

MEMBERSHIP FEES DEBATE

27/4/2019

Prepared by Bill O'Rourke

NCCU President

& Tim Wall

(Durham & NJCA)



Scope of this presentation

(Part a) That increases in ECF membership fees for the 2019/20 season should be limited at maximum to a rise in line with CPI inflation rate, and preferably to no increase

(Part b) That the ECF investigate with great haste the best and quickest way to release trust fund monies to support their proposed youth development plan, and to publish these facts for membership's awareness as soon as possible.



Increasing fees again

IS THERE A PROBLEM?

Volunteers now saying enough is enough –
congress organisers, league treasurers, club
officers, arbiters, graders

- But especially the players, who vote with their feet by quitting playing chess.



Why did we implement membership?

To create a **POSITIVE VISION** for the ECF –
supporting as much chess playing at as low a
cost as possible

We have lost this vision - we need to stop **TAXING**
the people who support chess.

Instead we are killing off the merry band of chess
volunteers who make chess work in this country –
club, league, congress and rapidplay organisers



What were the objectives of the membership scheme?

Increase ECF membership

Use this membership to get rid of the hidden game fee – pay your £10 then play as much as you like as cheaply as you can

Get more people playing chess at all levels

It worked! – membership increased year on year.



But what are the membership saying now?

The ECF hasn't listened to our concerns

“It just makes me wonder when they will stop increasing the fees for a service - how do other nations do gradings, which is all players want?

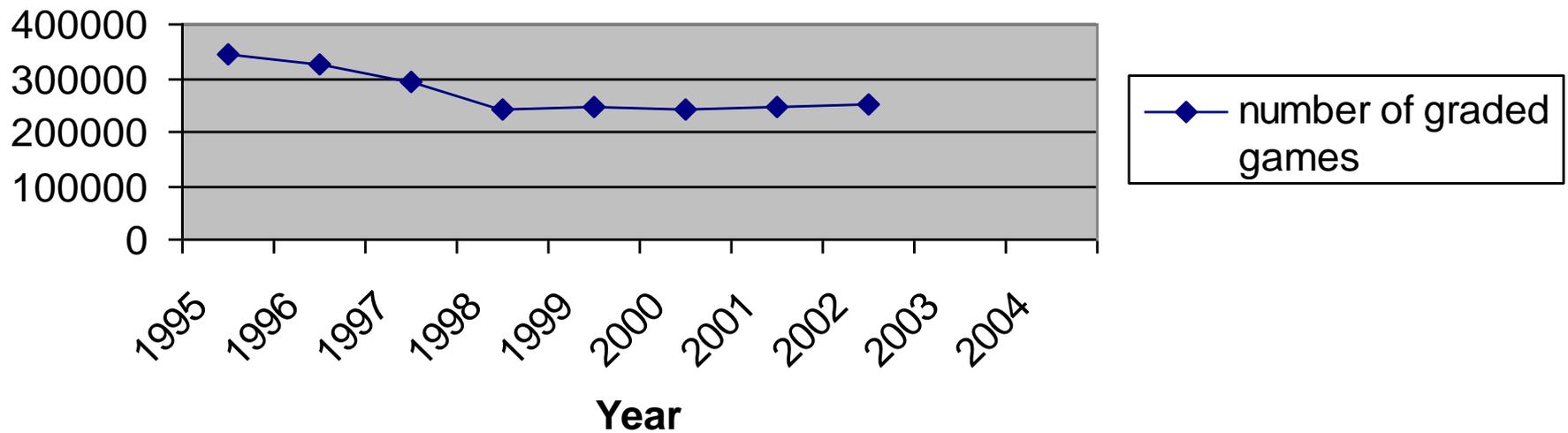
I know in Wales they have a live grade at a fraction of the cost”

“Another way of putting new players off - but never mind - they won't be happy until they have fleeced the aging captive market”



Chess playing was dying before the implementation of a modest membership fee:

