

Isle of Man Chess Association ("the Club")

2025 Annual General Meeting

Held at PromSpace, Loch Promenade, Douglas, Isle of Man

On Tuesday 2nd September 2025

In attendance: Alan Ormsby (chairman), Glenn Cross, Paul Smith, John Costello, Zahed Miah, David Dunkley, Henrik Fabri, Brian Woodard, Colin Watkinson, Howard Dobson, Sanjay Gumireddy, Brian Towers, Tony Robinson (13 Members)

1. Apologies received

Apologies were received from Keith Allen, Francis Thoday, Kyle Cross, Neil Davies, Antony Jackson, Silvester Sipos and Sandor Talas.

2. Minutes of the last AGM

The Chairman invited members to read the minutes of the 2024 AGM

3. Matters arising

There were no matters arising

The motion to adopt the minutes was nominated by Howard Dobson and seconded by Colin Watkinson and the motion was passed unanimously.

4. Chairman's Report

Alan Ormsby presented his chairman's report, a copy which is attached and forms part of these minutes.

The Chairman also reported that the 2025 Grand Swiss was now to be held in Uzbekistan but there was a chance that the 2027 event would be held in Isle of Man probably in late spring of that year.

The Chairman overall was happy with the progress of the transition away from the ECF. Compulsory membership was no longer required for Isle of Man members, and it was now up to members individually to decide if they wanted separate ECF membership. The incoming Committee would look at matters highlighted by members such as completing the move away from the ECF, looking for a potential Press officer and progressing a junior section.

5. Treasurer's Report

Zahed Miah presented the Treasurer's report, noting a surplus of £751 had been made for the year ended 30th June 2025.

Total income was £2,830. Income from membership fees and tournament fees was £830, which was lower than the previous year. The Club had received £1,500 from the Scheinberg family for which gratitude was expressed by all the members and it was likely the Club would receive a similar amount of support this season. An additional one-off donation of £500 had been received from Mr Harkort, for which gratitude was also expressed by the membership.

Expenses had decreased about 10% in the year, mainly due to the decrease in costs for the trophies, which had been discontinued. Total expenses were £2,079 which included £1,534 Rent, Weekend tournament total costs of £164, £205 for the website, £123 for miscellaneous expenses (including the purchase of a cabinet) and £53 for insurance.

The total funds available to the club were £4,304 which was a relatively healthy position, but this was primarily due to the generous donations from the Scheinberg family.

The Treasurer reported that the Club also held £8,276 relating to the balance remaining after the expenses for the 2024 Chess Olympiad team from the Scheinberg family and these monies were kept in a separate savings account and was specifically required to be spent on the Olympiad team and so was not available for general club expenditure.

The Treasurer reported that there were 23 paid members for the 2025 season (versus 29 for the 2024 season) and membership fees were pro-rated for new members joining during the year.

The Treasurer's report was proposed for approval by Paul Smith and seconded by John Costello and unanimously approved by the members.

6. FIDE affiliation matters

Alan Ormsby provided a recap of the position with FIDE and the association was an associate member of FIDE since 2020 which gave rights to participation in FIDE team and individual events, but the Isle of Man did not have a vote at the General Assembly.

Isle of Man players were now listed under the Manx flag on the FIDE website, and most members have switched and were listed under the Isle of Man on the FIDE rating database.

There were two chances for the Association to join other appropriate chess organisations

(a) European Chess Union (ECU)

The Chairman had sent a formal letter to the ECU requesting details on how to join and this had been acknowledged and would be discussed at the upcoming AGM of the ECU in October. Joining the ECU would allow the Association to enter ECU team and individual events. Malcolm Pein (of the ECF) had penned a letter to the ECU in support of our membership.

(b) European Small Nations Association (ESNA)

The Chairman reported that he had participated in a call in March 2025 with ESNA representatives and a letter of application to join had been sent and this would be discussed by the ESNA in November 2025. This would allow the Association to enter ESNA team and individual events.

Members would be updated as more information became available.

