

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE CHESS ASSOCIATION: ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
7:30 pm Monday 7th JULY 2025 British Legion Club, Radcliffe-on-Trent

1. Apologies: Graham Ladds, Stephen Humphreys, Ruth Humphreys, Chris Sargeant, Peter Ackley, Stefan Walentowicz, Chris Cumbers, Chris Budd, Marc Richmond, Mike Naylor-Eade, Jonathan Tait.

Attending: Neil Graham (chair) Nick London (minutes), Simon Scott, Dave Griffiths, John Swain, Chris Holt, Alan Johnson, Stuart Humphreys, Derek Padviz, Drag Sudar, Marcel Taylor, Tim Walker, Phil Morgan, Felipe Almeida-Lessa, Gavin Dow, Chris Spolton, Chris Hill, Alan Griffiths, Maurice Hill, Dave Flynn.

2. Previous Minutes (AGM 08/07/24)

P. Morgan to be added to attendees list. Minutes were approved by the meeting (none against).

3. Matters arising from the minutes (not on the agenda)

None

4. President's Report & Season 23-24 Review (Neil Graham)

I am now in my second term as President of the Notts Chess Association; my last tenure being some 40 years ago (1985-1988). In those intervening years my chess has got no better I am sorry to say but there has been plenty of activity within Nottinghamshire chess over these years.

Without the volunteers who organise chess on our behalf there would be no Association and no League and we are indebted to the individuals who sort out these and our website, the congress and all the other myriad events on our behalf.

Chess is a young man's game – witness the ascendancy of Gukesh Dommaraju who became undisputed World Champion at the age of 18 years and 195 days. I am extremely concerned that the running of the Association is in the hands of an increasingly elderly cohort of organisers. I hope that younger people will come forward in future years to assist in the running of the Association; indeed General Meetings have shown a distinct lack of enthusiasm for people to take on administrative roles. In addition the next Gukesh could already be in the county, and we need a system that encourages and identifies the stars of the future. On that note I am pleased that Senith Gunarathne (West Nottingham) has won the MCCU place in this year's British Championship. It was only through the efforts of this Association that the qualifying place was awarded to the Nottingham Congress and I understand that Senith will receive support from the Nottinghamshire Chess Foundation.

If we look at achievements during the past year, the start of the Summer Rapid play League plus the expansion of the Minor League gives everyone including beginners the opportunity to play competitive chess and we have seen a number of new players competing. I hope that these competitions and indeed the main OTB League itself may increase in 2025-26.

Finally returning to opening remarks, we have lost a number of players and supporters over the past year through death and illness. We remember them at this meeting.

5. Announcement of Prizes

Division 1 – Mansfield [*trophy retained by J. Tait*]

Division 2 - Beeston 1

Division 3 - Gambit 3

Division 4 – West Bridgford 3

Division 5 – Radcliffe & Bingham 3 [*trophy presented to M. Taylor*]

Minor League - West Nottingham New Brooms [*trophy presented to S. Scott*]

[*Other trophy handovers to be arranged*]

6. Development and PR Working Group

N. London provided an update on the work of this group and presented some plans and questions to the meeting. Actions agreed:

- a. Club secretaries to be requested to supply email details of club members to populate an up-to-date distribution list. **Action: NL.**
- b. Further development of NCA website preferred to a revived newsletter. Volunteers for content and editorial work are needed. **Action: EC.**
- c. Contacts with schools that have chess activity are requested, especially secondary schools. Also informal groups meeting for chess in e.g. cafes, pubs, libraries. **Action: NCA members.**

- d. 'Chessfest2.0' is proposed, to take place (on a smaller scale than in 2023) in late September. New Nottingham Central Library and railway station being considered as sites. Volunteers for the day and pre-planning sought. **Action: NCA members** to contact NL.
- e. Chess 'Mobbing' is a suggested activity – i.e. numbers at a pub, cafe or other venue with chess equipment. **Action: NCA members** interested to contact Dave Flynn.
- f. Social media development: volunteers with experience/expertise in this area are sought to develop NCA's presence and visibility. **Action: NCA members** to contact NL.

7. County Blitz Championship

D. Sudar updated the meeting on plans to hold this event for the first time since 2009.

To take place on 11/08/25 at British Legion, Radcliffe, starting 7:30pm. Online entries via the NCA website.

8. Treasurer's report and accounts

Stuart Humphreys presented the annual accounts (see separate appendix).

SH offered thanks to Steve Burke as outgoing treasurer for a smooth handover and support during his first year. Dave Griffiths also thanked for his service as the internal auditor.

Notable developments:

- a. online banking facilities, allowing online payment of event entry fees.
 - b. purchase of 20 new digital clocks.
 - c. sizeable profit from Rapid play and smaller one from Notts Congress
 - d. County Championship will run at a significant loss.
 - e. University league fees are now fully up to date, as are all other clubs
- Report and accounts **approved** (none against).

9. League fees

SH proposed that all fees be retained at the same level as the previously year for 2025-26

Agreed unanimously.

N Graham proposed that, in order to encourage more chess, new teams entering eh league should be charged at 50% of the standard league fee rate.

