

**Minutes of the
Annual General Meeting of the Bury Area Chess Leage**
Held on Monday 18th June 2012, at the Moreton Hall Community Centre, Bury St Edmunds

1. Welcome

Present:

Paul Kemp – PK (Chairmain, Linton)
Thelma Merry – TM (Treasurer, no affiliation)
Ole Bay-Peterson – OB (Vice Chairman, Cambridge City)
Stephen Pride – SP (Outgoing Match Secretary, Cambridge City)
Jon Crowe – JC (Incoming Match Secretary, Linton)
Colin Roberts – CR (Press Secretary, Outgoing Rapidplay Organiser, Bury St Edmunds)
Patrick Ribbands – PR (Incoming Rapidplay Organiser, Cambridge)
Steve Lovell – SL (Admin Secretary, Bury St Edmunds)
Scott Taylor – ST (Grader, Bury St Edmunds)
Tim Davison – TD (Internet Officer, Cambridge City)
Bob Jones – BJ (Congress Organiser, Bury St Edmunds)
Mark Szymanski – MS (Incoming Roger Goldsmith Organiser, Ely)
John Dawson – JD (Outgoing Ex-officio, Linton)
Charles Richmond – CRi (Incoming Ex-officio, Newmarket)
Vicky Allen – VA (Stowmarket)
Hugo Smith – HS (Bury St Edmunds)
David Wood – DW (Bury St Edmunds)
Dick Myhill – DM (Bury St Edmunds)
Lionel Tun – LT (Linton)
(19 members)

Club representation and Votes:

Bury St Edmunds – 7, Cambridge City – 4, Ely Beet – 1, Linton – 4, Newmarket – 1, Stowmarket – 1
(These are all within AGM club voting allocations).

Apologies:

David Barnicoat, Mike Angel

Notes from the Admin Secretary: Hugo Smith departed at the break following the election of officers. With nearly all matters proving to be uncontroversial, a formal vote was only necessary on a couple of occasions.

2. Minutes on the AGM 13th July 2011, and Matters Arising

The minutes were agreed as a true record of the previous meeting. (1st DM, 2nd OB)

PK noted that the minutes recorded that we should revisit the topic of January Grades, and that PK had promised to write a constitution for the BACL. The former was on the agenda for later, the latter had been deemed unnecessary by the Executive, but some rules of a constitutional nature and some general tidying were on the agenda.

VA asked for confirmation of the current holder of the Roy Adams Trophy (awarded for best performance by a Bury or Suffolk League player at the Bury Congress). BJ confirmed that it had been awarded to Richard Lamont for his performance in the Oct 2011 event.

3. Officers Reports

(i) Chairman – Paul Kemp

Commenting on another good season in the BACL, PK gave special thanks to five of the executive team.

- Stephen Pride (Match Secretary), who is standing down after eight years of service.
- Bob Jones (Congress Organiser), runs the “best weekend congress” in the country, and is also an invaluable assistance in the general running of the league.
- Thelma Merry (Treasurer), whose expertise has continued to improve the financial position of the BACL.
- Tim Davison (Internet Officer), for his excellent work on the website, especially enabling the direct entry of results.
- Steve Lovell (Admin Secretary), for easing the burden on PK by handling his role so efficiently.

(ii) Treasurer – Thelma Merry

TM summarised our financial position.

- Disregarding last year’s repayment of £275 from the congress accounts, this year saw a marginally higher surplus (£87.38) than last year (£35.05).
- The congress itself also made a surplus, but again taking into account the £275 repayment, this surplus was not as large as in the previous season.
- Both the league and congress were therefore self-financing this year, and have a combined balance of £1794.12, exceeding the stated goal of having £1500 in hand,
- TM saw only one necessary change to the accounts. To deal with the poor state of the league’s trophies (as reported by SL), TM proposed raising the entry fee for the League teams from £18 to £20 per team (less £2 if paid by 31 October)

The accounts were accepted and the proposal agreed (1st CRi, 2nd TD).

TM explained both the ECF changes and the way that this will be handled within the BACL.

