

Stourbridge Chess Club 2019 AGM Minutes
22nd May 2019 at Stourbridge Institute – start 7:35 pm

Present: Eric Horwill (President), Dave Scriven (Secretary), Steve Alcock, John Foxall, Jeremy Humphries, Paul Sharratt, Richard Wilkinson, Julie Wilson, Colin Woodall (and Frank Volcansek arrived during the meeting).

President Eric opened the meeting with a few words.

- It has been an honour and a privilege to be the club President for the past few years.
- Regarding the 2018/19 season, the club as a whole has done quite well.
- Our first Brian Dudley Memorial Tournament was a great success and we look forward to the second edition later this year.
- Most of our teams had a satisfactory season. The highlight was winning the Wolverhampton league Pittaway Cup despite having to make up a 2¼ point handicap.
- There have been a lot of players enjoying casual games on club nights.
- We currently have a very promising squad of junior players.
- Several of our members have represented the U140 Worcestershire team this season, which has been very successful having won the Midlands title and has now reached the semi-final stage in the National competition where we face Essex.
- The efforts of our members have ensured the smooth running of the club. I have to mention the splendid efforts of Dave, Steve, Paul and Julie in particular, but not overlooking other members' contributions.
- An archivist from Wall Heath will be writing an article on the chess club for the Black Country Bugle.
- I conclude by thanking everyone for their support during my period of office and wish the club all the very best for the future.

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Nic Fallowfield and Sam Bradley.

2. Minutes of the 2018 AGM

The minutes had been circulated previously and were accepted with no matters arising.

3. Secretary's Report by Dave Scriven

- The various aspects of club administration have all been completed, including attending various league meetings throughout the year. Thanks to Paul for helping out with some meetings within Worcestershire.
- Thankfully I have not had to attend any Rules and Disputes meetings this season on behalf of Stourbridge.
- The club has maintained a stable relationship with the Institute. They still take our room from us more than I would like, sometimes without warning, but the availability of the Falcon Room and the Restaurant is suitable. The availability of the car park on match nights is a big benefit and has been appreciated by lots of our opponents. The car park should be open when we have matches, so if it isn't open please ask the steward to open it.
- Team captains have not needed to continually refer to me about struggling for players, defaulting boards or worse still defaulting matches. There have been the occasional struggles to field a team, but we've usually managed to overcome them. Having said that, team selection for the top teams has been hampered because not all our members are happy to play in whichever team needs them to help the club. Even worse is when someone agrees to play, but only on condition of who else is in the team. Thankfully most of our players are happy to play chess in whichever league and at whichever venue they are needed to help the club, and that helps create harmony.
- It is great to see some people are arriving earlier to help set up for matches. Captains appreciate this. What captains also appreciate is prompt replies to e-mails and calls about your availability. It is hard enough to arrange teams without captains needing to chase players who have not replied for a few days.
- I have continued to write TWISC each week. Nearly all members seem to appreciate this weekly update, but there have been some replies that make me ask why I bother. If I look at 5 boards for 20 seconds each I may not fully understand every aspect of every position. When I write it up a few days later, forgive me if my analysis isn't 100% accurate. I try my best. I assume most members are happy for me to continue TWISC in its current form.
- I continue to pass on all information I receive as secretary. I'm also happy to answer any questions people may have about all aspects of the various leagues we compete in. Hopefully people realise I usually reply very promptly as I am on my e-mail every day. Of course the exception to this is when an e-mail is so blatantly ludicrous it doesn't deserve a reply.

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- Finally I have to commend Steve on his endeavours to create social chess on Wednesday nights for players who don't have a match. We have been crying out for years for players to be at the club on club night and thanks to Steve we now have a thriving social chess scene. I feel the members playing social chess has directly contributed to the increase in juniors playing and the increase in potential new members playing who may join. Well done Steve.

Jeremy offered thanks and appreciation for TWISC.

Richard commended the efforts on the analysis in TWISC.

The meeting was very supportive of TWISC and Dave's efforts as Secretary.

