

BURY AREA CHESS LEAGUE

Minutes of the AGM held on 16 July 2025 at Linton Chess Club

Welcome

Present were Anthony Chan (Chairman, Newmarket), Philip Fallon (Cambridge), Greg Thompson (Sudbury), Charles Richmond (Newmarket), Bob Jones, Steve Lovell and Alan Merry (all Bury St Edmunds) and Paul Kemp, Simon Marsden, John Nevin, Alan Richardson and Konrad Scheffler (all Linton).

Apologies were received from Mike Angel, Richard Caves, Oliver Lenton and Paul McMahon.

Minutes of the 2024 AGM

The minutes of the meeting held on 8 July were adopted. There were no matters arising.

Officers' Reports

Chairman Anthony Chan reported on a successful season. On behalf of the Match Secretary he reported the winners as:

League: Division 1 Linton Leopards, Division 2 Linton Lynxes, Division 3 Ely Beet Rooks.

Roger Goldsmith: Division 1 Linton Larks, Division 2 Stowmarket Checks

Players of the Season: Division 1 Gilad Kalchheim, Division 2 Konrad Scheffler, Division 3 Mike Angel.

Game of the Season: Open Philip Fallon, U1900 Josh Bewsey Holden, U1600 Chris Braithwaite.

Anthony reminded team captains to avoid seeking postponements of matches even if this led them to default a board, and to enter and verify results promptly.

Treasurer Alan Merry reported a deficit of £35.50 for the season. As Lloyds Bank are now imposing charges he proposed an increase in the club fees of £2 per League team and £1 per RG team. After discussion the AGM decided to leave the fees unchanged at £20 for League teams and £5 for the Roger Goldsmith as the League balances were healthy and could afford a modest loss. Alan agreed to consider transferring our custom to a bank that didn't impose charges.

Congress Organiser and Internet Officer Steve Lovell reported on a very successful congress last autumn which (even with additional prizes) produced a surplus of £385. He was exploring the possibility of merging the League and Congress websites, but confirmed that the League and Congress would continue to operate separate banking arrangements.

Both Alan and Steve were thanked for their work and diligent stewardship of the League's finances.

Ratings Officer and Jamboree Organiser Bob Jones reminded clubs that captains should seek approval for estimated ratings for unrated players. The Jamboree would be held at the Bury club on 4 September.

Safeguarding

Clubs reported on their progress in appointing a safeguarding officer and developing a safeguarding policy. Whilst the importance of this was acknowledged by all, progress so far could best be described as patchy. Bob Jones reported that the Suffolk League have developed a policy which could be a good template for clubs in developing their specific plans, and he would forward this.

It was agreed that clubs should have a safeguarding officer and policy by the end of 2025.

Rule Changes

Minor changes were made to the wording of rules 2.3, 3.4 and 3.7 to improve clarity and reflect current practice.

Rule 5 on timing will be rewritten so that digital clocks and increments become standard across all divisions and competitions. (Currently clubs retain an option to use analogue clocks with guillotine finishes.) This removes the need for the appendix on quickplay finish rules.

In division 3 and with the agreement of both captains the playing session can be shortened from 70+15 to 60+10 provided this is agreed before the day of the match. It is hoped that this will facilitate more junior participation.

The maximum team rating limits in the Roger Goldsmith competition were increased from 6500 to 6750 (division 1) and from 5500 to 5750 (division 2). We are now at a mid-point between last season's low limits and the higher limits used in 2023/24.

Team competitions for 2025/26: The League

The following entries had been received:

Division 1 Cambridge (3 teams), Linton (2), Bury (1) and Ely (1)

Division 2 Bury (2), Cambridge (2), Linton (2), Ely (1), Newmarket (1)

Division 3 Bury (2), Linton (2), Newmarket (2), Cambridge (1), Ely (1), Stowmarket (1) and Sudbury (1)

It was agreed that divisions 1 and 2 will operate in the traditional home and away match format. But 10 teams in division 3 was felt to be too many matches for this format (matches would run well into June), but to play each other team just once would provide meagre rations with just 9 matches.

The following proposal was unanimously agreed. Teams would be split into two groups, the west consisting of Linton, Cambridge, Ely, and one Newmarket team and the east of Bury, Sudbury, Stowmarket, and one Newmarket team. Up to Christmas/mid-January teams would play home and away in their groups. The three top teams in each group would then play the three top teams in the other group, home and away. The two bottom teams in each group would similarly play each other. This would give 14 games for teams in the top group and 12 for the lower group.

The attractions of this approach were that it would reduce travelling and it would provide a good number of games without the season over-running.

Team competitions for 2025/26: Roger Goldsmith

The following entries had been received:

Division 1 Cambridge (2), Linton, Bury, Newmarket

Division 2 Linton, Newmarket, Bury, Ely, Sudbury, Stowmarket

A proposal was made to run division 2 on an east/west basis, but this failed to win sufficient support, the majority being of the view that we didn't have sufficient entries to make this a viable option. In both divisions each team will play each other team once. A request was made that in preparing the fixtures

the Match Secretary tries to equalise the travelling distances between the four most distant clubs in division 2, ie Ely and Linton will travel once to Stowmarket or Sudbury (and vice versa).

On the scheduling of fixtures, divisions 1 and 3 would play in the same week, and division 2 on separate weeks, with RG matches being fitted in appropriately. In order to assist Bury and Cambridge who also play in other Leagues the Chairman undertook to produce a template which showed the weeks in which teams would play within a week.

Election of Officers

Chairman Anthony Chan
Admin Secretary Oliver Lenton
Treasurer Alan Merry
Internet Officer Steve Lovell
Congress Organiser Steve Lovell
Congress Director John Wickham
Rating Officer & Jamboree Organiser Bob Jones

The positions of Vice-Chairman, Match Secretary and Safeguarding Officer were unfilled, but Richard Caves had offered to continue as Match Secretary in the absence of other volunteers.

Forthcoming Events

Bury League Jamboree 4 September
Cambridgeshire Rapidplay 28 September
Bury Congress 18 & 19 October.