

**Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Sheffield & District Chess Association
The Trades and Labour Club, 200 Duke Street, Sheffield S2 5QQ
Tuesday 8th September 2026 at 7.30pm**

Dave Latham chaired the meeting in the absence of Andrew Hards

1. Apologies for absence

Andrew Hards, Mike Smith, Daniel Sullivan, Alan McIntosh, Clay Cross, University & Sheffield Deaf

2. Minutes of the 2025 Annual General Meeting held on Tuesday, 2nd September 2025

These had already been circulated by email and were agreed to be a true record of the meeting

3. Matters arising

No matters arising

4. President's Remarks

Dave Latham asked for a minute's silence to pay respect to Peter Swanson who passed away recently.

5. Treasurer's Report

Peter Micklethwaite produced a set of accounts showing a closing balance of £3,745. Pete has now set up a new Association bank account with HSBC which allows him to transact business online or over the telephone. The two old accounts have now been closed and the monies transferred to the new account. Mainly due to the delay in setting up the new bank account, only one Auditor has been able to verify the accounts.

6. Secretaries' Reports

Daniel Sullivan had provided the General Secretary with a report for the Summer League and it had been circulated by email prior to the meeting.

Geoff Brown had nothing special to report as General Secretary; Oli Brennan reported that Divs 1 & 2 and the cup competitions, had run smoothly and he thanked all of the captains; and Phill Beckett had had a similarly event-less season with Divs 3, 4 & 5 – although he did have to award a default in the Div 4 play-off match.

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

President	Andrew Hards
General Secretary	Geoff Brown
Treasurer	Pete Micklethwaite
Auditors	Nigel Carpino and Dave Latham
Webmaster	Steve Mann
Tournament Controller	Geoff Brown
Division 1 secretary	Oliver Brennan
Division 2 secretary	Oliver Brennan
Division 3 secretary	Phil Beckett
Division 4 Secretary	Phil Beckett
Division 5 Secretary	Phil Beckett
Richardson Cup Secretary	Oliver Brennan
Summer League Secretary	Daniel Sullivan
Vice-Presidents	all re-elected (apart from Peter Swanson, obviously)
Missed off the original agenda in error, the post for Richardson and Haystead controller is to be Oliver Brennan	

8. Election of members to serve on the Executive

Jonathan Arnott, Alan McIntosh, Jamie Woodhouse and Dave Latham

9. Fixing of fees and subscriptions

Pete Micklethwaite recommended that the fees remain the same. This was seconded and then duly agreed by the meeting.

10. Proposed amendments to the Constitution & Rules (see below)

There were only two proposed amendments, both presented by Geoff Brown.

The first of these, to Rule 20 (b) re a move to incremental time controls, was defeated (7 for, 5 against, 3 abstentions).

The second proposal re a permanent change of format to the individual tournaments (Rules 26 – 29) following last season's trial, was passed nem con.

11. Approval of Clubs seeking membership to the league

No new applications received.

12. Organisation of teams into Divisions

There were 41 team entries to the league giving us four divisions of 8 teams and one of 9. There was a casual vacancy in Division 3 and both Worksop and Chesterfield applied to fill it. After discussion and a vote, it was decided that Worksop B would take that vacancy.

There was then some discussion about whether Div 4 or Div 5 should have the 9 teams. In the end the meeting agreed that it should be Div 5.

Division 1 – Barnsley A, Chesterfield A, Ecclesall A, Hillsborough A, Nomads A, SASCA A, Woodseats A and Worksop A

Division 2 – Barnsley B, Darnall & Handsworth A, Ecclesall B, Hillsborough B, Nomads B, SASCA B, University A and Woodseats B

Division 3 – Barnsley C, Darnall & Handsworth B, Darnall & Handsworth C, Hillsborough C, Nomads C, Rotherham, Woodseats C and Worksop B

Division 4 – Chesterfield B, Chesterfield C, Clay Cross A, Ecclesall C, Ravenfield, SASCA C, University B and Woodseats D

