

**Minutes of the
Bury St Edmunds Chess Club
Annual General Meeting 2025**

Held Thursday 3 July 2025 at 7:30pm

1. Welcome

Present: Steve Lovell (SL), George Robinson (GR), Steve Ruthen (SR), Hugo Smith (HS), Bob Jones (BJ), Dan Pugh, Alan Watkins, Sergejs Starobucevs, Judith Heffer, Mark Heffer, Laurie Potts, Barry Allen

Apologies: Mark Webb, Andrew Donnolly

This satisfies the quorum of 8 adult members.

2. Approval of Minutes of the AGM Held 25 July 2024

The minutes were accepted as an accurate record of the meeting.

3. Matters Arising from the Minutes and Approval of Agenda

It was agreed that the only matters arising from the 2024 AGM was for SL to communicate the newly agreed policy regarding compensation for drivers to the members of the Club, which SL confirmed he had done by posting this document on the Club's website. The possibility of organising another 'swap shop' for chess books had also been raised at the 2024 AGM. SL noted that a 'swap shop' had not been held in the 2024/25 season, but he would look into organising one for the 2025/26 season.

4. Reports

Match Secretary (Bob Jones)

BJ had prepared a separate document outlining the Club's results for the 2024/25 season, which BJ circulated.

BJ reported that the Club had mixed results in the 2024/25 season, with one possible reason being that the Club was fielding too many clubs in the Bury Area and Suffolk Leagues, leading to teams being stretched too thinly with players having limited availability. BJ noted that there had been several defaults in the 2024/25 season due to the limited availability of players and League rating rules. SR echoed comments about the Club being overstretched. SL noted that more teams also meant that the league seasons were longer. BJ therefore proposed that the Club field fewer teams in the 2025/26 season to address this issue, which was agreed to by members present.

Treasurer (Hugo Smith)

HS reported that the Club was in a good financial position. The Club had 50 members for the 2024/25 season, collecting £691 in membership fees. HS reported a surplus of £590 for the 2024/25 season, with the Club holding approximately £2,000 in its reserves.

HS recommended that membership fees be held at the same level as the previous year for the 2025/26 season, namely:

Standard Membership: £40 per annum
Concession Membership: £30 per annum
Junior Membership: £10 per annum

This was seconded by SR, and carried unanimously by members in attendance.

5. Election of Officers

SL proposed that SR be re-elected as Club President. No other candidates put themselves forward, and the motion was passed unanimously.

Alan Watkins indicated a desire to step down as Events Officer, which was agreed by members present. SR invited other members of the Club to stand for the position, but no members present indicated a desire to do so. On this basis, SR accepted Alan Watkins' resignation, and noted that the position should remain vacant until such time that an Events Officer was elected.

Mark Heffer raised the question of whether *ex officio* members of the committee should be permitted to hold the role if they were no longer a paying member of the Club. Other members present echoed this. SR proposed that the *ex officio* members of the committee should be contacted to confirm whether they still intend to be members of the Club, pending which their *ex officio* positions should be reviewed.

Accordingly, the members voted and elected the committee as follows:

- President: Steve Ruthen
- Club Secretary: George Robinson
- Match Secretary: Bob Jones
- Treasurer: Hugo Smith
- Safeguarding Officer: Bob Jones
- Communications Officer: Steve Lovell
- Events Officer: Vacant
- Competitions Secretary: Vacant
- Ex Officio Members: Ed Player, Colin Roberts

6. League Matters

SL and BJ attended the Suffolk League AGM and reported that:

- The Suffolk League is currently lacking a First Team captain. A lack of players willing to represent the county is causing issues in Suffolk being able to field a full team. This was echoed by SR, Laurie Potts and Judith Heffer.
- There were to be some minor rule changes in Suffolk League matches for the 2025/26 season. Most notably, there were to be changes to the rules regarding postponement of matches. For the 2025/26 season, no match could be postponed past the last scheduled match of the season – the intention being that a large number of postponed matches prolongs the season and that a concrete end date for the season should be established.
- BJ noted that a new safeguarding policy had been adopted by the Suffolk League at its AGM, and invited members to read it.

BJ noted that the Bury Area Chess League AGM was due to take place on 15 July 2025, and BJ would report back any matters of interest to the Club.

7. Teams and Captains for Next Season

BJ circulated team sheets to the various team captains with possible team compositions for the forthcoming season.

BJ noted that, following on from the earlier discussion around the Club being overstretched, it would not be possible to field the same number of teams in the 2025/26 season as in previous years.

In previous years, the Club had fielded 7 teams in the BACL; 2 in Division 1, 3 in Division 2, and 2 in Division 3.

For the 2025/26 season, the Club would field 5 BACL teams; 1 in Division 1, 2 in Division 2, and 2 in Division 3.

Similarly, in previous years the Club had field 5 teams in the Suffolk League; 1 in Division 1, 2 in Division 2, and 2 in Division 3.

For the 2025/26 season, the Club would field 3 Suffolk League teams; 1 in Division 1, 1 in Division 2, and 1 in Division 3.

BJ invited players to contact him in the event that they had any comments on the proposed team compositions, as BJ was required to confirm BAFL and Suffolk League team numbers for 31 July 2025.

8. Upcoming Events

SL echoed BJ's comment that the BAFL AGM was taking place on 15 July 2025, and invited members present to attend if interested.

SL also highlighted that the next Jamboree event was to take place on 4th September 2025, and that the 42nd Bury St Edmunds Chess Congress was to take place on 18th-19th October 2025.

9. Any Other Business

Dan Pugh raised safeguarding as there were a number of occasions where junior players were being invited to play away matches, and wanted to be clear on the appropriate arrangements for junior players travelling to away matches. BJ confirmed that the Suffolk County Chess Association's child protection policy was available on the Club website.

Dan Pugh also raised the possibility of re-starting the online Club tournaments that had taken place during Covid-19 on chess.com and Lichess. SL confirmed that there online groups for the Club on chess.com and Lichess, and that members could join the groups to potentially arrange online games. SL flagged that, given the lack of online proctoring available, it would be difficult to arrange any prizes for online Club tournaments due to the inability to police cheating.

Dan Pugh also offered thanks on behalf of the Club to BJ for his continued service to the Club as Match Secretary, which SR and the members present seconded.

Close of Meeting: 8:11pm