HCA Secretary Report

With the stepping down of the HCA Secretary John Wheeler after almost 25 years at the helm, and the subsequent departure of the HCA President, David Nelson I am pleased to report that we have managed the change well.

We missed John's experience, but he has been available for assistance, which was especially appreciated in the build up to the Hampshire Congress and as an excellent sounding board.

In the County Matches we continued to play in the Chiltern League and Match Captain Fraser McLeod often had more players than the required 20 boards. This did mean that some regular players were unable to play, and if the Chiltern League re-instate additional sections Hampshire will be able to support this.

We did not participate in the WECU OTB season and for the foreseeable future this is likely to be the case. We did enter a team in the 4th WECU Online Tournament with a dual Hampshire / Dorset team, losing in the preliminary 7 – 9 against Somerset[1]. We also as still a member of the WECU entered a team in the OTB U1850 National Stages, losing 7½ - 8½[2] in the quarter finals against a very strong Yorkshire Team.

The 2023 Hampshire Congress, incorporating the Individual Championship was again held at the Lysses Hotel and we managed to even out the numbers in the sections (which was an issue the previous year). The Open was also FIDE rated for this first time. The tournament was at capacity with a new record 91 entries. This was the last Congress which our long term Arbiter Kevin Thurlow ran, and he was assisted by the Secretary and Vice President.

17 year old Iwan Cave retained the Individual Championship on tie-break, and we increased the prize money for each section, whilst still managing a profit.

This profit has been used to complete our replacement of analogue clocks with DGT ones, ahead of schedule. It is unlikely that will we make this sort of profit in the future, with the increased costs of running the congress.

We are looking to change the time-control and section ratings this year, with a five round rather than six round tournament.

Additional activities completed this year included the revamping of the HCA Website, new headed paper and Hampshire Chess Logo (many thanks to Peter Eales). We now have online banking, although unlinking from the HJCA is in progress. Once completed this will allow the HCA to move away from cheques, to use Bank Transfers (whilst ensuring controls are in

[1] Hampshire * 1 v Somerset * 1 | ECF League Management System (ecflms.org.uk)
[2] Hampshire v Yorkshire | ECF League Management System (ecflms.org.uk)

place).

We also embraced LMS for the HCA Congress, to record the results, and submit the ECF rating. Positive feedback from Congress entrants was received, and they especially appreciated the LMS reporting, additional space and free refreshments which were provided.

We are looking forward to the new Hampshire Rapidplay championship which is being held on the 7th September 2024 at Barton Peveril 6th Form College, which Iwan Cave is running under the HCA banner.

Finally the secretary would like to thank his fellow officers for their help and support throughout the season.

Graham Stuart
(Secretary, Hampshire Chess Association)