

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Sheffield & District Chess Association, held on Tuesday 6th September 2022 at The Trades and Labour Club, 200 Duke Street, Sheffield S2 5QQ starting at 7.30pm

1. Apologies for absence

Alan Taylor, Daniel Sullivan, Dave Hill (Ravenfield)

2. Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on Monday 9th September 2019

These had been circulated by email and were agreed as a true record.

3. Matters arising

None

4. Treasurer's Report

John Mercy presented his accounts unaudited. There had been only a handful of entries due to the pandemic.

John believes the Association will make a loss on Yorkshire League matches this next year and will recommend putting up board fees again.

5. Secretaries' Reports

General Secretary Geoff Brown, and Summer League Controller Alan McIntosh had already circulated their reports by email. (They are appended at the end of these minutes)

6. Election of Officers, Auditors, Archivist & Match Captains

President	Geoff Frost
General Secretary	Geoff Brown
Treasurer	John Mercy
Auditors	Dave Latham and Nigel Carpino
Webmaster	Steve Mann
Tournament Controller	Geoff Brown
Division 1 secretary	Phill Beckett
Division 2 secretary	Phill Beckett
Division 3 secretary	Alan McIntosh
Division 4 Secretary	Alan McIntosh
Richardson Controller	Phill Beckett
400 League Secretary	pending
Summer League Secretary	Alan McIntosh
Vice-Presidents	All re-elected

7. Election of members to serve on the Executive

Oliver Brennan, Jonathan Arnott, Daniel Sullivan and Jamie Woodhouse were elected

8. Fixing of fees and subscriptions.

It was agreed to raise league fees. It will now be £10.00 per club, £8.00 per team in the first division, £6.00 for teams in 6-board divisions, and £4.00 for the bottom division. It will still be £2.00 for a second cup team. The individual board fee for Yorkshire League matches were increased from £5.00 to £6.00 for those in work and from £2.50 to £3.00 for the unwaged.

9. Proposed amendments to the Constitution & Rules

a) Proposal (by Geoff Brown): That matches in all divisions, apart from the bottom one, should be played over 6 boards.

Delete [section \(d\) of Rule 14 – ORGANISATION OF THE LEAGUE](#) and renumber sections (e), (f) and (g) accordingly.

This motion did not receive the required two-thirds majority of voting members (9 votes for, 5 against, and 3 abstentions) and was therefore defeated.

b) Proposal (by Mike Smith): That [Rule 19 – CONDUCT OF MATCHES](#) should be tightened up to ensure that matches are played on a weekday evening. So, [Rule 19 \(b\)](#) to have the words “[shall be played on Monday to Friday evenings, and](#)” inserted so that it reads “[Matches shall be played on Monday to Friday evenings , and shall start at 7.30 p.m., or else any other time with mutual agreement.](#)”

This proposal was passed *nem con*.

c) Proposal by Mike Smith: to delete [Rule 19 \(f\)](#) which reads “[No smoking is allowed in the match room unless agreed by both, or all, captains present.](#)”

It would currently be unlawful for the captains to so agree, something the S&DCA could not condone.

Proposal passed *nem con*.

d) Proposal from Geoff Brown to amend [Rule 20 – CLOCK AND TIME-LIMITS](#) is to allow games to be played with time increments when suitable clocks are available for all boards in a match. [Rule 20 \(b\)](#) to be amended to read “[In all team matches, when sufficient digital clocks with an increment facility are available for all boards, then games will be played at the rate of all moves in 60 minutes with a 10-second increment per move being added from the start. If insufficient digital clocks are available, then each player shall have 75 minutes in which to complete the game.](#)”

This proposal was defeated (7 votes for, 9 against, and 1 abstention)

10. Approval of Clubs seeking membership to the league

There were no new clubs seeking membership. It was noted that Aughton Chess Club was no more and that Clay Cross had decided not to enter a team into the Sheffield League this coming season.

11. Organisation of teams into Divisions

With thirty-one teams there were enough to form four divisions. Unfortunately, due to Division 1 still being played over 8 boards, Hillsborough A didn't feel they could compete there and asked to play in Division 2. This left a casual vacancy which proved difficult to fill. Once again, the President had to use his discretion and allow a 7-team Division 1.

So, Division 1 is Ecclesall A, Nomads A, Chesterfield A, D&H A, SASCA A, Worksop A and Woodseats A.

Division 2 is Barnsley A, University, Hillsborough A, Chesterfield B, Ecclesall B, Rotherham, Nomads B and Woodseats B.

Division 3 also ended up as a 7-team division: D&H B, Hillsborough B, SASCA B, Woodseats C, Ecclesall C, Worksop B and University B.

