

Braunstone Chess Club
Minutes from 77th AGM Monday 19th June 2019
@ Braunstone Civic Centre

The chairman Richard Hanscombe declared the meeting open at 20:05.

1. Apologies for absence

There were 9 members in attendance, namely :-

Richard Hanscombe (RH); Mike Salisbury (MWS) Jim Bingham (JTB); Guy Closs (GC); Steve Barlow (SB);
Graham Booley (GB); David Sandrovitch (DS); Richard Lee (RL); Gheorghe Albu (GA).

Apologies for absence were received from :-

Tom Brown; Paul Martin; Vijay Gulab.

Other regular members who were absent :-

Abdi Abubakar; David Bray; Julian Tang; Neil Sumagasay; Jessie Amar; Martin Steele; Patrick Reid;
Sam Candari; Shaun Wilkinson; Stephen England.

2. Minutes of last AGM

As the minutes had been distributed in an email by the secretary (JTB), and the assumption that they ought to have been read by those present turned out to be fairly valid. The only matter arising was JTB's concern that the possibility of equipment being stored behind the bar for informal games had not been carried out. However MWS was able to point out that he took responsibility for this action early in the season, and no useful outcome had resulted. The only possibility was that a friend of the barstaff who lived nearby might be prepared to provide storage, but this clearly would not have been a satisfactory arrangement.

3. Secretary's Report

JTB's views (some, post -AGM!) about the performances of the league teams from last season were that :-

The 1st team had performed very well in Div 1 and achieved position 4 / 9, and been the only team to break into the monopoly of this division by Syston and Wigston.

The 2nd team did very well to become Div 2 champions and beat a strong Mkt Harb team on the tie break. The latter had been disputed because of our team's violation of the DTS Rules in its first match, but the LMC ruled in Braunstone's favour since Mkt Harb had failed to put in claim immediately after the match.

The 3rd team also had a good season and only missed winning the title by losing its second match to the eventual winners Melton Mowbray.

The 4th team in Div 4 provided league chess for a large group of the lower graded club players, and the captain GC was fairly satisfied with the team just managing to avoid relegation.

In the summer cups held in 2018 JTB was pleased to mention that the team we entered in the Wylie Cup managed to win the trophy. This came as quite a surprise, but was due to us winning on the tie break with Wigston, because of our head-to-head result.

JTB then informed the meeting that the Club Championship that he had tried to organise during the 2018-19 season had not been very successful, because of the players' league commitments and the costs of hiring rooms for extra nights just to get some tournament games played. In the end just 10 games were played, and JTB asked for endorsement for his proposal that Gheorghe Albu should be awarded the trophy based on the running performance grades. This was approved and Gheorghe was presented with the trophy, and then JTB undertook to have the necessary engraving done.

JTB mentioned that at the LRCA AGM that he recently attended (note - 22May19), there were a couple of points that were maybe worth passing on. Firstly, a long discussion had been held about the Declared Team System (DTS) introduced by the LMC for 2018-19 and it was decided to continue with it, but that the LMC would try to address some of the discontent it had raised, and maybe make some appropriate rule alterations.

Secondly JTB was able to pass on the good news that all the outstanding money had been recovered from the previous Congress Treasurer, and there was now a balance of >£4000 in the accounts.

4. Treasurer's Report

Our Treasurer (GC), started by mentioning that he had continued with his policy of trying to simplify his report, and had decided to leave out the complications resulting from ECF fees, since these effectively just pass through our accounts.

GC explained that the nearly £313 loss in his report was not too surprising because that had effectively been the plan made at the last AGM. Though the deficit was a bit higher than expected due to increased room rental costs (up by ~£130) which had resulted from the 10% increase made by the Civic Centre, and because we had an extra team in the league. Guy mentioned that although the £134.50 for equipment (etc) was unusually high, we could sensibly just regard it as an investment.

There followed some discussion on whether the £48 the club pays for having a website was worthwhile, especially as it is quite old-fashioned now. During this it seemed that the w/s probably had little impact in attracting new members, as it just backed-up the lead-in that searches on the LRCA w/s probably provides.

Regarding the costs, RL kindly expressed his willingness to host the website as part of his company's activities. Although the meeting was grateful for this offer there seemed to be a feeling that this maybe wasn't quite how the club should be managing its affairs. So ultimately the status quo was retained.

A procedure correction was made here, as acceptance of the Treasurer's Report; plus retrospectively for the Secretary's Report and The Minutes, was proposed by DS, and seconded by MWS. This motion was duly carried.