- To avoid high game fees (£2 per half game), players will need to be members of the ECF.
- Membership is available at four levels (Bronze, Silver, Gold and Platinum), costing from £13 (£9 for Juniors) for Bronze membership, which covers league and county chess.
- Those playing in congresses or 4NCL will need Silver (£19, £13 for Juniors) or Gold (£28, £22 for Juniors) membership respectively. A discount of £1 will be available to anyone joining the ECF online.
- As a result, TM expects game fees payable to the BACL to be much reduced, if not non-existent, though any £2 fees (or the Junior and Rapidplay equivalents) will be passed on to clubs.
- Players’ membership of the ECF will be handled at club level
- The BACL therefore encourages but does not require membership of the ECF, with clubs to set their own policies.

Those club treasurers present agreed they were content with the approach taken by the league, and the meeting as a whole approved the approach also (1st CR, 2nd BJ).

Note from Admin Secretary: Several further questions were raised, but rather than minute them here, I refer you to the ECF web pages on the matter. If you have any further questions, please get in touch.

(iii) Match Secretary – Stephen Pride

- SP noted that while the number of defaults this season was relatively low, there was still plenty of room for improvement.
- The executive deemed that the existing rules were sufficient to handle cases such as the clock dispute that arose this season, but on all matters relating to the starting of clocks advise that consultation with captains (plural) is strongly recommended. **Action: SP and JC to reissue guidance about clocks in the coming season's fixture booklet.**
- The executive proposes that the season should end, not at Easter, but at the end of April, which in some years would give us several extra weeks to fit in the required fixtures.
- The executive is keen to include all fixtures in the booklet (previously RGT and Rapidplay have not been) and therefore requests that all competition entries should be communicated to the Match Secretary by the end of August. **Action: Club secretaries to communicate teams to JC before 31st August 2012.**
- SP's paper to the meeting included several recommendations drawn from his time as match secretary. He drew our attention to just one: "The purpose of the League is to encourage the playing of chess, not prevent games from taking place."
- He concluded by saying he'd only ever had a small number of disputes to handle each season, and that the friendliness of the League and its members had made his role very much easier than it would otherwise have been.

PK offered his sincere thanks to SP for his tremendous input over his eight years, stating that his role has been essential in the smooth running of the BACL. SP was given a warm round of applause and a gift of the book "Mastering Opening Strategy", which led to several good natured remarks on the peculiarities of SP's opening repertoire.

The meeting accepted SP's report and the proposals therein (1st VA, 2nd HS).

(iv) Congress Organiser – Bob Jones

BJ thanked those who assisted him in running the congress, especially TM for handling the accounts, Yvonne Freiherr (Bury) who assisted with the pairing process, and TD for the excellent website.

- The event ran at a small surplus.
- BJ again received numerous unsolicited compliments and congratulations on the running of the event.

Comments about the year ahead were left for later in the evening.

(v) Press Officer – Colin Roberts

CR noted that fewer columns had been published this year as the sports editor of the Bury Free Press had not entered them despite CR having submitted them ahead of deadlines. CR has spoken with the BFP editors and received assurances about the appearance of future submissions. CR also noted that the column will now also be sent to TD for inclusion on the League's website.

(vi) Games of the Season – Jon Crowe

A disappointing lack of entries this year, with only one in Division 1 and two in Division 3. The games entered in Division 3 were not deemed to have been of sufficient quality to merit the prize. The Division 1 prize went to Norman Hutchinson. Suggestions were made as to how to encourage entries: adding the winning games to the website, including the score of the winning game in the fixture booklet, and adding guidance on what is expected. JC emphasised the role of captains in encouraging their players to submit games.

(vii) Roger Goldsmith – Mike Angel (absent)

In the absence of Mike Angel, PK summarised the outcome of this year’s event. The all-play-all stage led to a three-way tie which could not be settled by any of the sanctioned tie-break methods. Therefore, the final saw these three teams “cross-paired” across six boards. Linton emerged as eventual winners.

