

# Minute of Munster Chess Union Annual General Meeting

Held in the Springfort Hall, Mallow on 7<sup>th</sup> September 2014.

## **ATTENDANCE**

Frank Noonan, Simon Lawrence, Alan Salsac, Ray O'Brien, Eric Salsac, John Keane, Stephen Short, Pat Twomey, Paul Shanahan, Jan Heinrich, Gabriel Mirza, Patrick O'Sullivan, Ludmila Podzinkova, Sean Phillips.

Apologies were received from John Cassidy and Gerry Graham.

## **DISRUPTION OF AGM START**

Just as the AGM got under way John Alfred arrived. The Chairman told John that as he had resigned from the ICU he was no longer a member of the MCU and not entitled to attend. Therefore he was asked to leave by the Chairman who refused to continue the meeting until he did.

John refused and claimed that he was still an ICU member. It was pointed out that he was not listed on the ICU membership list downloaded the previous day. John then claimed that he was still a member as his fees had not been refunded. He was reminded that he had resigned in June by email with no conditions. He was repeatedly asked to leave but refused so the hotel security was called.

During these exchanges it was noted that Gabriel Mirza was recording the meeting and he was asked not to do so. Gabriel initially refused and several members pointed out that they objected to recording and had not given permission for it. At that point Gabriel agreed to stop recording and delete what he already had.

John still refused to leave. Finally he was told the Gardai were being contacted. After a further ten or fifteen minutes he said that he had to leave but would be back. The AGM then resumed after a delay of about thirty minutes.

## **2013 AGM MINUTES**

As the 2013 AGM Minutes had been available on the website in advance it was suggested that the formal reading be skipped if the meeting was agreeable. The meeting was then asked if there were any matters arising from the 2013 Minutes. No issues were raised.

The Minutes were adopted on the proposition of Alan Salsac having been seconded by John Keane.

## **MATTERS ARISING**

There were no matters arising.

## **CHAIRPERSON'S ADDRESS**

Alan Salsac, Chairperson, noted that the finances, which were a major concern last year, had been brought under control. He then outlined his vision for improving the MCU and a number of initiatives to increase the involvement of the membership.

A new low cost knockout competition between league clubs was being proposed. This would be covered by the same fees and would be played at the home club's home venue to reduce cost. To facilitate this initial rounds could be organised by region.

Last year Alan had hoped to set up a newsletter to communicate with the membership. However now that a website was available it was intended to use it for communication. It was also intended to use the website to promote clubs. In addition to basic listings, further information, history etc. could be included.

Based on experience during the past year a number of motions were being proposed to update the Constitution. Since the elected Committee is quite small there is likely to be a need for external assistance in some areas. One of the main Constitutional changes proposed would formalize the ability of the Committee to involve other non-voting members with relevant experience or technical expertise.

Members need to be aware that the MCU has limited resources and has to pay hotels for league venues. Some of these costs end up being carried by individual members until the team fees are received. This situation is unacceptable and clubs are asked to pay their fees on time in the coming season.

It should be the MCU's ambition to expand beyond just running a league to keep more in touch with members and work to increase the enjoyment of chess in Munster. One specific proposal is to revitalize the Munster Championship as a standalone event.

### **SECRETARY'S REPORT**

The secretary's report is available as a pdf document on the website. The main issues covered include:

- An outline of our response to the request received to enter teams in the under 16 and under 19 Inter-provincials
- A note that the committee decided that emails discussing issues should be treated as confidential.
- Unfortunately, in November, the behaviour of the MCU rep lead to a situation where the ICU Executive would no longer include him in confidential discussions. Despite attempts by the Chairman to resolve the matter the rep refused to change his behaviour. The Committee unanimously agreed that he was not carrying out his role and he was replaced by the Chairman as required by Article 3.5 of the MCU Constitution.
- Stephen Danaher raised the issue that Shannon had won all their matches in Division 2 but were only placed second in the league. Although the Committee accepted that Stephen had a reasonable point the results in the Munster Leagues have always been decided on game points and it would not be reasonable to change the rules retrospectively.
- Finally it was noted that the new MCU Website had gone live in late July. It is hoped that this will allow much better communication with our membership.

Gabriel Mirza questioned why the NCC/ECC qualifying tournament proposed in Motion 1 adopted at last year's AGM was not held. I explained that I had emailed all the Division 1 Clubs to determine their interest and only one club was interested in participating.

Gabriel pointed out that St. Michael's could have fielded teams. I pointed out that the motion specifically referred to Division 1 teams and that the committee had to work with the motion as passed.

The Secretary's report was adopted on the proposal of Alan Salsac, seconded by Pat Twomey.

### **TREASURER'S REPORT**

Simon Lawrence circulated a financial report showing that the balance between expenditure and income was back in balance. However the report does not include the final costs for room hire for league matches. The main reason for this was that individual members had paid for venues as the MCU bank balance was low and in some cases they still had to return the receipts and claim their costs back.

