

Braunstone Chess Club
Minutes from 75th AGM Tuesday 27th June 2017
@ Braunstone Civic Centre

The chairman John Robinson declared the meeting open at 19:55.

1. Apologies for absence

There were 10 members in attendance, namely :-

John Robinson (JKR); John Oliver (JAO); Paul Martin (PM); Jim Bingham (JTB); Richard Hanscombe (RH);
Guy Closs (GC); Vijay Gulab (VG); Steve Barlow (SB); Tony Robinson (ADR); David Sandrovitch (DS).
Also in attendance was potential new member : Roger Berrington (RB).

Apologies for absence were received from :-

Patrick Reid – work commitment
Mike Salisbury – on holiday
Nick Hall

Other absent members :-

Sherif Gonem, Barry Read, Toby Hoch – reasons unknown
Cyril Hill – leaving the club to move to a more convenient club
Stephen Hamby – leaving the club because of work commitments, and travelling problems having
relocated.

2. Minutes of last AGM

As the minutes had been distributed by the acting secretary (JAO), they were assumed to have been read by those present. The only comment was from JTB who pointed out that in the League Report the 2nd team had wrongly been shown to have defaulted 7 matches, when in fact these matches had been lost.

3. Secretary's Report

Not having had a proper secretary this season JAO just provided an informal (verbal) report of the performance of our league teams for the 2016-17 season.

He mentioned that all of our results are available for inspection on the excellent LRCA Results Website, and that our club's reputation had probably been impaired by the number of board defaults we had made, and the fact that we had had to withdraw our 3rd team from Div 2. The latter was due to the departure of some players from our club.

JAO's summary of the club's results was :-

1st Team – 2nd bottom (7th) in Div 1
2nd Team – 3rd bottom (6th) in Div 2
3rd Team – scratched from Div 2 (hence in bottom position)
4th Team – 4th bottom (5th) in Div 4
5th Team – (4th) in Div 5 Which could be considered to be our best result!

4. Treasurer's Report

This report had been prepared by the departing Treasurer Cyril Hill, and in his absence was distributed by JAO; who then fielded some questions about the report. He explained that the variation in the amounts for the subscriptions was because :-

Sherif Gonem paid £26 because he organised his ECF membership independently.
Conor Reid (junior) and Toby Hoch (unwaged) paid £25
Paul Wilson as effectively just a casual member paid £20
Jez Wells - £14 (his ECF fee)

JAO explained that the amounts in the Current Accounts in Treasurer's Reports for 2016 and 2017 could not be readily compared, because of the different approach that he (JAO) had taken regarding the room bookings for the 2016/17 season.

Ultimately acceptance of the Treasurer's Report was proposed by PM and seconded by SB; and this was followed by unanimous agreement.

5. Teams for Season 2017/18

The analysis of the availability of the likely club members (~15) by JAO led him to propose that we should just enter 3 teams in the league in the forthcoming season. The likely divisions we would enter are 2, 4 and 5 thereby essentially requiring 13 players; so this would then mean that we ought to be able to mainly keep the teams fairly independent, but still allow one or two players to get some games in 2 teams.

JTB then proposed that under these circumstances we should have a club policy of trying to ensure that all club members get to play as much league chess as possible. Guy Closs pointed out that he already tries to implement such a policy.

After some debate GC proposed and ADR seconded the motion that JAO's proposal be adopted. This was unanimously agreed.

6. Election of Officers

In the knowledge that we were unlikely to get any nominations from the floor of the AGM, JAO had approached various people in advance to take up the essential duties, so that the club could continue to function.

This transpired to be the only proposal that arose, so JAO asked for approval from the floor for this plan, and this motion, proposed by SB and seconded by DS, was passed unanimously.

Consequently, this meant that for the coming season we would have the following officers :-

Chairman: Richard Hanscombe

Secretary : Duties split between Jim Bingham (Official Secretary) and John Oliver (Administrative Secretary – unofficial position)

Treasurer : Guy Closs

Webmaster: (Continuation assumed in his absence) Mike Salisbury

1st Team Captain: Jim Bingham

2nd Team Captain: Mike Salisbury

3rd Team Captain: Guy Closs (with Tony Robinson making himself available as back-up)

7. Subscriptions (inc. Summer Membership)

Under this item the meeting returned to the general topic of the club finances, and some discussion followed about whether it is sensible to maintain our bank balance at such a high level (> £1000) and whether there ought to be measures taken to utilise some of this money. There was a general view that we have an adequate level of equipment (clocks, sets & boards) though JTB suggested that the 1st team sets are not all that good, and maybe the team ought to have some decent weighted sets for their matches.

Guy Closs raised the possibility of awaiting some suitable marketing opportunity to arise which might allow us to spend some money in a manner which might attract some new members.

No conclusions were reached on these matters, but they can probably be reconsidered by the club officials later.

