

## REPORT ON MCCU AGM 2011

It was marvellous to see all but one of the MCCU counties represented at the AGM. As more delegates arrived we had to expand the layout, not once but twice to accommodate everyone. We returned to the Bowling Green at Lichfield, with several delegates sampling the food before the meeting.

Unfortunately our President Peter Gibbs had been struck down by a bug the day before and was unable to attend, but he sent his best wishes. I felt it was a lively constructive meeting with all delegates contributing to the discussions at some point.

The elections for officers saw all re-elected unopposed, except for David Levens, who as a Board appointment to Junior Director during the year had not actually been elected by the AGM last year, but whose appointment was effectively endorsed by his election by this years AGM. A list of officers may be found on the website, so I don't propose to repeat it here.

Perhaps surprisingly for the times, the meeting encouraged the union to spend some of its' healthy reserves on increasing chess activity. In particular they endorsed the use of funds to expand a fledgling accredited coaching system through the MCCU, aimed especially at juniors. This is the brainchild of David Levens, appointed to the Board as Junior Director during the last year. A proper syllabus is already in place and David would be only too happy to receive enquiries from anyone interested in getting involved. There were some concerns that this may not be looked upon kindly by the ECF, but its' CEO Andrew Farthing assured us he felt it was a positive proposal, and undertook to facilitate communication with ECF coaching personnel. David re-iterated his offer to assist in getting junior coaching moving in MCCU counties & stressed the importance of bring young players into chess. A failure to do so will only result in the average age of players continuing to rise and the number of players continuing to fall. The Events Director will make renewed attempts with the Junior Director to run individual junior championships, in addition to run a team rapidplay event. The meeting also requested the Board to come back next year with proposals for an MCCU Congress, if a suitable venue and volunteers to run the event could be found. This last year the new U150 Rapidplay Grand Prix had found support from several events. The Open Grand Prix covered most of the congresses with Open sections, but it is noticeable that few players entered more than 3 events. Ali Jaunoobie from Manchester was the highest placed player not already qualified for the British & has accepted the MCCU nomination for Sheffield.

The finances led to more general discussion. The upshot was that, although the levy, the monies paid by counties to the MCCU remained unchanged, counties will receive a rebate in recognition of the fact that the union did not spend greatly last season and increased its reserves as a result.

A review of the levy had been requested at the last AGM. The report presented to the meeting explained that the issue had thrown up more questions than answers in terms of determining the level of activity in each county – the report may be found elsewhere on the website. In view of this and the uncertainty about future funding of the ECF the meeting decided not to take the review any further at this time.

Both the CEO (also wearing her county team controllers hat) and the Grading Director highlighted the increase in conceded county matches and defaulted boards. Team captains are also being lost, with counties finding it increasingly difficult to find and retain new captains. None of this bodes well for the future of the events. There is however no magic formula for solving the decline in either willing team captains or players willing to give up much of number of Saturdays to play for their county. It is possible that proposals for changes to the national rules will be made, if this happens delegates will be asked to canvas their counties for views to inform any future MCCU

voting at ECF council.

Various proposals relating to the MCCU County team rules had been tabled. The meeting decided that captains should have the freedom to agree time controls, decide to use digital clocks and incremental time controls. Whilst this has not previously been enshrined in the rules, captains have previously varied time controls from those set out, with the controllers over the last 20 years being quite relaxed about it. Other changes agreed were only minor “tidying up”. Proposals for a formal “advice to captains” document were shelved, to be discussed further next year. Unfortunately a number of delegates had not seen the document before the meeting, despite it being circulated.

The recently issued ECF funding proposals circulated by ECF CEO Andrew Farthing were discussed, Obviously having Andrew present enabled questions to be raised and feed back provided. However, this is only a first stage document that will be refined leading up to the AGM. Delegates were requested to provide further feedback from their counties as the situation develops. The CEO also asked delegates to consult their counties for about what role the MCCU should play, if any, should the universal membership proposal go through. It is unclear yet how players would sign up and pay their membership, given that the ECF office has been scaled back. AF is clear that an online option should be available, but feels that organisations may well have a role to play. Some concerns and questions were raised about where unions, counties, leagues and congresses would fit into a membership system. A one member one vote scenario would present real issues in terms of organising ECF council meetings. The future format of representation is still very much under consideration.

This report is merely aimed at highlighting the main things to come out of the AGM. Officers reports and discussion papers may be found elsewhere on the website. The draft minutes will be posted once time has been allowed for feedback from delegates. I would encourage anyone wishing to see more detail to look at this additional information.

Our webmaster is always looking for items to include on the site, which the meeting agreed compares very well with other union/county websites. He is also looking for items for a newsletter, so please have a look at his report and provide some material for him to use.

As always, if anyone has any queries or suggestions, I and the other members of the Board are contactable via the links on this site. If anyone is interested in helping with any activity please contact me.

Julie D Johnson  
CEO