The root cause of this problem was that Division 1 Clubs particularly had not paid their fees at the beginning of the league. The net result was that some team captains had ended up carrying the costs and this was most unfair.

To help make paying fees easier a PayPal account has been set up to allow payments via the website.

The treasurer proposed that all clubs should pay their MCU fees before the leagues start this year.

He also proposed that the fees remain the same for the coming year.

Although the Bank Balance currently looked good we need to maintain a buffer against possible hotel cost increases and it was also noted that web hosting costs for the website would be incurred in the coming season.

The Treasurer's Report was adopted on the proposition of Eric Salsac having been seconded by Pat Twomey.

### **LEAGUE CONTROLLER'S REPORT**

Frank Noonan noted that both Division 1 and Division 2 had been hotly contested right down to the final round. Ennis A and Adare A had scored equal points and the outcome of their individual matches was also equal. Ennis A won on Board Point count. Unfortunately for the third year in a row one of the teams had to withdraw after the start of the league.

Division 2 ended with a win for Ennis B on 20.5 ahead of Shannon on 18 points. Frank noted the issue raised by Shannon but pointed out that the current rules had to be applied.

The League Controllers report was adopted on the proposal of Pat Twomey, seconded by Patrick O'Sullivan.

### **CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS**

**1.** Remove the position of PRO from Section 3.1 of the Constitution and remove the PRO's Report from Section 4.4 point 7.

Proposed By: Alan Salsac. Seconded By: Ray O'Brien.

Alan proposed this as we have not actually had a PRO for several years.

THE MOTION WAS CARRIED.

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**2.** Add a new Section 3.4 to allow co-opting of help for the committee.

*3.4 The Committee shall have the power to co-opt any individual member of the MCU to assist or advise them if they feel that such member has experience or abilities which can be of benefit to the MCU. It shall also have the power to form sub-committees to assist it in specific areas. The Committee will also appoint an individual member of the MCU to act as it's delegate to the ICU, and such person will be subject to instruction from the committee in respect of the views to be expressed on it's behalf to the ICU. Any person or persons so co-opted shall have no voting rights at Committee meetings by virtue of being co-opted.*

Proposed By: Alan Salsac. Seconded By: Ray O'Brien.

An amendment to this motion to make the MCU delegate a separate section was proposed by Pat Twomey. The resulting amended motions were:

*3.4 The Committee shall have the power to co-opt any individual member of the MCU to assist or advise them if they feel that such member has experience or abilities which can be of benefit to the MCU. It shall also have the power to form sub-committees to assist it in specific areas. Any person or persons so co-opted shall have no voting rights at Committee meetings by virtue of being co-opted.*

THIS AMENDMENT WAS CARRIED.

*The Committee will also appoint an individual member of the MCU to act as its delegate to the ICU, and such person will be subject to instruction from the committee in respect of the views to be expressed on its behalf to the ICU.*

This amendment was adopted for a one year trial period and will be subject to review at next year's AGM.

THIS AMENDMENT WAS CARRIED FOR ONE YEAR.

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**3.** That the MCU create a new, non-voting position called "The Webmaster".

Proposed By: Gabriel Mirza. Seconded By: Jan Heinrich.

This motion was withdrawn in view of the new article 3.4 adopted above.

THE MOTION WAS WITHDRAWN.

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**4.** Change Section 3.5 to be consistent with Section 4.10:

*3.5 If any Officer shall, for whatever reason, fail to properly carry out his or her duties, the Committee shall appoint another member of the MCU to assume that particular office until the next AGM.*

Proposed By: Ray O'Brien. Seconded By: Alan Salsac.

Existing 3.5 text reads:

*3.5 If any Officer shall, for whatever reason, fail to properly carry out his or her duties, then the Chairman shall be required to carry out such duties.*

THE MOTION WAS CARRIED.

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**5.** Increase the quorum for the General Meetings in Section 4.8 from 5 to 15 members.

Proposed By: Alan Salsac. Seconded By: Ray O'Brien.

An amendment to change the quorum to 10 members was proposed by Pat Twomey and seconded by Frank Noonan.

THE AMENDMENT WAS CARRIED.

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**6.** Add a new Section **6. CONDUCT/DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE** to the Constitution and remove the existing paragraph 3.4. The new section will contain the following two paragraphs:

*6.1 The Committee shall have the power to expel, suspend or take such other action as it shall think fit in respect of any member, or affiliate member, who refuses or neglects to comply with the Rules of the MCU or who is guilty of any conduct which in the opinion of the Committee is seriously unsporting or is prejudicial to the interests of the MCU.*

*6.2 No action shall be taken against any member without first inviting them to furnish an explanation of the circumstances complained of either in writing or personally before the general Committee at the members' option. The decision of the Committee shall be ascertained by ballot and shall be final. A member of the MCU expelled by virtue of the provisions of this clause shall forfeit all right in and claim upon the MCU.*

Proposed By: Alan Salsac. Seconded By: Ray O'Brien.

