leicestershire by 9½-6½. This left us with a home match at the Atrium against old rivals Leicestershire. Despite having several of our top order players missing the team rose to the occasion and won the match 9-7. This win put us joint top of the MCCU table and ensured our place in the national stages.

In the Quarter Final our opponents were Essex. Lincolnshire has a lot of recent history against Essex having lost three times previously against them but in last year's Quarter Final we had finally managed to defeat them for the first time. We knew the match would be another tough encounter but once again we rose to the occasion and won convincingly 9½-6½. This set up a semi-final tie against the holders of the trophy Norfolk who had broken our hearts in last year's final. The morning of the match didn't start too well when Joe Kilshaw had a car accident on the way to the match and had to withdraw. Joe was thankfully unhurt but it left me a player short an hour and a half before the start of the match. Fortunately Kevin McCarthy was able to play and some last ditch travel arrangements meant that we started with a full team. The match was always going to be close but after several twists and turns the match was drawn 8-8. However for once the board count tie break was in Lincolnshire's favour and we went through to the final for the second successive year. Our last minute substitute Kevin McCarthy was the hero of the day when he held on to a draw from a worse position to see us home.

Our opponents in the Minor Counties Final at Warwick at the start of July were Suffolk. I had some difficult decisions to make regarding team selection as everybody was obviously keen to play but some of the players who had contributed throughout the season would unfortunately have to miss out. After a lot of thought I finally selected the team. The rules of the Minor Counties competition do not allow the average grade of the team to exceed 180. The Lincolnshire line up weighed in at 179.93 whilst our opponents from Suffolk averaged exactly 180! So another nerve wracking match was in prospect. Lincolnshire always held the lead in the match but Suffolk kept fighting back to make sure that the Lincolnshire lead was always within reach. With two games left in play we were ahead 7½-6½. The downside was that if the match was drawn the board count tie break would not be in Lincolnshire's favour. On board one Chris Dorrington faced International Master Alan Merry and although he was a pawn up in a queen and pawn endgame a draw looked the most likely result. The other game in play looked as if it would be lost. So Chris knew that he had to win his game at all costs. Whilst most of the watching spectators looked on nervously Chris kept his cool and slowly increased his advantage to win a thrilling game. The final game of the match was eventually lost but it didn't matter. After a gap of twenty eight years Lincolnshire had finally won the Minor Counties Championship again.

Over the past few seasons the squad members of the team have always been very enthusiastic and committed. Previous seasons have seen us knocked out twice in the Quarter finals plus three times at the Semi-final stage as well as in last year's final. But we have kept on trying and have added new faces to the team along the way. The winning of the Minor Counties Competition this year has been the result of several years' hard work not only by the team but also the people who work behind the scenes in Lincolnshire Chess and help to make my job as captain so much easier. Peter Sherlock, John Grasham and Herman Kok have all made significant contributions in various ways and they should also be applauded for their efforts. As ever I have enjoyed captaining the team and I am willing to continue for the 2017-18 season if asked to do so.

Denis Georgiou congratulated Nigel and the whole team for winning the national title.

7. UNDER 140 TEAM MATCH CAPTAIN'S REPORT (John Grasham)

Lincolnshire eventually got the new season underway with a home tie against Derbyshire. A couple of late withdrawals meant I had to call up both my reserves at the last minute. On seeing the Derbyshire teamsheet I realised yet another tough match was in prospect after we were outgraded by an average of 10 points on each board. Kieran Burt was first to finish, losing against a tactical trick from his opponent. Quick draws for Bill Egan and Peter Damms got us on the scoresheet and I levelled things up with a comprehensive win after being a rook and pawn up. Wins for Neil Milson and Mark Newstead followed but defeats for Adam Robinson and debutant Neil Roberts and draws for David Scott, Andrew Watson and Peter Sherlock left the score very finely balanced at 5.5 each with 5 games left playing. Chris Cumbers put us ahead when his opponent fell for a mating trick and Mike Dew unbelievably pulled off a draw after being a knight and pawn behind. William Orr's fine endgame style where he swapped his extra knight to gain two passed pawns put us on the brink of victory at 8-6 ahead but Frank Robinson lost after falling into a checkmate trap. This left the result hanging in the balance to the final game when Graeme Rae got into a level endgame with his opponent that just went on and on and on. Eventually his opponent ran out of time gifting us a 9-7 victory. However there is no time to rest on our laurels as our next match against Nottinghamshire is in two weeks time.

