



Queens Park CHESS CLUB

Minutes: 2025 Annual General Meeting

Date: 27 May 2025, 7-9pm

Venue: The Bungo, 17-21 Nithsdale Road, Glasgow

Present: Philip Blaber, James Burns, Joao Carrapico, Andy Chisholm, Gerry Cowan, Paul Cumming, Chris Dinwoodie, Olanna Horhut, Alex Lane, Moray Lennox, Jonny Linney, David Logue, Rhys McCrosson, Ryan McGill, Harry McGrory, Jordan McNaught, Eric McNeil, Kristen Neilson, Sarah Scott, Iain Shields (meeting chair), Malcolm Theodoreson, Craig Thomson

1. Introduction & Previous Minutes

Iain Shields chaired the meeting, which started at 7:05pm. He noted the high attendance and thanked everyone for taking the time to contribute. No issues arose from the 2024 minutes.

2. Secretary's Report

Andy Chisholm shared information about membership numbers and club activity in various competitions.

The club grew from 54 to 62 members, and had a membership cap in place for almost the whole season - with a waiting list that grew throughout.

15 of our members had achieved a national grading with Chess Scotland, taking our number of active, graded members to 51 - 83% of the membership. Of the members who already had a grade, 3 of them had gained in excess of 100 elo through the season, with Jordan McNaught's amazing performance gaining an incredible 174 elo.

There were great performances across all of our league teams, but most notably our Glasgow League C team who won division 4 - an amazing achievement.

We are again the largest club in Scotland, with the largest active membership and club championship. The club championship was a great success from my point of view, with a huge

reduction in the number of defaults despite the growth in numbers, testament to people embracing the new tools put in place. Congratulations to our new club champion - Jordan McNaught.

We held a number of successful smaller events through the year also: 3 seasonal blitz tournaments; a full-day Allegro; and another 22 player simul against IM Greet, with 2 wins for Scott Kilgour and Moray Lennox.

The club also had a huge turnout to the Glasgow Congress, with 17 members participating across 3 sections - with Ally McLellan sharing 2nd place in the minor and Jonny Livingstone winning the Major outright.

Overall, an amazing year for the club and for chess participation.

3. Treasurer's Report

Paul Cumming gave a breakdown of the club finances.

The membership growth has had a direct impact of the club finances. At the AGM last year we had a balance in the club account of £1030 in credit, we're finishing this year almost exactly £1000 more, on £2029.

In membership fees, we brought in £2650 - a combination of full memberships as well as 17 concessions (for unwaged and people of state pension age).

Our rent at the Bungo was £850, we pay £100 per month over the season from September - May, with December being £50 as we take the winter break.

We paid £265 for participation of our league teams, 3 teams in the GCL, 1 in the DDCL and 1 in the SNCL. £16 went to Hostinger, our webmail service we use for club emails. We've also seen the introduction of bank charges for our accounts, which seems to be the norm these days, which is £3-4 per month. £150 went to IM Greet for his simul, a figure we've increased year on year - a figure we felt was fair given his status as Scottish Champion.

£235 was spent on equipment, £60 on trophies and £62 on sundries which mostly went to Andy Chisholm for our Chess Scotland membership and printing costs for our club tournaments.

It's been very profitable for the club to have greater interest than ever and the club is in good financial health. In previous years it was discussed if we should have our equipment insured, but due to the storage situation we have in the Bungo - an insurance claim would almost certainly not be paid out, therefore the float the club has should be maintained for emergency equipment costs should we experience a loss.

Paul also thanked Iain and Andy for stepping into the shoes of Caitlin and Derek, noting that Iain had given the committee a solid direction and praised Andy's modifications to the Club Championship organisation.

4. President's Report

Iain spoke about the direction of the club.

I'm incredibly pleased with what's been achieved this year; not only in terms of the growth of the club and the secure financial situation that Paul has managed to steer us into; but more the community we've built as well. I've met new people and made new friends, and I think everyone around this table can say the same - and that's my favourite thing about this club. Anything we can do as a committee to build on this is something that we'll listen to ideas on.

Every time I'm at a chess event, people are always saying how impressed they are with our club - not just because of the size of the club; but because of the engagement shown to the Glasgow chess community as a whole.

