

Minutes of the Norfolk County Chess Association Annual General Meeting

Aylsham and District Ex Service and Social Club, Wednesday 5th June 2024

The meeting commenced at 7.30pm.

1. One minute's silence for chess friends who had passed away in the previous 12 months:

Ken Ellis, Andrew Duffell, Jack Richardson and Alan Holmes

2. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from:

Jonathan Reeve, Edward Hackford, Antony Hall, Trevor Ansell, David Payne, Johnny Danger, Norman Thomas

The following people signed the attendance sheet:

John Wickham, Matthew Perry, Heather Enid Walker, Alan Page, Brian Cunningham, David Moore, Paul Coppard, Martin Walker, Owen Hindle, Mike Read, D.P.Jones, J.Dawson, S.Moore, S.Livermore, Ben Collinson, S.Orton, Chris Perkins, Crumpton Clarke, Phil Sneesby, Tony Larnar, Eric Bradley, Craig Parks, George Lyall, Roy Hughes, Andy Hartland

3. Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes were distributed along with the agenda, by email to the county database, on Sunday 19 May 2024.

4. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising

5. Reports

Chairman:

John Wickham delivered the following report:

This season, sadly, we lost 4 of your chess friends. Starting with Ken Ellis in November, then Andrew Duffell the following month, then Jack Richardson in January and Alan Holmes in February. I had known most of them for many years. I cannot remember a season when we lost so many in such a short time.

The season itself has been a good one and this is down to the hard work of all officers involved with Norfolk Chess. They all should be thanked for all they have done. I would like to mention a few of them. Two new committee members, Alan Page (Secretary) and Stephen Livermore (League and Cup Controller) have both fitted into the roles and have done some great work this season. Matt Perry as Junior Organiser has excelled, and Andy Hartland has our finances well under control. All the committee members and Officers make my work much easier, and my thanks go to them all.

With each season we are adding to and increasing what we provide to you. There were more teams in the Leagues, we had an oversubscribed Norfolk Championships, there was a new event in the Team Blitz, and there were several club competitions. This all shows that Norfolk Chess is thriving.

Our Supporter Vice President scheme has provided funds to allow us to develop Norfolk Chess further in future. Andy will provide some details on this in his report. I am very grateful to the SVPs for their support.

There is an item on the agenda regarding an increase in league fees. Andy will outline this later, but I should mention that the fees have been frozen for at least 6 years and that during that period we also made the cup competitions free to enter, so there has effectively been a reduction in the fees paid by clubs. In order to reduce the operating loss we do need to increase the fees.

Our County first team won the EACU qualifiers and retained the Icen Cup. They are in the Semi final of the Minor Counties and play Sussex on Saturday, June 8th. We only enter two teams at the Qualifying stage but could also enter in the U1450 and U 1650 competition. If we want to enter these competitions, we do need captains and I have asked for volunteers. Please consider this if you are willing and able to help.

Of our other vacancies we need a Safeguarding Officer, a position that becomes more important as we grow in numbers and have a greater involvement of juniors. Another position is that of Vice Chair, while not critical, we need someone who can step in if I am unavailable.

Finally, all our clubs will receive an allocation of free scoresheets, enough to last for two years of league and cup games. This follows an initiative by Steve Lovell, the Bury St Edmunds Congress secretary and a member of Bury St Edmunds Chess club. He managed to get Greene King to sponsor the score sheets and agreed to include us. I should be able to distribute these to clubs at the start of the next season.

I hope you all enjoy your Summer and that you come back refreshed and ready for the start of the new season in mid September.

John Wickham

Secretary:

Alan Page delivered the following report:

First of all I would like to thank Brian Cunningham for his help in handover of the role, and also continuing as Secretary until August last year when I had completed other responsibilities.

Could I ask please that club secretaries let me have any email details for new player registrations to add to the county-wide email list.

Also, if you know of anyone not receiving the county-wide messages please let me know and I'll add their details or help investigate why this is happening (it could be their email service provider has blocked the message or treated it as spam).

Please could I ask you all to ensure you have signed the attendance sheet.

Treasurer:

Andy Hartland delivered the following report which had been circulated in advance of the meeting along with the accounts:

Financial Report for the period 3.5.23 to 30.04.24

1. Financial Position

On 2.5.23, NCCA had a total financial balance of £4486.52, comprising £2356.34 main NCCA funds, £1881.44 junior funds, £168.27 in the SVP fund, with £80.47 cash in hand. On 30.04.23 NCCA had a total financial balance of £5,408.08, comprising £2255.86 main NCCA funds, £2151.61 junior funds and £723.27 SVP funds, with £277.34 cash in hand.

Liquid funds increased by £921.56 during the reporting period. However, this figure masks a growing issue in relation to routine income, compared to routine expenditure. The Junior Fund contributed an additional £271.17 in 2023-24. The SVP fund contributed an additional £555.00 in 2023/24, with none of that income currently assigned. Due to issues at the ECF, the county faced liabilities for pay-to-play fees totalling £153 for which it had not been invoiced at close of year. Finally, the Norfolk Blitz 2024 event, held in May 2024, received £170 of BACS entries prior to the end of the financial year without any associated expenditure. Wherever the line is drawn in terms of the year-end date, it will create a distortion in relation to the financial picture presented for NCCA. Stripping out these distortions, and acknowledging that both the Junior Fund and the SVP fund have increased, and the positive impact that tournament income has had, there is a growing deficit of routine expenditure over routine income.

Club contributions to NCCA via league and cup entry fees have historically been the principal income source for the county. This remains the case but it has reduced in total and is further eroded by the impact of inflation on costs. League fees brought in £957 in 2023-4, while League and cup fees brought in £1102 in 2017-8. Routine expenditure, comprising county team expenses, admin expenses, insurance, web hosting, the purchase of a trophy and *En Passant* subscriptions, amounted to £1202.48 in 2023-34. This amounts to a deficit of £245.48 of routine expenditure over routine income in the reporting period. There is now a structural imbalance in NCCA finances, with routine costs exceeding routine income.