Lincolnshire's second match in two weeks was always going to be really tough. This time we were outgraded by an average of 20 points on each board. Quick defeats for Kieran Burt, Amogh Pilani and Peter Damms were cancelled out by wins for Mike Dew and John Grasham who took advantage of a horribly exposed king. A draw for Peter Sherlock and a win for debutant Arlan Musurov who was playing a Nottinghamshire replacement player levelled the score. Draws for Paul Fischer and Neil Milson kept the score level but

Nottinghamshire went ahead when Andrew Watson lost a rook and pawn endgame and David Scott blundered a piece. Lincolnshire then managed to get back on level terms when Adam Robinson won then Neil Roberts was able to sacrifice a knight to get a passed pawn. A draw by perpetual check for Graeme Rae left the scores tied at 7-7 with two matches remaining. However a miraculous result was not to be after William Orr and Mark Newstead both lost after both being a long way behind in endgames. This leaves Lincolnshire a great chance of qualifying for the knockout stages going into our final match against Worcestershire on the 4th March.

Lincolnshire's final match of the season was against national champions Worcestershire and we knew that only a win was good enough to guarantee our place in the national stages. However hopes were high when we fielded our strongest team of the season. Early defeats for me and Peter Sherlock were cancelled out by wins for Mark Newstead, Chris Cumbers and Andrew Watson. An unusually high number of draws were recorded with half a point for Adam Robinson, Amy Milson, Neil Roberts, Graeme Rae, William Orr, Paul Fischer and Neil Milson but defeats for both Peter Damms and Mike Dew left us needing to win the last two matches. However it was not to be after David Scott couldn't force home a couple of passed pawns against a knight and Bill Egan blundered a piece while ahead in the endgame. Both players had to settle for draws leaving Lincolnshire on the wrong side of 8.5 to 7.5 scoreline.

Because of our position of third place there was an outside chance of us qualifying as a lucky loser to the national stages if there weren't enough nominations from other unions. Peter Sherlock received an email on 22nd March from the national controller, Andrew Zigmond saying that he expected to be able to accommodate the Lincolnshire team in the national stages and would we be willing to accept a nomination. I said we would and then emailed the players on my team to tell them this. Three days later Andrew emailed Peter again saying that the rest of the unions had accepted their nominations and therefore he would not be offering us a place in the national stages of the competition. On the 27th March, I emailed Andrew Zigmond to say that I was very unhappy with what had occurred. He didn't bother to respond to my email.

For next season, because of our respective gradings, I will captain the under 120 team and William Orr will captain the under 140 team.

8. UNDER 120 TEAM MATCH CAPTAIN'S REPORT (William Orr)

The pool of players available to take part in U120 matches was slightly smaller this season, as several of last year's regulars were now above the grading limit. I anticipated some difficult matches, as I knew the other counties would be able to field teams with higher combined grades.

The season began in October with an away match against a strong Nottinghamshire side who were clear winners by 9½ – 2½. All the remaining matches were played in neutral venues in and around Thurmaston. The next opponents later in October were Warwickshire, when good performances by the team gave us a 7½ – 4½ victory. The third match was against Worcestershire in December, but with many of the U120 side also playing for the U140 team, there wasn't really a break in county fixtures. We lost the match against Worcestershire by 7½ – 4½, leaving our chances of reaching the ECF stages hanging on the result of our last match against Staffordshire, when a win would be required. The match was closely contested, but Staffordshire were 7-5 winners.

While it was disappointing not to reach the ECF competition, with a smaller pool of potential players available to call on, it is perhaps not so surprising. Nevertheless, I've been well supported by a group of dedicated players over two seasons, and my thanks go to everyone who played, even if only once. This season I'd like to mention Graeme Rae, Chris Cumbers, Terry Bennett, Mark Newstead, and Peter Metcalfe who played in every match, and made my job of assembling a team much easier. They nearly all delivered 2 points each from their 4 games. Paul Fischer played twice for 1½ points, while Richard Coats and Andrew Watson finished with a 100% record, each of them playing once and winning.

That concludes my tenure as team captain, as I find myself above the grading limit, at least temporarily. However the familiar figure of John Grasham will return to captain the U120 side, and I wish him every success.

Nigel Birtwistle said William Orr and John Grasham should be commended on running county teams with a limited pool of players.

