

EC Meeting Minutes – April 2020

Due to the coronavirus restrictions, the meeting was held via email during April. Those “present” were Shane Bhayat (SB) Steve Burke (SJB) Graham Neil (GN) Andrew Walker (ANW) Nick London (NL) Maurice Hill (MH) and guest John Swain (JS).

- 1) Minutes of Last Meeting
 - a) Minutes agreed with minor amendments.
- 2) Matters Arising
 - a) All on agenda.
- 3) CC, RP & Congress summing up and potential way forward
 - a) Following the sudden unexpected death of Robert Richmond in January, a subcommittee of four was formed to take over the running of the Rapidplay and Congress. John Swain and Simon Scott took responsibility for the preparations and actual running of the events. Steve Burke dealt with organising, accepting and checking entries, while Shane Bhayat arranged and dealt with the entry forms and PayPal requirements. Between them they covered other aspects as required.
 - b) The Rapidplay went ahead successfully and resulted in a profit of about £370, up £70 on last year.
 - c) All was progressing well for the Congress until the Coronavirus appeared on the horizon. This apparently resulted in a reduction of about 50% in early entries. As the weeks passed this trend continued with the committee monitoring events.

The initial government forecasts suggested that we would be able to go ahead with the event, albeit with a much reduced entry, as actually happened with the Blackpool Congress. However events accelerated rapidly, chess leagues were shut down, entries dried up and players started withdrawing, so it became apparent that we had to cancel the event. This was announced the day before the Government announced a ban on gatherings.

After an extensive effort to advise all entrants, get their acknowledgements, and refund their fees, we achieved that. After all this, the financial result was that we lost about £80.
 - d) Looking forward, John Swain has advised the High School that we will look to rearrange the Congress later this year. In any case we expect to be running the events as usual next season. Of course we will have to consider the possibilities, once life gets back to normal. It seems unlikely that anyone will step forward to run the whole thing as Robert did. So a similar committee will probably be required to run the events in future if they are to continue.
- 4) Finances
 - a) Banking arrangements update.
 - i) SJB had looked into alterations to the bank and building society arrangements. However this has been somewhat overtaken by events. The Nottingham Building Society wrote in February to advise that they were closing Savings accounts for clubs, charities, etcetera due to changes in Money Laundering Regulations. As a result we should be receiving a cheque at the end of August for the small amount we still have there.
 - ii) Following the death of Robert Richmond, we will need to replace him as a signatory on the bank account, but given the requirement for all signatories to attend together to complete a new mandate this will be deferred until more normal times. Shane will

probably be a new signatory, though obviously this needs to be confirmed nearer the time, and this may be affected by who is elected to run the NCA tournaments.

b) Robert's Legacy

- i) It was suggested that JS might be co-opted to the EC. But at present, given he is co-executor of Robert's estate this could give rise to a conflict of interest. Other possible recruits need to be considered.
- ii) The estate will probably take 1-2 years to wind up, so financially we need to carry on as normal for now.

There are basically three possibilities to look at that include 1) setting up a new charitable trust, 2) converting NCA to a charitable trust, 3) not setting up a charity ourselves.

At present, and for quite some time to come, the figures involved are uncertain. Also the way that the will is worded, there is no specific bequest to the NCA, so the executors will decide how it is enacted in the end.

Robert had expressed as possible purposes 1) bringing the British Championships to Nottingham in 2036, 2) a suitable international tournament to celebrate the centenary of Nottingham 1936, 3) suitable ways of encouraging/supporting chess in Nottinghamshire.

The old idea of acquiring some permanent premises to host chess in Nottingham was mentioned as a possibility, though this would bring with it a complete change of pace in respect of administration of the NCA, even if the trustees agreed it would be a suitable purpose.

For now SB, GN and SJB will investigate options, in consultation with JS representing the estate. We can then report back to the EC initially, then probably to a GM, with more concrete options.

5) Coronavirus Effects

- a) League – NL advised that, based on email exchanges with LMC members, there is no current consensus within LMC on what to do about the situation, and the LMC has not yet held a virtual meeting to make any decisions/recommendations. Effectively they are awaiting some steer from the government and other powers on how this will unravel.

The nature of 'getting started' will depend very much on the phased lifting of lockdown and its timing so we can't know what to decide yet. Everything from rescheduling the last 5 weeks of league fixtures through to abandoning 2019-20 altogether is possible.

- b) RRM - Normally this would need to be held by end of May, with any proposals for changes needing to be submitted by 10th May at the latest. It is clearly not going to be possible to hold such a meeting in current circumstances. However, if necessary, we could always make changes to the constitution to allow rule changes to be made at the AGM later in the year.

This could, for instance, be required to include any changes needed on health issues to allow league play to continue.

- c) AGM – The constitution says that an AGM is required at least every 18 months, so we have until the end of the year to comply with that. Though obviously something in the Summer/Autumn would be the expected/hoped for timescale.
- 6) New Website – SB reports that the new site was almost complete (with just a number of links to the old one and tidying up some demo news items needed) in early March. So the developer (Bev Webster) was paid the agreed fee. I was looking into doing that work and starting to discuss the changeover with her and David Coates when we got into the Congress problems and the Coronavirus lockdown on 23 March. There was an EC planned for 27 March and I had intended to discuss the launch then. We have since been holding that meeting by email, and this has taken some time! However, I will try to move forward with the launch before too much longer.
- 7) League Results – historic and going forward
- 8) Book reviews etc.
- 9) Centenary
- 10) Any other business