

2016 ECF Finance Council meeting - Bronze Member Responses

Resp.	Budget option	Transparent card votes?	Let the BMDR decide?	Sample comments
AF	A			I am quite happy with Option A
MR	B			I am not in favour of a such a substantial increase in Bronze member fees over the period to 2018. It seems draconian to offer the only alternative as no increase with associated disadvantages.
JV			Y	It all looks too involved for me, so I put my trust in whatever you think is best.
AW	A			option b is a retrograde step and option a is the only option to move chess forward
KG	A			As long as the increased revenue can be seen to be put to good use, which looks the case, I would be in favour of an increase in Bronze membership and find the proposal that it should be gently increased by £1 a year quite amusing. Just bite the bullet and make it a round £20, it is neither here nor there and people are hardly likely to give up chess because of it.
PC	B			I would vote for Option B - not because I object to higher membership fees (as I would happily play double or triple the current levels) but because I don't think these activities are any more than vanity projects. I would like to see an Option C where we keep the investment in Elite Juniors and International Chess but save the £11k that would be wasted on publicity dropped and any extra budget for the British Championships brought in from the event itself.
PR	B			Very simple, vote against any increase in fees
RD	B	Y		I would ... recommend that budgets for the next 3 years be frozen and any International expenditure be covered by those wishing to take part. I agree with your comments on transparency.
AH	A			I would be comfortable with option A
TP	A			My own feeling is that the staged increase (16/19/20) is a very sensible decision
MD	B			I'm not in favour of giving this organisation any more money than I have to... For those reasons I'd prefer no increase in fees.
DC	B			The Bronze fee appears to be increasing too much and will probably result in fall-off of membership if it continues, which will result in reduction in some leagues.
JN	?			On Bronze membership fee it seems to me that neither option is satisfactory.
MS	B			Circulating a few pubs with a grandmaster probably isn't the answer. Increasing the fees isn't either. We need to reduce the obstacles to membership

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ML	B			The ordinary bronze member gets nothing out of the (effectively) enforced membership of the BCF, and the fees we pay subsidise activities in which I suspect most bronze members play no part.
DB	A			I'm all for paying slightly more if it means greater exposure for the sport/game
RC	A?	Y		my view is that to get the best for chess the profile needs increasing and this means more publicity (the budgeted amount for 16/17 seems derisory) especially if sponsorship is sought for particular events. The focus of the publicity should be on non-members to increase the awareness and membership.
CN	A			We must have a viable organisation so I see no sensible alternative to Option A so please vote for it. We cannot withdraw from so much activity and turn the ECF into a lame duck.
GM	B			I'm completely opposed to any increase in fees, as I don't think there's a need for any extra funding
BJ			Y	Vote as you think best while bearing in mind generally to keep any financial increases to a minimum unless there is a strong justification otherwise
SL	A			I think it is vital that the BCF can continue to represent chess in a professional manner and that it can afford the tools it needs to do that effectively.
PL	B?			Option B appears to be unduly pessimistic and may be designed to shame attendees to vote for option A. There is room to not have any increase in memberships fees but to make some savings in expenditure. For instance scrapping the printed yearbook and providing the relevant information on line, even if by having links to the relevant county websites, would save about £2000 per annum. Why is there no new sponsorship. Scrapping the feasibility study for the Chess and Go centre would save £2000. Not having the league management software or monthly grading would also save £2000 per annum. Those combined savings would enable some increase in expenditure in other areas such as junior or international chess... If there is no compromise reached I would feel obliged to vote for Option B.
AG				I and several other players feel that the ECF direct membership scheme has not been a success. Some players do not pay their membership fees and, if their games are to be graded, the clubs are obliged to chase these players up in arrears or pay on their behalf. I think the old system worked better, where clubs and congresses paid the ECF directly on behalf of all their members/entrants and membership/entrance fees were reflected accordingly.
PB	B			If anything, an increase in fees will reduce the number of local league players at a time when leagues are shrinking anyway.

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JR	A			I am in favour of increasing the fees, but I do not see the point of monthly grades.
PH	B			Most club players want a competitive game of chess or two and are not interested in national or international tournaments or matches. Nor are they interested in producing Elite players. The ECF should be finding ways of reducing their fees to Bronze Members so as to attract more ordinary players into organised chess
GD	B			please keep the fees down thankyou
GM	B			The committee may think they now have a system whereby they can charge what they wantthey are wrong the result will be that people like myself will stop paying.
PB				Hi, Thanks for the info. I have no comments.
CC	A			Go for option A!!
IJ			Y	I have no particular views and will happily go along with whatever you consider to be the best option bearing in mind that I expect you will vote in accordance with the majority of replies you receive
BM	A	Y		I support a fee increase in order that activities and events are not curtailed. I support greater transparency with regard to council meetings - votes etc.
AC	A			I would support the proposal A to increase Bronze membership fees.
JA	A			I would be happy to pay extra for membership if the money is being used to increase the popularity of chess
RT	A?	Y		as a relatively infrequent player I would tolerate an increase to £15 membership, but would be against the projected future increases to £19 and £20
RW	B			International chess: I have no interest in paying for top English players to compete in team competitions. If no team is sent I couldn't care less. I don't believe an English team competing overseas helps boost chess playing numbers, even if the team was successful.
MT	B			These [the proposed membership increases] are pretty outrageous and should be avoided by whatever means.
PL	A			I favour option A - future increases in membership fees to enable ECF to try and grow the game
ED	B	Y		I am against increases in membership and game fees and agree with your support of the proposal for more transparent voting.
SP	B			I want my games graded which is all the ECF does for me. I know this may seem a bit selfish but as a Bronze member that's all I need, hence Bronze membership!

