

ECF AGM, Saturday 13 October 2018 - Bronze members' responses

| Member | Budget? | For DWOI? | Not 4 DWOI? | Fees? | Strategy? | Adrian or Tim? | Reps? | Comment |
|--------|---------|--------------|----------------|-------|-----------|-------------------|-------|---|
| AH | | | | | | | | "Good work as ever trying to gather views from your constituents, although I'd like to once again say that I won't reply to this because it's more important that others make their views known to you than me... Pretty sad, although not entirely unsurprising, that you have found Bronze members to be unsupportive of expenditure on junior chess" |
| BL | Y? | DW | | Y? | | | | "I live in a relatively depressed area... where quite a number of current players paying £16 to play league chess may grumble: <i>"What does ECF do for me and my £16? If they're now going to put it up by 13% I'll live without my league chess, thankyou!"</i> " |
| PL | Y? | DO | | N? | | A | | "I think we need to see a plan with specific objectives and how they will be achieved within the Budget provided. I think that just sponsoring the women taking in for instance the British Chess Championships is not likely to have much impact on increasing the number of women playing chess." "Casual chess is a great idea but it needs to be spread around the country rather than London." On membership fee increases: "I think the proposed increases should be deferred until the Finance Council Meeting next April when hopefully we can get answers to the points raised above and also those by yourselves." "I think we should support Adrian Elwin for the position of Director of Home Chess. I prefer his election address and I think he is likely to be reliable which is what is needed for this position." |
| PH | N? | O | | N | | | | Response from club Secretary and Treasurer on behalf of 11 Bronze members. "The ECF are trying to push [membership fee increases] through the back door when they should really be discussed at the April Finance meeting" "Remember though that the ECF made a membership increase for 2018-19 by ending the online membership discount - let this be used to finance office staff pay increases." |
| AA | | | | N | | | | "[T]he one point that I feel strongly opposed to is any recommendation to increase membership fees" |

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| JD | Y? | | | Y? | | | | "As an ageing bronze member, I have no objection to any of the constructive proposals." |
| IH | | | | N | | | | "I expect to be moving house and area in the summer of 2020. Perhaps it would be sensible not to join a new club, but confine myself to playing on the internet. Think of all the travelling costs I could avoid. Of course this may be what the ECF wants, even more chess players not belonging to its affiliates." |
| BR | N? | | | N? | N | | | "I agree with and support your proposals (1) and your critique of the strategy statement (2). In particular, I appreciate your desire to get detailed information on how the ECF plans to achieve its goals, and how it spends, accounts and budgets across the areas mentioned. Ideally this would be done by the Finance Committee..." |
| XX | | | | | | | | "I will be attending as <county> representative so am interested in the feedback. Although I'm a Gold member, i received the message as I handle the membership for an elderly player" |
| JS | | D | | | | | Y? | "I'm in support of having a Development Manager for the ECF but it would really benefit from having someone younger in that role if it comes to be created. As a new mid-20s chess player I joined the local club scene and in turn the ECF after playing online for a time. Finding the details of my local club, arranging to attend with the club secretary, joining the ECF, I had to navigate about 4 different websites to get this far. In order to boost incoming ECF members the online portals for chess need reorganisation, simplification and unifying." |
| SP | | | | N | | | | "As a returning bronze member after 2 year away, and soon to become silver again, I remain unconvinced of the value provided by ECF and do not support an increase in fees to the new levels now proposed" |
| DC | Y | | I? | N | | | | "I generally support the ECF plan, but its a lot of money for international that perhaps a lot of club members don't have any interest in. I suspect very few at my club were unaware of the Olympiad. " "I would like to keep the bronze membership fee down, as I see it as entry level, although perhaps not so at junior level where they play junior congresses rather than league chess." |

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| MW | | | | | | | | "My suggestion for the meeting....Discounts for Pensioners" |
| MW | N? | | | N? | | | Y? | "I think your comments and questions about ECF proposals are valid." |
| NC | Y | I | | Y | N | A | | "I agree with you on the strategy document. It would be nice if the goals had numbers attached and were more measureable." "I would support Adrian Elwin in the election more on the basis of knowing him and thinking he'd do a good job rather than his statement itself." |
| CW | | | | | | | Y | "Your commentary on these issues is very sensible and entirely in line with questions that I myself would ask. I am therefore happy for you and Gareth to vote as you see fit in the light of the answers that you receive to these questions" |
| MW | | | D | | | | | Development Officer: "This is a complete waste of time and money for what will be little return , If people wish to play chess they will join as they feel necessary (at no cost to the members). Like Bridge , chess is starting to become top heavy with administration , BEWARE !! " |
| AF | N | | | N | | | | "I am minded to recommend that you vote against any additional increase to Bronze membership rates as I cannot see sufficient evidence that the increased expenditure is justified." |
| XX | | | | N | | | | "we in the Sheffied chess league have only just join the ECF and there is talk that once we have become members the ECF will put up the entry fee and of course it will put off new members from paying the membership fee." |
| KL | | | | N | | | | "As a pensioner on a fixed income I hope that the membership fee remains the same." |
| JG | | | | N | | | | "the ECF treats ordinary members as milch cows." "Once again an increase for bronze members is proposed, without any added benefits for it." "The ECF needs to find a business model which treats its members respectfully." "... the failure to secure any sponsorship for the Olympiad team needs to be corrected in future. Someone somewhere must be prepared to sponsor something." |

