

MCCU LEVY

The 2010 AGM asked that the MCCU levy be reviewed and a report made to the 2011 AGM. Andrew Leadbetter explained that his understanding was that the levy was based on numbers of players and games to assess the level of activity in each county. The exact basis of the levy appears to have been lost in the mists of time, so there is an immediate problem with any idea of comparing then with now. In effect we would have to decide afresh how to deal with a number of issues.

On the face of it looking at how many players each county has may appear to be straightforward, but in fact this is far from the case. It would be perfectly straightforward if each county was responsible for running all events involving teams within its borders, and only teams within those borders were affiliated to a county, but neither is the case. Several counties run events that draw in clubs that are geographically based in other counties, and some leagues are not actually run by a county and cover clubs based across several counties. It is not clear whether this was not so much of an issue when the levy was set up, or what decision was made regarding how this was dealt with. The situation is further complicated by clubs who are geographically outside the MCCU, but play inside, and clubs who are inside the MCCU geographically, but play wholly outside it. Then add into the mix the fact that whilst the ECF grading database allocates a county to a club, this does not necessarily match where that club is geographically located. This is a particular issue with regard to Manchester, but they are not the only area affected. It is not just the treatment of clubs that presents a problem, but players as well. Some players are members of more than 1 club based in more than 1 county.

So, there are significant issues in trying to allocate clubs and players to counties. It could in theory be done, but there are many knotty issues about the basis of that allocation that would present real difficulties in reaching consensus. We do not have the necessary information to hand and obtaining it would take a good deal of work which would involve each county in providing some quite detailed information. This is not something to be undertaken unless the meeting really wants to go down that route.

If in addition allocating clubs and players, the actual numbers of games were to be brought into the matter, a whole new raft of problems arise. A significant number of players will not play all their chess in the MCCU, let alone in the county or counties their MCCU club or clubs are allocated to. To attempt to allocate games to counties would require detailed a breakdown from the grading database, but even with that, what about games in the leagues that operate across county borders & those are not run by any one county?

At the moment the difference between the cost to counties of one levy point and the next is small. Is it really worth getting involved trying to resolve a whole raft of knotty issues for sake of small sums? It is suggested that it is not.

It may be worth considering looking for an alternative method of determining contributions from counties to the MCCU. In this respect the future funding of the ECF may have some bearing. If the initial decision in favour of moving to a full individual membership basis goes ahead, this may involve counties becoming responsible for memberships in their area. If this were the case, there may be an argument for the MCCU basing contributions from counties on their membership numbers. It would then be for each county to decide how to raise the amount it would need to pay, as indeed is the case now. However, this is currently up in the air, so cannot yet properly inform any MCCU decision.

It is therefore recommended that the MCCU makes no decision on changing or revising the current levy system until the situation regarding ECF funding is clear. We will then be in a better position to formulate our options and decide on how to proceed.