

Sandwich Chess Club

Minutes of AGM, Tuesday 7th September 2021
held at St Clement's Church Hall, Sandwich

Attending: Harry Sharples (*President*), Jon Hunt (*Treasurer*), Daniel Allen, George Allen, Kit Blundell, Mike Davies, Roy Dawson, Ethan Latimer, Robert Starley, Mark Towlson
Apologies: none

Meeting opened 7.35 p.m.

1. Minutes from the last meeting

The President informed the meeting on item 3 – the matter of membership recruitment – that he had successfully encouraged several former members to return to the Club during the pandemic-affected 2020-21 season.

2. Presentation of the club's accounts

The Treasurer presented the accounts. A £50 donation from Ocado approximately balanced a £50 operating loss over 15 weeks. Because hire costs had unavoidably increased from £15 to £20 a week following the closure of the Phoenix Centre, the projected operating loss for 2021-22 was expected to be even larger than the £150 quoted at the previous AGM. For this reason, several later items on the agenda would address how to meet this shortfall. Donated equipment had been itemised for purposes of insurance, and Mark Towlson's kind donation of 20 sets, just received, would be added to the list. There were no questions, and the accounts were approved. Examination (audit) of the accounts is deferred until next year.

3. Committee reports on 2020-21

The President reported that, despite the pandemic, the Club had met successfully from September to early November 2020 and again from mid-June 2021. The Treasurer added that internal Club competitions had been run since mid-June including a formal Club Knockout competition. Mark Towlson praised the Thanet & East Kent League's online competitions and suggested that they should continue.

Resolution: It was agreed that this view, that online league competitions continue, should be represented at the League Committee meeting the following day. *[Note: We did indeed represent this view at the League Committee meeting.]*

4. Membership fees 2021-22

The Treasurer presented his proposal. The headline item was that the annual membership fee would rise from £50 to £55. Ocado had donated £50 to the Club in 2020-21; Chaos Cards was sponsoring the Club in 2021-22 and donating equipment (boards) to a value of £30. There was a discussion, and two separate motions were voted upon, the first on the figures

in the proposal, and the second on introducing GoCardless as a new payment method alongside cash and cheque.

Resolution: Both resolutions were passed by a majority.

Note: The Treasurer undertook to assist Roy Dawson – and, indeed, anyone else who requires it – with assistance in securing ECF membership. *[Note: The Treasurer renewed Roy's membership by phone, and Roy has reimbursed the Club.]*

5. Ideas for increasing membership

Daniel Allen presented a number of ideas: (1) new members' sessions, advertised to the public, featuring fun activities such as "Beat the buzzer"; (2) a public thank-you to Ocado for supporting us; (3) short taught sessions during Club meetings, say half-an-hour in duration, held in a side room; (4) further use of church noticeboards. Kit Blundell added: (5) advertising the Club in Deal; (6) putting out an "open" sign during Club meetings. The Committee received all of these ideas enthusiastically and undertook to act upon as many of them as possible.

6. Junior club / UK Chess Challenge

The President and Treasurer spoke briefly about their relaunch of the Junior Club on Friday afternoons. The Junior Club would have to break even by the end of October in order to be able to continue, and it was hoped that it would in fact prove profitable. A regular attendance of 8 juniors represents the break-even point, and a regular attendance of 12 or more would address a significant part of the (adult) Club's anticipated operating shortfall.

Mark Towlson successfully ran one of Kent's three Megafinals in Sandwich up until his retirement. He had sought to keep the entry fee at £12, which had worked out at £6 to the UKCC and £6 to the organisers, which had proved profitable.

Resolution: It was agreed that the Club should express an interest in taking on the Megafinal.

7. Club policy on Covid-19

After a discussion, the proposed text was rejected in favour of the following, which was voted upon and passed:

"Face coverings must be brought and worn unless otherwise agreed between opponents."

At the President's direction, to fulfil the League's request to clubs, a further vote was taken as to the most suitable outcome of a dispute over the wearing of face coverings. Four options were raised, discussed and voted upon: (1) the refuser loses the game; (2) the game is a draw; (3) the game is void / not played / both teams default the board; (4) a workaround solution is found, e.g. by using two boards or playing the game online.

Resolution: Members were allowed to cast a single vote, and the results were as follows: (1) refuser loses – 5 votes; (2) the game is a draw – 1 vote; (3) game void – 1 vote; (4) workaround solution – 2 votes. The majority view, therefore, was that the refuser should lose the game.

Note: Mark Towlson expressed the view that it would be better if the Club represented all of the options considered at the league committee meeting. The Committee noted his comment. *[Note: We did indeed represent the options not already on the table at the League Committee meeting, specifically the workaround solution.]*

8. Thanet & East Kent League Competitions

The President briefly talked tactics regarding how the Club could configure a team in the Steele Cup this season. He put out a call for volunteers to relieve him of captaincy duties for one or more of the four teams he currently leads. Members are considering his call. *[Note: Jon Hunt has agreed to be the Walker Shield captain.]*

9. Internal Club competitions

This item was deferred to a future meeting, as the meeting was overrunning.

10. Election of Officers for 2021-22

No election was necessary, as there were no candidates other than the existing officers standing for re-election. Harry Sharples as President was proposed by Jon Hunt and seconded by Roy Dawson. Jon Hunt as Treasurer was proposed by Harry Sharples and seconded by Daniel Allen.

11. Presentation of trophies and awards

The President presented the prize for the 2021 Club Knockout (two attractive Magnus Carlsen mugs) to the winner, Robert Starley. He informed the meeting that Robert was also the winner of the League Individual Quickplay Trophy, which he expected to collect at the following day's League Committee meeting. *[Note: We indeed collected the Individual Quickplay Trophy at the League Committee meeting, and Harry presented it to Robert at the Club on 14th September.]*

12. Any other business

Kit Blundell suggested organising a membership recruitment event at a gaming store in Canterbury, and also the possibility of forging a link with student chess clubs, for instance the one at the University of Kent.

Meeting closed 8:55 p.m.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "H. Sharples". The letters are cursive and somewhat stylized, with a prominent 'H' and 'S'.

Signed (President):

Harry Sharples

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jonathan Hunt". The signature is written in a cursive style, with the first name being more legible than the last name.

Signed (Treasurer):

Jon Hunt