

Minutes of Telepost Chess Club AGM

Held on Monday 21st August 2023, 7.30pm at the Clubhouse

Present: John Bashall (JB), Paul Billington (PB), Dennis Bonner (DB), Matthew Clark (MC), Nick Holmes (NH), James Holyhead (JH), Cesar Pileggi (CP), Graham Shepherd (GS), Shane Sweeney (SS), Kate Walker (KW) Steve Wilson (SW)

Apologies: John Casewell, David Hodge, John Westhead, Martin Ayres, Alex Brims

DB opened the meeting remarking what a great year it had been. There were 5 OTB teams plus individual competitions, online, congresses, and the county and national competitions played by Juniors.

1. Acceptance of the Minutes of the AGM on 5/9/22

The minutes were accepted.

2. Team Summary for 2022/23 Season

A Team - Division 1: OTB/Rapidplay/4NCL online

MC summarised the season:

It was a busy season for the A Team. Although we didn't win any trophies, we played some good chess and were competitive in all the competitions. In the Classical League we came 4th in Division 1 with 6 wins, 2 draws and 4 defeats. Nigel scored 6.5/11 on board 1. John Bashall scored 6.5/9 and Fred scored 4/5. In the Rapid Play League, we came 3rd, having been in contention for the title throughout the season. In the end, we finished 2 points behind Maddocks and 1 point behind Newport.

In the Cox Trophy, we were knocked out in the semi-finals by the B team, despite fielding a strong team including three of the six top active players in Shropshire! We made the finals of the One Day Cup after winning the league, but lost in the final on board count to Newport. Fred was outstanding, winning 11/11.

It was hard to raise players for the Online League, but there were some good individual performances in this competition. We are not going to enter this next season. In Online 4NCL, the B team finished in 22nd place and the A team finished in 24th place both with 6 match points out of a possible 14.

MC thanked all those who had played for these teams. DB thanked Matthew for all his work in captaining the teams.

B Team - Division 1 OTB

SW reported that the B team were up against higher graded teams all season. They had two draws and no wins in the first division of the league. In the Cox Trophy they defeated Oswestry A and our own very strong Telepost A team but lost a close match against Maddocks A in the final.

DB thanked Steve for taking on a difficult task.

C Team - Division 2 OTB

DB reported that it had been a tough season after Divisions 2 and 3 were combined. The new Div 2 was comprised of 7 teams, Telford A/B, Newport B, Maddocks C and our 3 Telepost teams of C, D and E. There were tough games throughout the season but the C team made it to the first division, just beating Newport to second place.

Many congratulations to Kate/James/Vin/Nick/ and Dennis for their fine contributions, with our fine back up reserves of Trevor Brotherton/Fred Bench and Shane Greenwood.

D Team - Division 2 OTB

DB presented MA's written report:

The season started quite well with a narrow defeat to Telepost C (2-3). However it never got off the ground and we only gained one point from the draw against Maddocks C. Jack Gough did his best on board 1, but he had only been on the lower boards the previous season so it was very difficult for him. At least every player gained a minimum of one point, with Alex getting 4, mostly on board 2. Luckily all of the opposing teams provided an online player for John Casewell, except for Maddocks C – that will change next season as opposing teams must supply an opponent or default. Thanks go to Graham Shepherd, John Bashall, Paul Billington, Peter Crean and Charlie Bethune for stepping in when one or more of the regular players was absent. However for both of our matches against Telford A we had to default on board 5. This will improve next season as, apart from only having to supply 4 players in Division 3, there will be a large pool of reserves resulting from the large influx of both senior and junior players over the past year.

E Team - Division 2 OTB

PB said he was feeling smug! He couldn't believe what had happened during the year, with strong new players arriving. Sam scored 4/6, Cesar beat Toby Neal and Phil Love and Charlie did well. Shane Greenwood joined the club and got 3/3, beating strong players John Footner and Dave Hollands. Then Archie came along and beat Kate! Merry showed real promise and gained a draw against Vinnie Crean. The team got 3 wins and 6 points.

