

NCA: REPORTS TO THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 7 JULY 2026

Secretary (Nick London)

- Steady stream of enquiries about chess clubs, especially for juniors, which are redirected to the most relevant/nearest club secretaries.
- Expanding informal chess activities in public libraries: a request to promote and publicise on NCA website has been responded to positively.
- Communications – the Whatsapp group is now well established but needs more people to join it (contact John Swain or Nick London for details). A generic A5 leaflet was produced in quantity (funded by Notts Chess Foundation) for distribution at events, public places, libraries etc.
- Some challenges around finding dates for general meetings – hence constitution proposal.
- General administrative duties and support for other officers.

Treasurer (Stuart Humphreys) [see separate document]

Records Sec (Simon Scott)

Total league games: 1352 (excluding Summer League)

Overall the league ran smoothly with very prompt submission of results. Most captains are remembering to verify their away matches. The main issue (outside of disputes) was defaulting above the bottom board, which can be due to a range of circumstances often outside the control of the team captain. Clubs with large numbers of teams are to be commended for keeping track of their tied players - this penalty was not applied at all this season.

LMC Chair (Chris Holt)

Thank you to everyone who has participated in the LMC this year. Last year, it was decided to have a member from each club on the LMC as this is a vital role and needs participation from as many clubs as possible to be effective and seen to be fair and impartial. I would like to welcome our new members and now that the rules have been amended at the last Rules Revision meeting, we have a full slate for next season.

This year saw more issues being put to the LMC for a decision than previously. We are a group of volunteers trying our best. I appreciate that some of these cases were highly contentious, heated and time consuming and I ask for patience while we work through the issues.

To note; there is no notification mechanism on the LMS system when captains put subsequent notes on the system. Those notes are also public. Please email the LMC mailbox instead.

The issues that came before us:

New Central 3 team in Division 5

Gambit 4 v Beeston 2 – Outside interference and player conduct.

Ashfield 3 v Grantham 3 – Clock malfunction and aftermath.

Mansfield 1 v West Bridgford 1 – The application of rule C6

West Bridgford v Beeston. – Player misconduct

Newark new player introduction after Jan 1.

Rapidplay & Congress Committees (Stephen Humphreys)

See website reports:

<https://www.nottinghamshirechess.org/2026/04/24/49th-nottingham-congress-report/>

<https://www.nottinghamshirechess.org/2026/02/02/35th-nottingham-rapidplay-report/>

Minor League Coordinator (Nick London)

Three teams entered this year and played home & away fixtures that involved two rapidplay games for each player. More flexibility was introduced in time controls to cater for juniors making long away journeys. The participants were almost all juniors and provided good first-time experience for those new to league chess – and acquisition of rating points. The league was won by Radcliffe Rockets with 7/8 match points, well ahead of West Nottingham New Brooms and West Bridgford Winterhawks. 144 games were played in total. The Minor League exists to provide an informal introduction to league chess and is not only for juniors – it could suit a club that has a few new members who are semi-committed to play but would like a less intensely competitive first taste.

ECF Delegates (Chris Holt)

As usual, Tim Walker and 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.

Website Administrator (Stephen Humphreys)

Thanks to the regular contributors Phil and Neil for their reports on the league and 4NCL. There is a steady trickle of updates coming through. All patching etc is up to date. We've introduced a new calendar page this year. If anyone wants to take over the admin of the site it would be appreciated.

Notts Chess Foundation (Nick London)

The three NCA nominated trustees (Ruth Humphreys, Dave Griffiths, Chris Budd) have worked with the other trustees to distribute financial support to a range of events, schools and individuals. Trustees meet around every 2 months but can act more quickly to approve a grant when necessary.

Grants and support to a value of approx. £12,000 were made to 21 different events and projects, in which more than 950 individuals took part.

The NCF website, through which formal request for grants are normally made, suffered various malfunctions during the year and it has now been migrated to a new hosting site and redeveloped, with major thanks to Chris Spolton for his help in this work.

As always, the challenge for NCF – and Notts chess developments in general – is not financial resources but people willing to initiate new projects and further enhance the chess life of the County. All reasonable ideas are open for consideration.