

LRCA AGM 2026 Minutes

The meeting was held online via Teams at 7.30 pm on Monday 1 June 2026.

Please note all written reports are available on the LRCA website and will not be reproduced within the minutes.

1. Present and Apologies for Absence

Ben Vaughan (Anstey)
Alan Agnew (Anstey)
Fraser MacDonald (Leicester University)
Stewart Gordon (Loughborough)
Rene Butler (Market Harborough)
Shaun Cope (Melton Mowbray)
Chris Knight (Melton Mowbray)
Shabir Okhai (Syston)
Bob Collins (Thurnby)
Iain Dodds (Wigston)
Martin Burrows (Wigston)
Bhuvaneswari Babu (Wigston)

Apologies: Ben McDermott (Ashby)

2. Minutes of the LRCA AGM 2025

Proposed by CK, seconded by BV, and approved by all present.

3. Officers' Reports

3.1 Chairman (Ben Vaughan)

BV confirmed that the Chairman's and Congress reports had been published on the website. Most fixtures were completed successfully, with some rearranged due to adverse weather. It was encouraging to see new players joining clubs and participating in league matches. Congratulations were extended to the divisional, cup and county championship winners.

BV reported that £112 had been raised for LOROS at the charity evening. He also noted disappointment that a classical Congress event could not be held alongside the rapidplay event.

Thanks were given to SC and his assistants for creating a new LRCA Facebook page, and members were encouraged to support it. Appreciation was also expressed to the GMC and volunteers for their continued contributions to the Association.

3.2 League Secretary (Bhuvaneswari Babu)

The report had been published on the website. BB presented the League Secretary's Report and confirmed completion of the 2025/26 season. The division winners were noted as Wigston 1 (Division 1), Wigston 2 (Division 2), Heathcote Arms (Division 3), Market Harborough 3 (Division 4), and Market Harborough 4 (Division 5).

A total of 41 teams competed during the season. BB noted that Division 1 had only seven teams, resulting in fewer matches, and this would be reviewed for next season.

Congratulations were extended to Anstey for introducing four junior teams. Thanks were given to SG for maintaining the LRCA website and updating results. Appreciation was also expressed to all captains, clubs and players for their cooperation throughout the season.

Members agreed to hold a review meeting for the 2026/27 season in due course.

3.3 Treasurer (Bob Collins)

BC presented the Treasurer's Report and Accounts, which had been published on the website. A surplus of £69 was recorded on the main fund, with the Association remaining in a healthy financial position. Increased trophy expenditure was partly due to the replacement of the Harrod Cup.

BC noted limited activity within the Atkins Fund, including an unclaimed refund treated as a donation. Increased junior chess activity, additional invoices and a £700 donation from the John Robinson Trust were also reported, with £300 included in the current accounts and £400 carried forward.

The consolidated accounts showed an overall loss of under £95, mainly due to a loss of approximately £300 within the junior chess accounts. Discussion followed regarding the ECF rolling membership system, including renewal dates, late fees and the number of free games permitted before membership was required.

The Treasurer's Report and Accounts were approved, proposed by SC and seconded by ID.

3.4 Audit Statement (Martin Burrows – Independent Examiner)

MB confirmed that he had reviewed the accounts and had no issues to report. He noted that the role is now referred to as Independent Examiner under the new constitution.

MB also highlighted delays in processing some junior account entries and suggested improvements to financial reporting procedures.

4. Committee Reports

4.1 County Teams (Vacant)

BV suggested that the County Teams Report be taken briefly, noting that there had been limited county team activity during the year. Discussion followed regarding the need for volunteers and team captains to help restart county competitions and encourage greater participation.

4.2 Congress (Ben Vaughan)

BV reported that the planned classical Congress had been cancelled due to a lack of entries and higher venue costs, making the event unsustainable. Refunds were issued to entrants. Members were encouraged to help promote future events and seek sponsorship opportunities. Discussion also took place regarding earlier advertising and avoiding clashes with other congresses.

4.3 Juniors (Alan Agnew)

BV presented the Junior Chess Report on behalf of AA, noting that the full report had been published on the LRCA website. Regular junior coaching sessions continued at the Oak Centre, with four groups and typically 34 children attending each week.

