

## SUFFOLK COUNTY CHESS ASSOCIATION

Minutes of the SCCA Committee Meeting, held at 2 Fieldfare Way, Westerfield, IP6 9FB on 8 April 2019 19:30 – 22:30

### **Present:**

President – Leon Burnett (LB)  
Secretary – Kevin Greenacre (KG)  
Treasurer – Adrian Sanderson (AS)  
County Grader – Dave Wild (DW)  
Cup & Plate Organiser – Rob Sanders (RS)  
U-160 Captain – Bob Jones (BJ)  
Junior Organiser – Tim Kent (TK)

### **1. Apologies:**

Correspondence Captain – Bob Stephens (BS)  
Competitions Secretary – David Green (DG)

### **Also absent was:**

First Team Captain – Steve Ruthen (SR)

Before the meeting commenced, LB thanked TK for offering to host.

### **2. Minutes of the last SCCA Interim Committee Meeting held on 1 March 2019**

Copies of these minutes had been distributed to committee members, there were two amendments to make –

9 - Change the sentence "The ECF is encouraging ..."

To

"The ECF is encouraging leagues to start to use their League Management System. From January the ECF are proposing to start monthly grading. As most graders will be unable to submit results monthly this may be a trial."

And

11 - Change the sentence "DW said he had heard ..."

To

"DW said he had heard some unhappiness about players who play for more than one club in the SCCA League. The committee said they had no concerns as long as players and team captains were aware of the rules and followed these."

The minutes were then approved.

### **3. Matters Arising:**

TK has two school trophies; he will provide further information to AS and BJ but they are believed to be for schools to win. BJ said there used to be individual trophies for different age groups and AS said there also used to be a girls' trophy in the past. BJ asked whether

Adam Hunt might know the whereabouts of other trophies. TK said he thought there were some individual trophies still around.

*Action Point – TK will provide details of trophies to AS to allow for the county list to be updated.*

*Action Point – BJ to look into some historical information he has about past winners to see if contact might be made to establish if they still had trophies.*

DW said there was a need to agree a date for when the Norfolk & Suffolk Cup Final is played. He reported that John Wickham had come up with a set of rules; these were made up of proposed rules for the competition together with details of historic rules.

Norfolk usually run their N & S Cup competition as a knock-out but had also used a league basis in the past.

After discussion, it was agreed that a sub-committee be set up to negotiate the rules for the N & S Cup with Norfolk.

LB said that DG had wanted to include the date for the Suffolk final on the calendar and thought this needed to be played shortly.

AS said that he would need confirmation of who would be paying for engraving work on the trophy; it was thought this was now up to date so unlikely to be a major expense.

BJ said he thought the winning team should arrange for the engraving to be done.

*Action Point – DG, BJ and Steve Gregory will get together and liaise with Norfolk about the rules for this event and then make a proposal for discussion at the AGM.*

#### **4. Action Points from 2018 AGM:**

BJ and AS had continued to work on an up to date inventory of trophies.

KG would issue a reminder for clubs to check if they held any trophies when he sends out an email asking for any proposals for the 2019 AGM.

There was an agenda item for discussion about the Safeguarding Children Policy. – see 5c below.

#### **5. Matters for discussion:**

##### **a) County Match Fees:**

LB said that DG intended to propose a change to the wording of 8.5 in the SCCA Constitution to clarify the process for reimbursing county match fees to captains.

At the interim committee meeting in March 2019, it was agreed this subject needed to be discussed at the 2019 AGM following the change of process agreed at the 2018 AGM.

AS said that he would need receipts for match fees from team captains to allow an audit trail to be maintained and to provide relevant information when the accounts are audited.

LB asked whether there was a need to return to the previous arrangement when team captains collected fees and then made the relevant payment(s) or to continue with the

current process of reimbursing team captains and thought this needed to be discussed decided upon at the 2019 AGM but as agreed at the recent interim meeting the SCCA committee would not take a collective view on the matter.