(viii) Rapidplay Organiser – Colin Roberts

CR stated that the Rapidplay had entered a “State of Terminal Decline”. Despite this season’s shake up, only 3 teams were entered in Division 1, and 5 in Division 2. These being only two-player teams, this is equivalent to just 4 four-player teams. Linton won in Division 1, while Black Bury won in Division 2. Several defaults occurred, including at match as well as board level.

(ix) Internet Officer – Tim Davison

TD noted that the new facility to enter results online has gone very well, with many results being entered online on the same night as the matches took place. The few minor problems were resolved quickly. Further developments for the coming season include

- Press Releases
- Honour Roll (Winners of competitions in previous seasons)
- Game of the Season (possibly)

(x) Grader – Scott Taylor

ST had no particular problems to report with grades whether actual or estimated. The players of the year were confirmed (noted under “Honours”)

4. Election of Officers

With SP stepping down, and JC having agreed to take the role of Match Secretary, PK noted that smaller clubs were under-represented in the Executive, and invited those from smaller clubs to offer their services in place of JD as Ex-officio. CRi volunteered and JD therefore happily stood aside. Somewhat pre-empting the later discussion of the Rapidplay event, CR also stood down to be replaced by Patrick Ribbands as Rapidplay Organiser. The only remaining change was the replacement of Mike Angel by MS as Roger Goldsmith Organiser. All elections and re-elections were unanimous. The executive is therefore as follows:

Position	Name	Club
<i>Chairman</i>	Paul Kemp	Linton
<i>Vice Chairman</i>	Ole Bay-Petersen	Cambridge City
<i>Match Secretary & Games of the Season</i>	Jon Crowe	Linton
<i>Admin Secretary</i>	Steve Lovell	Bury St Edmunds
<i>Treasurer</i>	Thelma Merry	No affiliation
<i>Internet Officer</i>	Tim Davison	Cambridge City
<i>Congress Organiser</i>	Bob Jones	Bury St Edmunds
<i>Rapidplay Organiser</i>	Patrick Ribbands	Cambridge City
<i>Roger Goldsmith Organiser</i>	Mark Szymanski	Ely Beet
<i>Press Officer</i>	Colin Roberts	Bury St Edmunds
<i>Grader</i>	Scott Taylor	Bury St Edmunds
<i>Ex-Officio</i>	Charles Richmond	Newmarket

At this point we took a ten minute break.

5. Proposals from Clubs and the Executive

(i) Roger Goldsmith Restructure

Due to the difficulties Newmarket have in forming a side which could compete in the RGT in its current form, CRi proposed introducing a 2nd tier in the RGT with lower grading limits. With few seeming keen on the idea, several feared that the lower tier might be too small to be meaningful and that entries in the higher tier might also be reduced, perhaps leading to two unworkable competitions. However, a quick poll suggested that in fact entries in the top division would be unaffected and the lower division, while small, looked feasible, though home and away legs might be necessary.

CR suggested an alternative of simply lowering the grading limit on the existing event. While this met with approval from numerous quarters a second poll suggested that over all RGT entries would not be as high as under the two-tier proposal.

With numerous references made to SP's wise comment (quoted earlier) about the purpose of the League being to encourage the playing of chess, the AGM reached the following final position:

- A 2nd tier should be introduced, with a total grading limit of 450.
- In the 2nd tier players graded under 60 should be assumed to be graded 60 for the purposes of the total grading limit.
- The grading limit on the 1st tier should remain at 580, but to encourage greater competition there should no longer be the alternative option of selecting a team according to grading bands.
- In the 1st tier players graded under 80 should be assumed to be graded 80 for the purposes of the total grading limit.

Action: Club secretaries to confirm competition entries to JC and MS in time for inclusion in the fixture booklet.

SL noted that the rules of the RGT give Swiss as the preferred format, but that this would not permit fixtures to be published in advance.

Action: RGT rules to be redrafted (more on redrafting of rules later).

