

## **STOURBRIDGE CHESS CLUB**

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Treasurer: Steve Alcock

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### **Minutes of an ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING held at The Queen's Head on Tuesday, 20<sup>th</sup> May 2025, commencing at 19.30 hours.**

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**Present:** Steve Alcock, Chris Evans, John Foxall, Eric Horwill, Paul Sharratt, Tony Shaw, Adam Ware, Julie Wilson.

- 1. Welcome and Apologies:** The President welcomed everyone to the meeting.

There were apologies from Dan Billingham, Jeremy Fallowfield, Nic Fallowfield, Richard Wilkinson.

- 2. Minutes of the AGM of 2024:** The minutes were agreed.

- 3. Matters arising:** There were no matters arising.

- 4. President's Report:** For me as president, this has been an interesting year.

A lot of our time and effort has been taken up with trying to get a venue for the chess club. At the start of the season we moved to the Talbot hotel and this seemed to be an almost perfect venue. Unfortunately, the owners sold the hotel behind the management's back. We were unable to get a straight answer from the new management about whether or not we would be able to meet there and it soon became apparent that we were not welcome.

At the start of December we moved to the Queen's Head where the landlady was and is very welcoming but the room is a bit on the small side and we are now considering alternatives.

Similar to last year, again we seem to have difficulty keeping our members. Also there seems to be a reluctance among members to attend the chess club and interact with it.

I know that Dan Billingham who is standing for club secretary has some ideas about how we can get greater participation and be more welcoming to new members.

We need some younger faces on the club committee with some new ideas.

However, despite this we have had a very successful season. Thanks in particular go to our team captains Steve, Paul and Tony.

I will leave it to the captains to tell you more about our promotions.

- 5. Secretary's Report:** There have been some difficulties in achieving full participation in some teams this year, and arranging transport has not been easy. Nevertheless, a very full programme of fixtures has been completed. It was particularly pleasing that the BDCL3 team won the divisional title and promotion to BDCL2. There are options for other promotions for teams in BDCL4 and WDCL2.

I have decided to relinquish my responsibilities with the club at this time. Health issues are beginning to constrain my activities – in particular, a diagnosis of macular degeneration means that my capacity to drive at night is already diminished, and my eyesight will continue to deteriorate. I cannot offer transport to others because of the potential risk to their safety.

- 6. Treasurer's Report:** We made a profit of £181.50 over the season, mainly due to increased income from four additional paying members and reduced expenditure, compared with a loss of £52.54 last year.

We have a healthy closing bank balance of £1587.16. This should enable us to buy any new equipment we may need, such as a storage cabinet for the pub.

We were charged £18 game fees by the Birmingham League for Ron Evans not being an ECF member. This was recovered from Ron.

- 7. Captains' Reports:**

The BDCL3 team finished joint first to secure promotion, and won the playoff to secure the divisional trophy.

The BDCL4 team has finished in third place, and has the option of promotion. This will be declined.

In WDCL2 the team finished in third place, but, with Stafford deciding not to take promotion, will play in WDCL1 next season.

In WDCL3 the team retained their current status.

In W&D the team finished in second place, having been deducted 2 match points for players being listed in the incorrect board order v Kidderminster.

- 8. Social Secretary's Report:** This year our Summer program was curtailed due to us moving venue.

The Summer tournament which started on the 9th July with 5 weekly rounds. Coming into the final round, I was the sole leader and had the black pieces against Colin. Colin came very close to causing an upset but miscalculated in a complicated position to allow me to gain the upper hand. John Foxall won against Max to take second place. The prize for best "newcomer" goes to Max. Max and Ben were the only entrants to play in all 5 rounds. This year it will start in the first week of July and I am hoping for a good turnout particularly from our newer members.

The Tony Evers match versus Halesowen was hosted by Halesowen on 29th July.

Well what can I say. It was a very good buffet and a very enjoyable evening but we lost by a large margin 9-2 and Halesowen had to lend us 2 players (who both lost) . I guess it was Halesowen's turn to win. Eric was our star performer with a good win against Tony Stokes and Tony Shaw and Steve Alcock both played well to draw.