BJ said that at the 2018 AGM the vote had been 11 – 1 in favour of the current process whereby the county would reimburse match fees to captains of the First Team and U-160 Team and so there would need to be a proposal for a potential change back to the previous system for discussion at the 2019 AGM. The change had been proposed by the Bury St Edmunds club and so if there was a need to change the SCCA constitution, a proposal would need to be made in the usual way.

AS confirmed that he had sent out a cheque to SR for expenses but had received no supporting information.

BJ said the U-160 Team had played on three dates but Patrick Ribbands who books up the venue has not provided any invoices; however, BJ said he could write up a note in relation to match day expenses he had incurred to support his repayment claim and AS confirmed this would be acceptable.

AS asked what match day expenses were actually reimbursable – BJ said he considered these to be the venue and a contribution for refreshments.

LB said he thought there were two issues – firstly the need for a proper procedure to be in place for reimbursing match fees to team captains and secondly the potential cost to the SCCA.

AS agreed that at the 2018 AGM, there had been a vote supporting the SCCA reimbursing match fees to team captains and there was a need to plan for this in the next season if this policy was maintained.

LB confirmed that as there was a potential change to the SCCA constitution, a proposal needed to be on the agenda for discussion at the 2019 AGM.

BJ said the SCCA constitution needed to be updated as the version on the Suffolk Chess website was not fully up to date; he said that DG was responsible for maintaining this so this needed to be updated.

*Action Point – KG to include a proposal to discuss the current process for dealing with county match fees on the 2019 AGM agenda.*

*Action Point – BJ to contact DG to update the SCCA constitution, who will then be able to update the version on the Suffolk Chess website. This would include the rewording at 8.5.*

#### **b) Divisional and Cup & Plate competitions:**

LB said there were a number of issues to review. He would like to propose that match points rather than game points be used to decide the SCCA leagues; match points are used in most team events, including international ones, and game points would then be used in the event of a tie in match points. This would require a change to rule 7.1.

DW said that county matches over sixteen boards are run on match points and wondered if there might be an issue around possible defaults but agreed that using match points is widely used elsewhere in chess. One concern he did have was when a captain was faced with a last-minute withdrawal of one of his players which could have potentially a larger impact.

DW asked whether LB had considered previous seasons where game points had been used to see if this proposal would have had any impact; LB confirmed he had not. DW thought it

would be good to have some kind of evidence to support the proposal but said there was no perfect solution; each system had its advantages and disadvantages and he thought it should be put to the AGM for discussion and vote. DW asked if the ECF League Management System would support match points being used, LB confirmed he had not checked.

The attendees discussed the county process which is rather different – if two counties tie, the results of their matches against each other then count.

BJ said he thought the proposed change to match points sounded rather complicated and that, at this stage, he did not think he could support the proposal.

RS said he liked the current situation; he thought in the past the leagues had operated on a match point basis although this had been some years ago, but the current system of using game points had been in place for some years.

DW said there was no right or wrong answer and that it really needed to be discussed and voted on at the AGM.

TK wondered if a bonus point could be awarded for a match win which is operated in the Bury Area Chess League.

LB pointed out that one consideration was the number of defaults; under the current system, a default on a board gave a free point to the other team. With match points, a team still needed to win the match to get the points.

DW noted that there had been two early defaults in division 2 and wondered why these matches could not have been rearranged. RS was able to provide information in relation to one of these; he had received a contact from the opposing captain the day before the match to advise that was not possible for the match to be played; RS said the room had already been booked and paid for so he did not think it was reasonable to have rearranged the match at such short notice. Another team had defaulted the other match but it was not clear about the circumstances as to why this had not been rearranged.

BJ said there had been a new team captain for one of the Bury clubs and there had been some initial issues which had been subsequently resolved.

RS said there had not been many 4 – 0 defaults but LB considered that, nevertheless in such circumstances, defaults can have significant implications in the final league standings.

BJ said that if Manningtree club wanted to propose this change, he thought this needed to be done in the usual way through a proposal for discussion and vote at the AGM and it was left for LB to discuss with his club mates.

