

Dear Council members

I am writing to you in relation to proposals to relocate the ECF Office upstairs in the current building in Battle. As set out in further detail below, this would provide the ECF with a more appropriate and improved office space and, in addition, would provide space which would provide a solution for sorting out and housing the National Chess Library.

The taking of the new office space and the housing of the National Chess Library are matters with which the Board would in normal circumstances be constitutionally empowered to deal and are not matters required to be submitted to Council for approval. However, notwithstanding this, a decision was made by the Board in 2015 to put proposals to Council at the 2015 Finance Council meeting in relation to the National Chess Library, and Council resolved, as a short term solution, to put the books comprising the National Chess Library into storage. Given the original decision to take the matter to Council, the Board feels it appropriate to revert to Council in the light of subsequent developments as set out below.

The decision to put the National Chess Library into storage has not worked well, as the storage space is not sufficiently large for the books to be sorted out and catalogued on site and any available volunteer lacks the transport capability to view them off-site.

Given this, and in the light of the opportunity to extend the ECF Office accommodation that has recently arisen, at the November 2016 Board meeting the Board approved proposals to relocate upstairs in the current building. We have learned in the last few days that another third party has now expressed serious interest in taking the space, as a result of which the landlord is unwilling to delay any longer and is insisting that a legally binding commitment is required in this regard by no later than 17th March. This timing clearly means that if the new lease is to be entered into it will have to be before Finance Council on 22nd April. The Board unanimously firmly believes that the new lease should be entered into, and so Council Members are being asked by this email to make it known if they have any strong objection to the Board so doing. If you do have any strong objection, please email accommodation@englishchess.org.uk no later than 13th March 2017.

Turning now to the proposal in greater detail:

1. The new arrangement will give the ECF Office an office of 936 sq. ft. of space (compared with the current 433 sq. ft.). This will allow the National Chess Library to be catalogued and then made available for public access. Moreover, a separate room will be available for meetings and library visits, there will be extra space for on-site accounting and bookkeeping work (next to impossible with the current facilities), and we will have a presentable public face for third party visits.
2. The cost of the new arrangements will be £15,606 p.a., compared with £10,934 p.a. for the current office space and book storage charge. The extra expense of £4,672 is included in the financial five-year plan to be presented to Council in April, which in the

Board's view represents a cost-effective solution that provides a suitable home for the National Chess Library and improves the ECF's office facilities.

3. There will also be initial one-off costs in respect of floor reinforcement of approximately £1,314. Shelving and other one-off costs have not yet been established, but in any event we intend to ask the PIF or Chess Trust to cover these. A volunteer has come forward to move the books from their present location.
4. We intend to seek at least a ten-year lease term so as to achieve a long-term solution to the ECF's library and accommodation requirements.

The attached appendices give further information about the proposals.

Kind regards

Mike Truran (CEO)