THE MOTION WAS CARRIED.

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**7.** Add a new Section **7. COMPLAINTS** to the Constitution. The new section will contain the following paragraphs.

*7.1 All complaints shall be made in writing to the Secretary who, should he be unable to remedy them, shall submit the same to the Committee whose decision shall be final.*

Proposed By: Alan Salsac. Seconded By: Ray O'Brien.

THE MOTION WAS CARRIED.

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**8.** Add a new Section **8. RULES OF CHESS** to the Constitution. The new section will contain the following paragraphs.

*8.1 The game shall be played according to the Rules of Chess adopted from time to time by FIDE, as modified by any bye-laws set down by the ICU and local rules specified by tournament organizers (which may not contradict the laws of the governing body). Any query or dispute concerning the rules of Chess arising during any event organised by or under the supervision of the MCU shall be referred to the Committee or its appointed representative(s), whose decision shall be final and binding.*

Proposed By: Alan Salsac. Seconded By: Ray O'Brien.

THE MOTION WAS CARRIED.

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**9.** Add a new Section **9. RULES OF MCU** to the Constitution. The new section will contain the following paragraphs.

*9.1 Members shall be bound by the Rules and Regulations of the MCU, and if any doubt should arise as to the proper interpretation thereof, the matter shall be referred to the Committee whose decision shall be final*

Proposed By: Alan Salsac. Seconded By: Ray O'Brien.

THE MOTION WAS CARRIED.

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## **GENERAL MOTIONS**

**10.** That clubs with multiple teams, cannot use players from one team to play for another team in the same division.

Proposed By: Jan Heinrich. Seconded By: Gabriel Mirza.

This issue received considerable debate before being put to a vote.

THE MOTION WAS DEFEATED.

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**11.** That clock times in Division 2 should not be longer than 90 minutes for each clock.

Proposed By: Gabriel Mirza. Seconded By: Jan Heinrich.

It was pointed out that games of less than 90 minutes might not be rated.

The motion was amended to read:

*That clock times in Division 2 should be 90 minutes for each clock.*

THE AMENDED MOTION WAS CARRIED.

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**12.** Players also from ULSTER to be considered like the players from CONNAUGHT = non-guest

Proposed By: Jan Heinrich. Seconded By: Gabriel Mirza.

It was stated that since Connaught now have their own league there was no reason to treat players from Connaught as non-guest players. An amendment was proposed that Connaught players should now be treated as guest players.

It was pointed out that the effect of this was quite different to the original motion and so would have to be treated as a separate motion which had not been notified in advance.

THE MOTION WAS DEFEATED.

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**13.** When making the MCU Calendar (either Div.1/Div2 dates)- one member of each Club to be consulted about Dates and Venues.

Proposed By: Gabriel Mirza. Seconded By: Jan Heinrich.

THE MOTION WAS CARRIED.

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**14.** A low cost club knockout tournament to be played at club venues should be established.

Proposed By: Alan Salsac. Seconded By: Ray O'Brien.

THE MOTION WAS CARRIED.

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**15.** The individual Munster Championship should be reinstated as a separate event and this should also incorporate a Munster Junior Championship.

Proposed By: Alan Salsac. Seconded By: Ray O'Brien.

Pat Twomey and Steve Short, who organize the Mulcahy Memorial Tournament which has included the Munster Championship in recent years, agreed with the motion and confirmed that they would like to see it back as a standalone event.

THE MOTION WAS CARRIED.

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**16.** That the incoming Committee examine the use of Match Points as the main scoring criterion in the Munster Leagues and adjust the rules to introduce this for the coming league season.

Proposed By: Ray O'Brien. Seconded By: Stephen Danaher.

In discussion it was suggested that using game points for tie breaks would be similar to using goal difference in soccer.

THE MOTION WAS CARRIED.

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### **ELECTION OF OFFICERS**

Chairperson: Alan Salsac was proposed by Ray O'Brien and seconded by Steve Short. Ray O'Brien was proposed by Gabriel Mirza but declined the nomination. As there were no other candidates Alan was deemed elected.

Secretary: Ray O'Brien was proposed by Pat Twomey and seconded by Alan Salsac. As there were no other candidates Ray was deemed elected.

Treasurer: Simon Lawrence was proposed by Jan Heinrich and seconded by Pat Twomey. As there were no other candidates Simon was deemed elected.

League Controller: Frank Noonan was proposed by Simon Lawrence and seconded by Eric Salsac. As there were no other candidates Frank was deemed elected.

### **AOB**

No items were raised under Any Other Business.

The Chairman then offered congratulations to Diana Mirza on achieving the WCM title for her performance in the recent Olympiad and closed the meeting.