

Welsh Correspondence Chess Federation, 2019 Annual General Meeting

Saturday 9th November 2019

St Mary's Priory Tithe Barn, Abergavenny, from 12:30

Please note that these minutes have been approved for release by the WCCF Executive Committee; however, should be considered as draft until approved formally by the 2020 AGM.

Present

- Russell Sherwood (International Secretary)
- Paul Scott (Co-opted EC Member)
- Austin Lockwood (Secretary)
- John Claridge

Apologies for Absence

- Peter Bevan
- Marc Wakeham
- Bob Hurn
- Mark Adams
- Stephen Bailey
- Ian Jones

Approval of the 2018 Minutes

The 2018 minutes were approved unanimously and with no amendments as a true record of the 2018 WCCF AGM.

Matters Arising

- No updates were reported on sponsorship opportunities
- No further progress was reported in the proposal to join World Zone, however it was noted that qualification for the eleventh European Team Championship final was now almost certain, and that leaving Zone One might risk the participation of some of our stronger players in a high category event.

Election of Officials

Two nominations for Peter Bevan for WCCF President were received in advance of the meeting (AL and PS), no other nominations were received. The meeting unanimously re-elected all current officials to continue in their current positions:

- President: Peter Bevan
- International Secretary and Delegate to ICCF: Russell Sherwood
- Secretary: Austin Lockwood
- Treasurer: Russell Sherwood

It was agreed that players would be approached for the position of Friendly Match Coordinator and Webmaster (**Action RS**). (Note: After the meeting Andrew Smith was approached as Friendly Match Coordinator and accepted.)

Co-option of Executive Committee members

Paul Scott, Ian Jones, and John Claridge were co-opted to the Executive Committee.

Honorary/Life Membership

No nominations were received.

Financial Matters

The financial report was delivered by the Treasurer; WCCF remain financially sustainable.

The free entries to an ICCF Open promotional tournament for new players have not proven to be expensive and have the potential to retain new players; the meeting agreed unanimously that these should continue.

One player was in arrears for entry fees, however, was now inactive; this payment has been written off by the treasurer. Current practice is now that entries will not be processed until payment has been received.

A proposal had been received in advance of the meeting by AL to make a donation to the Scottish Correspondence Chess Association to support the 2020 ICCF Congress in Glasgow. It was noted that SCCA had made generous donations to both the Cardiff and the Llandudno Congresses run by WCCF. The donation was agreed unanimously.

Tournaments

Domestic

Welsh Championship

The 2019 WCCC is progressing well, the next cycle will start in 2021. There was some discussion about how to encourage participation, and it was noted that WCU members were not allowed to participate in international events unless they had taken part in WCU events.

Eventually no proposal to change the qualification requirements was tabled, however further discussion and consultation will take place.

Trios

It was noted that as international members occasionally participate in the trio tournaments, we would need to obtain ICCF approval for any section starting in 2020 and beyond; this will be added to the list of WCCF and British events submitted to the ICCF World Tournament Director (**Action RS**).

PS mentioned that established players may be more willing to participate in trios if they were unrated; it was agreed that trios could be unrated if all three players agreed to this.

International Tournaments run by WCCF

Welsh International Open

The meeting approved an international open tournament in two stages to be started in January or February 2020:

- First Round: Eighteen-month Triple Block, seven player sections
- Final: 13, 15 or 17 player final with no fixed end date and with title norms available

It was agreed that the Welsh International Open should be repeated as a two cycle in alternate years opposite the Welsh Championship; ICCF approval will be sought **(Action RS)**.

It was noted that some of the 2019 International Members had joined WCCF in anticipation of an open tournament starting this year; some flexibility will be offered to these players.

States and Regions (S&RCCC)

The 2019 States and Regions is proceeding well with several Welsh and International players having already earned title norms. Some concern was expressed at the short duration of the tournament, it was agreed that the States and Regions would be extended to a two-year Triple Block playing cycle and run in opposite years to the British Webserver Team Tournament; the actual tournament duration will be 700 days. The next cycle will commence in 2021.

British Webserver Team Tournament (BWSTT)

The Fifth British Webserver Team Tournament is due to end in January 2020; Divisions Two, Three and Four have already completed with only one game remaining in Division One.

Some concerns had been raised by players about the short duration of the current cycle (eighteen months), it was therefore agreed to move to a two-year cycle in opposite years to the States and Regions; the actual tournament duration will be 700 days Triple Block.

It was also noted that some team captains had difficulty recruiting and had a surplus of overseas players because of the requirement to have two British players on each team. It was agreed that this requirement would be changed to one British player on each team.

Approval will be sought from the ICCF World Tournament Director **(Action RS)** and EFCC and SCCA will be informed of the new rules **(Action AL)**. Season Six will commence in April 2020.

North Atlantic Team Tournament (8)

As the winners of NATT7, it is now WCCF's responsibility to organise NATT8; given the number of international team tournaments starting in 2020 (Olympiads and European Team Championships preliminary and final), it was decided to defer NATT8 to Q1 2021.

Invitational Series

We now have at least two players actively seeking grand master norms; the meeting agreed unanimously that it would be appropriate for the next event in the WCCF invitational series should be aimed at these players.

