

Minutes of The LRCA Officials Meeting : 25th August 2015

Tuesday 25th August 2015 at Braunstone Civic Centre

The chairman **Mike Salisbury** opened the meeting at 7:35, and thanked those present for their attendance. (JTB P.S. – The reasons for this joint Policy Committee (PC) and League Management Committee (LMC) meeting had been explained in the emails to the attendees)
The General Secretary **Jim Bingham** took the minutes.

1. Present and apologies for absence.

	<u>Club</u>	<u>Present</u>	<u>Apologies</u>
2	Blaby District at Heathcote Arms		Graham Booley (GB)
3	Braunstone	Jim Bingham (JTB); Mike Salisbury (MWS); Paul Colburn (PJC)	
8	Loughborough	Michael Fraser (MF); Stewart Gordon (SG) + his support worker (SW)	John Mitchell (JM)
11	Oadby	Mike Thornton (MAT)	
14	Syston	Shabir Okhai (SO)	
15	Thurnby	John Pattinson (JP); Bob Collins (BC)	
16	Wigston	Iain Dodds (ID); Martin Burrows (MB)	Andy Morley (AJM);

2. Minutes of previous meetings – postponed until item 6, to allow the next item to be dealt with while MF, SG and SW were able to be present.

3. LRCA Results Website maintenance

MWS from the chair asked JTB to provide some background to this Agenda item, when it quickly became apparent that many of the attendees had no knowledge of the “complaints” list drawn up by SG about the current functionality of the Results Website. (PS by JTB : However, most attendees had received emails indicating SG’s dissatisfaction with the inadequacy of its maintenance).

Some discussions then took place on the actual points on SG’s list (now held on a Google Spreadsheet), and there was disagreement between SG and MF about the resolution of some of the items, the urgency of tackling these problems, and what might be the best strategy for progressing matters.

However MF did concede in particular that the website’s failing in relation to the administration of the Winterton Cup results should be rectified a.s.a.p. And he also agreed that allowing the cancelling of results followed by their re-input would be a useful way of overcoming some problems: so this would be implemented fairly soon.

In the debate on this item the following became evident :-

* Firstly that both MF and SG are both highly regarded website software designers (and are employed as such): which meant that their arguments were often above the heads of most of us present!

* MF certainly wants to continue his involvement in the Results Website Software; especially developmental aspects, as he had already invested a lot of effort into the software, and over the years had used it for honing his website building skills.

However he is not so much interested in its day-to-day maintenance, and would be pleased to offload some aspects of the work entailed – especially related to administrative activities.

* as well as the aforementioned “complaints”, SG felt that he would be far more dedicated to the maintenance work than MF, if he could be granted more authorisation of access to the software and databases. However, as the SW pointed out SG’s enthusiasm to get matters sorted often leads to levels disproportionate levels of frustration because of SG’s unfortunate condition (he suffers from Asperger’s Syndrome).

* some of the proposals made by JP and MWS relating to the merging of some aspects of the Results Website and the main LRCA Website, and also the delegation of administrative work were met very positively by MF, and it was agreed that progress could be made in these areas.

* MF was also very sympathetic to the possibilities of independent s/w development being made which could, on completion, be interfaced with his software. Though thorough testing would then need to be made to ensure that the integrity of the main software was not prejudiced.

* Although there was some feeling (from SO, MB, SG, MWS and JP) that MF’s use of his own named domain was possibly a slightly misguided choice, it was ultimately concluded that this was not of major importance.

* MF’s work to allow access to the Results Website from mobile phones was felt to be an exciting development: though MF did admit that the upheaval to the website resulting from the extensive changes had been at the expense of some recent shortcomings in the website’s normal usage. However, he believed these problems had now been resolved, and he was interested to hear some of the suggestions for enhancements in this area that were subsequently made.

* MF made a tentative commitment to meet up with SG and his SW, to try to find ways of co-operating in the future. Which was clearly met with all round approval.

With regard to the mobile phone development, MAT wondered whether this was a good idea in view of the rules inhibiting their use at matches. But he was reassured that the facilities offered would only be relevant to pre-match activities.

4. Proposed League rule change.

As this item is the responsibility of the League Management Committee, the minutes for it are being prepared separately by JP.

5. Junior chess finances

PJC explained that for several years now the administration of the LRCA junior chess (training and events) and its associated financial management has been made entirely autonomously, and it has been increasingly evident that this leaves the LRCA in a rather unsatisfactory position. The point being that the LRCA will undoubtedly be viewed by many as being the ultimate safety net for these finances, but it actually has no real control over them.

In recent times the donation by John Mitchell’s company of £300 has meant the junior finances have actually been fairly healthy, and PJC reassured the meeting that he has been ensuring that all the costs for training and events have been met by charges made on the parents of the relevant juniors. However the collapse of Paul Findley’s (PF) company (which provided training in schools), with tutoring obligations paid for in advance, but subsequently unmet, has left a very uncomfortable feeling amongst all those involved.

Discussions on this issue seemed to reach the conclusion that it is almost impossible to prevent anyone setting up a situation in Leics similar to that which PF had – that is, independent of the LRCA, and yet still leaving the impression amongst its clients that it was backed by the LRCA. It was felt that if this really the case, then the only option would be for those of us within the LRCA to try to keep a look-out for this danger in the future.

However, PJC did mention that we should maybe find a way to financially protect ourselves from the risk of legal claims against the LRCA, and this led MB to suggest that we probably ought to take a leaf out Wigston's book and arrange a public liability insurance policy.

Moving on from this concern, MAT raised the question of there being a junior training and events budget that the LRCA should set and control. And BC then took up this line to say that he felt that he as Treasurer ought really to be granted some control of the junior accounts. Though, even he, admitted that it was still better that the day-to-day management should be left as PJC's responsibility.

The parallel between this situation and that of the Atkins Congress was then highlighted, and it was recognised that if the LRCA is to ultimately act as the underwriter for both these laudable parts of our organisation then the LRCA Treasurer ought really to have the authority to monitor their accounts as and when he sees fit.

However, even if he were to be granted this authority, he mentioned that he would still prefer their accounts to be kept separate, and for him not be burdened with their micro-management.

JTB pointed out at the LRCA AGM AJM was authorised to come up with proposals for updating our Constitution, and it seemed that this might a good opportunity to address the above financial arrangements. Unfortunately, he had to concede that he didn't recall a deadline being put on this activity (JTB P.S. Though it does seem likely that at the very least AJM would ensure that it was ready for the 2016 AGM)

6. Minutes of previous meetings.

LMC held on July 8th 2014 – JP summarised these.

PC – N/A as these meetings have now been replaced by discussions made electronically.

6.1 Matters Arising

None mentioned.

7. Any Other Business