

WECU Spring Executive Meeting 23rd March 2019

Venue

Blackdown Garden Centre, W Buckland Rd, Wellington TA21 9HY

Present

Kevin Markey (KM)- President, Gerry Jepps (GJ) Somerset; John Wheeler (JW) Hampshire; Phil Meade (PM); Fixtures Secretary; Guy Greenland (GG), General Secretary.

1. Chairman's Welcome and Opening Remarks

KM welcomed those present and said he looked forward to his new role as President.

2. Apologies for Absence

Apologies had been received from Jonathan Underwood (Devon); Oliver Wensley (Deputy President); R. Jones (Archivist and Publicity Officer) ; Meyrick Shaw (Congress Organiser); Bev Schofield (Junior Secretary); Malcolm Steevens (Dorset); Roger Hardy (Bristol) and Mark Hassall (Jamboree Organiser)

3. Approval of Minutes of 2018 Spring Executive Meeting

Draft minutes had been prepared by Gerry Jepps. One item of note raised :At the bottom of 6.6. GJ had expressed thanks to Bev Schofield for her efforts in promoting Junior Chess. Bev had since replied with a note of appreciation to GJ for the comment. The Minutes were approved.

4. Matters Arising

None

5. Matters of Urgency Brought Forward by Chairman

There had been a proposal by the English Chess Federation to introduce a new four digit Grading system - see section 6.7 ECF Delegate's report

6. Officers Reports

6.1. President

KM had nothing to report that was not covered elsewhere in the meeting.

6.2. General Secretary

GG had nothing to report.

6.3. Treasurer

GG presented a written report received from the Treasurer (OW) which stated that the accounts are in good shape and effectively balanced in terms of income & expenditure for the 2018-2019 year. The Union broke even on the Jamboree.

Given this position, the Treasurer did not recommend any changes to the charges for the 2019-20 season. A summary of the accounts is attached.

6.4. Fixtures Secretary

(i) Review of 2018/2019 Inter-County Programme

PM provided the written report below with some updates from the Meeting.

DIVISION 1 (Harold Meek Trophy)

	CORN	DEVON	SOMS	Points	Posn
CORNWALL	xx	5	10	2	1/2
DEVON	11	xx	-	2	1/2
SOMERSET	6	-	xx	0	3

DIVISION 2 (Wayling Cup)

	CORN	DEVON	SOMS	Points
CORNWALL	xx	*	-	0
DEVON	*	xx	10	2
SOMERSET	-	6	xx	0

- To be played on Sunday 31 March

As the tables above indicate, county chess in the Union continues to decline. Gloucestershire, who have struggled to raise teams for the past few seasons, have lost more players and been forced to withdraw from the competition. We were almost reduced to two teams by the resignation of Somerset captain Roger Morgan only one year into his second stint at the job, a situation which caused me to offer my own resignation at the start of the season. Luckily Guy Greenland stepped in to enable Somerset to honour at least some of their fixtures, and we thank him for his efforts.

In Division 1 the match between Devon and Somerset was not played by mutual agreement, which left Devon and Cornwall joint winners with two points each, with Devon retaining the Trophy on tie-break by virtue of having won their individual match. Division 2 is currently undecided, with Devon needing at least a draw in their forthcoming match against Cornwall to win that also.

(ii) Qualifying Teams for the National Stages 2019

Minor: Devon
Under 180: Cornwall
Under 160: Devon
Under 140: Hampshire

Cornwall actually qualified for the Minor but opted, with ECF agreement, to play instead in the Under 180, which was undersubscribed.

(iii) Proposed Inter-County Programme for 2019/20

Recent practice has been to pair the top two teams in the last round, but I would like to pair Devon and Cornwall early in the season because it is the only potential Union Stage match (and only then if Cornwall revert to entering the Minor). The ECF are now keen to enforce the closing date for National Stage nominations after the chaos caused by last year's postponements.

The proposed schedule below is for Division 1 only, with counties being left free to play Division 2 matches on the same date or arrange separate dates as they choose. But I would request that every effort be made to play all six potential matches before the Spring Executive Meeting, as has not happened this year with Devon v Cornwall in Division 2. Should I draw up a schedule for all six matches, which would require finding six separate weekends? The dates below (same weekends as last year's) are actually a bit meaningless since the 4NCL dates do not appear to have been fixed.

*Sun 15 th Sep 2019?	WECU Jamboree
Sat 23 rd Nov 2019	Devon v Cornwall
Sat 18 th Jan 2020	Cornwall v Somerset
Sat 29 th Feb 2020	Somerset v Devon

*date to be set by Jamboree organiser

Entries for next season based on current information:

	DIV 1	DIV 2	ECF	National	Stages				
		(bds)	Open	Minor Ave Gr 180	U180	U160	U140	U120	U100
Cornwall	Yes	Yes 16		No	Yes				
Devon	Yes	Yes 16		Yes		Yes			
Dorset	No	No							
Gloucester	No	No		No					
Hampshire	No	No					Yes		
Somerset	No	Yes 16							
Wiltshire	No	No							

6.5. Congress Secretary

GG reported on behalf of Meyrick Shaw.

The British Championship place from last year was not taken up in Hull.

Dominic Mackle & Lewis Martin came joint 2nd in the event & shared the WECU trophy. It is believed they will both be able to enter the British this year, based on their 2018 performances. This has been explained to Adrian Elwin -ECF director of home chess.