Next for discussion was the Cup & Plate. As RS had not been able to attend the interim committee meeting, this had been deferred so that he could lead.

John Lambert (Clacton) had contacted KG in relation to an issue whereby a team had defaulted their initial match and had been entered into the Plate and then had defaulted again. RS agreed this was a good point and that one team had indeed defaulted in the opening two rounds.

RS said that there had been some problems with running these events this season. Different clubs had different needs and it was difficult to strike the ideal balance. The Cup had been the more successful with 12 entrants (2 had then defaulted).

RS went on to say that he thought Suffolk Chess was missing a trick; the intention was by running a Cup and a Plate competition, everyone would feel they were in with a chance of winning one of these.

AS mentioned that in the past a rapid play event had been arranged and wondered if this was a possible additional consideration; RS said he had liked the rapid play but there had not been that much support.

BJ said he thought most players saw the league as the main competition followed by the Cup and then the Plate and sometimes it had proven to be quite a challenge to find players for the Plate. In the BACL, the Cup event is named after Roger Goldsmith; teams play in two divisions in a league format and the winner receives the trophy. The teams are graded to a maximum of 580 over 4 boards in division 1 and 500 in division 2.

RS said that originally, the events had been subject to a grade limit; there had been some support for this but it had not been fully endorsed.

DW said that in Cambridgeshire, they run a grading limit of around 550 (and possibly 440).

RS said that teams from the same club tended to make up the entrants for the Cup and Plate events and thought it would really be beneficial if all clubs took part; DW wondered if it might be possible to charge a team say £10 if they entered the league and Cup & Plate and £15 for league entry only in a bid to encourage increased participation.

LB confirmed Manningtree had taken part in both Cup and the Plate and wanted to compete again. Was this the time to think of a different format to encourage more clubs to take part?

RS said he thought it was important for the Cup & Plate to be run on a different format from the league competitions. Perhaps a solution would be to reduce the amount of league fixtures from 14 to 12 as this would free up 2 'spaces' for the Cup & Plate.

LB asked about the option of having a seeded draw; RS said this could still produce mismatches.

RS said he had a possible way forward. This would involve 3 divisions of 8 teams so 24 teams in total. There would then involve the teams in division 1 taking part in a division 1 Cup, teams in division 2 taking part in a division 2 Cup and so on. This would operate on a knock out basis and there would be preliminary round if required. As it would be a knock out, half the teams would only play in the one match. This should mean no significant mismatches; matches would involve 2 quick play games on the same evening. Would there be room in the calendar – LB said he thought so. The quick play could involve board 1 v 2 and 3 v 4 and then a different opponent in the second game.

BJ said he felt there was more enthusiasm for graded events than the Cup & Plate at present.

LB said he thought we should be encouraging everyone to take part in such events.

It was agreed that RS would draft a proposal for discussion and voting at the AGM.

Onto the divisional structure; there was some discussion on John Lambert's suggestion of a top half / bottom half split; RS wondered if there could be a small reduction in the number of games from 14 to 12; he himself was not too keen on the idea of a split.

BJ said this had to be done in division 3 this season due to late withdrawals but this had proved the flexibility of the current structure.

RS suggested having 8 teams in division 1, 8 in 2 and then some flexibility in the number in division 3.

If John Lambert wanted to propose a possible change to the current structure, this could be discussed and voted on at the AGM in the normal way. The committee felt this might be looked upon favourably.

DW reminded the committee about the possible grading changes that would be going ahead and for this to be considered; if these do proceed, gradings would become 4 digits rather than 3 digits at present. There would be a need to be prepared to change any relevant rules potentially mid-season to reflect these changes. BJ said that from January 2020, a current grading of 170 would become 1900; TK thought it should be possible to have the ability to adopt the gradings with this new system without too many issues.

BJ said the competitions secretary would need to have the ability to interpret the rules if a specific issue was not covered; DW said he thought DG had a proposed wording for this eventuality.