2. Fixed Assets

Those of you who have compared last year's spreadsheet to the current year's will have noted that the value of fixed assets has reduced significantly, from £2,357.40 to £1,305.46. Nothing has actually changed. It is simply that it is now recognised that most of the trophy collection, which is based on nickel alloy, has little or no residual value. Unless made of silver, the value of a trophy plummets to around zero as soon as it is engraved. The value of our trophy collection lies in what it represents, not in what it would be worth were it to be sold. The previous value assigned to trophies vastly overstated their resale value. This figure has now been removed from the accounts.

Moving forward, fixed assets will comprise chess equipment (boards, sets and clocks). One trophy has been purchased, which will need to be factored into insurance calculations. No chess equipment has been purchased in the last 12 months. A notional depreciation value of 20% has been factored in for 2023/34 in relation to chess equipment, leaving a residual value of £1,305.46. This figure is incorporated in the NCCA main figures in the final box.

3. Junior Account

The Junior Account is managed within the overall NCCA account but is seen as separate and sacrosanct. Matt Perry, the Junior Organiser, has organised three successful events in the reporting period. The growth in income from junior chess, which has trebled since last year and expenditure, which has doubled, reflects the increased activity in junior chess. There is currently a healthy balance of £2,150 in the junior account to support Matt in his work. Matt is doing a great job.

4. The SVP Scheme

The SVP scheme exists to support and promote the playing of chess in Norfolk. The NCCA accounts for 2022-23 showed a balance of £168 in the SVP fund, which is now managed as a separate part of the overall accounts, along similar lines to the Junior Chess fund. In the current 2023-24 period, SVPs have contributed £555 to chess in Norfolk. None of this money has yet been allocated. In 2022-23 some SVP money had been allocated to support the decision to peg league fees and maintain free entry to the cup competitions. Depending on discussions at the AGM, a similar decision may be taken. Alternatively, it could be that the SVP fund is allowed to grow in order to address some of the future challenges that NCCA will face. In that case, it would be necessary to increase NCCA income via league fees/cup entries in order to maintain financial balance.

5. Norfolk Chess post-Covid

The trauma presented by Covid posed particular challenges when the time approached for people to consider returning to what had previously been considered normal life, with an entirely understandable degree of anxiety around personal risk. The decision to peg league fees and to remove entry fees to the various cup competitions was in part promoted to encourage players to return to the chess board. It is a strategy that has worked. There are more teams in the now four divisions of the Norfolk League than in recent memory and all of the cup competitions are well supported. League fees have now been pegged, and cup entry fees scrapped, for the last four years.

6. Future Threats

The first thing to say here is that chess in Norfolk is thriving. The number of league teams and participation in cup competitions have both increased. Eight significant chess events have been held in Norfolk in the last year, with many other activities taking place at club level.

I would highlight three threats to Norfolk Chess. The first is John Wickham. That might not be worded as well as it might be. John is central to everything that happens in Norfolk. He runs a number of events and, as a FIDE arbiter, is the only individual in the county currently capable of doing so. John devotes himself tirelessly to the cause of chess in our part of the world. John is both mortal and could decide at some point that he is no longer prepared to give everything that he does to chess in Norfolk. There is no understudy standing in the wings with John's skills to succeed him. This may not be a threat that a treasurer can do anything about but it is, in my view, be the greatest single threat to Norfolk Chess.

The second threat is that our equipment, in particular our clocks, will not last forever. Some have already failed and that process of degradation will continue. Replacing our current stock at retail prices would cost in the region of £2,000: a cost that would pretty much wipe out our reserves. For me, the solution to this threat is to build up our financial reserves to prepare for the future. I see the SVP fund as key to this strategy.

The third threat is the current significant imbalance between routine income and expenditure, discussed above. How should this imbalance be addressed? SVPs make an invaluable contribution to chess in Norfolk. Should some or all of this SVP money be used in the future, as it has been in the past, to support club chess in Norfolk? Or, should we look at increasing league fees for the first time in several years, and possibly re-introduce cup entry fees? Should SVP money be used to keep club chess cheap or should it be used to future-proof the organisation in view of future threats or is there a middle road?

7. Proposal regarding League and Cup Fees

In my view, the pegging of league fees and free entry to cup competitions has played an important role in seeing chess in Norfolk emerge from the nightmare of Covid. I do not see how continuing with this strategy can continue. In my view, the SVP fund has done its job in supporting club chess through a difficult period and we need to have an eye to what is down the road and prepare for that. I would like to build up the SVP fund over the next few years to prepare for the replacement of our chess clocks. I also feel that future decisions taken within NCCA need to have an eye to the deteriorating balance between routine income and routine expenditure. For now, I propose that league fees be increased by £5 per team. This would bring in an additional £145, assuming that the number of league teams remains the same. I would not propose to re-instate fees for entering the club competitions at this time.

8. And finally....

I would like to again show my appreciation for the support of the NCCA auditor, Phil Sneesby. I hope that those who know me would agree that the role of book-keeper is not one that comes naturally to me. Phil could not be more constructive and helpful in his approach to someone who doesn't really get why accountants work in such particular, mysterious ways. Work on the annual accounts this year, as before, has very much a team effort.

Andy Hartland
NCCA Treasurer
28th May 2024

League/Cup Controller:

Stephen Livermore gave a brief summary to the meeting and provided the detailed report included below:

NCCA League and Cup Controller's Report

Setting Up

This was to be our second season using the ECF League Management System to run our league and cup competitions. Matt Rausch had done an excellent job of setting the system up for the first season. With his help and advice from John Wickham and Bruce Carman I was able to get up to speed with relative ease.