He shared some good news about our venue.

We'll have our usual space down here again next year, but instead of having the Den we're going to have the back restaurant area for casual chess - and thanks to Paul's negotiating the rent increase will be precisely zero pounds!

And finally, he paid tribute to the committee and captains.

Paul, Andy, Jordan and Rhys have put in an incredible amount of work over the last year to make sure things run smoothly. I'd like to place on the record my personal thanks to them for their hard work and I look forward to another year of growing the club with them. I also want to thanks all the team captains for all the league teams and anyone who has stepped in to fill a captaincy or leadership role over the course of the last year - it's really appreciated and makes like easier for everyone who just wants to turn up and play chess.

5. Election of Committee for 2025/26

All five members of the committee indicated they were happy to stand for their roles again. No other nominations were received.

So the roles were proposed as follows:

- President – **Iain Shields**
- Secretary – **Andy Chisholm**
- Treasurer – **Paul Cumming**
- Competitions Manager – **Jordan McNaught**
- Communications Manager – **Rhys McCrosson**

The nominations were approved and the Committee will remain unchanged for the 25/26 season. Paul pointed out that it was the first time the committee had remained unchanged.

6. Points from Members

6.1 Venue

There is a general agreement that the Bungo should remain the club's home and that the formalising of our agreement re: space for casual chess/analysis in the restaurant area only strengthens the case for remaining there.

Craig Thomson pointed out that the only downside of the venue was the lighting in the basement. Iain acknowledged that the issue is something the committee is well aware of.

Andy pointed out that if lighting could be improved in the basement that we could increase our capacity for competitive games. Moray Lennox noted that the photography lights which Jordan provided had made a difference. Andy said that ideally we'd look at investing in lighting that could be mounted to provide 'top-down' light so as not to cast shadows. Chris Dinwoodie suggested rechargeable magnetic lights. The committee agreed they will investigate.

6.2 Membership Fee/Membership Cap

An increase was proposed from £50/£25 to £60/£30 with the assumption that our rent was going to increase with the formalisation of the hire of the casual chess area. In light of the recent negotiation which acquired the space for no rent increase, the increase wasn't necessarily required - though was still discussed.

Iain proposed that a freeze on the membership fee and a removal of the membership cap would be another way to increase the club's revenue.

Alex Lane asked if we were attempting to grow the float each year. Iain said that he wanted the float to be able to replace all of our equipment and run for a year if needed without asking our members to put their hands in their pockets. We've worked to build it over a few years and don't want to give it up, however it does give us flexibility if there is something we'd like to invest in over the coming period.

Paul added that his concern with an abolishment of the member cap would be in regards to administering a bigger club championship, given space limitations downstairs.

Rhys McCrosson also had concerns about removing the cap, adding that it was brought in to make the club's growth more sustainable. Alex countered that while the growth in earlier years was difficult, that since then the club had introduced a constitution and more structure that made growing a lot easier. He also pointed out that with a larger membership comes more numbers from which volunteers to help with setup/packdown can be found.

Jordan suggested we could set a cap but allow the committee to have jurisdiction as to whether it could be increased mid-season.

Chris D suggested that there should perhaps be an extra fee for members who play more games (e.g. in leagues + CC), given they are getting more out of the club. There was a broad disagreement with this as a direction. Harry McGrory pointed out that the club can organise

graded friendly matches for members at any time, so even those who don't play in league games can still play nationally graded games. Andy agreed that more communication could be done with members in regards to the possibility of graded friendlies. Gerry Cowan added that a tiered membership of any kind would open a can of worms when it comes to any club matters. Craig strongly agreed that a tiered system would not work, and added that the membership fee was for more than just competitive games, that it was for being a member of the club as a whole.

An initial **vote** was proposed with 3 options:

- Keep the member cap in place as is - 0
- Abolish the member cap - 6
- **Leave the cap to the discretion of the committee - 16**

A subsequent **vote** took place about the membership fee:

- Increase to £60/£30 - 0
- **Status quo £50/£25 - 22**

6.2 Queens Park Congress

Iain proposes that as the largest club in Scotland we should be aiming to run a weekend congress open to all entries in the next season. Finding a suitable venue would be the main challenge, but he'd also like to seek sponsorship for such an event.