Because of the club's healthy financial position there was an animated debate about whether we ought to reduce the club subscriptions from those levied last year. During this, JAO pointed out that we should not lose sight of the fact that this year ECF fees were going to be increased by £1 each, and the room hire rates were also to be increased. The latter by 15p per hr for the Fosse and the Winstanley rooms; and 20p per hr for the Ravenhurst.

Eventually some proposals on subscriptions were made and voted on, as follows :-

1. SB proposed and JTB seconded a motion to set the standard subs at £30
2. RH proposed and DS seconded a motion to set the standard subs at £35
3. JAO proposed a motion to keep the standard subs at £40, because he was concerned about the reduction of income that was going to result from the club having less members in the coming season.

The voting on these motions resulted in proposal 2 being passed by 4 votes to 5; with ADR abstaining.

(It is to be noted that the standard sub includes the cost (£15) of taking out ECF Bronze Membership for the player).

The meeting then discussed the situation of Paul Wilson, who for a least one year had effectively joined the club as a casual member. It was generally agreed that this should be formally defined as social membership, and JTB (seconded by PM) proposed that the subs for this membership (i.e. no league involvement) should be £0; but this was outvoted by the motion by DS and RH that it should be £5.

However the meeting also nominally accepted the proposal that non-members should be able to attend the club several times free of charge, before being asked to take up social membership. It was agreed that the Treasurer should be able to use his discretion about the time for imposing this arrangement.

While discussing the expenses associated with the standard members, JAO pointed out that in previous years the ECF has allowed players to play 3 games without becoming bronze ECF members, paying a board-fees instead. However JTB expressed the view that this may have been changed for this year, and that these initial 3 games may not now carry a charge at all. This point was not resolved.

8. AOB

JAO opened this item by proposing votes of thanks to two of our members who would be leaving our club after the AGM. Firstly he mentioned Cyril Hill who had very efficiently been our club Treasurer for the preceding 16 years, and then secondly John Robinson who has been top board for our 1st team for most of the same period.

A round of applause was given in gratitude for their commendable service to the Braunstone Club over this 2001 – 2017 period.

JAO agreed to take on the responsibility for emailing our thanks to these two previous members.

JAO then returned to the topic of our Minutes Books, which he had touched on at the start of the AGM. He mentioned that there had been several Minutes Books during the 75 years the club has been in existence, but disappointingly during the latter years they had all gone missing, and his discussions with past Secretaries (Ralph Hitchman; Bruce Denton and Paul Colburn) had all been to no avail. John mentioned that PJC's view was that they could have been amongst all the items that he brought to the club when he left on the night of the 2016 AGM. At this point a glimmer of hope was raised by DS, who said that he had taken home a box of items on that night, and he thought this might have included various historical paperwork etc. So DS undertook to carry out a search of the remnants of this material he'd taken, and would inform JAO of the outcome.

As a result of JAO's frustrations associated with this search he had now reached the conclusion that keeping Minute Books is a futile exercise, and we should now just rely on the Braunstone Website to keep all our historical records. Amongst these, one important item should be our Constitution, but it seems that the whereabouts of a copy of this is also lost in the mists of time.

It should be noted that as these matters were all discussed under A.O.B. the suggestions made can only be advisory. Consequently any future Club Secretary will actually still be free to adopt whatever procedure he chooses.

The meeting then turned its attention to the transfer of the bank account to the new Treasurer, and JAO was able to reassure everyone that matters were well in hand, and he'd brought all the relevant NatWest forms to allow GC to take over the bank account, and have JTB as a named signatory.

Finally there was a lively discussion about what improvements might be desirable to the League Rules.

Amongst these were JTB's and JAO's ideas that :-

1. Players should be obliged to record **all** their own moves, but be free to decide about recording their opponent's moves. The aim here being to remove the option for players to cease recording their moves when they have <5mins on their clock. ; and (b) avoid the usual (and sometimes unsatisfactory) involvement of a third party.
2. To eliminate the possibility of games using Fischer timings from running on indefinitely, we should consider introducing a rule which specifies that games will be discontinued once 80 moves (say) have been played, or if specified time (agreed beforehand) has been reached, and they are still in progress. For these highly unlikely occurrences adjudications would probably need to be used to resolve these games.
JAO's preference to overcome this problem was the use of sealed moves and the arrangement of game continuations when necessary.
3. The method of deciding the order of teams with equal points should always be by use of Games Points Difference. Unlike the existing tie break rules this would reflect the overall performance of teams throughout the season (unlike methods taking account of teams' head-to-head results).

This proposed method, as well as being arguably fairer, would also mean that the league tables would always be accurate at any time, and not be able to be undermined by later results – as happened towards the end of last season. JAO declared that he already intended to contact Stewart Gordon (The Results Website manager) about this point.

As JTB had earlier informed the meeting that the League Chairman, Mike Thornton, had announced at the LRCA AGM that he would be interested to hear of any new ideas about the League Rules, so to prevent further discussion it was agreed that anyone with suggestions about the rules should contact Mike Thornton directly.

The Chairman brought the meeting to a close at 9:30p

Minutes taken and subsequently written up by JTB 6July17