The task of structuring the league divisions was made easier with the introduction of 4 new teams. The result was a Division 1 with 8 teams, and Divisions 2,3 and 4 with 7 teams each.

15 teams entered the Williamson Cup, 14 teams entered the Rapidplay Handicap Cup, 7 teams entered the Norfolk & Suffolk Cup.

We started the season 2 weeks earlier than the previous season, on Monday 18th September. There were two reasons for this. The first was to provide space for the additional fixtures with the introduction of 4 new teams. The second was to provide more space at the end of the season for re-arranged matches, space which was in short supply in the previous season.

The league fixtures were generated automatically by the system. The cup fixtures were generated using a random draw.

Running

An early problem was that Wymondham could not use their home venue in December and those fixtures had to be re-arranged. For the coming season I will emphasise the facility for clubs to specify dates that they would like to be kept clear of league and cup fixtures for any reason.

There was also a problem at the end of the season with 2 teams from the same club in the same division playing a last match of the season. I will endeavour next season to refine the automatically generated fixtures to avoid such a situation. I will also endeavour to avoid the top teams from the previous season meeting too early in the new season.

The team captains did an excellent job of entering and verifying match results without delay, and keeping to the board order and guesting rules, making my job much easier.

The practice of using estimated local ratings in place of unreliable provisional ratings worked well enough, though I must emphasise that clubs should ensure that estimated ratings continue to reflect a player's strength as they improve.

Results

Williamson Cup

The final resulted in a close fought draw, but St Johns Crusaders won on board elimination.

Fakenham Oddfellows	3	Fakenham Oddfellows	½	Norwich Dons Buccaneers	2	St Johns Crusaders	2
Broadland Swallowtails	1						
Norwich Dons Buccaneers	4	Norwich Dons Buccaneers	3½				
Kings Lynn	0						
Broadland Bitterns	2	Lowestoft	½	St Johns Crusaders	2		
Lowestoft	2						
St Johns Crusaders	3	St Johns Crusaders	3½				
Aylsham	1						
Wymondham A	1½	St Johns Templars	1	Norwich Dons Avengers	1½	Norfolk & Norwich	2
St Johns Templars	2½						
*		Norfolk & Norwich	3				
*							
North Norfolk	2	Norwich Dons Avengers	2½	Norfolk & Norwich	2½		
Norwich Dons Avengers	2						
Norwich Dons Cavaliers	3½	Norwich Dons Cavaliers	1½				
Wymondham B	½						

Williamson Plate

The final resulted in a close fought draw, but Broadland Bitterns won on board elimination.

Wymondham B	1	Broadland Bitterns	4	Broadland Bitterns	2
Broadland Bitterns	3				
*		Wymondham A	0		
*					
Broadland Swallowtails	1½	Aylsham	½	North Norfolk	2
Aylsham	2½				
North Norfolk	2½	North Norfolk	3½		
Kings Lynn	1½				

Rapidplay Handicap Cup

The value of the handicap in this competition was demonstrated by the match between North Norfolk Shrimps and Norfolk & Norwich Pawns. In accordance with the handicap rules the Pawns needed 7 points or more to win, so the 6.5 points they did score was not enough!

In the final Norfolk & Norwich Knights were the stronger team and in accordance with the handicap rules needed 5.5 points or more to win. In the event they won with 6.5.

Aylsham	½	Norfolk & Norwich Knights	8	Norfolk & Norwich Knights	6	Norfolk & Norwich Knights	6½
Norfolk & Norwich Knights	7½						
Broadland Swallowtails	5	Broadland Swallowtails	0				
North Norfolk Lobsters	3						
St Johns Templars	3	St Johns Templars	5½	St Johns Templars	2		
Norwich Dons A	5						
Wymondham A	5	Wymondham A	2½				
Broadland Bitterns	3						
*		Wymondham B	½	St Johns Crusaders	8		
*							
St Johns Crusaders	6	St Johns Crusaders	7½			St Johns Crusaders	1½
Lowestoft	2						
*		Norwich Dons B	6½	Norwich Dons B	0		
*							
North Norfolk Shrimps	1½	North Norfolk Shrimps	1½				
Norfolk & Norwich Pawns	6½						

Norfolk & Suffolk Cup

The winners of the Norfolk half of this competition play the winners of a similar competition played in Suffolk to decide the overall winner of the cup.

Norfolk & Norwich won the Norfolk final against Norwich Dons and will now play Bury St Edmunds in the final.

*		Aylsham	1½	Norwich Dons	1½
*					
Lowestoft	2½	Norwich Dons	4½		
Norwich Dons	3½				
Wymondham	1	St Johns	1	Norfolk & Norwich	4½
St Johns	5				
Norfolk & Norwich	5½	Norfolk & Norwich	5		
Broadland	½				

League Division 1

Winners: Norfolk & Norwich A, Runners Up: Norwich Dons Avengers

Most Points and Best Percentage: Martin Walker, Norwich Dons Avengers

Team	Play	Won	Draw	Lost	For
Norfolk & Norwich A	14	10	3	1	41
Norwich Dons Avengers	14	9	3	2	39
Broadland Bitterns	14	8	3	3	30½
Norfolk & Norwich B	14	5	6	3	30
St Johns Crusaders	14	4	3	7	24½
Norwich Dons Buccaneers	14	2	5	7	22½
St Johns Templars	14	3	1	10	19
Aylsham Spitfires	14	2	2	10	16½

League Division 2

Winners: Norwich Dons Cavaliers, Runners Up: Wymondham Eagles

Most Points: Armando Galletti, Lowestoft A

Best Percentage: Biran Shah, Norwich Dons Cavaliers

Team	Play	Won	Draw	Lost	For
Norwich Dons Cavaliers	12	8	2	2	32½
Wymondham Eagles	12	8	2	2	30
North Norfolk Seals	12	6	1	5	25
Lowestoft A	12	5	2	5	24
Lowestoft B	12	5	2	5	24
St Johns Bishops	12	1	5	6	18½
Fakenham Oddfellows	12	1	2	9	14