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| LW | | | | N | | | | "I am the treasurer of a small chess club in the <League>. A significant majority of our members are either retired or in low paid jobs. It is difficult enough to get them to pay their club fees, which are needed for the venue we hire etc. and they have to be almost bullied in to renewing their ECF fees. I believe it is only 2 years ago that bronze membership was £13. The rise to £16 was way ahead of inflation and their incomes. I believe, therefore, that a new increase should be resisted at best or kept to an absolute minimum at worse." |
| PL | | O | W | Y | | | | "I think a job role to increase membership is tough and er interesting. The idea of only allowing games to be rated as played between ecf members should do it. Tell the league's and congresses!" |
| SG | | | | Y | | | | "I am in favour of the increase in membership fees" |
| SS | Y? | DWO | I? | Y | | | | "Chess seems to have the same problems has my other interest golf ,an elderly membership,and lack of interest from women and the younger generation.With i am sure greater capital expenditure i am afraid golf has not be able to solve the problem.However i would be happy to pay £20 per year if it would enable the ECF to encourage women and especially the younger generation to join in.Some no doubt will moan about this sum because the ordinary member does not get a lot from membership but i see it more as a charity donation. Regarding international chess i am against increasing expenditure apart from elite development training. As a socialist i am all for paying the staff a decent wage but must be wary of organisations spending money on grandiose ideas and also creating office empires." |
| RD | | | | N | | | Y? | "As chairman of <Chess Club> further increase in bronze membership can only lead to less members joining ECF. We have just increased club fees to cover venue costs and most members do not play in any league. If only one member does not renew you will need 5 members to renew just to stand still. I am sure all staff are busy but do we need increased numbers? We will leave matters to your discretion with a policy of reducing fees a priority. " |
| SW | N? | | | N | | | | "Your comments about the strategy statement and business plan are spot on. I work in business and if someone produced that as a plan they'd be excoriated." |

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| PL | | | | | | | | "For a Bronze membership, going up to £20 from £13 a fairly short time ago seems a bit excessive." "I wonder what the overarching 'Mission Statement' of chess bodies is. To encourage more people to play? To keep current players happy? To increase the overall average strength? To get recognition as a sport? At the club level I am helping with the first of these, in the hope that the other aspirations will follow." |
| MD | N? | | | N | | | | "[i] am beginning to feel that ECF's finances are getting out of control; budgets are being exceeded and forward planning has not been thorough" "As for sponsorship, I'm sure that if the right people asked the right companies to sponsor our national team then this would be forthcoming." |
| RH | N? | | D | | | | | "Chess by and large is an amateur's game and pastime and I feel this is one way or the start of "professionalising" the Federation" |
| JO | | | | Y | | | | "i have no problem with the proposed increases for bronze members. compared to what other people pay for their sports etc, £20 per annum is a trivial amount." |

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| DC | | | | | | | | <p>"I am concerned about the rising cost of bronze membership, seeing as I only play for my club in county competitions. My own feelings about increased expense aside, a more significant consequence is the effect on clubs like my own (and there are many more like us, who form the heartland of town and even county chess): we (typical clubs) do not have many members; we struggle to keep alive; we find it very difficult to avoid hefty fees for using premises for club night and matches; we have to charge subs which can be quite high to cover the rent and competition fees; this can put off new members; when we then say you must pay another £18, increasing, to play in matches, members leave or are put off joining. So, in the short term, these costs may help what 'ordinary' players see as the elite and indeed we may support this in principle. However, when clubs like mine die off these costs will be one of the reasons and the ECF will surely lose out in the long run."</p> <p>"why on earth can we not renew membership for three years, as we could before?? It is a pain to go through the process every year and it adds another problem when trying to organise members and get them committed - if we can sign them up to the ECF for three years we don't have to keep chasing them every September, with fingers crossed that they haven't decided to give up. If a</p> |