*Action Point – RS to draft a suggested set of rules with a proposal to be discussed and voted on at the AGM.*

*Action Point - KG to include a reminder to club secretaries about letting him know of any proposals to be discussed and voted on at the AGM.*

### **c) Safeguarding Children Policy:**

TK provided a copy of a SCP and said it was important to have one in place; this should be a framework. This was mainly from Essex's SCP which was slightly more advanced than the one Suffolk currently has.

BJ mentioned there was no Suffolk Junior Chess Association but there was a Suffolk Junior Chess Committee. He thought a SCP needed to cover any match involving young children or young people.

TK agreed there was room for improving Suffolk's SCP; BJ said he would like to review and also to perhaps have another junior meeting to discuss this matter.

LB said that after the interim committee meeting, DG had sent out the Stowmarket club's SCP so members could see details of this.

RS said the ECF's SCP has to be very detailed; LB said other counties had endorsed this as their own SCP and RS commented that it may be easier to do likewise, BJ also thought this sounded like a sensible way forward.

It was agreed to make a proposal at the AGM to endorse and use the ECF's SCP.

DW mentioned that Norfolk also has a bullying policy.

*Action Point – KG to include a proposal to use the ECF's SCP to be discussed and voted on at the AGM.*

### **d) ECF League Management System:**

DW advised the committee there was a need to set up a system on how we could use this; he would be standing down at the end of next season, together with DG, so it needed a fresh set of eyes and there was time for someone to become familiar with its use.

BJ asked how one could find out about the LMS – DW confirmed there were details on the ECF website; quite a few dummy sites were also there. Some leagues were already on there that had started to use the LMS.

In DW's view, the system was still being developed but there were already some good facilities. This included an option to allocate specific date(s) for matches; by January 2020, it was hoped that data could be obtained directly from the LMS to provide grading information. We have a year to get used to it and to find out the best way to utilise it.

BJ asked what skills were needed to operate the LMS. DW said there were, in theory, no specific skills needed. He would probably need DG to take a look at it as well but it was quite likely that in due course a County Result Secretary would not be needed as the LMS should be able to handle all tasks.

*Action Point – LB, BJ and all to look for a volunteer(s) to take up becoming the LMS user for the SCCA.*

## **6. Constitution:**

Already discussed was a possible change to 8.5 County Matches – to be discussed at the AGM.

DG was going to reword a proposal in relation to 4.9 Control of events to allow the Competition Secretary to act as controller of events and tournaments with the need for the committee to manage these. It could possibly be along the lines of '...the Competition Secretary in consultation with the committee...' to allow for increased flexibility.

*Action Point – DG to make a proposal in respect of a change of wording to 4.9 Control of events.*

## **7. Rule of Competition Secretary:**

In the absence of DG, the committee would ask for a final version of a handbook for subsequent Competition Secretaries; to include a job specification, guidance for a smooth handover and potential changes in relation to the introduction of the League Management System.

## **8. Proposed rule changes / discussions:**

**a) 'Where a club wishes to arrange a postponement between two teams from the same club, then the postponed match may not be scheduled for a date that would make it the last game of the season for either team'**

RS thought this suggestion only went half way and thought there should be no postponed matches played after the last set of scheduled matches. He suggested that no postponed matches may be rescheduled that would make it the last scheduled match of the season. The committee thought this was a sensible suggestion.

LB asked what the committee thought about the wording of rule 3.7 about there being no requirement to default on the lower board. The committee discussed the rule and decided that if any club wanted to propose a change to this rule, this should be done in the normal

way for discussion and voting at the AGM. RS thought this might be a bad rule but as it had only been voted for recently, it was probably right to respect the recent change. BJ thought if there was any abuse to the rule, this would be addressed.

In rule 5.1, one sentence has perhaps been misunderstood and LB said he did not think the sentence was needed. BJ clarified that a player can only play for one team in Division 1 and one team in Division 2. RS asked if this rule did not apply to the bottom division and LB confirmed that it did not. BJ said he would like this rule changed but respected it had only recently been voted for. There was just a need to reword the line to confirm this rule does not apply to the bottom division.