Ryan McGill suggested that hosting a single-day allegro event would be an easier way to test the water when it came to event organisation. Iain agreed and was open to this possibility too.

Paul raised concerns around the logistics around organising such an event, although principally he was in favour of it. He also said he would want to ensure that whatever venue we find would actually be in the Queens Park/Southside area to make sure there was a good link to the club.

Craig suggested that a perfect venue could be Hampden Park in their hospitality/function suite. There was a general good feeling around this idea. He also said he may be able to secure a sponsor, but that it might rely on us being able to attract GMs to the open competition.

No vote was cast, but there was a universal good feeling about looking toward Hampden as a venue for potential single or multi day chess events in the future.

6.3 Constitution

Iain proposes that the constitution will be open to a consultation from the membership over the coming weeks. Similar to our previous club championship consultation, members will be invited to make suggestions via email over the off season for review by the committee, for a new draft to be made and endorsed by the membership.

It was universally agreed that this didn't need further discussion this evening.

6.4 Club Championship

A number of proposals have been brought forward about different ways that the club championship (CC) could be restructured, however discussions of them are very much interlinked making for a long and often nuanced debate about the details of them.

- Paul brought forward a proposal that we could split the CC into two divisions: an open and a 'challengers' (or similar). The idea behind the suggestion is that in such a large club championship; the majority of the field are out of contention by round 3. By creating a second tier you could create something which lower rated players could still have something to compete for deeper into the competition. If the 'challengers' was set to U1500, then players under 1500 could still choose to enter the open if they wished.
- Alex thought the idea of a tiered championship would risk segmenting the club; meaning that the top players would mostly play against each other and vice versa. He was in favour of one or more grading prizes being introduced and he also brought up the idea of accelerated pairings, which could be another method of balancing the two halves of the draw.
- Jordan pointed out that, because the open would still be available to all players which the segregation wouldn't be forced upon any member.
- Olanna said that, as one of the lower rated members, she still wanted to feel like she had an equal opportunity in the championship.

Iain expressed an agreement that he wanted the club championship to remain one competition, and tried to steer the discussion towards the other linked ideas which would eventually be voted on.

- It was suggested the CC should be reduced from 7 to 5 rounds.
- Related to that, and similar to a tournament run by Hamilton CC in January which is 5 rounds; accelerated pairings could be implemented in order for stronger players to be paired with each other more quickly.
- The idea of introducing a tie break game or series of games, which could give a more satisfying conclusion to a shorter tournament if an outright winner didn't emerge in 5 rounds.

The discussion then opened again to the members:

- Eric suggested a further tournament could be run just for U1500 players, with the CC still being for all members.
- Chris was also in favour of more in-club graded games for lower rated players, saying it was easier to play at your own club than to play in the league where often travel is involved.
- Phil expressed good memories of the tiered club championship at Giffnock, which he won in 1997. Congratulations, Phil.

- Rhys expanded on the idea of accelerated pairings, saying that they gave lower rated members a chance to get paired closer to their level from round 1, meaning that they'd stand a better chance of being in contention further into the tournament.
- Harry pointed out that the fact that so many members had achieved ratings this year was partly on account of the fact that unrated players were paired against stronger players, as unrated vs unrated results don't count towards getting a rating.
- Jordan expressed that while he didn't have a stake in whether the club championship became tiered, as a Club Championship competitor and the competitions manager, he was against the idea of going from 7 rounds to 5 - as the likelihood of an eventual tie increases and dropping a half point effectively ends your hopes of winning the tournament.
- Moray asked what the withdrawal rate was from the CC as the idea of tournament fatigue had been brought up. Andy looked up that there were 7 withdrawals, although many of them were in the final round. Iain pointed out that as of last year's changes, players are now entitled to take a bye at any stage of the tournament - which was introduced to address that concern and did seem to be working. He added that default rates were down and no defaults occurred where the opponent was unaware when they showed up for the game.
- David asked if going back to 6 rounds was an option. Jordan pointed out that it becomes very likely with the swiss system that some players will inevitably have a 4/2 split in the colour they play for the games which makes it a less fair option than an odd number of rounds. Harry suggested that perhaps at our level of chess, imbalance colours wasn't as much of an issue.
- Iain pointed out that there is no such thing as a perfect tournament and there would always be compromise, but it was his view that there should be some tie break in place to make sure that a clear winner was decided. Craig submitted that he would rather, in the event of a tie, that first equal were awarded; as by nature you'd be deciding it outwith the format of the tournament.
- Craig continued that he felt that 5 rounds was definitely too short for the size of the club, but after experiencing fatigue himself at 7 rounds - wondered if compromising at 6 rounds was a better solution. Ryan disagreed, saying that 5 and 7 felt like the two most realistic options and that he favoured 5 - especially given that the club wanted to enter more teams into the leagues and that would take up more space downstairs.
- Rhys suggested that introducing a second half-point bye could be another way to combat any individuals' tournament fatigue. He went on to add that the idea of the 10-day window, which was introduced before the club had access to the upstairs space, could be done away with and much more flexibility could be given to when matches are played.