A further entry will be determined by the congress this Easter.

6.6. Junior Activities

Bev Schofield was unable to attend the meeting but she had sent a message to the General Secretary (GG) regarding the following :

The Congress on 23rd and 24th February 2019 unfortunately had to be cancelled due to a lack of suitable venue but. the good news is we are in talks with a brand new venue (literally - it's being built as we speak) who seem very keen on building ties with the community and providing a hub for activities. We are due to talk again in a couple of months time - they are also building their management team at the moment, but we are hopeful this will work out as our Treasurer is on the governing body and working for us from the inside.

6.7 ECF Delegate

No report as Roger Hardy has resigned. It was proposed by KM he be asked to cast a proxy vote in the interim. His resignation is accepted

GJ did however provide feedback about ECF affairs and highlighted that the ECF was intending to hike up membership fees and introduce monthly grading.

This was in line with the ECF 'development plan' and to re-numerate ECF staff.

ECF Council papers that are available provide a detailed report but it was felt that awareness of the re-structuring of fees generally was somewhat lacking. There had been some outrage from other Counties. The increase was not yet 'set in stone'.

The agenda for the ECF Finance Meeting could be referred to where discussion and ratification of the new fees proposed would take place (WECU would have one delegate vote).

The Union needs a new Delegate, but also County representatives can still vote.

There had been a proposal to use the FIDE calculation for a four digit grade system and a grading consultation with membership.

The new grading system would allow a monthly grade to be calculated from results being collated online. This would be advantageous for Leagues and Club Championships and known grades would be up to date.

6.8. Jamboree Organiser

MH provided the following report:

Report of WECU Jamboree for 2018

The event took place on Saturday 19th September 2018 at West Hill Village Hall.

The results were as follows

Somerset 7.5

Devon 6.5

Cornwall 4

Graded section (Somerset only had 6 boards)

East Devon 8

Torbay 8

Cornwall 4.5

Somerset 0.5

I would like to make the following comments:

1.The tournament took place on a Saturday as opposed to a Sunday. This was due to the difficulty in obtaining a suitable venue capable of taking a good number of teams. I had a similar number of people preferring a Sunday as those preferring a Saturday.

2.I would suggest that each team nominates two players to stay and clear up afterwards. It took a long time to clear up with the numbers available.

3.The tournament as it stands is about at the minimum of teams in its current format.

I have organised the tournament for two years and have only stopped as I have moved abroad. Otherwise I would have been quite happy to continue.

KM accepted that MH has now resigned as Jamboree Organiser. and that a new Organiser is required for the 2019 event and suggested contact be made with Richard Smith or Matthew Turner.

6.9. Archivist and Publicity Officer

RJ provided the following report:

I can report that the Union's Championship and General Congress is proceeding and returning to the Royal Beacon Hotel, Exmouth. The event Secretary, Meyrick Shaw, reports that entries are now beginning to come in, after a slow start. GM Keith Arkell is unable to enter, which has encouraged GM Matthew Turner, a former champion, to try his luck.

It appears that the slow start to entries may have been partly due to the internet and Google. When the **West of England Junior Chess Championships** were unfortunately cancelled at short notice in February, it was, of course, important to flag this up on the internet. Subsequently, when anyone wishing to find out about the adult event, and typing in the words "West of England Chess Championships", Google picked up the closest wording it could find, and up came at the top of their listing "**West of England Chess Championships Cancelled**" probably with the word "Junior" in faint lettering and struck through to indicate that it couldn't find the word junior in the enquiry. Which is fair enough, but the damage is done. People often only read the headlines.

It was Jerry Humphries who discovered this while at the recent E. Devon Congress, and I alerted Bev to this and she acted promptly to allay any potential further damage.

Hopefully, the West of England Junior Chess Championships won't be so unlucky in the future.

It's now 2 years since I submitted an extended report on the E. Devon Congress to the Editor of *Chess* magazine, Richard Palliser. The main point of interest that year was that Juhn Nunn had entered at the last minute and I managed to eke that out to 2 whole pages. Palliser liked it and invited me to submit other articles on various aspects of West Country chess, both topical and historical. Items have included a postal game between R. D. Blackmore & Bristol's Nelson Fedden, annotated by Steinitz, Next week, in the April Issue there will be 2 pages on the this year's E. Devon Congress, featuring 2 juniors, Will Claridge-Hansen (now Exeter Uni.) and Sheyras Royal, formerly "The World's Best 9-year Old", now just turned 10, who has kindly annotated his Rd. 5 game against John Wheeler - a cracking display by both players.

KM stated that a new website host needed to be found for the WECU webpages and he said he would approach Dave Tipper of the Bristol & District Chess League.

6.10. British Chess Trust Educational Award 2019

Any recommendations needed to be forwarded to the ECF by 31st March. There were no candidates put forward at the Meeting. It was agreed to include the matter again on the Agenda for the Council meeting to remind delegates to search for potential candidates in their areas for 2020.

7. Proposed Dates for 2020

(N.B. The 2019 Council Meeting is scheduled for 1st June 2019)

7.1. Spring Executive 21st March 2020 7.2. Council Meeting 6th June 2020

8. Any Other Business

None.

G. Greenland (last updated 21/07/2021)