

ECF Finance Council Meeting 24 April 2021

Dear SCCA Participants,

I am writing to invite your feedback on matters to be put to the above meeting, which I will be attending as your representative. Please see the meeting agenda and supporting documents on the ECF website [Council Papers – English Chess Federation](#). Here are the main issues that require voting upon and the SCCA Board's thoughts on them:

Item 7 – Fees.

The proposal is to not increase Fees, as had been the pre-pandemic plan. The 40-45% of people who did not renew last year should not be financially discouraged from re-joining. **We support this proposal.**

Item 8 - Budget.

The projected reserves at the end of 2021-22 are very low at £8k and that assumes a decent (although not 100%) recovery in membership income. The question that needs to be asked at the meeting is "What activities will be dropped if the membership income undershoots the budget, to avoid ECF running out of funds?" **Our support for the proposed budget will be conditional on the response.**

Item 9 – Authority of (Budget) variation.

The ECF Board wishes to have the freedom to vary the budget between general meetings in light of the uncertainties arising from COVID. It is hard to envisage a spending spree given the state of the reserves and that membership income won't start flowing in until August at the earliest, not long before the October AGM. In normal times, thus is a practice we would not support. However, in light of the exceptional circumstances on this occasion, **it seems acceptable to support this proposal, assuming we are persuaded to support the original budget in item 8 above of course.**

Item 10 – Voting Register

This proposal effectively seeks to grandfather voting rights from 2019 so that parties unable to host OTB competitions due to COVID are not disadvantaged. **We support this proposal.**

Item 11 – Directors' Terms

Proposals that would have the effect of limiting an ECF Directors' term in one post to either 1, 2 or 3 terms or longer, respectively.

Council had a pre-meet on this topic. At that session we were briefed that, although the Pearce Commission had recommended a maximum of two terms, it really hadn't given the matter that much thought. Hence slavishly sticking to the Pearce recommendation on the issue is inappropriate. The reality is that there is actually only a rather small number of good, willing, chess administrators and that if one was forced to lose such people from jobs they do well, due to a term limit, that would be counterproductive. There is also, already, an ECF election process in which, if alternative candidates come forward and contest elections, there is an opportunity to vote to replace existing incumbents should Council wish to do so. **Our view is that all of the proposals should be voted against and the status quo of no term limits should be preserved.**

Item 12 – Voting Allocations of Council Members

This proposal seeks to include new voting allocations to organisations who provide online ECF rated games as well as introducing a Blitz category for both OTB and online voting right allocations. Online is weighted at 50% of OTB and the ratios of SP, RP and Blitz ratings are roughly proportional to the playing times for each category. It seems equitable to give voting rights to organisations who provide online chess (which brings in membership income at supporter level as a minimum), ditto Blitz. **We support this proposal.**

Item 13 – Kindly note that this is an information item, not a voting matter. The ECF have decided to abandon the 2019-2020 National Counties Finals, which never actually got started due to COVID.

Item 14 – County Championship Team Rating Limits. This is a matter that has been consulted on quite late in the day via county captains as well as county executives. The consultation continues, despite ECF having already published a proposal, and SCCA Board is actively engaged with the DoHC. Our current concern is that the proposal as it stands reduces the number of county team categories by one from six while at the same time making the lowest team even harder to field (new U1400 vs previous equivalent U1450 (U100)). It leaves us with the prospect of a net loss of one county team. No-one is denying that it has been getting increasingly difficult to field county teams in the last decade but we are hoping to be given a fighting chance of fielding the lowest team in future by having a higher upper grading limit for it. There are several ways to do that, including moving all of the bands up by 100 points, for example. It remains to be seen what the other SCCU counties feel about this and **our ability to influence this proposal will be strongly dependent on achieving SCCU alignment.**

If you have any comments on the above please email Paul Shepherd via tv1div1@surbitonchessclub.co.uk. by 22nd April 2021 at the latest.

Many thanks.

Paul Shepherd – SCCA ECF Council representative on behalf of the SCCA Board

9 April 2021