DB commented that it was really good for the club to have such an influx of strong players.

Div 1 Online team

DB reported on Alex Brim's behalf that nobody really wanted to play in this competition and those that did generally had it the lowest priority over other games. Games that were played tended to

have enormous grading imbalances. The team played six and won one. DB thanked Alex for captaining.

Div 2 Rapidplay

NH reported:

Executive Summary is we won! Division 2 Rapidplay had been in the doldrums for some years with lower graded players reluctant to play. Controller Chris Lewis decided to change the format and this year the division was restricted to players with an August rapidplay rating below 1640. As luck would have it we had Graham Shepherd and Kate Walker who both crept in under the rating restriction, plus James Holyhead, who had a rather fictional low rating because of lack of ratings during covid. So despite my best efforts to scupper things by losing games, we had a strong team that won the title by 7 points and remained unbeaten - with Kate a perfect 11/11 score. I was particularly pleased that we were able to put out the same team for the entire season and would like to thank Graham, Kate and James for being such a pleasure to captain.

We also put out a second Division 2 team which Steve Wilson captained, using the opportunity to give lots of players experience of rapidplay. A total of 13 players took part, with Shane Sweeney and Alex Brims scoring particularly well. Highlight, though, was Rudi's draw against George Vizokai in a game with at least six decades between the players.

3. Shropshire Minor Individual/Membership status

DB reported:

Minor Individual

For players under grading of 1640 there were 20 players from all of the Shropshire clubs and our own James Holyhead came 1st, many congratulations. The Grading prize for Under 1500 went to Dennis, Under 1400 to John Casewell and Under 1300 to Martin Ayres. A fantastic clean sweep for our Telepost players and long may it continue.

Dennis asked members to look out for the new season Minor Individual which is usually 7 Swiss rounds from October to April/May. We could have a very strong field next season.

Membership update

Our latest update is that we have 55 members including 13 Juniors, a fantastic achievement and makes us easily the biggest club in Shropshire. Thanks to Paul for mentoring all the new members.

There had been new players arriving virtually every week and we have now moved to our 2nd night at the club, which is Wednesday for social chess - there have been 12 and 13 people attending in recent weeks - while Monday nights will be for "Quiet" chess, including all of the League games, Cup and other team and individual competitions. The other good news is that we will be entering 6 adult teams and 1 Junior team in the Leagues for the coming season up from 5 teams last season.

We hope to have three Rapidplay teams - A and B in division one, captained by David Hodge and Matthew Clark, and a C team captained by Archie Flavell.

Dennis thanked everybody for their very enthusiastic support and long may it continue.

4. Telepost Individual

PB reported that it had been an exciting time - players such as Cesar, Sam, Charlie and Dave coming in, some ungraded at the start of the competition, and doing well. He took great pleasure in watching them improve. Nigel Ferrington was the clear winner with 6/6. The U1700 is still to be decided. Alex Brims beat Sam Hollands in the last round to win the U1400. His advice for next season is to watch out for the improvers! Paul showed the newly engraved trophy for the competition.

5. Club and Shropshire Chess website

NH reported:

The main development for the club website is that I rebuilt it to move it from some specialist software, which is very expensive, to the web-based software Wordpress, which is free. The other advantage of this is that Wordpress is much easier to use, quicker to update, and good for letting multiple people contribute. All you need is a web browser. If anyone would like to get involved, or learn how it works, please let me know. Maybe some Juniors would like to contribute some news from one of their tournaments or a diary of the season?

The Shropshire site is already on Wordpress - we redesigned and moved it during lockdown - and a number of people, especially Chris Lewis, look after their own pages. It's remained stable since we moved it. I hope people get chance to read Peter Kitchen's regular news reports - they usually appear early on Weds morning. Again, if you'd like to get involved, let me know.

Huge thanks as ever to Vinnie Crean, who handles our website hosting and deals with lots of techie stuff behind the scenes. Neither site would run without him.

DB thanked NH for his work on the sites.