This year it's our turn to host it and the date is dependent on what we decide about the venue.

The club dinner was held in the Talbot on the 19th August where the food was excellent but the service was a bit haphazard! . This year's dinner will be held at Bay Tree, Kinver on a date to be decided.

An internal blitz tournament was held to kick-off the 2024/25 season on 27th August. 8 of us played altogether in a round robin format with a time control of game in 7 minutes. There was a friendly atmosphere throughout with new and old members all mixing in and taking part. New member Dan Jones won the tournament with a perfect 7 out of 7. John Foxall came second with 5 points.

With Christmas Day falling on a Wednesday, we were unable to hold any Christmas events

Throughout the year, the online club has held tournaments on chess.com. I am now a chess.com affiliate which means I can award up to 3 diamond memberships as prizes. At the moment online tournaments are held once a month. We usually get between 5 and 8 players so could do with some more. I'm just trying to keep the online club ticking over as it attracts people to the OTB club. We also have the occasional daily chess match. Do let me know if there's any particular type of tournament you would like me to put on.

- 9. Publicity Secretary's Report:** I have sent a few reports to the newspapers, however they have not been published. I no longer receive the Stourbridge News but my reports do not appear in the online searchable edition.

If you have any ideas as to how I can get my reports published please let me know. If you play in any congresses, county matches or other chess events including online can you let me have your results and any points of interest so I can add them to my report.

I would love to receive match reports from team captains or at least email me the match results and any points of interest.

I can also provide posters and cards advertising the club if anyone would like to put them up somewhere suitable.

**Website:** We have a group on Facebook but participation by club members is low. So, if you have any chess related stories or information do post it on our Facebook group or the chess.com club. Also, should the club have some other social media presence?

Throughout the season I have been regularly updating the Website, although I have not done so much this year as I have put a lot of effort into venues for the chess club and I have also been unwell.

The website was hosted by Plusnet, but it is now moving to Greenby and I am hoping they will offer better tools and support and a security certificate.

**10. Safeguarding update:** There were no incidents to report. The club had a new draft safeguarding policy, which was accepted unanimously.

**11. Presentation of Awards for 2023/24:** The following awards were made:

The Sidney Willetts Trophy (most reliable club member) – Eric Horwill

The President's Cup (services to the club) – Tony Shaw

The Denis Fernihough Trophy (most improved player) – Adam Ware

**12. Summer programme:** The following events are planned:

(i) Summer tournament – 5-round Swiss.

(ii) Tony Evers match v Halesowen

(iii) Club dinner

**13. Election of Officers for 2024/5:** The following officers were elected:

(i) President – Julie Wilson

(ii) General Secretary – Dan Billingham

(iii) Treasurer – Steve Alcock

(iv) Social Secretary – Julie Wilson

(v) Publicity and Website – Julie Wilson

(vi) Safeguarding – Adam Ware

(vii) Team captains – BDCL2 Adam Ware; BDCL4 TBC; WDCL1 TBC; WDCL3 Steve Alcock; DDCL3 Steve Alcock

(viii) Co-opted members – Eric Horwill and John Foxall

**14. Teams for 2024/5:** It was agreed that the teams for next season would be:

BDCL divisions 2 and 4

WDCL divisions 1 and 3

DDCL3

**15. County chess update:** In both the Minor Counties and u1650 competitions the Worcestershire teams had been knocked out at the quarter-final stage of the nationals.

**16. Fees for 2024/5 season:** It was agreed that membership fees would remain unchanged.

**17. Venue:** Various possible venues were discussed. It was decided that the club should continue to meet at The Queen's Head.

**18. ECF membership:** Members were reminded that they could not play more than 3 games in any league (including cup matches) without incurring a membership fee for the English Chess Federation.

**19. A.O.B.:** There was none.

The President thanked everyone for their attendance, and declared the meeting closed at 21:25.