

Dear SCCA Participants,

I am writing to solicit your input in respect to some key matters that will arise at the upcoming ECF AGM. Papers for which can be found here [Council Papers – English Chess Federation](#).

Two Contested Elections

CEO – Mike Truran vs Malcolm Pein

Their election addresses can be found here [Mike-Truran.pdf \(englishchess.org.uk\)](#) and [Malcolm-Pein.pdf \(englishchess.org.uk\)](#). I have also received further information from Mike via two emails he has separately sent to Council members and from Malcolm via the SCCU (all attached).

Each candidate has referred to potential conflicts of interest of the other candidate. For completeness here are the respective 4NCL and CSC organisations to throw more light on those points. [Four Nations Chess League \(4ncl.co.uk\)](#) and [Staff | Chess in Schools and Communities](#)

It is regrettable that two great servants of English Chess are in what appears to be an unpleasant contest. I think it is appropriate to focus on HOW candidates get things done and behave ahead of WHAT they say they are going to do. Trust is essential. We need the best candidate to unite the ECF Board to a common purpose going forward.

Who do you think should be ECF CEO?

Chair of Governance – Robert Stern vs Chris Fegan

Their election addresses can be found here [Robert-Stern.pdf \(englishchess.org.uk\)](#) and [Microsoft Word - ECF Election Document 2021.docx \(englishchess.org.uk\)](#). I should also draw your attention to the report by the NEDs [C35.6b-NEDs-Report-to-Council-2021.pdf \(englishchess.org.uk\)](#) and, in particular section 4, noting alleged inappropriate board behaviour and specifically naming Chris Fegan in that context.

Earlier this year Robert Stern initiated two separate informal consultations with Council on prospective motions related to governance prior to them being formally proposed at a General Meeting. That was a good initiative/process and Robert was responsive to the feedback he received.

The SCCA Board is minded to support Robert Stern. Your views?

Two specific motions in respect of transferring currently Trustee over-seen funds into ECF

See items 10 and 11 of the AGM agenda [C35-Agenda.pdf \(englishchess.org.uk\)](#). I have enquired of the ECF Chair whether there will be any further supporting papers for these proposals and understand that none are planned at this stage. I therefore am relying on the descriptions in Malcolm Pein's CEO candidacy papers.

I attach a description of BCF, which deals with the structure and origin of the trusts, produced with the kind assistance of Mike Gunn when I sought to respond to a constituent's query last year.

There seem to be two fundamental points:

- a) Who should control the funds? Currently it is the Trustees and, in some circumstances, BCF.

Historically the funds have been used to fund development projects and initiatives over and above the day to day running expenses of the ECF. These proposals appear to place the control of the funds solely with the ECF Board. They might then be used for day-to-day expenses (for example in re-establishing the ECF cash situation post COVID, which Malcolm specifically mentions). I ask myself who would be minded to leave any further legacies to chess if they thought that they might be used simply to keep subscriptions down? A point made a few years ago by Stuart Reuben.

- b) There is the question of the tax consequences of such transfers. An expert tax advisor opinion should have been procured and submitted for review by Council to support the motion.

The SCCA Board is minded to vote against these proposals. Your views?

A motion to instruct the ECF Board to lobby the UK government for more funding (agenda item 12)

We would all like to see more government money coming into English chess. The statement that is being referred to is that Oliver Dowden recently referred to chess as, at least in part, a sport. It is currently not formally recognised as a sport in this country and misses out on funding opportunities because of that.

However, it is not clear what the ECF Board is being specifically asked to do. What if it doesn't do anything? What is Council's remedy? Of course, it is via the election process that could cause a change to the ECF Board. It is fine to ask the ECF Board to include a lobbying plan in its strategy, which ought to be costed too of course, but instructing them in a non-specific manner does not seem to achieve much.

The SCCA Board is minded to vote against this proposal. Your views?

I would be very grateful for SCCA participants' feedback no later than end of day 13th October please. Please email me at tv1div1@surbitonchessclub.co.uk

Many thanks.

Paul Shepherd – SCCA ECF Representative