

ECF Finance Council Meeting 2015 - Bronze Member Responses

Respondent	Combine Bronze/Silver?	Increase Fees?	Comment
LB	N		"I confirm the existence of at least one person who represents their club in matches but has no interest in tournament play, and would wish the differential maintained"
AB	Y	Y	"The distinction between Bronze and Silver membership seems to me rather unnecessary, if merely from an administrative point of view. All under the same umbrella would seem to me a better system of organisation. I therefore do not object to the proposed £2 increase for Bronze membership"
AJ		N	"my view is that Bronze members are being exploited for income for no extra benefit"
MN	N	N	"Most of the club members feel that they are paying as much (or even more than) they want to county, regional and national bodies"
RD	N	N	"I think most members are happy with the current level of fees and it would be difficult to justify why they would pay for enhanced membership which would not be used."
TR		N	"I'm against the proposal to increase fees as there is no perceived benefit i.e.its just a cash making machine"
PH	N	N	"merging the two silver and bronze seems a bad idea for me if means an increase in price"
DS	N		"I agree with your plan"
MN		N	"what is the benefit or point of raising the reserves to £100K?"
RS	Y		"I think it is best to bring bronze/silver closer or merge them completely seeing as this currently puts me off entering 1 tournament each year which I might otherwise. However, the game fee for non-members is already ridiculous and must not be increased any further... Raising these fees will discourage these people from playing"
PO			"I was wondering if it has ever been discussed whether Graders should get a free membership or at least a reduction for the work they do?"
HW	N	N	"I think ECF charges should be only be increased to a maximum of in line with inflation. Charges need to be constrained to encourage more people to play chess (i.e. so Chess is attractive to new and infrequent players). The Bronze / Silver differential needs to be maintained. The proposals would put people off playing chess."
JL	N	N	"I am an unwilling member of ECF. I have to join to play the odd match in our local league. My interest therefore is to keep my fees as low as possible!"
JG		N?	"In respect to increasing the fee from £13 to £15 it seems heavy to do it"
DM		N	"I believe it is totally wrong that bronze members should pay more to effectively subsidise the international chess players "

Respondent	Combine Bronze/Silver?	Increase Fees?	Comment
MR		Y	"£2 increase seems reasonable. I guess the desire to increase the surplus to £100,000 is prudent? Some rationale would be helpful."
AF	Y?		"My view is the membership regime and fee structures are rather complex and there are merits in simplify. Please bear this in mind when you vote, but happy to go with your judgement"
JK	N	N	"Most League's comprise of many retired players (above 65 to 85) who do not have a disposable income"
BJ			"you have my mandate to go ahead and vote what you think best."
MD	N		"Why not make it compulsory for everyone wanting to play in tournaments to have Silver m'ship? This would be their extra benefit. Why should Bronze pay more instead"
KM		N	"Since we seem to be moving to a period of negative inflation in England (Deflation), then should fees be going down rather than up. Perhaps in the current financial atmosphere the reserves/surplus could be reduced from 89K to 85K rather than be increased to 100K. We are all in it together"
BB		N	"I agree that ECF needs a surplus for the unforeseen and to invest for the future but why should it go from 89K to 100K? why is 89K not sufficient? I wonder what new costs the Commercial Directorate are incurring which will benefit the members?"
PP	N	Y	"I am in favour of these increases, but I would like to suggest that a "Pensioners' Rate" might be introduced... Re: Determination of Game Fee: A 25 percent increase cannot be justified in light of current rates of inflation."
BB	N	N	"I don't play any Congress games. So any nearing of Silver membership is of no interest to me. I would oppose any increase in the bronze membership."
LP	Y	Y	"Happy to merge into silver and pay more"
G	N	N	"don't want to pay more – in the end I will just stop paying – don't want to pay for these high graded people to go on a chess holiday... the commercial function should pay for itself or what is the point of it"
AS	N	Y	"I would be against any increase for the purpose of merging bronze and silver membership... Clubs need to get new members to participate in league and internal competitions and although £15 might put some off joining it could be much more difficult if the annual amount payable was much higher (in addition to the club internal subscription)"
PP		N	"I rarely play these days... so get virtually nothing for my money."
SP	N	Y	"If silver members don't play league chess might I suggest that they do!! If I take up tournament chess again I would need to be a silver member and would not expect to be subsidised by bronze members"
GM		N?	"I would be unhappy if fees were increased for youngsters"

Respondent	Combine Bronze/Silver?	Increase Fees?	Comment
RF		N	"I captain my local team, getting a full team out is a real demand, and the average age gets older and older. Only one plays in tournaments, the rest just want to play social chess at the club, and if pushed will play in the local league. I guess we are fairly typical. So, anything that puts people off from playing in the league is to be avoided, keep it simple , keep it cheap."
PS		N	"I only play league matches so not keen to pay more for no increased value."
PS		N	"I think that membership fees should remain unchanged."
PL	N		"the proposed merger of bronze and silver should be opposed for the time being as it would lead to yet a further increase for bronze members"
BS	N	N	"At the moment the only benefit is I get a grade which determines which board I play. In reality the grade would have little to do with this as the captain would always play the team in the best order."
AH	N?		"I am a bronze member because I only play a bit of league chess and am not generally interested in tournaments. That being so I would tend to favour the lowest cost option for bronze. However if it is in the wider interests of chess to change things , within reason I'd pay a bit more."
KB	N	N	"We have enough trouble getting players to pay the current cost and feel there could be a fall in members which would be counter productive. Many are not really interested in having a grade for instance and feel they are forced into membership. Those who are silver member likely to be more serious about their chess and should also pay also pay their share of any increase."
FD		N	"It is typical of the ECF to propose an increase in fees without exploring other options. This is symptomatic of a lack of a coherent strategy from the centre. For example, the published ECF strategy document is nothing more than an aspiration or wish list - it is not a strategic document because similar to party political promises it does not say how the strategic wish list can be attained."
PA		Y	"I support the increases in the membership fees."
IL			"the proposed increase for adults [is] OK. Juniors I would say £10 is enough as we need to encourage this sector to grow for the future... Increasing the reserve by nearly 15% from 89 to 100 in one year seems excessive. I would have thought 8% in year 1 and 8% in year 2 would be more considerate of members fees. I know £100,000 sounds a good achievement but it is after all just a number to aim for."
LM	Y		"Just like to say the main objection I have with the current membership scheme is that to play in congresses you have to have Silver membership, which I do not agree with. Hence, I now do not play in Congresses... The Bronze membership should cover ALL chess playing tournaments."
CL		N	"I oppose any increase in Bronze member fees"