Division 5 – Barnsley D, Barnsley E, Chesterfield D, Clay Cross B, Darnall & Handsworth D, SASCA D, Sheffield Deaf, Woodseats E and Worksop C

12. Any Other Business

- (a) The question about where to store the Association's chess equipment was raised. Jonathan Arnott on behalf of the Chess Centre, and Dave Latham, personally, came forward. They need to liaise with Daniel Sullivan who currently has the equipment in his garage.
- (b) It had been realised recently that the Association's tie break rules for 4-player divisions may not work fairly when some matches have been increased up to 5 or 6 boards. Nothing can be done about that just now but the matter will be taken to the next Executive meeting.
- (c) Geoff Brown is now taking entries to the Sheffield Individuals. He will send out a flyer.
- (d) Sheffield's Yorkshire League captains are still Mike Handley and Geoff Brown

- (e) Pete Micklethwaite raised Jim Burnett's suggestion that some payment should be offered to the Chess Centre when they host various Association events (e.g. Crabb Shield, etc). The meeting was generally happy for this to happen, as long as similar remuneration was offered to other clubs for events that they host (e.g. tonight's AGM at Nomads').

The meeting closed at 8.30 pm

Summer League 2025-26 Report

Twenty teams entered the Summer League, spread across four divisions. Just over a third of the matches in Divisions Two, Three and Four featured more than four boards.

The divisions all proved to be very hard fought. Division One was decided in the final match of the season, with Chesterfield A coming out on top of a three way tie with Worksop A and Ecclesall A. Darnall and Handsworth A won Division Two. There was also a tiebreak in Division Three, with Darnall and Handsworth B coming out on top over Chesterfield B. Finally, Barnsley B won Division Four.

I would like to apologise to all the football fans in the league – I'm not a football fan, and had no idea that a significant number of matches clashed with World Cup matches.

Finally, special thanks to the captains of clubs who entered three teams. Their flexibility in terms of having more than one team playing on a particular night ensured that sorting out the fixtures was much easier.

Daniel Sullivan

Summer League Secretary 2025-26

Motions accepted under 9 “Proposed amendments”.

1.

Proposed change to Rule 20 (b)

Geoff Brown

This old chestnut again. However, it has been a couple of years since the last proposal to move to increments and everyone in the league is now used to using digital clocks. I’m not aware that any of our clubs are still using analogues.

The 2025/26 Sheffield Individual tournaments were all played with increments and not one game went beyond 2 hours 30 minutes. (There is, of course, the rider that in a Swiss System there is often a rating discrepancy in most pairings in the early rounds. League games between evenly matched opponents may have a propensity for going beyond the 60 moves allowed for in the proposal – 60 moves at 15 seconds per move takes 15 minutes per player, i.e. 2 hours 30 minutes for the game. Every additional 10 moves over 60 would add 2 ½ minutes per player, i.e. 5 minutes to the total time for the game).

Furthermore, in their Tournament Rules, V03 November 2024 the ECF “strongly recommends organisers to use incremental time controls wherever possible”.

The document goes on to say, “When a non-incremental time limit is used the regulation of the event shall specify whether the game is played according to (FIDE’s) Guidelines III (Quickplay Finishes), as described in Guidelines III.2.1” and then there is a lot of blurb, relating to tournaments rather than leagues.

We last covered this at the Fixture Meeting back in 2023 when a reminder was given that the procedure for anyone hoping not to lose on time. The guidance then is given in FIDE’s Appendix E, section III.6 to the Laws of Chess taking effect from 1 January 2023, namely:

“III.6 The following shall apply when the competition is not supervised by an arbiter:

III.6.1 A player may claim a draw when he/she has less than two minutes left on his/her clock and before his/her flag falls. This concludes the game. He/She may claim on the basis:

III.6.1.1 that his/her opponent cannot win by normal means, and/or

III.6.1.2 that his/her opponent has been making no effort to win by normal means. In III.6.1.1 the player must write down the final position and his/her opponent must verify it. In III.6.1.2 the player must write down the final position and submit an up-to-date scoresheet. The opponent shall verify both the scoresheet and the final position.

