LINCOLNSHIRE CHESS ASSOCIATION ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2026

Held at the Training Centre, Lindum Construction, on Saturday 5 September 2026, 12.30pm.

MINUTES

Attending: Nigel Birtwistle (Chair), Chris Holt, Peter Sherlock, James Kennedy-Wright, Chris Cumbers, Denis Georgiou, Andrew Watson, John Mainwaring, William Orr.

Apologies: Keith Noons, Ben Mason, Nick Stead.

Opening Remarks

The Chair opened the meeting at 12:40pm.

1. MINUTES OF 2025 AGM

The minutes of the 2025 AGM were circulated to attendees, and these were voted as an accurate record of the meeting. Proposed by Peter Sherlock and seconded by Andrew Watson.

2. MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising.

3. SECRETARY'S REPORT

(Chris Holt)

Thank you to everyone for their hard work over the year. I attended ECF meetings as the association's representative and a copy of my report is in the minutes. I wish to draw your attention to two items which should be discussed:

1. An update to the privacy policy. This was, firstly, overdue and secondly, we had a request from a solicitor to redact personal information from the website. That triggered thinking of a review.
2. A safeguarding policy. The Association has a Safeguarding Officer in post but no written safeguarding policy. This paper asks the meeting to adopt one, to confirm the appointment formally (and through the election of officers), and to approve a small budget.

There followed a discussion on both policies and the need for governance with an executive committee. Following the meeting, John Mainwaring has been appointed as a deputy safeguarding officer.

4. TREASURER'S REPORT AND ACCOUNTS

(Peter Sherlock)

- *The accounts and balance sheet for the year ended 31 August 2026 are appended to these minutes.*

This season we made a surplus of £105.40, compared with £325.56 last year.

The extra team from Louth plus the team from Bourne meant that the subscriptions raised were £430, compared with £370 last year.

The entry for the County Championships was down from last year, particularly in the Open section, where there were only 7 players. Steve Lewis entered the Open but later withdrew on health grounds, sadly later passing away, but was happy to donate his entry fee. Four players decided to donate their winnings.

Thus, the surplus made on the County Championships currently shows £207, down from £363.99 last year.

The county team expenses were down from £311.75 to £251.60, perhaps reflecting the fewer games played by the 3 teams.

Earlier in the year it was agreed to create a new D1 trophy, incorporating the base from the old one, brought up to date with the winners from previous years. Grantham, Grimsby and Lincoln each contributed £10, and the cost of the new trophy, created by Francis Bowers, was £280.

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: James Kennedy-Wright Seconded: Chris Cumbers and approved Nem Con.

5. MCCU DELEGATE

(Peter Sherlock)

I was unavailable for the MCCU AGM in July, as it clashed with the County Championships, so I have no update on what was discussed.

Update from Ben Mason (MCCU2)

The Santander account is still dormant, but they are nearing a resolution. It's believed that there is around £3,000 in the account.

There will be some fees due — question for the Treasurer: *do you know which counties entered from the 2021/22 season onwards, please?*

There was quite the debate about what the historic charge will be. It's likely to be £42, plus a charge of £50 for 2026/27. Therefore, Lincolnshire would owe £92.

Alex Nichols is the new Treasurer, and he has been tasked with creating a budget by the end of December to see what expenses the MCCU has.

The MCCU committee is looking for a Secretary and an Events Director.

On events, to try to get some more inter-county chess happening, there was talk of hosting weekend jamboree events. The advantage over the current county matches is that they would take place at a single location, so all a captain would need to do is organise a team and not a venue. This was seen as a way to increase chess, not to reduce the county MCCU competition as it currently exists — it was just felt that counties have a lack of captains, and this was one option to try to combat it.

There followed a discussion on county teams and the lack of captains from other counties.

6. ECF DELEGATE

(Chris Holt)

I attended both the AGM and finance meetings via Zoom.

AGM

There were constant audio issues, and the meeting lasted a full five, frustrating, hours. This was mostly concerned with finding a slate of new Directors.

Board Elections

All executive positions were uncontested and filled with large majorities. The key appointment was Richard Walsh as CEO, who is seen as someone who understands grassroots chess and wants to bring the ECF closer to its members — including proposals for member consultation days. The Operations & Administration Director role remains unfilled.

Strategy & Membership

ECF membership has hit an all-time high, recently surpassing 20,000 members, and there is significant government financial support of £250k over three years, though not yet formally signed. The ECF is now more actively running its own events (English Rapid, English Blitz, Junior Championships), which the author warns could clash with local congresses. Plans for new weekly YouTube chess shows were also announced, though a new BBC Chess Masters series appears unlikely.

