

Cumbria Chess Association

Minutes of the 133rd Annual General Meeting

Held on Saturday 12th July 2025 at the Crown Hotel, Eamont Bridge at 2pm

In attendance

J Rashleigh (Secretary), D Shaw (League Controller), N Cooper (Treasurer), J Lydon (Junior Organiser), A McAtear (Match Captain/Rating), R Farrall (Penrith), G Sharkey, M Howarth (Maryport), W Siddall, J Ovens (Carlisle), R Hayley, P Hanks, N Foxcroft (Ulverston)

In the absence of the President, the Secretary took the Chair

1. Apologies for absence.

E Fruchtenicht

2. President's Address

In the absence of the President, no address was given

3. Minutes of the 132nd AGM held on 3rd August 2024

These had been circulated to clubs and were approved as a true record.

4. Correspondence

The only items were covered later in the agenda

5. Reports

5.a) Secretary's Report

It had been a quiet year.

ECF had recently circulated an email offering chess equipment at bulk prices. The Secretary would circulate this to all clubs.

There had also been correspondence with ECF regarding the County Champion of Champions proposal which would be discussed later in the meeting.

5.b) Treasurer's Report and Accounts

Neill Cooper circulated unaudited accounts for the year to 30th June 2025. They showed a surplus for the year of £247.09 and funds totalling £1,186.00. The audit would take place shortly.

The meeting expressed its thanks to Neill for taking on the role and to David Cole for recreating the financial records following the sudden death of the previous Treasurer.

The Treasurer proposed that the registration fees be unchanged at £8 for adults and £1 for juniors. This was approved unanimously.

5.c) Membership Secretary's Report

Andy McAtear reported that there had been 88 paid up members in the year including 11 juniors and 4 ladies.

There had been a dialogue with the ECF regarding the rules for imposing game fees based on a fixed date rather than the date on which the relevant game was actually played. ECF had explained that there was an appeal process to deal with this sort of situation.

5.d) League Controller's Report

Dave Shaw reported that the season had run smoothly. He sought and obtained confirmation from the meeting that clubs were happy with scheduled games potentially running into April.

Dave questioned whether there was an argument for the Open League to play each other home and away effectively doubling the number of matches. There was no appetite for this.

5.e) Rating Officer's Report

Andy reported that there had generally been no problems.

The meeting discussed the unsatisfactory situation in which ECF awarded new players a notional grade of 1800 which was in nearly all cases far too high and resulted in unrealistic board orders being played. The meeting agreed that in these circumstances, captains should make their own estimate of a new players playing level and order their boards accordingly.

5.f) Junior Organiser's Report

The meeting noted that there were now three individuals actively involved in organising junior chess in the county.

Peter Hanks reported that he had now created the 'Furness Juniors Chess Association'. He had organised some junior tournaments in Ulverston including a tournament in the Coronation Hall. He would continue to work with local schools and run regular tournaments.

Neil Cooper reported that he had set up an online event for Cumbria juniors which was a service he was already performing for ECF on a nationwide basis. One aim was to organise online inter-county matches for juniors.

John Lydon reported that he had again organised a tournament at Long Marton and he had again supported the Long Marton Schools Tournament. He had also assisted the school in obtaining chess equipment with the help of the ECF Grassroots Fund.

There had been a junior tournament as a part of the North v South day at the Rheged.

John also entered two junior teams in the Pennine Cup played in Manchester and the results were an improvement on the previous year.

Dave Shaw mentioned that there had been the 'Chambers Cup' which had existed since 1929 and had been until recently presented to the best performing county junior. The meeting did not know where the cup now resided but in the current environment was clearly desirable to locate it and start presenting it to juniors again.

The meeting thanked John, Peter and Neill for their efforts which were achieving so much across the county.

5.g) Match Captain's Report

Andy McAtear reported that three matches had been played in the U1850 sections. The first against Merseyside was very close but lost 5.5 – 6.5. The second was against Yorkshire and was lost

3.5 - 8.5. The third was against Greater Manchester and was lost 3 – 9. Cumbria had been outgraded in all these matches and needed to get some of its stronger players out in future to have any chance.

5.h) ECF Delegate's Report

The Secretary had circulated details of the ECF proposals to hold a County Champion of Champions tournament. Cumbria had a County Champion who would be eligible each year (currently Holden Davis) but did not currently have a ladies championship. The meeting agreed that the County should support the proposal and await further developments.

5.i) NCCU Delegates Report

Nothing to report

5.j) Website Organiser Report

Dave Shaw circulated some statistics to show the number of 'hits' the website received including some from faraway countries! There had been no problems maintain the site.

6. Presentation of Trophies:

Whitaker Trophy champions – This was won by Carlisle 1. The old shield was presented to John Lydon on behalf of the Carlisle team. Peter Hanks noted the measurements needed so that he could get on with the work of generating a new trophy as previously agreed.

Cumbria South champions – Ulverston A had retained the trophy which was accordingly presented to Neill Cooper a member of the winning team.

Open League champions – Penrith A were again the winners and retained the trophy which was on display at the hotel.

7. Discussion and Voting on the Proposals previously notified

8. The proposals were that the grading limits in the County Championships to determine the Minor section and eligibility for the Greenhalgh Trophy should be set at the discretion of the tournament organiser rather than being prescribed in the Constitution. The meeting approved the change unanimously. The Secretary would update sections 4.4(c) and 4.4(d) of the Constitution accordingly.

Gary Sharkey suggested that it might be possible to establish a 'Foundation Section' at the championships to encourage players who were just learning.

9. Safeguarding Policy

The Secretary noted that in March the ECF had issued extremely comprehensive policies for safeguarding and safe play which were on their website and a number of officers had been appointed for this purpose. There was therefore no excuse now for the County not to produce their own policy as had been discussed at the previous AGM.

It was agreed that a Working Party should be established to draft a suitable policy. Following some volunteering from members present, it was agreed that the Working Party should consist of the President, the Secretary Elect, the Safeguarding Officer, David Siddall and James Ovens. The Secretary would set up the arrangements for the Working Party.

10. Election of Officers

The President was re-elected unanimously.

The Secretary had taken the decision to stand down. Matthew Haworth was nominated as his replacement and was elected unanimously.

The following officers were re-elected unanimously:

League Controller: Dave Shaw

Membership Secretary: Andy McAtear

Rating Officer: Andy McAtear

Match Captain: Andy McAtear

Junior Organiser: John Lydon

ECF Delegate: Eggert Fruchtenicht

NCCU Delegates: Egger Fruchtenicht and Andy McAtear

Website Organiser: Dave Shaw

Safeguarding Officer: John Lydon

Hon. Auditor: Neil Foxcroft.

11. Any Other Business

John Lydon had been successful in placing a number of news items in the Cumberland News and there was discussion as to whether similar publicity could be generated in the South of the county perhaps through the Westmorland Gazette.

The meeting felt that the North v South match held last winter had been a success and should be repeated if possible. John Lydon agreed to contact Rheged to establish possible dates and likely costs.

Peter Hanks suggested that the County Rapidplay tournament should be resurrected. This suggestion was endorsed by the meeting. It was noted that it was important to establish a date and a venue for this and the County Championships very early as finding suitable venues continued to be challenging.

12. Date of Next AGM.

To be agreed.