4. Treasurer's report by Dave Scriven

The accounts were discussed and approved.

For the forthcoming season:

- I expect league fees will be similar to this season, though we will incur league fees of approximately £30 for WDCL.
- We may incur some catering costs for the Tony Evers match, but these should be more than covered by the anticipated profits from the raffle.
- The only exceptional costs I envisage are about £20 for some scoresheets.
- There is a chance we could incur a "game fee" cost in the Summer for the only Stourbridge member who has not yet joined the ECF. If that happens, the cost will be passed to the individual.
- If anyone has any suggestions of items we may wish to purchase, please raise it at the end of the report.
- I expect our finances are in good shape for the season ahead. I also believe our club fees are set correctly and don't think we should change them, especially the free membership for juniors that was introduced last year. I therefore suggest the subscriptions for next season are as follows:
 - £15 for full members
 - a reduced rate of £10 for students and unemployed
 - Juniors are free
- Members will still need to be ECF members. I wish to keep this separate from our club accounts. ECF Membership fees will be in addition to the above club fees. Bronze Membership will be about £16 for adults.

Eric pointed out there would be some minor costs for the Brian Dudley Memorial (e.g. medals).

It was agreed to keep the fees as proposed by Dave.

5. Captains' Reports

Birmingham League Division 2 – Paul Sharratt

- Good season, with us able to field relatively strong teams.
- Struggled at bottom of table for a while before finishing 7th out of 12.
- Terrill Cup ended in second round against a very strong Sutton Coldfield div 1 team.

Birmingham League Division 4 – Sam Bradley (report read by Dave)

A good first half of the season before Christmas included 3 wins against the eventual bottom 3. We ended up finishing 7th out of 11 on 8 points winning 3 and drawing 2. Unfortunately the season ended on a sour note with the team defaulting against Walsall Kipping due to player availability which I apologise for. Thanks to all members who played throughout the season.

Wolverhampton League Division 1 – Paul Sharratt

- Similar tale to the BDCL Div 2 team finishing 6th out of 11.
- Won last four matches to give a played 10, won 5, drew 1, lost 4 record.
- Pittaway final against a strong Mercia with a 2¼ point handicap so we needed 5½ from 8 boards, which we achieved!

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Wolverhampton League Division 2 – Sam Bradley (report read by Dave)

After surviving relegation last season due to a team folding, could we survive again this season? Our first 4 games were all at home from which we were unable to earn any points. It was only until Warley Quinborne away did we pick up our first win of the season and due to St George's team folding we had a chance of beating the drop. Even with some good individual performances we didn't get any more points and we finished 10th (relegated) with 4 points above bottom placed St George's. Thanks to all the members who played and was good to see new members/youngsters turning out.

Wolverhampton League Division 4 – Steve Alcock

- Fairly successful season finishing 3rd out of 6.
- In with a chance of promotion but lost last two matches.
- Not trying to get promotion, preferring to give games to juniors, each of whom won at least one game.

Julie pointed out there is a "Top 40" on the WDCL website which includes several Stourbridge players.

Wolverhampton League Humphreys Cup – Colin Woodall

- Runner up in final.
- Ron won on top board so we only needed 1 point from other three boards, but we didn't get it.

Dudley League Division 2 – Colin Woodall

- Finished lower half with 1 win and 3 draws.
- Never had any problems assembling a team.
- On one occasion had 11 players available. (Dudley teams only need 4 players.)
- We entered to have fun, and we did.

Dudley League Division 3 – Steve Alcock

- This was a fun league.
- Most games were for juniors.
- Finished 6th out of 8 having won 1 and drawn 2.
- If we had claimed the default win against Walsall Kipping we would have finished 3rd, but we preferred to re-arrange and actually play the match.

Worcester and District Division 1 – Paul Sharratt

- We entered for some "social competitive" chess.
- Finished 5th out of 5; played 8, won 1, drew 1, lost 6.
- Everyone enjoyed games against different opponents to the usual "serious" league opponents (Birmingham league and Wolverhampton league)

There was general agreement that we enjoy playing for fun in the Worcestershire and Worcester leagues against our county colleagues and county teammates.