9. GRADING OFFICER'S REPORT (Peter Sherlock)

Results were forwarded for grading for

Lincolnshire League
County Championship
U-18 Rapidplay events
Scunthorpe & District League
Louth Rapidplay
George Renison Jamboree
Internal club results for Horncastle, Lincoln, Louth, Grimsby & Scunthorpe.

Results were submitted in December and June in line with the twice yearly grading lists.

10. NEWSLETTER EDITOR'S REPORT (Peter Sherlock)

The county newsletter was published at the end of July after the County Championship.

11. CORRESPONDENCE SECRETARY'S REPORT (Peter Sherlock)

Lincolnshire again entered a team in the national correspondence chess competition organised by the ICCF (International Correspondence Chess Federation). We finished in 10th and bottom place in Division 2 with 3.5 points and will therefore be relegated to Division 3. Our only "win" was for Herman as a result of a default with 5 draws. The breakdown of scores as following:

Harry Russell 1.0, Herman Kok 1.5, Ian Scott 1.0, James Irwin 0.0, Behzad Parnian 0.0, Mike Colebrook 0.0, Peter Sherlock 0.0 and Paul Fischer 0.0 Total 3.5

The Division was won by East Wales A with Yorkshire C also being promoted to Division 1 to be replaced by Essex B and Hertfordshire A. In Division 2 Worcestershire A were also relegated so join us in Division 3. Somerset and West Wales B were promoted from Division 3.

Behzad Parnian withdrew from the team. I asked for offers to replace him and Joe Kilshaw from Grimsby and Alex Ashworth from Lincoln came forward so I asked Mike Colebrook to stand down having indicated that he would be happy to do so if stronger players came forward.

Thus this season's team is Harry Russell, Joe Kilshaw, Herman Kok, Ian Scott, James Irwin, Alex Ashworth, Peter Sherlock and Paul Fischer

12. ECF DELEGATE'S REPORT (Peter Sherlock)

I was unable to attend either the AGM in October 2016 or the Finance meeting in April 2017, both taking place in Birmingham. My proxy was taken by Robert Richmond from Nottinghamshire in October and by Marcus Misson from Cambridgeshire in April. I am therefore grateful to them and others for providing the details contained in this report.

A minutes silence was observed for Richard Haddrell the Grading Director and John Philpott the Company Secretary and volunteer Finance Controller who had both passed away during the year.

The elections were uncontested apart the 2 non-executive directors where Julie Denning and Stephen Woodhouse were elected on a card vote.

The reports showed a year of stability and progress on all fronts with the 5 year plan being passed.

At the Finance meeting there were 3 main issues that were decided upon.

Firstly, the Game Fee in its current form will be abolished from September 2017. Instead the system will allow non-members to play up to 3 games in a league or event free of charge. 4 or more games will incur a charge of £16. This is to reduce admin costs and encourage new players.

Secondly, the Membership fees will increase as follows:-

Platinum from £60 to £70.

Gold from £32 to £34.

Gold Junior unchanged at £27.50

Silver from £22 to £23.50

Silver Junior unchanged at £17

Bronze from £15 to £16
Bronze Junior reduced from £10 to £9.50
Upgrade Bronze to Silver from £7 to £7.50
Upgrade Silver to Gold from £10 to £10.50

Thirdly, the Governance Committee was asked to look at giving direct members more say in the running of the ECF. It came up with 3 options

Option 1 – Abolish Council with the Board being elected by direct members.

Option 2 – Keep Council and only have direct members voting for councillors with one member one vote – no organisation votes for Council.

Option 3 – As now with more votes for members.

Options 1 & 2 were defeated. Option 3 got 119 votes for and 84 against but this was less than the 75% needed to change the articles.

As I am unavailable for the AGM, due to take place in London on October 14 2017, I have decided to stand down as ECF representative for Lincolnshire.

13. MCCU DELEGATE'S REPORT (Peter Sherlock)

John Grasham and myself attended the MCCU AGM held on June 17 at the Rolls Royce Chess Club in Derby, John in his capacity as Secretary of the MCCU and myself as Lincolnshire representative, Grading Director and Controller of the Inter Counties competition.

Ray Dolan announced that the MCCU Congress would be held in Walsall in August. This turned out to be a successful event.

Andrew Leadbetter, the treasurer, reported no significant items of expenditure and recommended no change in the levy at £7 per point.