Respondent	Combine Bronze/Silver?	Increase Fees?	Comment
BK	N	N	"I am a bronze member ho has no intention of playing in tournaments - so I would prefer the fees to be maintained at £12 for online payment"
DM	N	Y	"Bronze membership is nearly 50% of the total membership so to penalize the many for the benefit of the few is clearly wrong... The obvious answer to the upgrade from bronze to silver is to make available whichever order it is done in, even if it requires some action on the part of the player (e.g. to claim the free upgrade retrospectively)"
MP	N		"I am against the merger of Bronze and Silver because I do not see it as being of benefit except for those at Silver level."
DW		N	"how about a reduced rate for > 65?"
PR	N	N?	"i would prefer not to subsidise silver members who get additional benefit for an additional fee which seems reasonable... It is also hard enough to get club team members (the older ones) to pay anything even for bronze membership as they play mainly for fun"
JB		N?	"Have they explained why reserves of £89K are insufficient, and why £100K is desirable?... What is the Commercial Directorate's brief? Presumably it exists to generate rather than consume funds... Why are juniors being asked to suffer a significantly greater percentage increase in their subscription than seniors?"
MW			"it would be a good gesture not to increase the junior fees (they seem quite expensive relative to adult fees as it is)... all I feel I really get out of ECF is the grading, and in the background their organisation of league chess."
DS	N	N	"The ECF is currently generating more than enough money to raise the reserve to the arbitrary figure of £100,000, not that I understand their desire to do so given there is so much additional funding held separately with the BCF. I also feel the current bronze and silver memberships are working fine the way they are"
MD	N	N	"I can see no advantage to Bronze members – who are the core of most chess clubs – in the proposed increase in fees."
DL	N	Y	"Currently the silver rate is payment for approximately three congresses or one if you are already a bronze member. If someone only does congresses then they are only likely to become silver members if they do three or more congresses. For one or two congresses they could simply be non-members which they might do now with the same expense."
LW	N	N	"First thoughts, after no great study of the issues, is that the run of the mill non chess fanatic is being asked to support the habit of others. From the point of view of a treasurer of a small chess club (...) it is hard enough to get people to join the ECF anyway & I am forced to resort to arm twisting. In fact this year I joined on another members behalf. Last season 3 members had not joined and the club lost £96 we could not afford."
PH	N	N	"They should look to effect savings before coming to members for increased contributions."

Respondent	Combine Bronze/Silver?	Increase Fees?	Comment
TH		N	"If the E.C.F. is a genuine non-profit organisation, why do they need to build up the reserves so much, I think that the officials should spend time on cost cutting measures."
RC	N?	N	"Many clubs have taken the view that if you wanted to play league chess then bronze membership was mandatory because treasurers were of the view that attempting to collect the £2 fee per match played in retrospect (by non-bronze members) would be a nightmare and would probably result in payment by those who were already bronze members. However this view may change with an increase in fee and the ECF would end up with less money as many club members play fewer than 6 games a season."
NM	Y	N	"In my opinion the direct membership fee is a poll tax on chess players, and at entry level people will be put off."
GD		N	"You should be ashamed of even trying to increase an already excessive rip off fee."
PL		Y	"I am very supportive of the increase in membership fees!"
DG		Y	"The proposed increase in subs is triflingly small. £15 for a whole year sounds very good value to me."
PC	N	N	"I think that both of these proposals make things worse for bronze members. The idea of being a bronze member is to get grade recognition for games played. I don't think we need to pay more for this basic requirement"
JR	N		"I am a brronze member who plays club and county chess but almost no tournaments. I am fairly typical of most of the members of my club... I am therefore against the proposal to increase bronze membership fees with a view to merging bronze and silver membership categories."
DG		N	"There is a deep seated concern as to how the E.C.F. operates and certain events in recent years have not shown the organisation in a good light... Anything that you can do to keep the membership fee down will help."
AF	N	N	Bronze members' rep. With the Bronze/Silver split, arguably players pay roughly in proportion to what they get out of the ECF (I note in particular Silver players play significantly more graded games on average than Bronze players). Perhaps consideration could be given to creating a new Bronze category for tournament-only players. Why not fix the anomaly whereby those who pay the ECF tournament Pay-to-Play fee and then acquire Bronze membership don't get an automatic upgrade to Silver? Rather than increase membership (and game fee) rates, I wouldn't increase expenditure on International teams and I'd spend less elsewhere (on Library storage and on the Commercial Directorate). I'd increase reserves more slowly (I note the ECF has access to some £900K held in trust funds). Also, I note Junior income may increase by £17.5K depending on the timing and success of the ECF FIDE Academy launch.
Yes		5	11
No		29	35
Total responses			64