Worcester and District Division 2 – Steve Alcock

- 5th out of 8 at present, but there is one match outstanding that may see us drop to 6th.
- 12 different players represented the team, including many juniors.

Worcestershire County Division 2 – Paul Sharratt

- This was more fun social chess.
- Played 8, won 5, drew 1, lost 2.
- Worried we might have got promoted, which was not in the plan, but eventually finished second.

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6. Social Secretary's Report by Julie Wilson

This year we had our usual range of club activities and a couple of new ones. We had 17 entries for the Summer Tournament which included some guests. It was very close, with three players tying for first place on 4 points – John Foxall, Martin Berridge and Don Curry.

I am organising another Summer Tournament this year. It will take place every 2 weeks starting on 12th June. The pairing will be very flexible so that basically anyone who turns up will be able to play. It's open to members, prospective members and friends of the club. I am also hoping that in the weeks in between players will bring their games down to the club so we can play through them and analyse them.

The annual friendly Tony Evers match against Halesowen was played on July 24th at the Lighthouse pub. This time it was Halesowen's turn to host it. Stourbridge outgraded their opponents on the higher boards. We won the 14 board match 9½-4½ with our top 8 boards all winning which is excellent. This year, it's our turn to host it and subject to confirmation from Halesowen it will be on the 17th July. I will be sending out an e-mail nearer the time.

The club's pre-season blitz tournament was held on 22nd August. It was a seven round Swiss tournament with eleven players. Steve Alcock was the controller as he wanted to try out the Swiss pairing software. Hossam Aboushady won it on 6.5 points followed by Nic on 5.

The inaugural Brian Dudley memorial blitz chess tournaments in memory of the club's former president and county champion Dr Brian Dudley were held on August 29th 2018. Players were invited from neighbouring clubs to participate in either a junior or an adult tournament. Both tournaments had a fast time control of 10 minutes per person per game.

The final results were a clean sweep for Stourbridge even though only a quarter of the participants were Stourbridge players. Nic won the main tournament with 5.5 points. Stourbridge's Hossam Aboushady took the Under-145 prize on 4 points, and Jeremy Humphries the Under-125 on 3.5 points. The junior tournament was a five round round robin and was won by Stourbridge's Ethan Chan Smith on a perfect 5 point score.

We are proposing to hold the event again this year on 21st August. Thanks to Eric and Steve for organising it along with me.

The proposed date for the club dinner is 19th June at Vesuvio's. They offer a 3 course meal for £15.95 or two courses for £13.95. It's informal and open to club members, partners, friends and hangers on.

As we had few matches in May, we held an end of season blitz tournament. We played in two groups the top group was won by a guest player Jeremy Fallowfield and the ungraded group was won by Iren Treasure.

7. Publicity (including website) Report by Julie Wilson

I have been able to send the newspapers almost weekly reports based mainly on the information provided by Dave in TWISC. The Stourbridge Chronicle has published summaries of these most weeks and these have improved as the season went on. Also if you play in any congresses, county matches or other chess events can you let me have your results and any points of interest so I can add them to my report.

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

We also have a club notice board on the right hand side by the entrance we use. Feel free to put any chess related material on it. If anyone has any tournament flyers you can put them on there.

I have updated the website and have now put the fixtures in a Google calendar. I still need to make the site responsive for mobile phones and other devices.

I sent round an e-mail about the use of social media but only got three replies back. I will be starting a public Facebook group for the club imminently and we will see how that goes.

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8. Presentation of Trophies

Eric presented the Trophies as follows:

- The Presidents Cup for services to the club was presented jointly to Dave Scriven and Steve Alcock. (This was the 15th consecutive year Dave had won the trophy.)
- The Denis Fernihough Trophy for most improved player was awarded to Trevor Tennant.
- The Sydney Willets Trophy for the best player was awarded to Hossam Aboushaady.