Finance Committee Report

A contentious outgoing finance committee report focused negatively on a £26–30k overspend during the 2022 Olympiad (caused by Russia's invasion of Ukraine forcing a last-minute venue change), while ignoring the ECF's successful navigation of COVID and its current healthy financial position.

Mike Truran's New Role

A new non-executive director post was created for outgoing CEO Mike Truran to assist during the transition period. This proved controversial — some felt it was improper for it to be a voting post, and others felt the new CEO shouldn't have his predecessor around — but it was approved 128–75 after the incoming CEO said he welcomed the support.

FIDE Update

FIDE president Dvorkovich is expected to win re-election and continues to bypass FIDE commissions. There are concerns about the direction to lift all sanctions on Russia, and Malcolm Pein hinted he might stand against Dvorkovich if that happens, though he was not optimistic about the chances of defeating the bloc voting.

ECF Finance Meeting

The finance meeting was held on a Wednesday evening, rather than a Saturday, and I girded my loins for another epic.

Chess Trusts

Both The Chess Trust and the John Robinson Youth Chess Trust have healthy investments, with funding allocated similarly to last year. A notable initiative is support for IM Balaji's pursuit of the Grandmaster title, with grants tied directly to each GM norm achieved. Lawrence Cooper joined the John Robinson Youth Trust as a new trustee.

Annual Accounts

The ECF's accounts were passed without significant debate. Income last year was £762k with a surplus of £20,249 — healthy, though down from £969k the previous year due to the timing of DCMS grant recognition. The ECF grassroots fund still has £85k remaining, with the main challenge being finding enough qualifying projects to spend it on rather than any lack of funding — pointing, the author notes, to a shortage of volunteers rather than money.

IT Budget — the main debate

The bulk of discussion centred on the IT budget. The board wants to hire a salaried IT manager, with a proposed core spend of £48k, a £24k development budget, and an undisclosed salary. A confused debate followed — with £250k incorrectly being cited — but a proposal to defer the IT strategy to a separate meeting was rejected 15–8. A lot of us are very sceptical whether £12k is sufficient for new development given the ECF's ambitions.

Government Funding & Reserves

The ECF has secured a new round of DCMS funding of £750,000 to support elite chess, running until 2029. The ECF has also agreed to reduce its reserves from £100k to £50k, with the Chess Trust available as a funder of last resort. The budget projects losses over the next two years as part of this deliberate strategy.

Membership

The ECF has hit a new record of over 15,000 paying members. Membership fees will rise by £1 for Gold and Bronze, with Gold set to rise a further £1 the following year. A proposal to bring both increases forward into one year was withdrawn after fierce pushback from board members. Junior fees are rising faster than adult fees as part of a strategy to bring them up to 50% of adult membership cost.

AGM 2026

In a new development, all ECF members are invited to attend the AGM in person as observers. It will be held on 17 November 2026 in Leeds, with an awards ceremony, director Q&As, and a 960 rapidplay tournament running alongside — part of the new CEO's drive to bring the board closer to the membership.

Overall picture: The ECF is in a strong financial position with growing membership, secured government funding to 2029, and expanding activities — though IT investment and volunteer capacity remain open questions.

I am willing to stand for another year as I combine the same role with Nottinghamshire.

7. LEAGUE SECRETARY'S REPORT

(Andrew Watson)

Last year a trusted source mentioned that a neighbouring county had adopted the practice of enabling league captains to enter league results into LMS themselves. This had been a successful change of policy for their leagues, despite initial resistance to it, so it was discussed at last year's LCA AGM as a possible way forward for Lincolnshire. So, it also proved to be the case for Lincolnshire. There was a limited amount of confusion to start with, but that was quickly resolved via WhatsApp, and fairly rapidly team captains were confidently entering results themselves into LMS. This has resulted in both a healthier distribution of admin duties and a much deeper understanding of LMS across the County.

Division One was won by Lincoln A, but only by aggregate game score, as Grimsby tied with Lincoln A on match points — both teams finished the season on 14 points, having both won 7 games and lost 1. When looking at the aggregate game score, Lincoln A were 11 points ahead of Grimsby, therefore securing the winning position. Louth ended 3rd with 6 points, Appleby Frodingham 4th on 5 points and Lincoln B 5th on 1 point. Stand-out players in this Division were David Coates, playing for Lincoln A, who won 6 and drew 1 game out of 7, giving him a win rate of 92.9%. Nick Stead of Grimsby also achieved 7 wins out of 8 games, with a win rate of 87.5%. Alexandr Klimchick, playing for Lincoln A, won 6 out of his 7 games, giving him a win rate of 85.7%. Kevin McCarthy was another Lincoln A player who stood out, winning 5 and drawing 1 out of 7 games, giving him a win rate of 78.6%.