Iain decided to put a few things to a vote:

- Should the CC split into 2 divisions? -
 - In favour - 3
 - **Against** - 18

Motion fails.

- Number of rounds for CC:
 - 5 rounds - 5
 - 6 rounds - 3
 - **7 rounds** - 13

CC remains at 7 rounds.

- Should the CC have accelerated pairings?
 - **In favour** - 10
 - Against - 2

Motion carried.

- Should we allow players to take 2 ½ point byes in the CC?
 - **In favour** - 14
 - Against - 0

Motion carried.

Discussion continued on the subject of tiebreaks:

- Jordan pointed out that the current tiebreak (Tournament Performance Rating) was a slightly unfair system as players aren't in control of the strength of players they are paired against, adding that it's also an anti-climactic way for the competition to end. He said he'd be in favour of a rapid play-off match, proposing 20+10 double round-robin games - continuing until any tie is broken.
- Andy suggested that, further to Craig's point about it being a classical tournament, that a classical play-off would be appropriate. An 'armageddon' match could be a way to conclude it in one game. Jordan pointed out that the armageddon format is more suited to rapid play on account of the advantage to white being time based. Moray also added that at lower levels, 'draw odds' with black is not as much of an advantage.
- Rhys suggested, on the basis of the decisions which had been made so far (7 rounds and accelerated pairings), that the likelihood of a tiebreak being needed was very low and that we could keep the same system (TPR) and see how it panned out.

- Chris brought forward that the top players in the club should get the exclusive right to say how the tie would be broken, given that many are unlikely to be competing. Moray added that those who were in contention come round 5 could take a vote on how the tie would be broken. Jordan pointed out that in this system, whoever had the highest TPR score would be inclined to vote for that so the fairest way to decide would be before the tournament starts.
- Craig once again voiced strong opposition to any form of tie break, saying he believed even though a tie was very unlikely that first equal would be the fairest conclusion in that eventuality.

An impromptu **vote** took place:

- Should the result of a tie for 1st in CC be **first equal**?
 - **In favour** - 9
 - **Against** - 6

Motion carried.

Paul brought forward after a specific case which occurred in the year's CC that, in cases where players have very limited availability - as a last resort the game could be allowed to be played in a private residence.

- Harry said he'd be happy with this as long as there was a neutral party attending to arbitrate in the event of a disagreement
- Rhys said he thought we should not be allowing it, and that with the likelihood of the window to play games extending that it shouldn't be an issue as players will have more club nights available to play their games.
- David added that he was uncomfortable with a situation being created where any member would feel pressured to go to a private residence and indeed to host anyone in their own residence.

One last vote took place.

- Games should be allowed to be played in private residences as a last resort.
 - In favour - 5
 - **Against** - 14

Motion fails.

8 Any Other Business

- Bungo in the Back Lanes to take place on 21st June, in the lane behind Craig's house on Marywood Square. QPCC to provide equipment and all welcome.
- Craig wants QPCC to challenge Hutchey to a chess match, a large game with around 20 boards. He has reached out to them already but not heard anything back as yet. The committee in favour of exploring this idea further.

9 Close

There was no further business, Iain brought the meeting to a close and invited all to the Alison Arms for refreshments.

Minutes by Andy / 8 August 2025