I presented my Grading Directors report which showed yet another small reduction in the number of games played. I also presented a list of players who had not joined the ECF.

I also gave my report as Counties Controller. The changes brought in last year came into effect. 5 teams entered the Open/Minor section with all 5 electing to be considered for the Minor section. Worcestershire, Leicestershire and Lincolnshire qualified for the national stages. The other two counties Nottinghamshire and Warwickshire entered the U180 section and both went forward to the national stages.

John Grasham expressed his disappointment in that Lincolnshire, having initially been offered the third qualifying place in the U140 section, found that this had later been withdrawn by National controller Andrew Zigmond.

Peter Gibbs, the President had stood down and John Pakenham was elected in his place. As a consequence John stood down as Chairman and Paul Sharratt was elected in his place. All other posts were re-elected en bloc.

Leicestershire put forward a couple of rule changes but the chairman declared them to have been submitted too late to be considered and will be included in next year's agenda. They were discussed but not voted on, the main one being to reduce the Minor from 5 hour minimum duration to 4 hours in order to reduce the risk of excessive hire charges. I pointed out that Rule 6 currently allows that this could be done provided both captains agree.

Both John Grasham and I were re-elected in our respective roles.

14. ELECTION OF OFFICERS FOR 2017 – 2018 SEASON

President:	Denis Georgiou
Vice-President:	David Carew
Honorary Secretary:	John Grasham
League Secretary:	John Grasham
Honorary Treasurer:	Peter Sherlock
Open Team Match Captain:	Nigel Birtwistle

Under 140 Team Match Captain: William Orr
Under 120 Team Match Captain: John Grasham
Grading Officer: Peter Sherlock
Newsletter Editor: Peter Sherlock
Correspondence Secretary: Peter Sherlock
ECF Delegate: Francis Bowers
MCCU Delegates: Peter Sherlock (MCCU1), John Grasham (MCCU2), Ian Scott (MCCU3)

Webmaster: David Coates
Life Members: Mike Colebrook, Robert Dale, Keith Palmer

15. PROGRAMME FOR 2017 – 2018

Jamboree Hosts	Scunthorpe 7 th October 2017, Grimsby 2018
County Championships	Lincoln – 21 st & 22 nd July
Louth Quickplay	Louth – early June
County AGM	9/9/18

16. ANY PROPOSALS

Proposal to amend the Lincolnshire League rules on rearrangement of matches. John Grasham proposed the re-writing of the Lincolnshire League rules to clarify a few points and to introduce a new rule regarding the postponement of matches. The new rule would read if a captain wishes to request a postponement of a fixture he should contact the opposing team captain. If both captains agree the postponement can go ahead. However both captains must agree on the date to replay the match and the team captain requesting the postponement must notify the league secretary of the date of the rearranged fixture within fourteen days of the postponement. If the league secretary does not receive notification within this timeframe then it will be at their discretion to either set the date on which the league fixture must be played or default the team which has requested the postponement. If the opposing captain does not agree to the postponement then it will be referred to the League Secretary to decide whether there were sufficient grounds for the postponement. If there aren't sufficient grounds for the postponement then the team requesting the postponement will default the match. If there are sufficient grounds for the postponement then rule 2 (i) shall apply with the fourteen day period starting when the league secretary notifies both team captains of his decision.

This was passed unanimously with very little discussion. Denis Georgiou said that as League Secretary, John Grasham should write the rules to make them fair to all and easy for him to run the league.

17. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- Lincolnshire v East Yorkshire U140 – 11/11/17. William Orr to captain. It still wasn't known what the venue will be, how many boards it will be and whether it will be graded.
- Ian Scott requested that all clubs provide him with up to date details of the clubs for him to circulate to anyone who requests them from the LSCA and requested that all clubs do their utmost to attract and retain new adult members.
- Paul Chaplin reported that Grimsby Chess Club had moved to new premises. They now play at Millfields Hotel, 53 Bargate, Grimsby, DN34 5AD.
- John Grasham proposed that Keith Palmer become a Life Member of LCA for his years of dedicated service to junior chess. This was passed unanimously.

18. TROPHY PRESENTATION

Denis Georgiou presented the Division 1 trophy to John Grasham (Louth), the Division 2 North Trophy to Mike Colebrook (Grimsby) and the Division 2 South Trophy to Nigel Birtwistle (Grantham)

The meeting was closed at 16.45.