Division 2 North was won by Scunthorpe this year, with a total of 9 points. Grimsby came 2nd with 7 points, Lincoln C 3rd with 5 and Louth B 4th with 3. Stand-out players in this Division were Joanne Hutchinson, playing for Scunthorpe, who won 3 and drew 1 out of 5 games, giving her a win rate of 87.5%; Jules Brown, playing for Lincoln C, who won 5 out of his 6 games, giving him a win rate of 83.3%; and Githma Madukalpa, playing for Grimsby, who won 4 and drew 1 out of his 6 games, giving him a win rate of 75%.

Division 2 South was won by Skegness, who won 7 out of their 8 games with a total of 14 points. In 2nd place came Grantham with 11 points, Bourne 3rd with 9 points, Lincoln D 4th with 3 points and Louth C 5th with 3 points. Stand-out players here were Gary Winson, playing for Skegness, who won 3 out of 3, giving him a win rate of 100%; Ben Mason, from Grantham, who won 5 and drew 1 out of 7 games, giving him a win rate of 78.6%; and Sam Warner, from Bourne, who won 6 out of his 8 games, giving him a win rate of 75%.

Generally speaking, events flowed quite smoothly this year again, with WhatsApp helping a lot to co-ordinate matches and aid communication between captains.

There followed a discussion regarding the use of clocks, what happens if a venue has to close before the end of a game (the President could get a GM to adjudicate), the misuse of mobile phones and interference. The general and league secretaires will circulate an electronic handbook or notes to captains on these points.

8. OPEN TEAM MATCH CAPTAIN'S REPORT

(Nigel Birtwistle)

Since the pandemic there has been a steady decline in the number of teams wishing to enter the Open Section of the MCCU Competition. Last year only Worcestershire entered, but this year we had a new team from Derbyshire entering the competition, who last entered the Open in 2015.

We started our campaign in early November against Worcestershire at Sharnford in Leicestershire. Although there were no early finishes to the games, Lincolnshire steadily increased their advantage as the match progressed and scored a decisive 11½–4½ victory, despite Worcestershire winning the last two matches to finish. Our second match took place against Derbyshire at North Hykeham in the first week of December. This was our first match on home soil for six years! Derbyshire fielded a much weaker team than anticipated, and Lincolnshire cruised to an 11½–4½ victory. This meant that we were MCCU Champions once again and qualified for the National stages.

The quarter-finals were due to take place in May 2026, but Lincolnshire received a bye to the semi-final. There we faced our old rivals from Norfolk at Peterborough. As always, the matches are very close when our two teams meet, with a single match point or board count usually deciding the result of the match. This match was no exception, but unfortunately, after some epic battles, Lincolnshire went down to an 8½–7½ defeat. A drawn match would have seen us through to the final on board count, but it was not to be. Once again, we have proved that we can compete with any county at this level. I am willing to captain the team again for the 2026–27 season if asked to do so.

9. U1850 AND U1650 CAPTAIN'S REPORT

(William Orr)

This season the U1850 section comprised 3 teams, with 12 board matches planned, but with the possibility of additional boards by agreement.

The U1850 season began with a home match against Nottinghamshire, played over 14 boards. Notts arrived with a strong team, winning by 9.5–4.5. Thanks to Herman and the Lindum Group for the use of the Training Centre for the match.

The opponents for the second match were Staffordshire, who proposed playing over the minimum 12 boards. We were back at our frequently used neutral venue in East Goscote, where both teams fielded surprisingly weaker sides — so much so that I had to play myself. Lincolnshire won comfortably by 8–4, the result being enough for a nomination to the ECF stage, where we were drawn against Yorkshire. The match was played at the Sheffield Chess Centre, where we faced a strong Yorkshire team who won 9.5–6.5.

Top performers over the season were Jules Brown and Herman Kok, with 2 wins each.

In the U1650 section, 12-board matches were also planned, but for our first match, against Staffordshire, we agreed on 16 boards. The remaining matches, against Warwickshire and Worcestershire, were 12-board matches. Unfortunately, all these matches were lost by narrow margins. The remaining match was against Derbyshire, scheduled for the end of the MCCU season. Unfortunately, clashes of dates, and a lack of players on the few available dates, meant that this match had to remain unplayed.

