

Braunstone Chess Club
Minutes from 76th AGM Tuesday 19th June 2018
@ Braunstone Civic Centre

The chairman Richard Hanscombe declared the meeting open at 20:00.

1. Apologies for absence

There were 11 members in attendance, namely :-

Richard Hanscombe (RH); Tom Brown (TB); Paul Martin (PM); Mike Salisbury (MWS) Jim Bingham (JTB);
Guy Closs (GC); Vijay Gulab (VG); Steve Barlow (SB); David Sandrovitch (DS); Richard Lee (RL);
Julian Tang (JT)

Apologies for absence were received from :-

Patrick Reid – work commitment
Martin Steel – work commitment

Other absent members :-

Sherif Gonem, Barry Read, Abdi Abubakar – reasons unknown

2. Minutes of last AGM

As the minutes had been distributed in an email by the secretary (JTB), they were assumed to have been read by those present. The only comment made about the distributed minutes was by John Oliver (our Admin Secretary in 2016-17) about who had captained the teams in the 2016-17 season. JTB undertook to correct the minutes accordingly.

Proposed by GC with SB, the minutes were then accepted by the meeting.

3. Secretary's Report

JTB's views (some, post -AGM!) about the performances of the league teams from last season were that :-

The 1st team had done fairly well to be in the top 3 throughout the season, but were not quite strong enough to challenge for the Div 2 championship. Matters did improve when Richard Lee joined the team, and at the meeting he expressed the view that we should have been able to manage win it! JTB congratulated TB on coping pretty well with the challenge of playing top board in our team – (JTB additional comment – He scored 40% against players graded on average, 181, and commendably, played in all the 1st team matches).

MWS mentioned how the new strong players, TB and RL, had been welcome additions to the team this season.

The 2nd team in Div 4 stayed mid-table throughout the season, and ultimately achieved the captain's aim of avoiding relegation,

The 3rd team in Div 5 managed to maintain a high position in their division throughout the season, though their captain JAO thought this was a bit fortuitous, and was convinced they would be overhauled by the end of the season. In this he was correct, but the team did finish 4th, and was only 3pts behind the 2nd placed team. JAO personally, in what transpired to be his last season with Braunstone, commendably scored 12 out of 15.

JTB then listed some individual successes that club members had had during the year. Viz. :-

- (i) Tom Brown won the club championship (JTB apologised for having forgotten to bring the trophies to the meeting)
- (ii) JTB, himself, won the 2017 County Challengers Championship (excuse the self-praise!)
- (iii) Tom Brown won the U165 Atkins RP Tournament

(iv) Pat Reid won the Notts U135 RP Tournament

4. Treasurer's Report

This was the first report by our new Treasurer (GC), and in his summary he explained that he intended to simplify the report in future by incorporating advance room rentals into the year in which they are paid. And as a general point he mentioned that total room rentals have been recently running at ~£250 per year.

GC explained that the variation in the amounts for the Club subscriptions was because :-

Some players had organised their ECF memberships independently.

RL had only joined for part of the year.

As a junior member, TB's subs had only been £5.

After a short discussion the issue of whether the website fee of £38.39 was worth paying was c/f to AOB.

In conclusion the Treasurer declared that the loss presented on the balance sheet (£63.77) was of little concern considering our healthy bank balance and he suggested that we should look to sustainably reduce the current balance (just under £1200) in the coming years.

Ultimately acceptance of the Treasurer's Report was proposed by PM and seconded by SB; and this was followed by unanimous agreement.

5. Teams for Season 2018/19

The discussion on what our aims should be with regard to the number of teams we should have and in which divisions, was significantly impacted by MWS's summary of what the structure of the League might be in the coming season. Mike explained that the League Management Committee (the LMC – of which MWS is a member) were considering either having a similar format to the last season, or making a radical change involving having divisions of between 8 – 10 teams in each. Since there were 45 teams in the League last year, the latter proposal would probably result in there being just 4 divisions.

Regarding the allocation of our club players to teams, and bearing in mind the barring rules (could also be changed by the LMC this year), MWS pointed out that he would like to see more effort made to give everyone a reasonable number of games. He personally didn't do very well in this respect last year because he was unable to play in several 1st team matches, and didn't get many 2nd team games in compensation.

After much discussion MWS proposed that we should aim to have a team in Div 1, and then either of two possibilities depending on which format the LMC decide upon. This would be teams in Divs 3 and 5 for the 5 division format, otherwise Divs 2 and 4 for the second format under consideration.

Ultimately this proposal was accepted, with the extra amendment (proposed by JTB) that the club officials should have a meeting (possibly over the internet) to make the final decision once the League format has been declared by the LMC.