6. New members' mentor/Juniors/Shrewsbury Cup

PB reported that he had a Cheshire Cat grin from the number of new players who came into the club and showed promise as good players. As well as the Juniors, we welcomed Archie and Gabe. It was exciting to see the new people and their parents and his emphasis was to be a friendly face to new people. As for the Juniors, it reminded him of when Nigel Ferrington first joined the club as a junior - some of the new players are even younger than Nigel was and show great promise.

The Shrewsbury Town Championship has 30 entrants this year, all of whom were keen. There were some unexpected results, with Rudi Bedford on 3/3 before losing narrowly to Dan Hilditch-Love.

Paul thanked Dennis for his work in building the club to the current numbers. Dennis thanked Paul for taking on the task of mentor when there were only two members and seeing it grow so much. The meeting agreed with both sentiments.

7. Treasurer's report

JW sent his report:

Please accept my apologies for the AGM as I have a previous engagement that I agreed back in February. I have ended the year's account on Friday 4th August.

I have tried to move the financial matters of the club to online only this year and have now deposited all the petty cash into the bank account to ensure an accurate record of expenditure. Where people don't use online banking, Dennis or myself have accepted the cash and then deposited it into the account. Where people make a payment into the club account, please use the reference to indicate what this is for (e.g. John W subs) as this makes it easier to keep track of. This year has been a very busy year for the club with a significant surge in membership. This has brought an equally significant surge in income, though the increased numbers have brought an even bigger requirement for chess equipment which accounts for the overall loss this year. However, this equipment should last for many years and hopefully the increased membership will help to rebuild the club funds.

Looking at the income for the club, this comes overwhelmingly from subscriptions, though this year the sweepstake has added an additional £40 overall to the club funds after the prize money has been paid out. The £4.89 donation comes from Vince Crean, who pays the annual website subscription of £14.89 and donates the outstanding £4.89 after his £10 subscriptions have been taken out.

On the expenditure side, the fees pay for the various leagues, though they also include £18 incurred for ECF game fees as a result of players not being affiliated to the ECF. Part of the difficulty is that the ECF have a "supporters" category which does not entitle players to their games being graded. This means that any player who buys a "supporter" membership who plays in either a league, congress or a graded competition (e.g. club championship or Shrewsbury championship) will incur a cost which has to be paid by the club. Please could all members ensure that they buy the appropriate membership that entitles them to play in the competitions that they enter. A bronze membership covers club championships and league matches, but anyone wanting to play in congresses needs a silver membership. Juniors are entitled to their 1st year free but will need to register their membership with the ECF for their free year (see details of this on the ECF website).

The chess equipment is mainly the costs of chess clocks, but also includes some extra boards, clock batteries and some score sheets. The website fee is an annual charge for hosting the Telepost website. The sweepstake prize fund has already been subtracted as I thought that I needed to include the payout (even though I have yet to pay it) to give an accurate picture of the accounts.

Overall, the club had £160 as at the 4th August having subtracted the prize money for the sweepstake. However, we have two outstanding liabilities of £18 (for outstanding ECF game fees last year) and £80 (for trophies on order), which are imminent. which means that we only have £62 in the club funds once these bills have been paid.

Although this is very low by historical standards, subscriptions for next year are now due and I expect that club funds will be rebuilt rapidly once these come in. I would recommend that these remain the same for next year as we should only have batteries and score sheets to pay out for equipment, which was by far the largest cost this year. We are likely however to incur a higher cost for trophies, given that we are likely to have 7 teams next year. This cost is obviously more difficult to predict as it depends on the success of the club teams! As I am not attending the AGM, please feel free to contact me with any further queries at jwesthead@btinternet.com and I will answer as best I can.

John Westhead 5th August 2023.