John Pocock and Chris Cumbers were top scorers, with 2 wins each.

Thanks to everyone who played this season, or helped out in any way. I've been very fortunate to have a group of very supportive players. That now concludes my time as U1650 captain. Ben Ashcroft has agreed to take over and will no doubt bring fresh ideas to the role.

10. ELECTION OF OFFICERS FOR 2026–2027 SEASON

(Table shows the current roster.)

President	Nigel Birtwistle
General Secretary	Chris Holt
League Secretary	Andrew Watson
Honorary Treasurer	Peter Sherlock
Safeguarding Officer	Phillip Beckett
Open Team Match Captain	Nigel Birtwistle
U1850 Captain	William Orr
U1650 Captain	Ben Ashcroft
ECF Delegate	Chris Holt
MCCU Delegates	Peter Sherlock (MCCU1), Ben Mason (MCCU2)
Webmaster	David Coates
Life Members	Robert Dale, Keith Palmer, Denis Georgiou and Peter Sherlock

The officers were elected Nem Con, proposed by Nigel Birtwistle and seconded by John Mainwaring.

11. PROGRAMME FOR 2026–2027

A. League for 2026/27

B. County Teams

As last year, there will be a minor counties team, U1650 and U1850.

12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Chris Cumbers asked that the association look into speeding up the time controls with a view to put a proposal to the AGM next year.

The next AGM will probably take place on 9th September 2027, subject to forthcoming dates of the Hull congress (this should also be the scheduled fixture meeting). Venue to be agreed.

The meeting was closed by the Chair at 2:40pm and the fixture meeting commenced.

Chris Holt
Secretary

APPENDIX – TREASURER'S ACCOUNTS

LINCOLNSHIRE CHESS ASSOCIATION
ACCOUNTS FOR YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2026

2024/25 INCOME		2025/26	2024/25 EXPENDITURE		2025/26
	Subsriptions			**Levies**	
0.00	Bourne	30.00	-	Game Fees	-
30.00	Grantham	30.00	-	MCCU Levy	-
70.00	Grimsby	70.00	**0.00**	**Total**	**0.00**
100.00	Lincoln	100.00			
70.00	Louth	100.00		**Expenses**	
70.00	Scunthorpe	70.00	-	Minor	-
30.00	Skegness	30.00	-	All teams	-
370.00	**Total**	**430.00**	**311.75**	**Total**	**251.60**
	Game Fees				
-	Barton	-	-	Bank Charges	-
-	Boston	-	-	ECF Yearbook	-
-	Grimsby	-	45.00	AGM Venue	-
-	Lincoln	-	-	Donations	-
-	Louth	-	-	Correspondence Team	-
-	Scunthorpe	-	51.68	Web-site	-
-	Skegness	-			
-	Spalding	-		**County Championship**	
-	Minor	-	345.00	Prizes	345.00
0.00	**Total**	**0.00**	20.00	Expenses	20.00
			365.00	**Total**	**365.00**
0.00	**D1 Trophy Eng**	**30.00**			
				Trophies	
	County Championship		-	New D1 Trophy	280.00
728.99	Entry fees/donations	572.00	-	D1 Trophy Eng	30.00
-	Sponsorship	-	**-**	**Total**	**310.00**
728.99	**Total**	**572.00**			
				Officers	
0.00	**Interest**	**0.00**	-	P.Sherlock (Treas)	-
			-	**Total**	**-**
1100.99	**General Fund**	**1032.00**	**773.43**	**General Fund**	**926.60**
-	Special Fund	-	-	Special Fund	-
1100.99	**Total**	**1032.00**	**773.43**	**Total**	**926.60**

LINCOLNSHIRE CHESS ASSOCIATION

BALANCE SHEET as at 31 AUGUST 2025

	2024/25	2025/26
Balance B/F	2336.61	2662.17
General Fund – Income	1100.99	1032.00
- Expenditure	773.43	926.60
Profit/(Loss) for year	325.56	105.40
Balance C/F	2662.17	2767.57
Balance made up of		
Current Balance at Bank		
Current Account	2662.17	2767.57
Deposit Account	0.00	0.00
Total	2662.17	2767.57
Less Debtors	6.66	-
Plus Creditors	-	-
Total	2662.17	2767.57

P.G.Sherlock
Hon Treasurer

5 September 2026

Approved by the Annual General Meeting on 5 September 2026. Proposed: James Kennedy-Wright Seconded: Chris Cumbers.