In rule 10.2, LB said he would like this to start 'In a Quickplay finish...' to clarify.

In rule 12.1, DW said there needed to be a motion to change the existing wording of the rule to allow for a change mid-season in the event of grading changes; authorisation was required to allow this to be done without the need to hold an AGM or EGM. BJ said that he did not see a need for a specific EGM as we already know of these potential changes. After further discussion, it was proposed that the following sentence be added to rule 12.1 – 'Those attending the AGM or EGM may decide that the SCCA Committee shall be authorised to formulate the exact wording of any change to the Rules approved at the said meeting'.

*Action Point – KG to add to AGM agenda,*

#### **b) Timing rules for 2019 – 2020 season, in particular division 2.**

With rule 2.5, LB said this rule would become redundant if the trial ceased. BJ said that if the trial was approved, the rule would become permanent and then incremental timing could be trialled in division 3. AS said that some clubs in division 3 may not possess the necessary clocks to allow for this timing to be used. It was thought that incremental timing would become the default but there was still the option of using an alternative. It was recommended that incremental timing be used as a trial in division 3.

#### **c) The 'one man, one substitution' rule change.**

It was believed this might have been raised by DG but in his absence, it was not clear what this proposal related to, agreed that KG would contact DG to clarify.

*Action Point – KG to check with DG about this item.*

#### **d) Others**

BJ said that an estimated grade for players without a full grade allows them to play in the U-125 and U-145 competitions at present; if the player then gets a real grade during the season, should this be used or should the September's estimate continue to be used? DW said that dramatic improvement can happen; BJ confirmed he thought the real grade should take precedence over any estimate and said he expected his club will be proposing a rule change. After discussion, LB said that the committee would broadly support a change to confirm that when an actual grade is published, this would supersede any estimate grade. A proposal would be sent for inclusion to the AGM agenda in the usual way, this would probably involve a – e grades.

### **9. Officer's reports:**

LB said his first year as President was coming to an end, he had spent time learning what the post involved. He said he had two outstanding concerns. The first was with Junior

Chess where he had attended meetings and a recent junior event and he wanted to get a Safeguarding Children's Policy approved. The second concern was to find replacements for KG, DG, AS and DW who had all indicated they would be stepping down from their posts. He said he had enjoyed his first year.

AS provided some details of county finances; he had estimated county match day expenses at around £300. A decision would need to be made about whether to continue reimbursing county captains in order to allow for accurate budget forecasting. He also mentioned the ongoing work at maintaining an up to date inventory of trophies and concluded by confirming he would be happy to step down at the end of next season after many years as county treasurer.

KG did a brief report; it had been a quiet year as county secretary but he had prepared and issued agendas and minutes following the last AGM, the interim committee meeting in March 2019 and the current committee meeting.

DW reported that a new membership scheme had been introduced by the ECF this year. Changes were required so the Results Database could handle information from the new interface. DW had introduced a new facility so that one person in each club has the power to decide who could enter results for each team. DW informed the committee that he had decided to close the Results Grading database at the end of the 2020 – 2021 season. The role of the County Results Officer will have to be reviewed to manage the transition to whichever Results Entry system is adopted.

#### COUNTY RESULTS OFFICER – 2018-19 REPORT

A new membership system was introduced by the ECF this year. Changes were required so the Results Database could handle information from the new interface. This interface has changed once since then. In the old system the information was kept up to date. Now it is updated sporadically – usually weekly – so I have to keep checking for updates.

The AGM changed the restrictions on which the teams a player is allowed to play for. Changes had to be made so breaches of the new rules were reported. Every year there is a problem with captains not being able to enter results for their team. I have introduced a new facility so that someone in each club has the power to decide who can enter results for each team. I think this has helped reduce the number of problems referred to me. The version of the PHP software which I was running was reaching the end of its life. I therefore upgraded it from version 5 to 7 in November. There were a few changes which I had to make to keep the software working. I also made some changes to simplify the code and use new language facilities. I amended about 130 code files and was surprised that only one fault attributable to these changes was reported by a user.