9. Teams for next season

The meeting agreed the following. For the “serious chess”:

- Keep two teams in BDCL, div 2 and div 4, and enter both teams in the cups.
- Keep three teams in WDCL, div 1, div 3 and div 4, and enter both cups.

For the “social chess”:

- Continue in Worcester and District div 1 and div 2, giving extra games to players who want them.
- Continue in Worcestershire div 2 to give extra games to players who want them.
- Continue in Dudley div 2 and div 3.

There were two discussion points:

- There is a chance the WDCL may ask if we wish to retain our div 2 place instead of being relegated to div 3. The meeting decided we should stay in div 3, having been given a reprieve last season which led to a second relegation.
- There is a small chance we could be relegated from Worcester and District div 1. If that happens and we end up with two teams in div 2 we will withdraw the “top” team. The remaining div 2 team will again give priority to the lowest graded players.

10. Election of Officers 2019/2020 Season

The following officers were appointed for the forthcoming season. All of them were elected unopposed:

- President – Julie Wilson
- Secretary – Dave Scriven
- Treasurer – Dave Scriven
- Social Secretary – Julie Wilson
- Publicity (including website) – Julie Wilson

The following volunteered as Captains for next season.

- BDCL Div 2 – Paul Sharratt
- BDCL Div 4 – Sam Bradley (with Eric as vice-captain)
- WDCL Div 1 – Paul Sharratt
- WDCL Div 3 – Sam Bradley (with Eric as vice-captain)
- WDCL Div 4 – Steve Alcock
- Dudley Div 2 – Colin Woodall
- Dudley Div 3 – Steve Alcock
- Worcester Div 1 – TBD
- Worcester Div 2 – TBD
- Worcestershire Div 2 – TBD

Each of the above captains will be confirmed when the new grades are published, as some players may not be registered in the team they have offered to captain. If anyone wishes to volunteer to be captain, please let us know. We can't keep expecting the same people to captain several teams. Steve and Paul have offered to captain the Worcester and Worcestershire teams again if necessary.

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11. Miscellaneous

- **Brian Dudley Memorial:** Sub-committee of Eric, Paul, Julie and Steve will arrange this.
- **GDPR:** With so few members and so little data, SCC will continue their pragmatic approach.
- **ECF Child Protection:**
 - We have adopted the same policy that covers Worcestershire County, Wolverhampton League, Birmingham League and Dudley League.
 - Paul had received no referrals.
 - If there is any allegation involving juniors or vulnerable adults immediately notify Paul and don't do anything else at all.
 - Paul will provide some information on our policies for inclusion on our website.
- **Venue:** Good venue, even better with barriers up on match nights.
- **Club Attendance:**
 - This has been fantastic compared with previous seasons.
 - Steve agreed to continue with the successful social chess on Wednesdays.
 - Steve will either be at the club or arrange for someone else to be at the club.
- **County Chess:**
 - Dave reminded players they can play for Worcestershire.
 - Paul then explained just how good County chess is and how well we are doing at U140 level.
 - In last four seasons we have won National competition and reached three semi-finals.
 - Stourbridge usually provide at least four players in every team, which reflects well on the club.
 - There is an excellent team spirit.
 - There are also an Open team and U120 team.
 - The Worcestershire AGM next week may also approve an U100 team which could include ungraded players.
- **Chess Equipment:** No new equipment was needed, apart from scoresheets.

12. Any Other Business

- **Clocks:** There was general confusion about how to set digital clocks. Steve will be teaching himself how to do it and will write up some simple guidelines for everyone to use.
- **Summer Tournament:** Time control will be 80 minutes plus 10 seconds per move. This is used in several leagues and could soon be adopted by all local leagues.
- **“New” Club:** Boldmere have changed venue, moving from Boldmere to Oscott. They have decided to rename themselves Oscott. Details of new venue will be available at the start of next season.

The meeting ended with thanks to Eric for his time as President.

Meeting closed at 8:55