(ii) Rapidplay Restructure

With the apparent demise of the Rapidplay in its current form, the executive proposed replacing it with a six-round Rapidplay competition played over two evenings (one in Cambridge, the other in Bury). This would be primarily an individual event, but with team results appearing through aggregation. Pairing would be using the "Ribbands" pairing system.

The proposal would also free several weeks in the season for other events (such as internal club competitions or completion in other leagues). A pilot event at Cambridge went well with 34 in attendance. With no-one voicing opposition, the proposed restructure was adopted.

Action: PR and JC to arrange appropriate dates for the event(s).

(iii) January Grades Revisited

At the 2011 AGM we had agreed not to use the January grades except for players with no grade published over the summer. Acknowledging the problems associated with a complete move to using the latest grades for all purposes, the executive proposed that January grades should be adopted, but only for the purposes of board order, with summer grades continuing to be used for eligibility for teams (in comparison with nominated grades and total grade limits in the RGT). The usual grading tolerance would continue to apply. This proposal was approved without complaint.

Action: New guidance to be included in the fixture booklet.

(iv) Grading Tolerance

To prevent tactical abuses and bring the BACL into line with other Leagues, the executive proposed reverting to the previous arrangement of a 10- rather than 15-point grading tolerance (for both board order and relative to nominated board grades). This proposal proved uncontroversial and was approved without opposition.

Action: Relevant rules to be redrafted for fixture booklet.

(v) Tidying of various rules

PK briefly summarised a number of minor amendments which the executive proposed to make. These changes related to the general format of the League, the permissibility of substituting alternative players, and the reporting of results via the website. In all cases these changes would merely reflect actual practice. Other changes related to more constitutional matters including the makeup of the League leadership, the timing and conduct of the AGM, and deadlines for the submission of proposed changes.

With these and a large number of other rule amendments already approved, the executive sought permission to form a committee to oversee the redrafting of these rules and of the rules in general, with a promise to retain the spirit of the proposals as presented and approved. The proposed changes were not opposed and the committee was composed.

Members: PK, SP, JC, SL, BJ, MS, CR. **Action: PK to convene group discussion over email.**

6. Honours

The Chairman noted the trophy winners for 2011/12 as follows:

Competition	Winner(s)	Trophy with secretary
Division 1	Linton A	Yes
Division 2	Cambridge Dons	Yes
Division 3	Cambridge Gowns	Yes
Roger Goldsmith	Linton	No (with Linton)
Jamboree	Cambridge / Linton	Yes
Division 1 PotY	Norman Hutchinson (Linton)	No (with Cambridge)
Division 2 PotY	Kris Rafalski & Patrick Ribbands (both Cambridge City)	No (with previous holder)
Division 3 PotY	Steve Lovell (Bury St Edmunds)	Yes
Roy Adams Trophy	Richard Lamont	No (with holder)

7. League Entries

Although Bury Scarabs finished bottom in Division 1 and Cambridge Dons top in Division 2, both teams preferred to remain where they were, and this was approved by those present. As a result, with Cambridge teams swapping places in Divisions 2 and 3, the entries remain as last season.

Club	Division 1 Teams	Division 2 Teams	Division 3 Teams
Bury St Edmunds	2	2	3
Cambridge	3	3	1
Ely	1	0	0
Linton	1	1	1
Newmarket	0	0	1
Stowmarket	0	0	1

8. Upcoming Events

The following upcoming events were noted.

Jamboree	Wednesday 19 th September at Bury
2 nd Leg of Jubilee Rapidplay	Thursday 28 th June at Bury
Cambridgeshire Rapidplay	Sunday 28 th October 2012 at Whittlesford.
Bury Congress	Saturday 13 th and Sunday 14 th October at the Apex in Bury

BJ noted several changes for the congress.

- VAT will be charged on venue hire, meaning an increase in costs of £350. BJ has approached the sponsor Music Sales, who he hopes will cover this increase.
- With the assistance of TD, BJ is hoping to introduce online entry and payment for this year's event. Research suggests that this will cost roughly £1 per transaction.

9. Any other Business

No further matters were raised.

Close of meeting: 10:05 pm