League Division 3

Winners: Norfolk & Norwich C, Runners Up: Wymondham Owls

Most Points and Best Percentage: Evghenii Sevciuc, Norfolk & Norwich C

Team	Play	Won	Draw	Lost	For
Norfolk & Norwich C	12	9	1	2	31
Wymondham Owls	12	7	3	2	29
Aylsham Hurricanes	12	6	1	5	26½
Norwich Dons Daredevils	12	4	2	6	24
Broadland Swallowtails	12	4	2	6	20½
St Johns Knights	12	2	2	8	19
Kings Lynn	12	4	1	7	17

League Division 4

Winners: Wymondham Wrens, Runners Up: Norfolk & Norwich D

Most Points: Edward Hackford, North Norfolk Crabs

Best Percentage: Murray Raff, Norfolk & Norwich D

Team	Play	Won	Draw	Lost	For
Wymondham Wrens	12	9	1	2	33½
Norfolk & Norwich D	12	9	1	2	32
North Norfolk Crabs	12	9	1	2	31½
Aylsham Gladiators	12	5	2	5	26½
Broadland Harriers	12	3	0	9	18
St Johns Knaves	12	2	2	8	15½
Broadland Grebes	12	0	3	9	11

Alex Niedzwiedzki Memorial Trophy

This goes to the player with the highest percentage performance in NCCA League and Cup standard play competitions having played 10 or more games. This year the trophy goes to Evghenii Sevcuic (Norfolk & Norwich) who won 9 of his 10 games giving a 90% performance.

John Charman Trophy

This goes to the highest scoring player in NCCA League matches and rated under 1600 having played 6 or more games. This year the trophy goes jointly to Edward Hackford (North Norfolk) and Chris Flynn (Lowestoft).

Detailed Results

All of the details of this season and past season results are available to view on the ECF League Management System, see <https://ecflms.org.uk/lms/node/103194/home>

The events are listed down the left hand side. Select one of these and you will see a series of tabs that include tables of results and player statistics.

Roll of Honour

The Roll of Honour on the NCCA web site will be updated with all of this season's results. See <https://www.norfolkchess.org/rollofhonour.html>

Stephen Livermore
June 2024

Events Organiser:

John Wickham delivered the following reports:

I would like to start with thanks Mike Read and Roy Hughes for their help and support. Mike has for many years helped me in setting up events but also with watching games, coaching and assistance at several of our events. Roy has helped in setting up online entry forms plus spreadsheets to track the entries, and in booking the Blitz. I have for several years indicated that for most of the work involved I have been doing this on my own. This has been fine but recently I have become concerned as to the risks faced by the County should I not be able to attend the event. We do not have someone who could take over and run the event at short notice. The financial risks if we had to cancel, say Gt Yarmouth would be over £1600. As I get older and have more responsibilities outside of chess the risk increases, and this is why I have raised succession planning and having a backup. Ideally, we need someone to work with me who can take over at some point. One person has indicated his interest to me. He is doing the ECF arbiters course which is a good start and I will discuss further with him. We ran five events this year adding in a Team Blitz event. Attendances have been good but I have concerns that the changes to the ECF Membership system next season may lead to reduced entries next season.

Team Blitz

This was a new event, an idea of Roy Hughes who was joint organiser, as an opener for the new season and was held on 12 September 2023 at the Horstead Tithe Barn. 16 teams entered and we had two sections Championship and Challengers playing an all play all of 7 rounds.

In the Championship Dons Avengers and Norfolk & Norwich A were equal first and Broadland Bitterns were third. The Challengers had Dons Donuts and Norfolk & Norwich B joint first and Lowestoft B third.

It was good to have so many teams playing as the evening was wet, with heavy rain, but also there was traffic

chaos on the North Walsham Road following an accident.

Norfolk County Chess Championships 2023

We normally have a limit of 48 entrants, so that we have the top 24 playing in the Championship and the rest in the Challengers. It is rare that we are full. However, this year by the end of July I was concerned that I only had 10 places left and that a lot of the players who qualify for the Championship had not entered. So, I sent round a reminder, and some did respond but we then had some more for the Challengers. As you will appreciate this is unprecedented to be full by the beginning of August. I increased the limit to 52 but they were quickly snapped up and I had to close down entries and start a reserve list. Those on the reserve list who qualified for the Championship were given priority when there were withdrawals. There were some but we had 52 turn up with 26 in each section.

The main focus of the Championships is to find the Norfolk Champion and while it is encouraging that so many want to play in the Challengers, I will need to find a way to get the top players in first before opening up for the Challengers.

The Championship was strong with ratings from 2212 – 1756. It meant there were some strong, over 1700, players in the Challengers. The top rated player, Martin Walker started well with a win in the first round. By round 4 was on 4 points and 1 point clear of the rest.

Into the last round we had Vivash Samarakoon and Jaden Jermy on 3 and Vivash was drawn against Martin Walker. Despite my encouraging them to play to the death they agreed a draw after 16 moves. This gave Martin the Championship. Joining Vivash on 3.5 points were, Stephen Orton, who beat Jaden Jermy, and Roy Hughes who beat John Lambert. They all tied for second place.

Martin last won the Championship 32 years ago, and in a different name. It was a well-deserved win.

The U1940 Champion was Trevor Ansell. He tied with Mervyn Hughes and Darrell Pigott but won on the tie break with a better sum of opponents scores.

In the Challengers the final round top board was a tough match going down to an endgame that looked like it would go in Ben Yelverton's favour but right at the end in a rook + pawn against rook ending Ben overlooked a tactic when Stephen Livermore took the pawn and after Ben took the rook Stephen captured Ben's rook. A draw with them both on 4 points. Peter Stone meanwhile had beaten Joseph Grant to go to the same score. The tie break gave the Challengers trophy to Stephen Livermore. He also was the U1640 Champion. Ben was the U1825 Champion.