The Chairman reported that the Committee had been involved in setting out the draft criteria for the selection of the Isle of Man team to participate in the upcoming Olympiad to be held in Samarkand, Uzbekistan in September 2026. The draft criteria is attached and forms part of these minutes. It was felt by the Committee that, apart from Li Wu, the rest of the team would be similarly rated and that it may be appropriate to offer a wildcard chance of participating for members. The normal criteria of highest rated player (expected to be Li Wu, who was keen to play again) and winners of set tournaments would still qualify, and it was felt that a wildcard chance for one of more places may be required to complete the team line up.

The Chairman invited the Secretary to explain the rationale and John Costello advised the meeting that it was felt that there may not be the same desire to participate for the following reasons

- i) It was not the first time the Isle of Man was participating
- ii) The venue was Samarkand, Uzbekistan not Budapest, Hungary which was probably perceived as a step down and more travel was involved to get there
- iii) Uzbekistan had a partial UK Foreign Office advised travel ban, there may be problems obtaining travel insurance, its health service was considered inferior, and it had an extensive list of banned medications which may stop certain members travelling there.

It was also felt that it was likely the team would finish around its ranking place no matter how it was constituted and this was an opportunity to offer a chance to the wider membership to obtain a place on the team.

Alan Ormsby informed the meeting that the intention was to create a situation whereby members meeting the criteria of 14 games played would be entered into the draw for one or more places (as non-Manx flagged players winning tournaments would create extra draw places).

Paul Smith asked for clarification if members playing less than 14 games could qualify and Glenn Cross confirmed that it would be possible, but the player would need to win one of the specified events to be offered a place on the team.

Henrik Fabri enquired about the date of 1st March 2026 to be under the Manx flag and felt this may offer an unwarranted chance to high rated players joining the Club to secure a place on the team. Glenn Cross replied that the 1st October membership date would rule out this eventuality. Alan Ormsby added that the Committee could block membership and that the 1st March 2026 date was to give players as much time as possible to arrange transfer to the Manx flag.

Henrik Fabri expressed the opinion that in the event of the winner of one of the tournaments with an offered place did not accept, then the place should be offered to the runner up and he felt this was appropriate especially regarding the Manx Championship. Alan Ormsby replied that this matter had been considered in detail by the Committee and had been rejected in favour of the extra place in the random draw.

Paul Smith expressed concern that the draw winner may not have the same commitment and may treat the opportunity as a free holiday. Brian Towers reminded the meeting that draw participants had to meet the 14 games played which would show commitment to being selected.

The Chairman assured the meeting that in the event of unforeseen circumstances affecting member's chances to participate in the draw, the Committee had the power to amend the criteria accordingly and the object of the selection criteria was to give all members who wanted to participate a chance to qualify for the team.

Alan Ormsby also advised the meeting that the incoming Committee would again interview for the role of non-playing captain role and invited prospective candidates to get in contact to put their name forward for consideration.

7. Competitions for 2025/26

Brian Woodard advised the meeting that it was planned that Glenn Cross and himself (if both elected) would share the burden of organising the competitions for the 2025/26 season, which would likely largely mirror the previous season. The first night on the calendar was for the Blitz (Night 1) which was a chance for new members to play, and the first long play competition would be the Douglas

Championship which would start the week after. It was noted that more players turned up for long play events and members were encouraged to support the Rapid and other format competitions.

The new website was being put together and would be integral to keeping members informed with the season calendar being on the home page. Results of games and the games played would also be available to view. The Clubs web address would change, and it would also have a link to the Isle of Man International archive of news, photos and games. Members would be given a chance to view the draft pages and an email with the link would be sent out. Volunteers would be needed to assist in maintaining the website and assist with inputting games. Alan Ormsby confirmed that the first 5 years website costs would be covered by Isle of Man International Chess Limited and it was hoped that additional content would be added to the website over time.

The rules for the season's events would be placed on the Club Website in advance of the start of each competition to prevent any arguments or disputes.

Colin Watkinson offered to run the quick play tournaments during the year and the Chairman asked for volunteers on the quickplay nights to assist Colin with those competitions.

The winners of the 2024/25 tournaments had been added to the Honours Board section of the website.

