

Welcome to the inaugural edition of the Welsh Chess Union newsletter, your essential source for everything happening in Welsh chess. Whether you're a seasoned competitor, club player, or chess enthusiast, this newsletter will keep you informed about upcoming tournaments, recent results, administrative updates.

We welcome any contributions, suggestions, and feedback.

1) Management Board Restructuring

I'm writing a proposal to improve the MB effectiveness. Its aim is to clarify the decision-making authority, and to ensure appropriate distribution of responsibilities. It provides a management framework which will create a two-tier governance structure with a streamlined Executive Committee responsible for strategic direction and policy-making, supported by a second tier of directors with specific operational responsibilities. It formally defines a regular meeting calendar together with officer's objectives.

2) Website Redesign

This project is very high on our agenda. I've written a technical spec that, once approved, will be used for tendering. The redesign is heavily cost dependent, of course. Discussions are underway as to how this could be funded.

3) Tournaments and Events

The WCU is responsible for many tournaments over the year. There are 4 open weekend events, the South Wales International, now in its 20th year. There are also the WCU Championship events - the closed and open, as well as the rapid and blitz championships. We also provide a large number of junior championship events across many age categories. We also organise primary and secondary schools' events, which have proved very successful. There are also the Senior championships that we are hoping will become a regular fixture. We are holding this year's championships alongside a new u50s event. The WCPL is our main team competition, held over a number of weekends throughout the year. It is the qualifying event for the European Clubs. Then there's the Olympiad which takes a great deal of organisation. We also regularly send teams to the European and World Senior Team Championships. At the last Senior Euro's we managed to finish in 4th place, just missing out on a bronze medal to England.

4) Sponsorship

We are currently reviewing sponsorship options. In particular, one of these is looking very promising. We have approached the Sennedd and UK governments on a number of occasions, for financial support without success. This was even in light of the vast amount of funding the ECF received from Westminster. We had a prominent politician involved, supporting our case, but to no avail. The door isn't completely shut, however, and we are still in discussions with the Sennedd.

5) Glorney, Gilbert, Robinson and Stokes Junior International tournament

Wales is hosting the event this year. With the costs covered by Welsh Chess Education Trust, we are pleased to be holding this at the Celtic Manor Resort, Newport.

6) FIDE Funding

To qualify for FIDE funding the board has to come up with an annual plan with defined targets that need to met. The plan has to be approved by FIDE and they need proof that the various targets in

the plan have been met. Our application has been accepted for a number of years. Doing this is an ongoing challenge, but thanks to the work of a very few officers, we are able to reach our target key performance indicators.

7) Arbiters

The number of qualified National Arbiters has increased over the last couple of years. We are building a great team of qualified arbiters and we're always looking for more. Contact the WCU (Kevin Staveley) and we can arrange courses for those interested.

8) Publicity Director

This is a key role that's currently vacant. We need someone who can coordinate reporting of events, both before and after they are complete, and to manage WCU social media pages. We need a central point for coordinating publicity at a zonal level too. This is a key role that's currently vacant and essential to raising the profile of Welsh chess at all levels. The Publicity Officer will serve as the primary communications hub for the Welsh Chess Union, coordinating all aspects of publicity and media relations.

Here's how I see the role: They will coordinate comprehensive event reporting, managing both advance publicity to promote upcoming tournaments and competitions, and post-event coverage to celebrate achievements and maintain engagement. They will take full responsibility for managing and developing WCU's social media presence across all platforms, including producing a regular newsletter.

A crucial aspect of the role involves establishing and maintaining a network for coordinating publicity at zonal and club levels, working closely with regional representatives. The Publicity Officer will also liaise with external media outlets, including local newspapers, radio stations, and chess publications, to secure coverage of significant events and achievements. They will also be involved in the design of the new WCU website.

If you are interested, please message me directly.

9) Ladies Chess

There are far too few active Welsh FIDE rated females at the moment. This needs addressing. Our Ladies Director is keen to hear from anyone as to how to move things forward here. For example, one suggestion is to make the Welsh Championship attract more females. A starting point, perhaps, is to make the byes more flexible (as in up to round 5 like the Open). Some players couldn't play because of the current format. Please post your thoughts on the WCU FB page.

10) Future newsletters.

We hope to publish these frequently, The absence of a Publicity director and, as far as we're aware, zonal publicity officers, makes it challenging to gather reports and stories from a local level, so I would urge you to send your reports direct to me for publication.

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