There were five new British grand masters from 1990-1999, six from 2000-2010, but only one so far in the current decade and none since 2011. It could be argued that the GM title has become harder to achieve in recent years, however the Russians (three in 2019) and Germans (two in 2019) have been successful and even similarly sized federations to Wales (for example, Lithuania) are regularly picking up new GMs. The meeting did not feel that it was over-ambitious to try and reverse this notable decline in the success of British correspondence chess, at least as far as Wales is concerned. RS will confirm expected dates with players **(Action RS)**.

A review of the potential of our member to earn minor titles will take place and a second invitational tournament organised in 2020 to maximise norm and title opportunities **(Action RS)**.

Currently Suspended Events

Member Organisations Team Tournament

The MOTT is currently suspended; changes in the WCCF constitution mean that correspondence clubs are now affiliated rather than having member status, and the last tournament attracted only five Welsh players, meaning that WCCF was subsidising many foreign players by offering free entries without any associated income from membership subscriptions. It was agreed that other team events (BWSTT and S&RCCC) offered similar opportunities to players, and that this tournament should be permanently discontinued rather than be relaunched as a tournament for affiliated organisations.

Tri Nations

No further discussions have been held with ENG or SCO regarding the Tri-Nations, it was agreed that approaches would be made to both federations to gauge future interest (**Action AL**). It was noted that Ireland now have a new national delegate and that it may be possible to adjust the format to allow their participation.

If the Tri-Nations does continue, it will be regarded as a developmental opportunity for new players and therefore the premium membership requirement will not apply.

Proposed New Events

A number of possible new events were introduced for discussion by RS but none were taken up by the meeting; a club team tournament was discussed later in the meeting (see under "Development").

International Matters

International Team Events and Selection

Along with Scotland, Qualification for the 11th European Team Championship now appears to be *almost* assured. The following team events will take place in 2020 with Welsh participation:

- European Team Championship 12 Semi Finals
- European Team Championship 11 Final
- Olympiad 22 Preliminaries
- Under 2,300 Memorial Team Championship Preliminaries

It was agreed unanimously that participation in international team events will be limited to premium members only unless there are recruitment or development opportunities (for example friendly matches).

Only premium members will be invited to participate in the events listed above, and players' norm requirements and availability will be considered when determining board order. Final approval of selections will be by the Executive Committee.

A point about the availability of the team selection policy was made by PS; this should be published on the website to avoid any misunderstandings (**Action AL**).

ICCF Proposal 2019-27 "Consultation in Team Play", agreed at the recent ICCF Congress in Lithuania completely changes the approach we will take for future international team events. Our team consultation process will be developed but is likely to be based on private online "team rooms" (**Action RS**).

We will continue to arrange international friendly matches with other member federations and correspondence chess organisations. The purpose of these matches was discussed briefly; whilst some federations are particularly competitive when organising these events, we prefer to see them as development and recruitment opportunities.

Interested players will be approached about the vacant friendly match organiser position.

Counties and Districts Correspondence Chess Championship

The loophole which allowed this and other tournaments involving multiple national federations to continue without being required to respect international rules has now been closed by ICCF. Despite several enquiries to the tournament organiser, no communication has been received from EFCC about the implications of this change. AL will once again ask EFCC for clarification (**Action AL**).

If the Counties and Districts continues as an international event, we will continue to support this tournament and expect future invitations to be submitted centrally to WCCF as per ICCF rules, rather than to team captains directly.

International Individual Events

British Correspondence Chess Championship

We will continue to partner EFCC and SCCA as co-organisers of the BCCC and promote this tournament to Welsh players.

It was noted that the BCCC is now eligible for ICCF medals and certificates; this will be suggested to the organising committee.

National nomination for WCCC cycle

Only premium members will receive WCCF nominations to the WCCC cycle; these will be allocated to suitably qualified players on a rotational basis.

ICCF Congress 2020, Glasgow

The 2020 ICCF Congress will take place in Clydebank, Glasgow from 23-27 August. WCCF intend to send a strong delegation (hopefully including at least RS, AL and PS). Unfortunately, JC will be unable to collect his SIM award in person because of a conflicting professional commitment.

WCCF will again undertake a systematic consultation process with all premium members in developing proposals for Congress and for selecting the Welsh vote on each of the proposals submitted.

Development

Recruitment

It was noted that although the number of active players has been steady over the past few years, the number of active WCU players signing up for CC has slowed. It was decided that a new event specifically for OTB league players would be introduced, this will be an “inter-club” team tournament with each WCU chess club being invited to submit a team of three players. Only one player could be an established CC player (the definition of “established” is still to be decided).

This tournament will be offered free, and there will be no membership requirement. The start date will be towards the end of the OTB season in July 2020 (**Action AL**).

As there are some English registered players active in North Wales, it's possible that this may be classed as an international event by ICCF. Approval will therefore be sought in advance of the tournament starting **(Action RS)**.

Tournament Director Development

Marc Wakeham and Andrew Smith continue to progress towards the IA title; it was noted that the international Natcor tournaments regularly directed by Marc will qualify for the IA title from next year, which should accelerate his progress towards the title.

AL mentioned that two Level Two TDs under his mentorship are from other member federations (BUL and AUT) and that it was difficult to find opportunities for developing TDs. It was agreed that priority would be given to Welsh Non-IA TDs and to Non-IA TDs mentored by Welsh IAs when selecting TDs for all new WCCF tournaments not requiring an IA.

The meeting closed at 16:30.