

BURY AREA CHESS LEAGUE : AGM 2019

The AGM took place on Tuesday 16 July, at the Linton Chess Club (Cathodeon Centre, Linton).

Present were :

Norman Hutchinson (Chairman)
Patrick Ribbands (Match Secretary)
Stephen Pride (Administrative Secretary)
Paul Kemp (Treasurer)
Bob Jones (Grading Officer, Handbook Editor & Jamboree Organiser)
Steve Lovell (Congress Secretary & Internet Officer)
Mark Szymanski (Roger Goldsmith Organiser)

Tom Bramley (Cambridge)
Margherita Boroni (Linton)
Chris Davison (Linton)
Michael Osborn (Linton)
Alan Richardson (Linton)
Steve Ruthen (Bury)
Hugo Smith (Bury)
Alan Watkins (Bury)
Nate Weersing (Linton)
David Wood (Sudbury)

Before the meeting began, the Chairman paid tribute to Marcus Misson, of Warboys Chess Club, who had also served as Secretary of the Cambs Chess Assocn, who had died unexpectedly. Others said he was always cheerful, with a wickid sense of humour.

1 The Minutes of the previous AGM (held on 9 July 2018) were approved.

2 Matters Arising

There were none.

3 Officers' Reports

(i) The Chairman expressed concern that the League was losing players, obliging some to play for more than one team. Distances to Away matches put off some lower-graded players. But there had been no major problems.

(ii) The Match Secretary said there had been only one defaulted match, and only five other board defaults. There had been no disputes.

(iii) The Treasurer's report had been circulated. There had been no items of exceptional expenditure, and both the League and the Congress had made satisfactory surpluses. It was agreed :

- to leave the League fees unchanged ;
- to reduce the Roger Goldsmith fee from £7 to £5
- to increase the Best Game prizes from £25 to £40, and to undertake better promotion

(iv) The Grading Officer reported that estimated grades at the beginning of the season had, with one exception, proved remarkably accurate.

(v) The Internet Officer said for reporting results, we should move to the ECF/LMS system in September, and this was agreed. Guidance for Captains (and other players) would be needed.

A problem would arise because of the League's unusual bonus point system. The Internet Officer would explore the best way to retain the bonus point (possibly by retaining David Wilde's system, though that would expire in a couple of years, or hoping that the LMS would evolve to accommodate it, or by using the idea of having a fifth, ghost member on each team). If no satisfactory way could be found, a future AGM might have to consider dropping the bonus point.

(vi) The Roger Goldsmith Organiser had nothing to report.

(vii) There was no Rapidplay Organiser and no event had been held. It was agreed to abolish the event.

(viii) The Congress Secretary said the 2018 Congress had been very successful. The Congress Director had previously suggested that the BACL would need to look at changes to the ECF grading system, namely monthly lists and four-digit grades, in relation to all its competitions. (Note : these are expected to affect our 2020/21 season.)

4 Honours

League	Div 1	Cambridge Examiners
	Div 2	Linton Llamas
	Div 3	Bury Vipers
Roger Goldsmith	Div 1	Cambridge Masters
	Div 2	Linton Lapwings
Jamboree		Linton
Player of the Year	Div 1	Who ??
	Div 2	Who ??
	Div 3	Who ??
Game of the Season	Div 1	Stephen Lewis
	Div 2	Martin Pinner
	Div 3	No entries

5 Election of Officers

The following were elected :

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|-------|--------------------------|--|
| (i) | Chairman | <u>Vacant</u> (but <u>it was agreed</u> that Norman Hutchinson should continue to act as Chairman for the remainder of the meeting. And <u>see note</u> after the minutes) |
| (ii) | Vice Chairman | <u>Vacant</u> |
| (iii) | Match Secretary | Patrick Ribbands (<u>but was replaced by Chris Davison</u> - <u>see Item 14</u>) |
| (iv) | Administrative Secretary | Stephen Pride |

(v)	Treasurer	Paul Kemp
(vi)	Grading Officer	Bob Jones
(vii)	Internet Officer	Steve Lovell
(viii)	Handbook Editor	Bob Jones
(ix)	Roger Goldsmith Organiser	Mark Szymanski
(x)	Jamboree Organiser	Bob Jones
(xi)	Game of Season Officer	Paul Kemp
(xii)	Trophy Officer	Norman Hutchinson
(xiii)	Congress Director	John Wickham
(xiv)	Congress Secretary	Steve Lovell

6 Structure of the League - 3 or 4 Divisions ? (And associated issues)

If the 3 Division structure were retained, with no East/West split, Clubs would ideally like to have the following teams :

Club	League	Comments
Bury	2+2+2	
Cambridge	2+3+0	But would require the AGM's permission to keep Gowns in Div 2
Ely	1+1+0	
Linton	2+2+2	
Stowmarket	0+0+1	
Sudbury	0+0+1	
TOTAL	7+8+6	

The meeting had before it two papers.