Near the end of the calendar year I submitted all the results of the SCCA Competitions and club events. I have been doing this job and updating the Results system since the 2003-4 season. I have been thinking about the future of the system for several years and have put off taking a decision about the date when the system would be retired. I have now decided to close the Results Grading database at the end of the 2020-21 season. I shall not provide the software to anyone else. I have suggested to all the organizations which use the database that they should consider a transfer to the ECF League Management System. This should have a number of advantages. It should have a longer lifespan than the current system. Potential changes to Elo style grades and monthly grading will automatically be incorporated into the ECF LMS. The role of the County Results Officer will have to be reviewed by the person/team managing the transition to whichever Results Entry system is adopted.

I shall do my best to amend our database to cater for any changes introduced by the ECF. We shall know more after the ECF AGM, which is normally held in October. The changes

are expected to be introduced in January 2020. I think the Elo-style grade changes will be introduced on schedule. Our competition rules will have to be revised.

TK said he had not been a committee member before so was learning about the post and hoped that next season he would be able to continue to develop junior chess in the county. He said that organising with LB had helped. TK's main motivation would be school chess and he was excited about an upcoming event being held in Felixstowe. There was also the Bury St Edmunds junior congress in May.

TK also brought up the Safeguarding Children's Policy. He suggested that before adopting the ECF's policy, it should be read and reviewed to ensure that it was suitable. LB said this would need to be done quite quickly and TK suggested that two or three people should read this; he suggested himself and BJ and perhaps one other. TK confirmed the county did have a Child Protection Officer, Bobby Sebastian. There was also discussion as to whether the CPO could be on the SCCA committee; the post should involve managing the SCP and reporting on this. LB suggested this issue needed to be presented to the AGM; this would possibly be a way forward. TK said he would discuss with Bobby; Bobby may already have the necessary training. BJ thought it would be good if a CPO was announced at the AGM.

RS said that 12 teams had entered the Cup and Plate, unfortunately 2 of these had not actually played any matches. He thought the competitions had gone reasonably well but there was room for improvement. The competitions were nearing the finals and they would be held in Bury St Edmunds on 9 May 2019. There was a suggestion that perhaps the date and venue for Finals Night could be decided upon at the start of the season.

BJ advised the committee that the U-160 county team had reached the next stage of the competition; they had needed to win their last two matches to achieve this which they had managed after a very close finish. Suffolk had been drawn against Manchester in the quarter finals and the match would be played on 12 May 2019.

In the absence of SR, BJ confirmed that the first team had also qualified for the next stage and were now in the Minor Counties event; they had been given a bye in the quarter finals so were now in the semi finals where they would play either Devon or Nottinghamshire.

The county had not participated in correspondence chess so there was no report from BS.

Unfortunately, DG was unwell so had been unable to produce a report but the committee thought this would be forthcoming when DG had fully recovered.

#### **10. Nominations of officers for the 2019 – 2020 season:**

KG confirmed he would be stepping down as county secretary after the 2019 AGM.

There was currently no Vice President in post.

DW and DG intended to step down at the end of the 2019 – 2020 season. AS had also indicated he would like to step down.

Replacements for these posts would need to be sought.

**11. Agenda for the AGM to be held on 21 May 2019 at Ipswich Chess Club:**

KG would send out an email to clubs and committee members shortly asking for items to be included on the agenda for the AGM; this would include proposals for rule changes and also proposed changes to the constitution.

**12. Any other business:**

AS and KG are current signatories for cheques so a replacement would need to be found when KG stepped down.

There was a reminder about the forthcoming Bury St Edmunds Junior Chess Congress.

DW mentioned the forthcoming ECF meeting where membership fees would be discussed; there were also proposed changes to the Open competition. He said the EACU sometimes sent a delegate to this meeting. Currently the voting register shows BJ but the county usually gave its votes to John Wickham. Currently Suffolk has 2 votes and this is based on the number of events held; whereas Norfolk has 5 votes due to more events organised.

LB thanked all for attending.

The meeting closed at 10:30 pm.