Junior activity included participation in the National Primary Schools Chess Association competitions, Leicestershire Primary Schools Championships, Under-9 and Under-11 team events, and EJCOA qualifying events. Two primary school tournaments involving three schools were also held, with Fairfield Prep, Leicester Grammar and Richard Hill School among the participating schools.

It was noted that Leicestershire junior teams had competed in Midland Zonal and National Finals events, including Under-11 girls' competitions hosted at Loughborough Grammar School.

Thanks were expressed to MB for assistance with grant applications and to volunteers supporting junior coaching and events. BB suggested that greater focus should be placed on encouraging girls' chess participation.

5. ECF Delegate

It was noted that no ECF Delegate report had been received or presented.

6. Ratings Officer & Webmaster (Stewart Gordon)

SG presented the Rating Officer and Webmaster Report, noting that league and summer cup results had been successfully submitted for rating during the year.

Discussion took place regarding difficulties caused by January rating updates coinciding with early January fixtures. Members agreed that the matter should be reviewed further before any rule changes were proposed.

SG also reported ongoing issues with automated emails generated through the LRCA website not always being delivered correctly. Investigations into the issue were continuing.

7. Election of Officers

The following officers were elected for the 2026/27 season:

Position	Elected
LRCA	
President	Ben Vaughan
Secretary	Bhuvaneswari Babu
Treasurer	Bob Collins
Other Officers	
Rating Officer	Stewart Gordon
Webmaster	Stewart Gordon
League Fixtures Secretary	Martin Burrows
Summer Cup Controller	Iain Dodds
Individual Competitions	Andy Morley
Junior Officer	Alan Agnew
Safeguarding Officer	Alan Agnew
Independent Examiner	Martin Burrows

SO proposed that all current officers be re-elected en bloc. This was seconded by SC and approved by the meeting.

8. Subscriptions for 2026-2027

BC recommended that the fees remain unchanged for the 2026/27 season at £4 per board for the league and £8 per team for the Summer Cup.

SO proposed the recommendation, which was seconded by BB and approved by the meeting.

9. Any Other Business

Members discussed the possibility of introducing a rating cap for Division 5 teams, with a suggested limit of approximately 1500 Elo. Advantages and disadvantages were considered, including deflated junior ratings and potential difficulties for smaller clubs fielding teams. The matter will be discussed further at the next LMC meeting.

The possibility of online league matches was discussed, particularly for long distance fixtures. Concerns were raised regarding technology requirements, consent, fairness and the impact on ECF ratings. Members generally favoured continuing with over the board chess.

Long distance fixtures, such as Ashby v Wigston, were discussed. The possible use of neutral venues, including Anstey, was suggested, although fixture scheduling complexities were acknowledged.

The future of the Chapman Cup was discussed due to declining participation in recent years. Members felt that other competitions, including the Harrod Cup, Wylie Cup, county events and 4NCL, had reduced interest in the competition. Suggestions for future formats or alternatives were welcomed.

A request from SC and CK to review Rule 14 was discussed, particularly in relation to mobile phones and electronic devices. Members agreed that the smoking aspect of the rule was largely obsolete. Discussion covered emergency phone use, inadvertent phone activation, photography of boards, educating new players, pre-match reminders, suitable penalties for breaches, and avoiding distractions during play and post-game analysis. SG confirmed that he was preparing guidance notes for new players. BB and BV agreed to review and redraft Rule 14 for future consideration.

SO stated disappointment that Wigston 2 were given a "free relegation" for the second time in the last ten years, whereas Shepshed having been relegated fairly, and indicating they would fold as a club if they were forced to remain in Div 1, had their division placement put to a vote. MB pointed out that Wigston 2 had not been relegated and that the team had been withdrawn as the club was reducing its number of teams from 6 to 5. The club were losing 5 players from the pool of Wigston 1/2 players so it was appropriate for Wigston 2 to be the team removed. The team Wigston had in division 2 in 25/26 was the Wigston 4 team that had won division 3 the previous season. Subsequent to the meeting ID sent SO a detailed analysis of the Wigston playing resources known at the time of the team entries. This showed that the decision to remove the Wigston 2 team was fully justified and in accordance with the league rules.

10. Date of Next AGM

The next AGM is provisionally scheduled for Monday 24 May 2027, subject to confirmation.

The meeting closed at 09.00 PM.