The Best Game prize was won by Lucy Batley. We added a Junior Best Game Prize that was won by Dan Joal Allwin Christopher who scored an impressive 2.5 points. Also, we had a Championship section prize which was won by Stephen Orton.

I have already booked the Tithe Barn for next year for 5th and 6th October 2024. Hope to see many of you there next year.

Championship

1st Martin Walker
2nd = Vivash Samarakoon
 Stephen Orton
 Roy Hughes

Challengers

1st = Stephen Livermore (Champion)
 Ben Yelverton
 Peter Stone

U1940 Trevor Ansell (Champion), Mervyn Hughes, Darrell Pigott

U1825 Ben Yelverton

U1640 Stephen Livermore

Best Game Lucy Batley

Championship best game: Stephen Orton

Junior Best Game: Dan Joal Allwin Christopher

Austin McDonnell- David May

Norfolk Rapidplay 2024

With a week to go I had just under 45 entrants and thought that we would get around 50 but with a rush of entrants, some at the last minute, we ended up with 58 playing, an increase on last year. This with some kind donations meant I was able to enhance last years prize funds.

Hevingham Village Hall is larger than the Tithe Barn and has a large breakout area plus a bigger and better equipped kitchen. A major drawback is the lack of nearby facilities which would be a problem for a weekend congress. I would be interested in any feedback on this. I have already booked the Tithe Barn for this year's Norfolk Championships (5th & 6th October) but if we wished to make more use of Hevingham then it could be an option in 2025.

The Championship section was strong this year with top seed Alan Merry at 2440, and nine of the 22 players rated

over 2000. It was good to see Mike Harris playing and also David LeMoir returning to the event.

Round 4 produced a shock with Alan Merry losing to Mike Harris, which put Mike in the lead on 4.5. Catching up with Alan was Jaden Jermy on 4.

With several on 4.5 the final round was there for Mike to win, but Jaden won their game to move onto 5 points. Alan beat Steve Moore and thus tied with Jaden in first place. With John Anderson winning against Bharath Klass, he shared third place with Mike. Steve Moore had a good tournament ending the sole person on 3.5 and won the U2000 rating prize.

The Challengers had a superb performance by Dan Joal Allwin who on a rating of 1488, beat several payers rated more than 200 points higher, He beat Barry Connor, Andy Hartland, Graham Blowers, Armando Galletti, Mark Nettleton and drew against Sam Gaffney. This left him on 5.5/6 as the highest scoring over all 3 sections, winning the Peter Burnett trophy. He was also a clear point ahead on the rest, a great performance and as Mike Read reported after the Norfolk Championships, he is one to watch. Sam Gaffney and Daniel Thompson were joint second. Sharvari Saharkar did well and shared the U1600 rating prize with Mark Nettleton.

The U1450 had 9 juniors out of the 17 entrants. Larysa Klepikovska won her first three games but in round 3 was beaten by Martin Madar (from Ipswich) who moved a half point ahead of her. Larysa won her final two games but Martin lost in round 5 to Thomas Ryall and then won his round 6 game leaving Larysa the winner of the section on 5 points. Martin and Thomas tied for second place.

The junior prize was shared between four members of the Norwich Juniors, Sridatta Kesanupalli, Pranav KumarVimala, Tekshan Malempatti and Juniad Ahmed.

Overall the event went well. There were a few illegal moves to sort out but in the main the games were incident free. With 58 entrants that certainly helps me and eased my workload.

Championship

1st = Alan Merry

Jaden Jermy

3rd = Michael Harris

John Anderson

Rating U2000 Steve Moore

Challengers (U1750)

1st Dan Joal Allwin

2nd = Daniel Thompsom

Sam Gaffney

Rating U1600 Mark Nettleton

Sharvari Saharkar

U1450

1st Larysa Klepikovska

2nd = Tom Ryall

Martin Madar

Junior = Pranav Kumarvilla

Sridatta Kesanupalli

Juniad Ahmed

Tekshan Malempati

Peter Burnett- Dan Joal Allwin

Great Yarmouth Chess Congress 2024

The Great Yarmouth Racecourse is an excellent venue for our Congress and give us plenty of room for the players. However, the cost has increased and we can only afford it with sponsorship. Fortunately, Kingsley Healthcare, who are opening a new care home at Eversley Lodge (close to the Racecourse) agreed to be the main sponsor. With our other sponsors, Bodo Ltd, Great Yarmouth Town Centre Partnership and Patrick McDermott we had enough to cover the increase and to enhance the prizes. In addition, there were some very generous donations which helped to add some extra prizes.

We had 86 players lined up but one did not turn up due to illness. It could have been more as two entrants withdrew when the date of the train strikes was announced and I suspect there were some who were put off entering for the same reason. The numbers of entrants meant that with the other funds we managed to do better than break even.

The Open was a very strong tournament with 24 players and ratings from 2512 to 1740. Also from board 14 upwards the ratings were all over 2000. The top 3 players were Alan Merry 2512, Jacob Boswell, 2331 and David Spence 2254. I was pleased that David entered as he was a regular several years ago.

The final Parings had Alan Merry playing David Spence. This was reminiscent of congresses several years ago

when David and Alan would meet. Harry Zheng was playing Geoffrey Moore. In what appeared to be a tight game David beat Alan to go into first place where he was joined by Harry Zheng. Alan who we have been used to taking first place had to share third with Jacob Boswell and Gerald Moore. The U2000 rating prize was shared by Trevor Ansell, Dave Hall, Stephen Berkley, William Bartram, Antony Hall and Michael Gibbons. The junior Prize was won by Kit Blades.