Agreed (none against).

10. Officers' Reports

All reports received had been circulated previously. *[See separate appendices to these minutes]*

All reports were **approved**, none against.

Discussion & questions on some reports, as follows:

- a. Records Secretary (S. Scott): D Sudar queried the reported number of players participating in league matches and suggested it should be 244 rather than 219.
- b. Minor League Coordinator (NL):
Acknowledged that a time limit of 25+10 could lead to a late return from away fixtures for many juniors. A flexible approach to time limits can be adopted for next season.
- c. County Championship (N London, Stuart Humphreys):
 - i. Event spread over two separate weekends attracted the same number of participants as 2024. Suggested that a different time of year (e.g. November) may attract more interest.
 - ii. Comments on alternatives formats for a championship were invited – send to NG.
 - iii. Ashfield are undertaking to organise for 2025-26
- d. Correspondence Team Captain (P Morgan): General feeling that sadly the format has reached the end of its purposeful life, given the permissible use of chess engines. All games this year were drawn. Notice has been given that the ECF event will no longer run.
PM was thanked for his role as captain over several years.
- e. Notts Chess Foundation (N London):
 - i. Trustees are giving consideration to establishing a long-term growth fund to assist in staging a major event to mark the centenary of the Nottingham 1936 tournament.
 - ii. Stuart Humphreys is working on the completion and publication of Robert Richmond's book on the 1936 event.

- f. Safeguarding: no incidents or queries have arisen during the past year.

11. Election of Officers

-	<u>OFFICER POST</u>	<u>ELECTED</u>
a.	President -	Neil Graham
b.	General Secretary -	Nick London
c.	Treasurer-	Stuart Humphreys
d.	Executive Committee-	President, Secretary, Treasurer (ex-officio)
		John Swain, David Flynn, [Vacancy x 2]
e.	League Secretary-	Felipe Almeida-Lessa
f.	Records Secretary-	Simon Scott
g.	League Management Cte	League Sec, Records Sec (ex-officio)
		C Holt, D Griffiths, P Morgan, Graham Ladds, N London, [Vacancies]
h.	Minor League Coordinator:	Nick London
i.	County Teams-	[Vacancies]
j.	Correspondence-	[not required]
k.	Congress Committee	Simon Scott, Stephen Humphreys, Hambel Willow
l.	Rapidplay Committee	Simon Scott, Stephen Humphreys, Hambel Willow
m.	County Championship Cte	[Ashfield Chess Club]
n.	Junior Committee	Tim Walker, Mike Swanwick, Chris Spolton
o.	Webmaster-	Stephen Humphreys
p.	Website editors	[not required]
q.	ECF Delegate-	Chris Holt
r.	MCCU Delegate-	Tim Walker, John Swain
s.	Auditor-	Dave Griffiths
t.	Lead Safeguarding Officer	Phill Beckett
u.	Deputy Safeguarding Officer	Ed Jones
v.	Nominated Trustees for Notts Chess Foundation	Chris Budd, Dave Griffiths, Ruth Humphreys

All proposed officers were **approved** with none against.

Vacancies will be filled where possible via co-option by the Executive Committee. Further actions:

- LMC faces some difficulties in obtaining a quorum of members in the event of disputes and challenges. NG proposed that clubs currently not providing a member be asked to nominate a representative. **Agreed** (none against).
- NG raised the issue of the absence of county captains to organise teams, despite many past successes. A show of hands indicated a desire to run one or more County team. However no attendee volunteered at the meeting.

Action: NG to write to all clubs asking again for volunteers.

12. Arrangements for season 2025-26

- a. League Structure: LMC had met the previous evening; a proposed structure was circulated at this meeting. With 4 new team entries and one drop out, there were 41 teams to accommodate. The proposal is for a 9-team 1st division, with consequent additional promotions further down the structure. Comments and queries are invited during the following week.

Action: NL to email proposal to all club secretaries and 24-25 team captains.

Action: Clubs to respond with any comments to Chris Holt as LMC chair.

- b. Tournament Dates:

Rapidplay 1st February 2026

Congress 18-19 April 2026

UK Blitz championship Zonal 7th September 2025

County Championship – to be arranged.

13. Any Other Business

- a. Division Winner Trophies:

- i. Proposed that any missing trophies that cannot be traced should be replaced.

Agreed (none against); **Action: EC.**

- ii. Proposed that trophies, when awarded or passed on, should require a signature from the recipient and/or minuted. **Agreed** (none against).

- b. Request made that the League Handbook/documentation should include a brief guide for new team captains, similar to pre-2021 format.

Action: FA-L (league sec.)

- c. Noted that Fred Jones has been chair of Grantham Chess Club for 40 years this year, having taken over from his father Arthur Jones in 1985.

Congratulations were offered to Fred by the Association.

- d. Noted that Radcliffe & Bingham Chess Club has received an award from the British Chess Educational Trust for its work in developing junior chess in the area.

- e. It was note with deep regret the passing on of some long-time members of the association:

Terry Lavelle

Mick Harper

Barry Redburn

George Harper

A few moments of silence was observed in their memory.

Meeting closed 10:10pm.