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EK				Is the "library" referred to in the minutes or accounts a physical library or an online resource? AF comment: I think we're due an update on what's happening with the library - has there been an audit of the inventory; what progress has been made on finding a new home?
DK	A			my view is that Option A would be better. An increase by £5 over 3 years seems a modest price to pay for the benefits
NR	A			Increasing the fees is fine with me. I don't think fees are particularly high as they stand at the moment, and if the additional money is spent on development then the increase makes a lot of sense.
NA	B?			£4k (more than a third of the total budget) of that to send a chess bloke into pubs sounds to me like a massive waste of money
SM	A	Y		I'm happy, personally, for subs to increase as per Budget A, and specifically Bronze from £15 to £16. Probably necessary
JP	A			Please vote for budget Option A.
AA	B			I Support Budget Option B - no membership increases
PR	A?			I have severe reservations about the increase in Publicity Budget and how it is proposed it will be spent...I do support a greater digital presence but Pubs and MIND day I have doubts and I am not sure what ' Road Shows ' involve. In all publicity/marketing expenditure I would like to know how they judge ' success '
JF	B?			Few people play sufficient games for measurable changes in grade... The ECF is talking about huge amounts of publicity to encourage new players and yet the cost each time we sit down at a chess board is increases exponentially... Small increases are a necessary evil as should be accepted... One of the trust funds was specifically set up to support youth chess. Would it not make more sense for this fund to 'do the youth bit' leaving the wider ECF resources to cover other budgets?
JJ	A?			As someone who only joined the ECF as a bronze member just a month ago, I have very little knowledge of what is going on in English chess. However, I do support the increase in membership fees if it results in the outcomes that are sought, i.e., a second elite player at over 2,700 ELO, more support for sub-elite players and better software for gradings and competition results, etc.
MD	B	Y		What I really object to about the proposed increases over the next 3 years is that for Bronze members - the largest group - the increase is +£5 = 33%, whereas Silver is only 22%, Gold 18% & Platinum 16%.

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RD	B			If ECF fees do rise, please make a reduced fee for anyone like me on a low income. If this does not happen, I simply will not be able to afford to play club chess and will not play!
MR	A			I would like you to vote for Budget Option A but with an amendment to the proposal, namely the removal of the £10k budgeted expense for League Management Software. Chess needs all the publicity it can get so I am not averse to the proposal within this budget for a tenfold increase in publicity expenditure. I am concerned, however, with the significant % increase in Bronze fees from 2017/18.
RM	B			AF comment: PH responded on behalf of RM and others (see following entries) from his club. Budget Option B is preferred... According to Bronze members the most important function of the ECF is to provide a National Grading system and the ECF is already amply rewarded for this core activity. Budget Option A produces an ECF wish list of items of expenditure with little or no benefit to Bronze members and expects these members to pay for them... [some] items of expenditure in Budget Option A relate to discretionary spend and should only be financed by discretionary income such as Government funding (there is none), sponsorship, lottery and other grants, and donations.
PT	B			AF comment: see RM (see above).
ST	B			AF comment: see RM (see above).
MR	B			AF comment: see RM (see above).
GM	B			AF comment: see RM (see above).
DW	B			AF comment: see RM (see above).
JM	B			AF comment: see RM (see above).
MC	B			Please go for option B we already pay too much and all I hear from our club members about how much chess costs.
MF	A?			I'd be keen to see the junior initiative continuing. Having seen a superb level of support from both parents and children it would be very sad if this had to retreat. Junior chess is the future of the ECF.
HW	B			Option B for me. £5 isn't a lot in absolute terms, but it is a substantial percentage increase. Such an increase may put off chess players renewing their ECF membership. I don't think the £11k Publicity Strategy will work, but at the same time I don't know what will draw in new chess players
RD	B			My thoughts are that no increase to membership, as it will mean ECF will lose memberships
GM	A			I would go for option A

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BM	A?			I think Bronze members should receive something more than the grading service etc. A monthly newsletter or chess problem competition might bring the Bronze Membership class to life.
DB	B			I would urge you to vote against the proposed ECF membership price increases. I do not see what benefit I would directly get for the price increase.
MP	B			Most players recognise the need for ECF membership if they are to play competitive chess, but it is an increasingly large hurdle that is being put in the way of new players, and increasingly we will see players will opt to only play on a casual basis
AF	B	Y		Bronze Members' Direct Representative. I am concerned that any fee increases will discourage membership signup and participation in OTB chess - I already see this at my own club. The proposed/projected increases in budget option A are greatest for Bronze members (at 33% over 3 years) but they stand to benefit least from the increases in expenditure. Am not averse to increases in expenditure but would have liked the proposals to have been better explained with, in particular, supporting discussion papers. With Option B there is still scope for expenditure increases as the option produces a surplus and as reserves at the end of the current year are forecast to be £6K over the £100K target. Rather than the A/B budget options, would it not have been better to have agenda items for each of the 5 main expenditure proposals and then another item to decide how to finance whatever expenditure was approved? Does expenditure on international team tournaments deliver value for money? What is the budget for appearance fees for the European Team Championships in 2017/18 and the Olympiad in 18/19 (for this year's Olympiad the appearance fee budget is circa £16K for open team players)? Wouldn't it be better to spend less on appearance fees (since we're not close to being medal contenders) and, instead, to encourage up-and-coming players (assuming their fees would be less)? Various Qs on Junior Academy expenditure (these are covered in an email to Traci Whitfield and David Eustace).
69	A: 26	Y: 8	Y: 3	Totals. For the budget options: 7 are not A and not B; 3 of those say let the BMDR decide; the other 4 give no view or like neither A nor B.
	B: 36	N: 0	N: 0	