SCCA AGM 2019 – Report by Delegate to SCCU Executive

Paul Shepherd attended two SCCU Executive meetings and two SCCU Council meetings since our last AGM. Peter Lawrence attended the latest SCCU Executive meeting in April 2019. Paul Shepherd also served a second year as SCCU General Secretary.

The most material items that SCCU have dealt with over the last year have been in relation to some county match rule changes that come into effect on 1st September 2019, digitalisation of the SCCU Bulletins and discussions of ways to increase participation in SCCU competitions and raising the profile of SCCU.

Regarding the County Match Rules the most significant changes relate to:

a) being clear about the roles of captains with the emphasis being on captains jointly trying to resolve disputes at matches prior to escalation. If escalation is needed, standard forms will be required to be completed.

b) clearance of ungraded players will be allowed post match provided that such requests have been made pre-match. This is to deal with late requests.

c) improved definition of when mobile phones can be used, where they should be stored during play as well as when players can leave the playing venue.

The SCCU Executive agreed to the digitalisation of the SCCU Bulletin archive. Funding for this was partly via a legacy from Richard Haddrell and partly from SCCU funds. The paper archive is now lodged with the British Library.

Discussions on the future have resulted in the new SCCU/London Championships scheduled to take place on 29 June 2019. At the time of writing three Surrey clubs have entered a total of four teams.

It is anticipated that discussions will occur at the SCCU AGM on 7 July 2019 on the subject of increasing county team participation. Here are a few topics expected to come up and I would like SCCA members comments on them during this meeting:-

a) How do you feel about the possibility of a combined Berkshire and Buckinghamshire team being allowed to compete in the SCCU competition? (We have heard mixed opinions so far as to whether it is easily accessible. By road - yes, by public transport - maybe not)

b) We have previously discussed the possibility of fielding teams with average grade limits rather than upper cut-offs. The Board thinks cut-offs are easier to manage than average grades. Do you agree?

c) The Board believes that a "handicap" system (e.g. similar to the Stoneleigh trophy target score to win the match) to level the playing field for weaker vs stronger counties is not a suitable format for county chess and is certainly no preparation for the ECF stages. Do you agree?

d) Do you think moving some or all of our matches to a central London location would increase or decrease player participation?

e) We have discussed ideas to increase junior participation in county chess with some of our captains. That is still a work in progress but one idea was to have a county format which provided the possibility of, say, 4 rapid-play games county games in an afternoon instead of 1 long-play. Would that work for a mixed adult and junior team?

***Paul Shepherd – SCCA Delegate to SCCU Executive***

***15 June 2019***