5. Teams for Season 2019/20

Firstly there was some discussion on who would probably be available to play in our league teams, and this led to GC listing the 22(?) players who are currently paid up members. In this he included Jesse and Sam who have indicated their interest by having already paid fees for next season; and he also mentioned that Tom Brown would play in matches during university breaks. RH confirmed this latter point.

In discussions about which divisions we would aim to have our teams, there was no question that 1st team would be entered in Div 1, but there was much discussion about whether we should apply for the 2nd team to stay in Div 2. MWS raised this point because of Tom Brown's situation; the uncertainty of good availability of some other strong players; and the fact that in Div1 the 2nd team would need to increase the number of players for matches to 5.

GB pointed out that the LMC are probably expecting our 2nd team to be promoted to Div 1 anyway, and MWS agreed with this view even though he felt unsure that the team would be strong enough to cope in Div 1.

Eventually the meeting voted for us to apply for 2 teams in Div 1; so we consequently have no need to prepare a case for the 2nd team not to be promoted.

During these discussions much consideration was given to the likely gradings of our players and their designation within the DTS.

With regard to the 3rd team, the issue of us seeking promotion arose again, and ultimately RL's argument of us having the higher ambition prevailed, and he convinced the meeting that we should apply for the 3rd team to be in Div 2, in order to give our new players a taste of more challenging games.

JTB's rose his concern that with only 4 teams there would not be enough match play for all the members we are likely to have, but the view in the meeting was that this still would be best for the moment. The main obstacle probably being that we would have difficulty finding a captain for a 5th team. Also we might be stretching ourselves too much, so instead, the better option would be not to take the risk of entering a 5th team that we might have to withdraw before the season starts. So we should opt for the alternative of waiting to see if we get more new players and then maybe ask the league secretary of a late entry of a 5th team might possible if that becomes feasible.

6. Election of Officers

Chairman: Richard Hanscombe informed the meeting that he was willing to continue as chairman unless there was anyone interested in taking on the role. As the latter wasn't the case Richard duly remained in place.

Secretary : In emails between the incumbent secretary (JTB) and Steve Barlow prior to the meeting it was evident that Steve might be prepared to accept nomination for the role. At the meeting Steve confirmed that this was still the situation, so JTB declared his enthusiasm for this change and it was duly carried.

Treasurer : GC expressed his willingness to continue in this role, and with no other candidates anyway, this was enthusiastically approved by all present.

In the discussions about the team captain positions, since it was clear that there no new candidates for these roles forthcoming, the meeting was pleased to accept that existing incumbents should all just continue.

So the summary of the Club Officials for 2019-20 is as follows :-.

Chairman: Richard Hanscombe

Secretary : Steve Barlow

Treasurer : Guy Closs

Webmaster: Mike Salisbury

1st Team Captain: Richard Lee

2nd Team Captain: Mike Salisbury

3rd Team Captain: Jim Bingham

4th Team Captain: Guy Closs

Since JTB was now standing down as secretary the chairman proposed a thanks be given to him for the work he had carried out over the preceding years. And this was carried unanimously.

7. Subscriptions

GC started this topic by gave his view that we ought to adopt a change to last year's policy of keeping the fees low in order to encourage new members to join. So his proposal was that we should set the fees this year for the adults and juniors at £35 and £20 respectively, both of which include the ECF bronze membership fee. This was readily passed by the meeting.

Some discussion then followed about the finances of the informal chess evenings after JTB mentioned how he thought that RL effectively bankrolling the evenings didn't seem very satisfactory, even though Richard was seemed to be philosophical about it. However after GC gave a summary of the room prices RL agreed that he would try to make hiring the Winstanley his main option in future, as this would cost just £3.35 per hour – (i.e. £11.73 for 3.5hrs – a saving of £3.68 over a Fosse Room booking (JTB note))

In order to help a bit with the financing of the informal club evenings GC proposed (with SB seconding) that the "cleanest" way to help out would be if the club made a one-off donation of, say, £50 to give Richard an initial kitty with which to work with.

RL was pleased with this, and said he would also ensure that the attendees on these evenings would also pay a nominal fee.

8. AOB

JTB expressed his concern that we only have the bare minimum of clocks for most matches, and this led to the agreement that he should go ahead and order a couple more, as well as replenish our stock of score-sheets.

As a final comment JTB expressed his disappointment about the low attendance at the AGM (though maybe the re-arranging of its date didn't help – post-meeting note)

Having established that there was no further business the Chairman brought the meeting to a close at ~21:50

Minutes taken and subsequently written up by JTB 26Jun19