III.6.2 The claim shall be referred to the designated arbiter.”

I have seen a couple of examples of this process (and personally been involved in at least one) over the last couple of years and it is clear that a lot of people don't understand it. A recent situation at Darnall & Handsworth saw a group of players and captains discussing one particular claim for half an hour or so after everyone else had left the building.

In my opinion, then, playing matches with increments would avoid all of that hassle, and so I propose

20(b) In all team matches, each player shall have 60 minutes, plus a 15 second increment per move, in which to complete the game.

2.

Proposed change to the rules for the Individual Competitions

Geoff Brown

Entries to the Sheffield Individual Championships had been gradually decreasing over the years so last year I proposed a change of format. Instead of players making their own arrangements for their matches (be that at a chess club, down the pub, or in their own homes) it was agreed that we would try, temporarily for one season, playing all the matches in each round at a single venue, on a set night per month.

That arrangement seems to have been successful: there were 35 entries last season, pretty much tripling the entry for the recent seasons before then. And, as far as I could tell, everyone appreciated the new set up.

I would therefore like to propose that we now make last year's temporary changes for Rules 26 to 29 inclusive become permanent changes. Last year's wordings have been altered slightly to remove specific mentions of the 2025-26 season.

(If these changes become permanent then note that the plan for 2026-27 is to use the same venue as last season, the Sheffield Chess Centre, but switch to the last Thursday of each month, instead of Wednesday)

RULES FOR INDIVIDUAL COMPETITIONS

26.

SHEFFIELD CHAMPIONSHIP

(a) A Sheffield Individual Championship tournament shall be held annually. If there are sufficient entrants, then the format will be a six-round Swiss system tournament. If the number of entrants is low then the Tournament Controller can alter the tournament format.

(b) The winner shall hold, until the end of the following season, the title of "Sheffield Chess Champion" and the Bruce Trophy.

(c) **Entry shall be open to any member of the Association but note that ECF membership, at Bronze level or above, should be held and still in place on 30th June.**

(d) (i) The Tournament Controller shall 'seed' the six highest rated players before play begins. If fewer than 18 players compete, then one third of the entrants shall be seeded. The highest placed player not included in this list of seeds shall hold the Holroyd Trophy until the end of the following season.

(ii) The Tournament Controller shall 'seed' the six next highest rated players before play begins. If

fewer than 18 players compete, then one third of the entrants shall be seeded. The highest placed player not included in either list of seeds shall hold the Shapero Trophy until the end of the following season.

27.

CONDUCT OF TOURNAMENTS

(a) Entries shall be sent to the controller. The treasurer will make arrangements to collect the ECF game fee (£21.00 from 1st September 2025) from entrants without at least Bronze ECF membership.

(b) The closing date for entries shall be October 15th.

(c) Matches will be played at a single venue, starting at 7.30pm, on a set day (e.g. final Thursday) in October, November, January, February, March and April.

(d) The draw for successive rounds shall be made by the Tournament Controller as soon as possible after 15th of each relevant month. Players may request a half-point bye in any round as long as they notify the controller by 15th day of the month of that round.

(e) Should a tie-break be required to determine an outright winner in any of the sections then tie-break systems will be applied in the following order: (i) Direct Encounter (where the tie-break is required to separate only two players on the same score) (ii) Buchholz Cut 1 (iii) Buchholz (iv) Sonneborn-Berger

28.

CONDUCT OF TOURNAMENT GAMES

(a) The time limit for the individual tournament shall be 60 minutes per player plus 15 seconds per move.

29.

DEFAULTING OPPONENTS

(a) The Controller shall have the authority to disqualify players who default more than one game.

(b) The Controller's decision shall be final in the event of any dispute.