8. Election of Officers

The following officers were duly elected unanimously after being nominated and seconded; -

Position	Elected	Nominated by	Seconded by
Chairman	Alan Ormsby	John Costello	Paul Smith
Treasurer	Colin Watkinson	Alan Ormsby	Glenn Cross
Secretary	John Costello	Paul Smith	Henrik Fabri
Competition secretary	Glenn Cross	Henrik Fabri	Brian Towers
FIDE liaison officer/International Rating Officer	Alan Ormsby	Paul Smith	John Costello
Other	Brian Towers	Glenn Cross	Sanjay Gumireddy
Other	Brian Woodard	Glenn Cross	Sanjay Gumireddy
Other	Zahed Miah	Glenn Cross	Sanjay Gumireddy

The Chairman thanked Zahed Miah for his contribution over many years as Club Treasurer.

9. AOB

David Dunkley felt that the website would benefit from some modernisation and more relevant information and offered to assist with the creation and maintenance of the website.

The fees for the forthcoming year were reviewed, and it was felt that no increase was warranted, and this was passed unanimously - rates for the 2025/26 season, to include entry to all competitions, as follows; -

Club membership (full)	£40
Club membership (unwaged)	£20
Junior	£Nil (on condition that juniors are accompanied at all times)

The Club's bank details were the same and could be provided on request from members. Subscriptions to be paid by 1st October. A page on the website would be updated with membership details.

The Key holders for the equipment cabinet were noted to be Brian Woodward, Brian Towers, Glenn Cross and Colin Watkinson. The premises key holders were Colin Watkinson and Alan Ormsby.

Howard Dobson requested that the Tournament controller for the Douglas Championship ensure that the competition started promptly at 7.30pm each evening, with all clocks being started at that time.

Alan Ormsby reported to the meeting that the Committee was still looking at the setting up of a junior section and how to encourage children to play the game. There had been a pilot scheme for Manx Schools, but funding had been discontinued by the Government, and it was left to individual schools to arrange chess clubs/lessons. Howard Dobson added that the secondary schools competition had ceased but there was a primary school competition still running which the Association supported, and equipment has been directly supplied to schools.

Henrik Fabri requested that as the winner of the Manx Championship trophy 4 times, that he be given the opportunity to purchase the retired trophy. The Chairman invited Henrik to make an offer to the incoming Committee.

Brian Woodard would look at placing a photo of all the trophies retired and held on the website, within the Honours Board section and David Dunkley offered to assist with this.

Howard Dobson enquired about the status of Manx Liberty and Zahed Miah confirmed that the team had won the 2024/25 4NCL Division One and after discussions with Dietmar's family it was felt that this was a fitting ending and tribute to Dietmar's stewardship of the team and that it should end on this high note.

The meeting finished at 9.17pm

Signed as a true copy:

Chairman..... Date.....

I would like to start by thanking all my fellow committee members for their invaluable contributions over the last season: John Costello, Glenn Cross, Brian Towers, Colin Watkinson, Brian Woodard and Zahed Miah.

The 2024/25 season was an important transition year for us, on our journey towards self-sufficiency. Not only did we play in the FIDE Olympiad for the very first time, but we also showed that we could run the Manx Championship as a FIDE-rated event. This means that we can progress to the next phase of our plan by breaking the last link with the English Chess Federation. By having all our classical tournaments FIDE rated, there is now need for us to insist that IOMCA members be members of the ECF.

With long-play, classical chess easily being the most popular events of our season, the Calendar for the 2025-26 season sets aside dates for more long play events than ever before, giving everyone the chance to play in three different tournaments spread across the season. And for everyone who manages to complete two of those events playing a minimum of 14 games in the process, they will have a chance of representing Isle of Man at the next Olympiad. We'll talk more about this later in the agenda.

A valid criticism of our first Olympiad experience was that we didn't promote it in the local media and so there was no publicity promoting chess on the island. I again ask any member that wants to take on the role of Press Officer or Publicity Officer to please make yourself known. It could even be that we take a dedicated Press Officer with us to the next Olympiad, whose sole role would be to generate content for a new website and the local media. This is something that the incoming committee should discuss in the coming weeks.