Telepost Accounts 2022- 2023

<u>Income (£)</u>		<u>Expenditure (£)</u>	
Subscriptions (adult)	= 390.00	League and game fees	109.00
Subs Online/Junior 7 x 5	= 35	Trophy (inc engraving)	20.50
Donation	= 4.89	Chess Equipment	519.91
Interest	= 0.04	Website fees	14.89
Sweepstake	= 80	Sweepstake Prize	40.00 (not yet paid)
Total income	= <u>509.93</u>	Total Expenditure	<u>704.30</u>
Loss for the year	= 194.37		
Brought Forward from 2022	354.37		
Minus loss for this year	194.37		
Total in club funds 04/08/23		<u>£160.00</u>	
Consisting of	Current Account	£127.12	
	Reserve Account	£32.88	

DB stressed that captains and competition organisers must make sure that all players are at least Bronze level ECF members to avoid fees.

8. Election of officers/captains

The following were elected/confirmed en bloc, proposed by MC and seconded by JH:

Secretary - Dennis Bonner
Treasurer - John Westhead
Website editor - Nick Holmes
Equipment officer/new members mentor - Paul Billington

The captains were proposed by JB and seconded by SW:

Captains:

A team - Matthew Clark
B team - Steve Wilson
C team - Dennis Bonner
D team - Alex Brims
E team - Martin Ayres
F team - Paul Billington
Juniors - Paul Billington

9. Proposal

- a) Increase the Adult Annual fee from £10 to £15 and the Juniors/Online players from £5 to £10 annually - Paul Billington

Paul explained that the main motivation for the proposal was to allow the club to provide more trophies and prizes which would in turn further encourage and excite the junior players, helping to make the club bigger and more attractive.

SW said that he saw what Paul was trying to achieve but that he felt the Junior fee should not be increased as it was a lot of outlay for parents. MC was supportive of the proposal to build up club funds. NH was against as it represented a 50% increase and once this year's subs were paid the club would have plenty of funds to support Paul's idea of more prizes. KW asked if we could have entry fees for individual events instead. JH said that he would be worried if the fees ever put someone off from joining and agreed that the accounts were basically strong. KW suggested that the increase be optional - ie a donation element.

After some discussion the meeting voted on Steve's proposal that any increase not apply to Juniors - this was defeated with 3 in favour, 7 against and 1 abstention. The meeting then voted on two options:

- A - Paul's proposal of an increase to £15 for adults and £10 for juniors.
B - Kate's proposal of retaining the current fees but inviting optional donations.

Option B was carried with 9 in favour and 4 against. DB to communicate to the members, including a £5 suggested donation. GS noted that there was no need to publicise individual donors or amounts.

10. AOB

Summary of 24/7 Shropshire AGM

MC reported:

Minutes are on the Shropshire Chess Association website. Congratulations to Dan on being elected as League Controller. There have been a number of other positions created and please could anyone from Telepost get in touch if they are interested in these positions.

Please note the success of Dennis proposal that captains should "*use the latest rating list published on the ECF database as at the date of the match*" to determine board order.

The Cox Trophy and Minor Knockout will now be played throughout the season, like the FA Cup.

Teams **must** now provide an opponent for a Blue Badge-holder, either to play online or at a venue of the Blue Badge holders choice, following Dennis's proposal

It was a positive AGM with everyone present delighted at the expansion of Juniors. Chris Lewis has been nominated as ECF Junior Organiser of the Year.

Telepost Dark Knights

JC had organised an online blitz that went very well and is prepared to organise further events. NH suggested we repeat the blitz event.

Individual Telepost Rapidplay

This is to be held on 11 September. Entries to Steve Wilson by 10 September - he will be making the draw for the first round that evening. Players should arrive promptly for a 7.20pm start. There are 22 entrants so far. There will be handicapped time controls.

Rapidplay Knockout

MC proposed a Christmas knockout competition inspired by the format of the World Chess Championships, with two 10 min games each round, with a 3/2 decider if needed. Matthew will organise this and circulate details nearer the time.

Christmas meal

Steve hopes to organise this for Friday 15 December, at last year's venue, the Coleham Tap. He is taking orders now.

PB said that a benefactor, Paul Slade, had donated an oversize set for the club to use to promote chess. There was some discussion of the issue with disturbing the darts players. Paul will be making signs for the door and Dennis asked people to make sure their opponents knew about this issue.

Meeting closed 9.05pm.

NH 22/8/22