In the Major we had 34 playing with a ratings range of 1540-1892. One person did not turn up and another came late but asked to transfer to the Minor

Round Four saw Parin Suchak beat Paul Kelly to be the sole player on 4 points. Steve Moore beat David May and Dave Twitchell ended Dan Joal's good run. That left 2 players on 3.5 (Steve and Dave) going into Round five.

David Twitchell played Parin Suchak and drew. Steve Moore beat Sam Gaffney to share 1st place with Parin Suchak. Dave Twitchell shared 3rd place with Paul Mottram (who had a good final run of games) on 4 points. The U1740 rating prize was shared by Chris Perkins and Graeme Jones.

As the highest scoring Norfolk based player Steve Moore was awarded the Peter Vivian Shield.

In the Minor we had 27 playing with ratings from 1100 to 1600.

We had 14 playing in Round three and with Clive Le Baigue winning he went into Round four as the only one on maximum points and continued with a win in that round. He was guaranteed at least a share on 1st place as his nearest rivals, 3 players, Kenneth Jardine, Michael Sturman and Graham Lawrence, were on 3 points.

Michael Sturman beat Clive and with Graham Lawrence also winning we had a three way share of 1st place.

Graham as an unrated player (he has not played for several years) could only win the value of 3rd place and he generously donated his prize to the Congress. That left Clive and Michael sharing the combined prize for 1st and 2nd. Michael who was once a neighbour of Bob Royall asked that his prize go to the Junior funds in Bob's memory, a very generous gesture and Matt Perry will be putting the money to good use.

The U1450 rating prize was shared by Joe Eagle and Rod Mills. The Junior prize was shared by Larysa Klepikovska, Edward Lott and Thomas Ewart.

For next year it is looking that we will have some sponsorship and should be able to use the Racecourse again.

Likely date, which may change, will be 12th & 13th April 2025

OPEN

1st = David Spence Ipswich/Suffolk
Harry Zheng London

3rd = Alan Merry
Gerald Moore
Jacob Boswell

Rating U2000 Trevor Ansell, Dave Hall, Stephen Berkley, William Bartram,
Antony Hall, Michael Gibbons

Junior Kit Blades

U1900

1st = Steve Moore Norwich Dons
Parin Suchak Syston

3rd = David Twitchell Lowestoft/Gt Yarmouth
Paul Mottram

Rating U1740 Chris Perkins
Graeme Jones

U1600

1st = Clive Le Baigue Margate
Michael Sturman Bradwell
Graham Lawrence Watton

Rating U1450 Joe Eagle
Rod Mills

Junior Ed Lott
Larysa Klepikovska
Thomas Ewart

Peter Vivian Shield- Steve Moore

4th Norfolk Blitz 27 May 2024

This was held again at the Horstead Tithe Barn on the Bank Holiday Monday. With a Blitz numbers of over 40 present a problem when there is just one arbiter and the Tithe Barn is just right for such a number. Roy Hughes once again booked the venue.

We had 32 enter which I split with 16 each in the Championship and Challengers. Unfortunately 3 withdrew (all in the challengers). In the Championship we had ratings ranging from 2212 to 1669. The top seed was Martin Walker and the top 5 were all over 2000.

Alfie Onslow and Michael Harris both were on maximum score and met in round 4 when they drew. After that Alfie won his remaining games to finish on 9.5/10 and Michael after another two draws ended on 8.5. Third was Jaden Jermy and the U1950 rating prize was shared by Hazel Bowler and Steve Moore.

The Challengers had 8 juniors out of 13 players. Dan Joel Allwin was the top seed and he and Pranav Kumarmavilla on maximum scores met in round 4 where Pranav won. However, Pranav lost in the next round to Thomas Ewart but after that game won the remainder to top the Challengers on 9/10. Dan Joel lost another game and ended up on 7.5 and in second place. Third was Bryony Eccleston and Thomas won the U1400 rating prize. So the top places were all juniors. Pranav excelled with his score.

I did wonder if a bank holiday would be a problem for some but we actually attracted several players who were in Norfolk for the bank holiday (including Nigel Blades who used to play for Norfolk & Norwich).

County First Team Report 2023-24:

Although he could not attend, Antony Hall had sent in the following report which was read out by Alan Page:

I returned to the captaincy for the first time since the 2019-20 season. Our matches took place at a new venue in Newmarket, the King Edward VII Memorial Hall, which has hosted the EACU Congresses. The general consensus was that it was a big improvement on Turner Hall.

The First Team comfortably finished top of the EACU Open Championship with four wins, one draw and one defeat. No other county scored more than two wins. We also scored the most Game Points (55½). Things didn't start convincingly as I was admitted to hospital a few days before the opening matches, but David Payne kindly stepped in at short notice to captain the teams in my absence. We suffered a close defeat to Suffolk but beat Cambs, and then got into our stride in the remaining matches.

We accepted our nomination for the Minor Counties alongside Bedfordshire, who finished second. The other five nominated counties from outside the EACU were the same as last season, which shows how competitive it is. We were paired at home in the QF to Devon, whom we lost to in the final two seasons ago. Once again, we played at the intermediate venue of Knaphill Methodist Church near Woking, a long journey for both teams. The match took place on the hottest day of the year which also saw the M25 shut nearby to allow a new bridge to be installed. Fortunately, there were no travel problems.

I was able to field a much stronger team than Devon, and we won 11½ – 4½ although the match was tougher than the scoreline might suggest. We will play Sussex in the SF on Saturday 8th June at Great Baddow, near Chelmsford. We beat them in the QF last season, but they are strong opponents and there are no easy matches at this stage.

At the time of writing, a total of 25 players have represented the team. As ever, I would like to thank everybody who has supported and played for the team this season, with special thanks to John Wickham for setting the DGTs and preparing the kit, and David Payne for holding the fort in the opening matches while I was indisposed.

I am willing to continue in the role of First Team Captain.