6. Election of Officers

Since, as usual, it was clear that we were going to have to rely on the usual suspects to take on the various roles to be filled, with no likely new candidates emerging, the meeting homed in on the proposal that the officials should be elected en bloc, and their roles would be as follows :-

Chairman: Richard Hanscombe

Secretary : Jim Bingham

Treasurer : Guy Closs

Webmaster: Mike Salisbury (probably with some input from RL*)

1st Team Captain: Mike Salisbury

2nd Team Captain: Jim Bingham

3rd Team Captain: Guy Closs

* RL offered his IT Social Media expertise with the objective of raising the club profile in order to seek potential new members.

7. Subscriptions (inc. Summer Membership)

Under this item the meeting returned to the general topic of the club finances, and some discussion followed about whether it might be worth having very low subs for the 1st year for new members. This was decided against, on the basis that we already allow new members a free trial period, and it was felt that our quite reasonable fees were unlikely to be a deterrent to new members.

Continuing this interesting topic, RL mentioned that, for example, we struggle to get new members when compared to Wigston as they :-

- Are open every week.
- Have more teams
- Equipment storage at their venue.
- Free room.

The only point amongst these that could apply to us might be to the 3rd one; so JTB offered to contact a relevant person at the Civic Centre to sound out about this possibility. Incentives for the CC to provide any storage would be the possibility of increased bar takings resulting from more chess players frequenting the Centre, and also any payment that might be agreed for such a provision.

We then digressed into a discussion about the junior sessions that JT and RL have been organising, when there was unanimous gratitude that they were taking place. It was ultimately decided that this activity should continue autonomously, with the main connection to the main Braunstone Club being the sharing of our kit, and the possibility that club members could be invited along to join in the sessions. Julian was enthusiastic about this idea, and offered to increase his email address list to make his notifications about these events more widespread.

We also discussed the possibility of the junior sessions being held in rooms booked for Club matches; though Julian expressed some reservations about the children being too disruptive to make this feasible.

Eventually we returned to the issue of the Club subscriptions, and GC's suggestion that we should consider his idea of reducing our bank balance by lowering the standard subscription to £30, and this then became a proposal that was voted for, unanimously. As already established, this level of subscription incorporates the cost (£15) of taking out ECF Bronze Membership for the Club member.

8. AOB

What should now have been the first point to be addressed should have been the question of ceasing our contract with our website provider. Having omitted to discuss this at this juncture, the status quo must presumably continue to operate, which actually complied with the views expressed when it was raised earlier. However it is also worth minuting that RL, at the time, raised the question of us creating our own website platform. This was unresolved.

The next point discussed was the long-standing members who have now moved to other clubs, and RH particularly mentioned that we should minute our gratitude to John Oliver for his contribution to the club over the years. So a vote of thanks was passed to this effect, and JTB agreed to contact John Oliver pass on this plaudit. [Subsequent to the meeting JTB received a valedictory report from John Oliver which is included at the end of these minutes].

JTB also mentioned that he had already sent a friendly good-wishes email to Tony Robinson on his departure from the club.

A final interesting development regarding the topic of our Minutes Books (raised at the 2017 AGM) was that DS had come across 2 very early Minutes Books (including the 1st one!), and he happily passed these on to JTB for safe keeping. (post-AGM comment by JTB – this item should probably have been included in Agenda Item 2 – had DS been present at that point!)

The Chairman brought the meeting to a close at ~21:30p

Minutes taken and subsequently written up by JTB 4July18

Valedictory Report from John Oliver : June 2018

After a year's sabbatical as a team captain, I took over the club's bottom team in 2015/16, which was B5 and found it a bit of struggle to put out a full team at times; mainly due to limited availability of players, rather than an actual shortage.

Despite this we won the division 6 title, under the tie break system and would not have been champions, but for Barry Read and Paul Martin, who travelled to Melton as a 2 man team, thus limiting our defaults, and the consequential penalties.

In 2016/17 we were promoted to div 5 and we made an excellent start – being top of the division at Xmas. And this was despite once again only fielding 2 players away to Melton. From then onwards, fielding a full team became a real issue, resulting in another 7 board defaults, giving a total of 9 for the season. Nevertheless we finished 4th, with 17 points after penalties.

2017/18 - in contrast to previous seasons, the team did not default any boards. Still in div 5, although now known as B3, we hit the ground running and stayed top of the division until early March. This was mainly down to a stunning defeat of new look Oadby.

I never felt we could win the title, due to being outgunned, not just by Oadby, but also by Kirby and Mkt Harb. In the end we finished 4th again, with 20 points, but it was a very enjoyable season and a pleasure for me as captain.

Apart from 2 matches, we fielded the same team throughout, ie vijay gulab, barry read, myself and paul martin. Barry wasn't available for the first match, and I was unwell for the last match.

That's all history and next season, after 19 enjoyable years at Braunstone, I shall be playing for Mkt Harborough, as captain of their first ever 3rd team. For many years, I have fancied playing for Mkt Harborough, but while the club only had one team, it was never a viable proposition - now however, times have changed and I hope my contribution will help to promote chess in that area of leicestershire.

au revoir, John Oliver