

WORCESTERSHIRE CHESS ASSOCIATION

EXECUTIVE MEETING, 21st MAY 2011

Agenda item 10(a): ECF Delegate's Report

The ECF is moving from annual to six-monthly standard play grading lists. A list will appear in July/August 2011 as normal, with the first "extra" list in January/February 2012. The WCA should consider whether this has any impact on its competition rules, where grading affects eligibility or board order. (A simple rule change clarifying that season-long competitions are based on the August grading list might be considered appropriate.) Graders will be encouraged to submit results twice a year, but if they wish to continue with an annual submission, this will be accepted.

At a meeting of the ECF Finance Council, it was decided not to accept the Board's recommendation of no increases to **Game Fee and Membership subscriptions for 2011/12**. Instead, the following changes were agreed:

- Game Fee to increase by 4p to **58p**;
- Membership subscriptions to increase by **£2** in each category, e.g. Standard becomes £27 and Junior £22;
- The minimum membership fee for affiliated leagues, congresses and other organisations to increase by £4 to **£58**.

All increases to take effect from 1st September 2011.

At the same meeting, the ECF's **funding options for 2012 and beyond** were debated at length. There were two basic options: (1) a change to a universal membership scheme; and (2) a continuation of the current "mixed" approach (Game Fee plus the option of individual membership in some parts of the country; membership schemes elsewhere). A 57% majority voted in favour of Option 1.

In principle, this raises the prospect of every player who wishes to participate in graded events (such as the Worcs League) needing to become an ECF member in September 2012. The current expectation is that this would cost £18 for adults, £12 for juniors. (There would be no Game Fee payable.)

However, implementing this will require changes to the ECF's Articles, which require a 75% majority, and this is by no means assured. The ECF Chief Executive will be writing shortly to all affiliated leagues, etc. to explain the Federation's plans and to seek to address the concerns raised in the debate.

As part of this communication, he will explain the ECF's plans to seek **charitable status**. In combination with a switch to universal membership (rather than game fee) would open the door to Gift Aid, potentially reducing the cost to individual members without harming the income to the ECF. Because an organisation can only become a charity if its aims are exclusively charitable, this would need to be achieved by splitting the current ECF into two organisations, say *Chess England* as the charity dealing with the amateur game and the *English Chess Federation* dealing with the international and professional aspects, including the British Championships. It is distinctly possible that the latter non-charitable organisation would be small enough to fall below the VAT threshold, which would again create the possibility of reducing the cost to individual members.

Much work is to be done on this over the next few months. The Chief Executive's aim is to have firm proposals on all of this ready for the AGM in October. The WCA will need to consider its stance nearer the time.

It is currently my intention to stand for re-election as Chief Executive in October. The candidates for Board roles are not yet known, but the Directors of Junior Chess (Peter Purland) and Marketing (Stewart Reuben) have already indicated a wish to step down from their roles.

Andrew Farthing

20/5/11