Captains' Rose Bowl – Jeff Dawson

The recipient this season was top scorer for the First Team with 6/7 (so far). A special mention also to Peter Stone, who scored 5/6 for the U1850 team.

Antony Hall
Norfolk First Team Captain 2023-24

U1850 Captain's Report:

Although he could not attend, David Payne had sent in the following report which was read out by Alan Page:

County U1850 Championship

This year's U1850's campaign was going well until the final round of matches where we slipped from first place to third place. We lost to a close match with this year's champions Suffolk so we needed a draw with Hertfordshire to put us in 2nd place. Unfortunately, we choked and suffered a heavy loss and slipped to third place on game points.

Final table

Team	Play	Won	Draw	Lost	For	Against	Points	SP	MP	IM
Suffolk CCA u1850	6	4	2	0	54	42	10	0	0	0
Hertfordshire CA u1850	6	3	1	2	52	44	7	0	0	0
Norfolk CCA u1850	6	3	1	2	48	48	7	0	0	0
Cambridgeshire CCA u1850	6	0	0	6	38	58	0	0	0	0

Fixtures / Results

Home Team	Result	Away Team	Date	Time	Status
Norfolk CCA u1850	9½ - 6½	Cambridgeshire CCA u1850	Sun 29th Oct 2023	10:00	OV
Suffolk CCA u1850	8 - 8	Norfolk CCA u1850	Sun 29th Oct 2023	14:00	OV
Norfolk CCA u1850	9 - 7	Hertfordshire CA u1850	Sun 4th Feb 2024	10:00	OU
Cambridgeshire CCA u1850	7½ - 8½	Norfolk CCA u1850	Sun 4th Feb 2024	14:00	OV
Norfolk CCA u1850	7½ - 8½	Suffolk CCA u1850	Sun 3rd Mar 2024	10:00	OV
Hertfordshire CA u1850	10½ - 5½	Norfolk CCA u1850	Sun 3rd Mar 2024	14:00	OU

Several Norfolk players had impressive performances over the championship season, notably Peter Stone with a superb 5 / 6 (4 wins and 2 draws) . His rating performance was an excellent 2013 so he won't be eligible to play in the U1850 section next season.

Henry Leather , David McLean, Chris Flynn and Stephen Livermore all had decent results.

We used 21 players over the season with the following Norfolk clubs providing players:

St Johns	8
Norwich Dons	5
Norfolk & Norwich	3
Lowestoft	3
Aylsham	1
North Norfolk	1

It would be great if we could get players from all the Norfolk Clubs represented.

I am proud to report that we met all our fixtures without any defaults and I was able field strong teams on every occasion.

Individual Performances (Stats)

Name	Performance	Score	Games	Including Defaults ▲
Leather, Henry	2070	2	2	100%
Stone, Peter	2013	5	6	83.33%
Flynn, Chris	1823	4½	6	75%
McLean, David E	1932	4	6	66.67%
Livermore, Stephen	1771	4	6	66.67%
Blowers, Graham K	1716	3½	6	58.33%
Klass, Bharath	1750	3½	6	58.33%
Yelverton, Ben	1697	3	6	50%
Payne, David J	1746	2	4	50%
Larter, Nigel J	1708	1	2	50%
Shah, Biran S	1773	3	6	50%
Perkins, Chris	1658	1	2	50%
Galletti, Armando	1691	2½	6	41.67%
Adegboye, Ayomikun	1600	1½	4	37.5%
Scott, David	1717	1½	4	37.5%
Wickham, John R	1557	1	3	33.33%
Movilla Miangolarra, Ander	1448	½	2	25%
Payne, Colin R	1502	½	2	25%
Bowler, Hazel	1620	1½	6	25%
Dolamore, John E	1588	1	4	25%
McAvoy, Jim	1456	½	6	8.33%

I am confident that next season will be able to field a competitive team again and hopefully we can win the championships again and progress to the KO stages.

Thank you to all who represented the County this season and in particular, thank you to the drivers who provided lifts to Newmarket – the team could not participate without you.

I would be happy to continue my role as captain – unless anyone else is desperate to take the reigns?

If anyone is interested:

Lincolnshire 9½ - 6½ Suffolk

Kent 5 - 11 Hertfordshire

Hertfordshire will play Yorkshire in the semi final on 8th June – Good luck to our EACU rivals

David Payne- U1850 captain

Junior Organiser:

Matt Perry gave the following report to the meeting:

Norfolk Junior Chess Report 2024

Junior chess in Norfolk has continued to go from strength to strength this year.

The majority of the county's junior players attend the Norwich Junior Chess Club run by Stephen Orton. Others come from clubs including Broadland Junior Club, the North Walsham Library Chess Club and Sheringham

Primary School. There is also now a new junior club 'The West Norfolk Knights' in Downham Market, which has proved popular in its first few sessions.

There have been 2 tournaments organised for Norfolk junior chess players this year; the North Walsham Tournament and the Norfolk Junior Championships. Each event proved to be a success with 45 and 57 juniors taking part respectively. The Sheringham Junior Tournament is taking place in July this year.

The Norfolk under 9 champion for 2024 is Oleksandr Tychna, under 10 is champion is Sirius Palmer, under 11 champion is Tekshan Malempati, under 14 champion is Dan Joal, and the under 18 champion is Edward Lott.

The Norfolk juniors now have an online team, which includes 36 players. Each month the team takes part in the East Anglian Battle and the National Inter-County tournament. The Norfolk junior team have performed well winning the national 2nd division and they won the East Anglian tournament in May.

We continue to have an online presence on our website, Lichess, Facebook and X (Twitter).

I would like to thank Michael Sturman for donating his prize money from the Great Yarmouth congress to the juniors in memory of Bob Royall. We intend to buy a shield to be given to the junior personality of the year, each year. It will be given to a junior who has done some or all of the following

- 1) Has put in a lot of effort into improving.
- 2) Has attended their club and/or entered the majority of Norfolk tournaments
- 3) Has overcome adversity.
- 4) Has made a valuable contribution to a club.