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| | | | | | | | | <p>On the proposal for a Development Manager: "... a more serious failing might be lack of effective engagement with the chess-playing public out of whom the ECF seeks to extract money to fund activities those people have no interest in, and of which they have no knowledge... The proposal lacks detail as to what might be achieved and how it might be done. The apparent hope, based on the bonus idea, is that somebody with ideas might step forward and perform magic... Step 1 should be to solve the problems of vacancies and engagement with the paying members. Then you can look at more nebulous ideas dignified with the epithet "leap of faith". "</p> <p>On the proposal to invest in women's chess: "I'd need to know why women didn't play and whether they wanted to before giving the "cause" money."</p> <p>On extra expenditure on Office staff salaries and increased manpower: "IN FAVOUR. I'm keenly aware by observation and inference that pressures on office staff would merit pay increase(s). I'M PREPARED TO BELIEVE SOME EXTRA STAFFING MIGHT BE NECESSARY"</p> <p>On extra expenditure on International Chess: "NOT IN FAVOUR. Bronze members are not there to finance international chess. Yes, it would be nice if we won the Olympiad etc, but not from bronze membership fees."</p> <p>On the proposal to increase membership fees: "If the ECF could persuade [new members] directly that they ought to [pay first £16 and then £18 and then £20], then that would be fine. It's no use simply addressing those on the floor at ECF Council meetings in terms of the cost of a pint of beer."</p> <p>"THIS MID-YEAR RE-BUDGETING IS NONSENSE, ESPECIALLY WHEN DIRECTORSHIPS ARE CHANGING. (Tim Wall speaks of sponsorships, not increased fees.)"</p> <p>"MOST BRONZE MEMBERS SEEK NO MORE THAN A GRADE. THEY CAN PAY MORE IF THEY WISH TO SUPPORT MORE ACTIVITY. THE ECF NEEDS TO SELL</p> |
| SM | N | O | DWI | N | N? | T | | |
| JL | | | | N? | | | | "I am opposed to any increase in the ECF fees. A 50% increase is way too much. I get very little from my ECF membership." |

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| EK | Y | DWO | I | Y | | | | "I fully support the increase in membership fees in order to support the development manager role, women's chess, and the salary reviews. In fact I would happy for this increase to be even greater to further support these areas, particularly development. However, I don't support the increase in membership fees to contribute more to international chess. In fact, I think that our contributions to this area should be reduced, with more of an onus put on those involve to find alternative ways of funding this." |
| MP | N | WO | DI | N | N | A | | <p>From the treasurer of a county association. "Unfortunately, this all sounds rather repetitive, as the ECF board once again seek to raise expenditure to support ideas that have little analytical thought, at the expense of the membership. Bronze members in particular are those whose affinity to the game is primarily at club level and playing matches in a local area. Some may venture further afield in the sphere of county chess, but generally bronze members have no great interest in the international game. It is tiresome to hear the board's plans to raise membership fees above the rate of inflation. Since we mostly became direct members of ECF some years ago, we are increasingly pawns in the ECF ambitions."</p> <p>"In our clubs we are increasingly losing players of working age due to the pressure of work. A match of chess is what it is - a commitment of at least three hours. It is a social problem of the demands made upon working people to work longer hours, not the failure of chess to attract and enjoy."</p> <p>"I don't know Tim Wall, but I do know Adrian Elwin... I would hope that he would bring more sanity to the position. I have always found him to speak sensibly..."</p> |
| GR | | | D | | | T | | "I would support Tim Wall for the Director of Home Chess in view of his (apparently) very wide experience here and abroad and I like his views on encouraging chess in the wider community as opposed to simply in chess clubs among committed enthusiasts... I see no advantage in having a paid Chess Development Officer when there are no criteria for what he or she would actually do." |
| DS | | | | N | | | | "I disagree with the proposal to raise ECF membership subscriptions" |

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| JG | | | | | | | | "ECF BUDGET CRYING OUT FOR SOME SPONSORSHIP, especially for international end of things. What's the strategy?" |
| RS | | | | N | | | | "Against proposed fee increases, esp. for Bronze members who receive very little in exchange, which are far higher than inflation." "There appears to be no plans to alleviate the decline in club chess or local leagues." "Social chess is looked on as a cash cow to finance the activities of the few in international and prestige events." |
| AF | N | DO | I | N | N | | | Bronze members' rep. |

TOTALs N:4
 41 N?:6
 Y:3
 Y?:4

 N:18 N:4 A:3
 N?:4 N?:1 T:2
 Y:6 Y:0
 Y?:2 Y?:0