And there is still a need for a Junior section but it needs experienced members to come forward with a credible proposal to run it. At present, all we can really offer is for enthusiastic junior players (accompanied by a parent) to play in our occasional weekenders. Unfortunately, the one junior member that played in the last weekend has now left the island.

I'll have more to say later in the agenda but for now I'll just mention that I would like to stand as Chairman for the forthcoming season and, with Tuesday nights cleared in my calendar, I intend to be very active as a player in the coming season.

Thank you.

2026 FIDE Olympiad – Selecting an Isle of Man Team

(Agreed by IOM Chess Association Committee on 15 July, and wording finalised 23 July 2025)

Background

- To be held in Samarkand, Uzbekistan.
- Arrival/departure dates: exact dates not yet known but likely to be in the second half of September 2026.
- Olympiad is a team competition with the likely participation of over 180 countries.
- IOM will be using its FIDE-affiliated status to enter a team for the second time, following Budapest 2024.
- 11 round Swiss, teams of 5 players plus (optional) non-playing Captain.
 - 4 players participate in each round.
- The Olympiad Organiser provides free, full-board hotel accommodation: two standard double rooms and two single rooms (4 star minimum) for 5 players + 1 Captain.
- The non-playing Captain will also be Chief of Delegation.
- Scheinberg Family has provided sponsorship of £15,000:
 - To cover air tickets, uniform, UK hotel on outward and return journeys.
 - To cover any transfer fees for those changing FIDE federation to IOM.
 - We'll aim to provide a single room for each team member, instead of the two double rooms provided by the Organiser.
- Assume 15 or 16 nights away from IOM.
- Prospective team members should consider UK Foreign Office travel advice on topics such as security, health and insurance before committing.
- Team members will cover costs of their own lunches and any sundry expenses.

Qualifying criteria

- Paid-up member of IOMCA as at 1 October 2025.
- IOM flag in FIDE Rating Database as at 1 March 2026.
- The 5 places decided (in this order) as follows:
 - Highest FIDE rated player as at 1 October 2025
 - If highest rated player declines or is ineligible, an extra place will be allocated to the Random Draw.
 - Douglas Champion 2025/26
 - If Champion is already qualified, declines or is ineligible, an extra place will be allocated to the Random Draw.
 - Manx Cup Champion 2025/26
 - If Champion is already qualified, declines or is ineligible, an extra place will be allocated to the Random Draw.
 - Manx Chess Champion 2025/26
 - If Champion is already qualified, declines or is ineligible, an extra place will be allocated to the Random Draw.
 - RANDOM DRAW, to determine at least one place (and possibly as many as five places) held at a social event to be arranged for IOMCA members in April 2026. Players eligible for the draw must:
 - Have played at least 14 classical games from IOMCA events in the 2025/26 season. (*Note – a walkover or a 1-point bye will count as a game*)
 - Have completed at least two of the three above classical tournaments in the 2025/26 season. (*Note – withdrawing from a tournament, defaulting multiple games, or taking a last round default does not meet the definition of “completed”*)
 - Have met the other qualifying criteria.
 - Have confirmed their availability for the duration of the Olympiad.

- Each qualifier must give a firm commitment to be available for the duration of the Olympiad by 30 April 2026 and pay a deposit of £300 that would be lost if they pull-out without good reason, as determined by IOMCA Committee.
 - If a qualifier has difficulties in paying the £300 deposit, they should speak (in confidence) with the IOMCA Chairman who may vary this requirement as he sees fit.
- Each qualifier must commit to upholding acceptable standards of behaviour and etiquette, including adherence to the dress code. They must also agree to accept and respect the authority of the Captain.
- It is expected that team members will travel together both to and from the event.
- In the event of unforeseen circumstances, the IOMCA Committee can vary the qualifying criteria as it sees fit, and its decision is final.

Captain/Chief of Delegation, and Team Selection Policy

- Non-playing Captain (doubling as Chief of Delegation) to be appointed by IOMCA Committee.
 - Duties will include the administration of travel and hotel arrangements for the team members.
 - In the case of several candidates, the Committee will interview them before deciding.
- Team selection to be arranged so that every player plays in at least 6 games unless they are prevented from doing so due to illness.

-END-