Patrick Ribbands, as Match Sec, made the case in his paper for 4 Divisions. That would make it easier for someone to play for two teams, make promotion or relegation less of a jolt, reduce the work for the Match Sec, making it easier to meet clubs' wishes, and a lower risk of Ely finding that both its teams were in the same Division.

Stephen Pride's paper offered comments, as Admin Sec, on Patrick's. He did not express a view on the merits of 3 or 4, but argued that it was up to Patrick to persuade us that 3 Divisions had a serious problem which would be solved by creating 4 Divisions, without creating significant fresh problems. He listed some issues which had been raised before the meeting in email exchanges.

He added that the complexity of the issues suggested that more work was needed.

It was generally agreed that 4 Divisions would require at least 24 teams, and it was far from clear that this could be achieved.

It was agreed to stick to 3 Divisions.

Patrick's paper also included a separate proposal to permit an active player to be nominated for two teams, in different Divisions. But this did not attract any discussion.

7 Contingency Planning for 4 Divisions later

The Chairman presented a paper which argued that the AGM should have more flexibility to restructure the League.

Bob Jones believed that Rule 2.2 already gave the AGM considerable flexibility, because the first sentence said what would "normally" happen, leaving it open to the AGM to decide otherwise. But the Admin Sec said that the second sentence limited exceptions to the norm to those cases where the clubs affected requested a variation. If the AGM wanted to have freedom to vary where those clubs didn't make a request, a Rule change would be necessary.

It was agreed to relax the rules to permit the AGM to make changes where one of the clubs didn't request it, provided that any team which had won promotion could insist on promotion.

It was also agreed that in some circumstances it might be desirable to relegate more than one team from a Division, whether or not the additional team or teams agreed to this.

The Admin Sec would make appropriate amendments to the Rules.

8 East/West split of Division III ?

The Admin Sec had circulated a paper proposing that, if we retained 3 Divisions, Division III should be split between East and West, primarily to avoid lower-graded players and juniors having to travel a long way. He reported that Cambridge, Stowmarket and Sudbury all supported this proposal.

But it might limit the variety of players a player could expect to play, and Bob Jones reported that Bury was against it. The proposal was defeated.

Bob offered the Bury club as a half-way house. Stephen said this was not ideal (since it reduced the number of home matches), but Cambridge could consider it.

9 Cambridge Gowns

Cambridge requested that the Gowns be allowed to stay up in Division II, otherwise it would be disbanded. Cambridge would endeavour to strengthen the team.

Paul Kemp reluctantly supported the request, but said it must not become a regular event. The request was approved.

10 League and Roger Goldsmith entries

Clubs submitted the following entries for 2019/20 :

Club	League	Roger Goldsmith
Bury	2+2+2	1+2
Cambridge	2+3+0	1 +0
Ely	1+1+0	1+0
Linton	2+2+2	1+3
Stowmarket	0+0+1	0+1
Sudbury	0+0+1	???
TOTAL	7+8+6	4+6

11 Mobile Phones

The Match Secretary had circulated a lengthy amendment to Rule 6.4, but Tom Bramley thought it was too onerous. It was agreed to make a much shorter amendment, so that if a player's phone makes any sound during play, he will receive a warning for the first offence, and will be defaulted for a second offence in the same game.

12 Voting Rights

The Admin Sec said it was important that the AGM took decisions in the interest of all players, and the proposal on the agenda would avoid bias in favour of the club hosting the AGM, or against players who failed to attend. But Paul Kemp argued that having to vote in person was an incentive to attend, which aided recruitment to vacant offices. It was defeated.

13 Other proposals from Officers or Clubs : Fischer Timing

Bury proposed a time control of 75m plus 15s, bringing the League into line with the Suffolk League, and Stowmarket and Sudbury supported that. But Cambridge preferred the existing 70m plus 15s, in line with the Cambridgeshire League, and the proposal was withdrawn.

14 Match Secretary

Patrick Ribbands resigned as Match Sec. Chris Davison was elected in his place. Patrick confirmed that he would provide the normal hand-over support.

15 Chairman and Deputy Chairman

These Offices remained vacant, and the Core Executive would have to pursue that (see Note below).

16 There was no Other Business

Stephen Pride
Administrative Secretary
20 July 2019

Note : The following day, Alan Richardson volunteered to become Chairman, and a proposal to appoint him was circulated to the Core Executive, and to Club Secretaries.

Future Events to note :

- 5 Sept Jamboree in Bury
- 29 Sept Cambridgeshire RP, Whittlesford
- 26 & 27 Oct Bury Congress