Division 4, which is to be a four-player division as it is the bottom one, has Barnsley B, Nomads C, Worksop C, D&H C, Woodseats D, Sheffield Deaf, Ravenfield, Chesterfield C and SASCA C

12. Any Other Business

- a) 400 (is it now 5800?) League: Only one club showed any interest in entering the 400 League and so that will not happen this season.
- b) Online League: Now that over-the-board chess is back, there appears to be no appetite to run another online season.
- c) Bill Ward, on behalf of Woodseats, informed the meeting that they intended to put forward a rule change next year to award 3 points for a league win.
- d) Geoff Frost brought up a recent incident in which players had requested using their mobile phones / tablets to record their moves, as they had issues with writing. Norman Wragg pointed out that visually impaired players use various methods for recording their moves. A discussion concluded that we, as an Association, should be prepared to allow this (i.e. the use of electronic devices purely for recording moves) when a player is physically unable to with pen and paper, and where there is no other solution.

The meeting was closed at 9.50 p.m.

General Secretary's Report 2022

Well, it's been a strange three years since our last Annual General Meeting.

On Friday, 13th March 2020, we took the decision to put the league 'on hold', and within a few days the rest of the country followed suit and the first lockdown started. It quickly became apparent that we wouldn't be getting back to normal for quite some time. Eventually, following consultation with clubs, the Executive decided to terminate the 2019/20 season and award league trophies, and any promotion or relegation issues, based on the average number of points scored by teams in the matches that had been played before lockdown. Those trophies will be awarded at the Fixture Meeting on 20th September.

Lockdown created a chess void that was then filled by a splurge of online activities. Oli Brennan set up Rotherham Chess Club's series of individual online tournaments. They continue to this day, and it is no longer just local players that enter. He gets entries from throughout Yorkshire, other parts of the UK, and, also from India!! Oli's efforts earned him the ECF's Award for Online Contribution to Chess.

Although online chess is not everyone's cup of tea, the Association has successfully run three online team league seasons in the last couple of years. Thanks should go to Phill Beckett for overseeing the running of these leagues. The facility to link a player's Lichess profile to the ECF LMS pages meant that games could be viewed online in real time, almost like being in the match room itself. Online League Season 1 was won by Hillsborough. For Season 2, we had three divisions which were won by Nomads A, SASCA A and Nomads C. In Season 3, Nomads again won the first division, with the other two divisions going to Nomads B and Clay Cross.

Inevitably, over the last three years, we have lost a few local players. I'm aware that Pete Ballard and Andy Baxter, both of Rotherham CC, have passed away, as has Mike Johnson of Chesterfield. There may well be others that I'm not aware of. Sadly, Aughton Chess Club has closed down as well.

Slowly though, we've seen some green shoots of recovery. Clubs started to open their doors again last year, although I'm aware that some individual members are still uncomfortable about returning. In the summer of 2021, when we were allowed to meet in small groups out of doors, there was a series of over-the-board events in pub gardens in and around Kelham Island. Jon Arnott organised the Hope Valley tournament outdoors in 2021, along with a few SASCA club nights. Jon has also run a series of one day events, both open and junior-only ones. The YCA managed to run an otb 2021/22 season in which, sadly, Sheffield could only muster one team. I believe we'll have two teams in the 22/23 YCA league. Our own Association ran an 'interim summer league' of four divisions this spring, in which eighteen teams competed (see Alan McIntosh's separate report).

One positive spin off from the pandemic is the extra time that people have found for hobbies. It seems that the 'working from home' generation has taken to chess, propelled perhaps by Netflix's Queen's Gambit series, and many clubs are reporting a healthy increase in new members, albeit at the weaker end. But clubs need to embrace these new people and make sure they stay with us.

So, Covid may still be lingering, but the time has come to look at restarting our main league and cup competitions again. At the time of writing this, it looks like we'll have thirty teams spread over four divisions for the coming season. Let's hope it's a success. **Geoff Brown, 5th September 2022**

2022 Summer League Round-Up

A report by A McIntosh

With the 2022 summer league now completed, congratulations go to:

Division 1 winners SASCA A 16 pts, runners-up Chesterfield A 13 pts.

Division 2 winners Worksop 17 pts, runners-up University A 15 pts.

Division 3 winners Ecclesall B 16 pts, runners-up Chesterfield B 14 pts.

Division 4 University B 17 pts, runners-up Ecclesall C 13 pts.

In division 1 SASCA A's strong flexible squad had the title sewn up with a match or two to spare, finishing three points clear of Chesterfield A. In division 2 University A were the early front runners, but they were pipped by Worksop. Barnsley for a number of reasons were weaker than expected and failed to gain a match point, but I hope they at least enjoyed the competition. With hindsight I feel I should have placed them in the third division, but I'm not sure that their replacement would have performed any better. The division 3 title race was a close affair. Ecclesall slipped up on a couple of occasions but critically beat their nearest rivals, Chesterfield B, in both meetings. University B were comfortable winners of division 4, finishing four points clear of Ecclesall C. The University had a large better than expected squad that might have been more suited to the third division, but it could have been problematic for whichever club took their place.

In conclusion, I think the summer league has been a great success. There were 120 matches played over 579 boards. I never expected we would have four divisions of six teams and I never expected we would have so many new players taking up over the board chess. What is also encouraging is that although these new players are not exactly in their teens, they have certainly lowered the average age of those playing in the S&DCA league.

Finally, I would like to thank all those that took part but especially the captains that entered their results – reducing my workload – and especially Geoff Brown and Steve Mann for their work on new players, registrations and general support.