I intend to award the shield for the first time at the Sheringham event.

We have also purchased a shield for the Norfolk Junior Player of the Year. To be presented to the junior who has made the most progress or been the most successful in the last year. This year's winner is Vivash Samarakoon, for his excellent results in Division 1 and his performances for the county team.

Finally, I would like to thank everyone who supported myself and Norfolk Junior chess this year, including John Wickham, Stephen Orton, Jonathan Reeve, Cosmo Stephanides, Martin Walker and Andy Hartland. Without this support all of these successes would not have been possible.

ECF Delegate:

John Wickham delivered the following report:

Last year the Government announced a grant of £1 million to chess. Part of the funds were for grants to local authorities to provide chess tables in parks so that there is open to chess. I know of only Great Yarmouth Town Council applying for such a grant and their table is to be placed near the Marina centre.

The majority of the funds were to go towards developing the next English Grand Masters and to enable England to challenge for gold medals in European and World events. The money has to be applied for with a budget outlining how it is to be spent and what is to be achieved. What the funds cannot be used for is normal expenditure.

BCF/ECF used to receive an annual grant which was not used wisely and when it was withdrawn in the early 2000's ECF had to increase fees to make up the shortfalls.

However, ECF have identified an amount that can be used to develop chess at grass roots levels with things such as subsidised chess equipment, help for new clubs and congresses, grants for training etc. Details of how to apply will be advertised by ECF when they are ready to proceed.

You may recall that ECF consulted on a review of the Membership scheme. At the AGM last October the results were discussed and it was agreed to merge silver and gold membership. This would lead to an increase for silver members and a reduction for gold members. It would also mean that a Bronze member playing in a Congress would pay a higher figure to upgrade to gold.

At the ECF Finance Council meeting on 27th April the new membership fees were set for 2024/2025. As Fees had

been unchanged for 6 years ECF needed to increase them all by £2 to balance the accounts. As a result, bronze increases to £20. Gold is now £35, which is an increase of £8 on the discontinued silver and a £4 reduction on the old gold fee rate. Platinum increases to £77. This change means that the pay to play rate (paid by non-members and bronze members entering congresses, being the difference between bronze and gold) is £15. That is a high figure, and it may lead to fewer new players entering congresses. For Juniors, after pressure at the meeting Junior Bronze at £6 has been reintroduced. The Junior Gold fee is £12 and junior platinum is £77. The free junior membership in the first year is still available. In juniors only congresses the pay to play fee is £3 and for congresses where adults and juniors play the pay to play is £6 (the difference between junior bronze and junior gold). The new membership fees will start from 1st July 2024 so that ECF have time to ensure the system changes are operating correctly. All current silver members will get a free upgrade to gold from 1st July until their renewal date. This also applies to Junior silver members. The new pay to play rates will operate for events after 1st September 2024.
John Wickham

Website:

Trevor Ansell was unable to attend but sent the following report which was read out by Alan Page:

I am not aware of any problems with the website but if anyone does encounter any at any time please feel free to report to me for investigation.
I am also happy to consider any proposals which could add value to the website, it exists to provide information about Norfolk chess activities for all Norfolk players.
I am willing to continue in the role if elected.

6. Proposal to increase league fees and to reintroduce cup entry fees

A proposal by the NCCA Treasurer Andy Hartland to increase league fees for next season by £5 (i.e. from £33 to £38 per team) was seconded by Eric Bradley and approved by the meeting.

7. Election of Officers and Committee Members

The following committee appointments were made:

Chairman	John Wickham
Vice Chairman	Brian Cunningham
Secretary	Alan Page
Treasurer	Andy Hartland
League and Cup Controller	Stephen Livermore
ECF/EACU Delegate	John Wickham
Auditor	Phil Sneesby
Junior Organiser	Matt Perry
Web Site Officer	Trevor Ansell
Trophies Officer	Jeff Dawson
Events Organiser	John Wickham
County 1st team Captain	Antony Hall
U1850 Captain	David Payne
U1650 Captain	Vacant
U1450 Captain	Vacant
Safeguarding Officer	Martin Walker
Additional EACU delegates	Mike Read, David Payne, Eric Bradley

8. Presentation of trophies:

At this point Jeff Dawson addressed the meeting regarding the introduction of a new cup, The John Wickham Trophy, in recognition of all the continuing work performed by John on behalf of Norfolk Chess over many years. We were joined by Owen Hindle who kindly presented the trophy to John. John in turn responded by thanking all involved. The new trophy replaces the previous Division 1 trophy.

Division 1:

Winners – Norfolk & Norwich A

R/U – Dons Avengers

Division 2:

Winners – Dons Cavaliers

R/U – Wymondham Eagles

Division 3:

Winners – Norfolk & Norwich C

R/U – Wymondham Owls

Division 4:

Winners – Wymondham Wrens

R/U – Norfolk & Norwich D

Williamson Cup – St. John's Crusaders

Williamson Plate – Broadland Bitterns

Rapidplay Handicap Cup – Norfolk & Norwich Knights

Captain's Rose-Bowl – Jeff Dawson

Norfolk Chess Personality of the Year – Bodo Rissman

Alex Niedzwiedzki Memorial Trophy – Evghenii Sevciuc

John Charman Shield – Edward Hackford & Chris Flynn

Peter Vivian Shield – Steve Moore

The previous Division 1 Trophy was now available to be reassigned and was presented as follows:

Norfolk & Suffolk Cup NCCA Winners - Norfolk & Norwich

9. Any Other Business

At this point Mike Read mentioned that Norman Thomas, who was unable to attend the meeting, had sent his good wishes to John Wickham regarding the presentation and new trophy.

The meeting closed at approximately 10.00pm