NUMBER OF GRADED GAMES



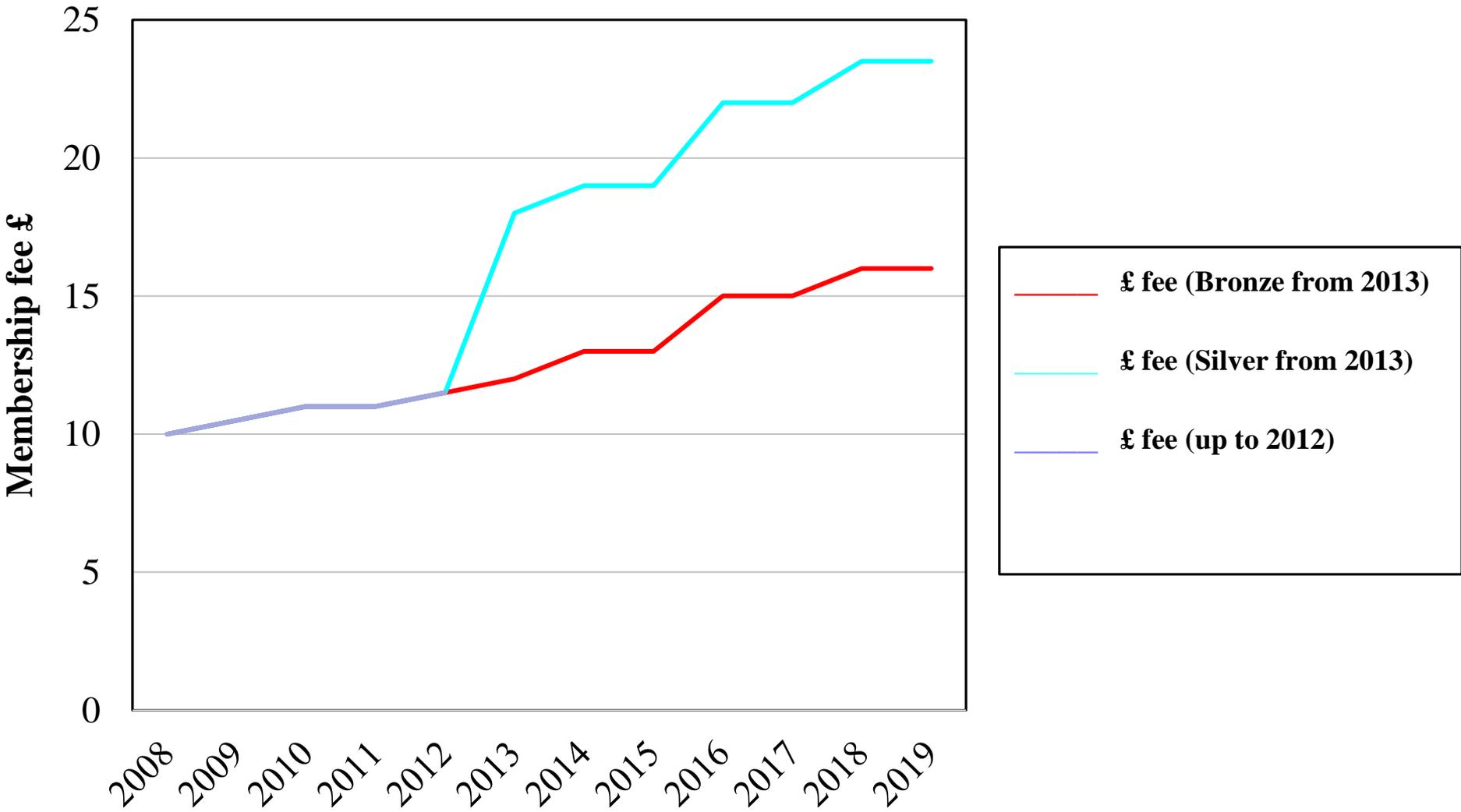
But now we are in danger of organised chess dying because of large year-on-year membership fee increases:

REMEMBER – it is not just the ECF membership fee for the same yearly grade. Club and congress players face increasing club membership fees as venue prices increase, as well as increased travel costs to get to matches.

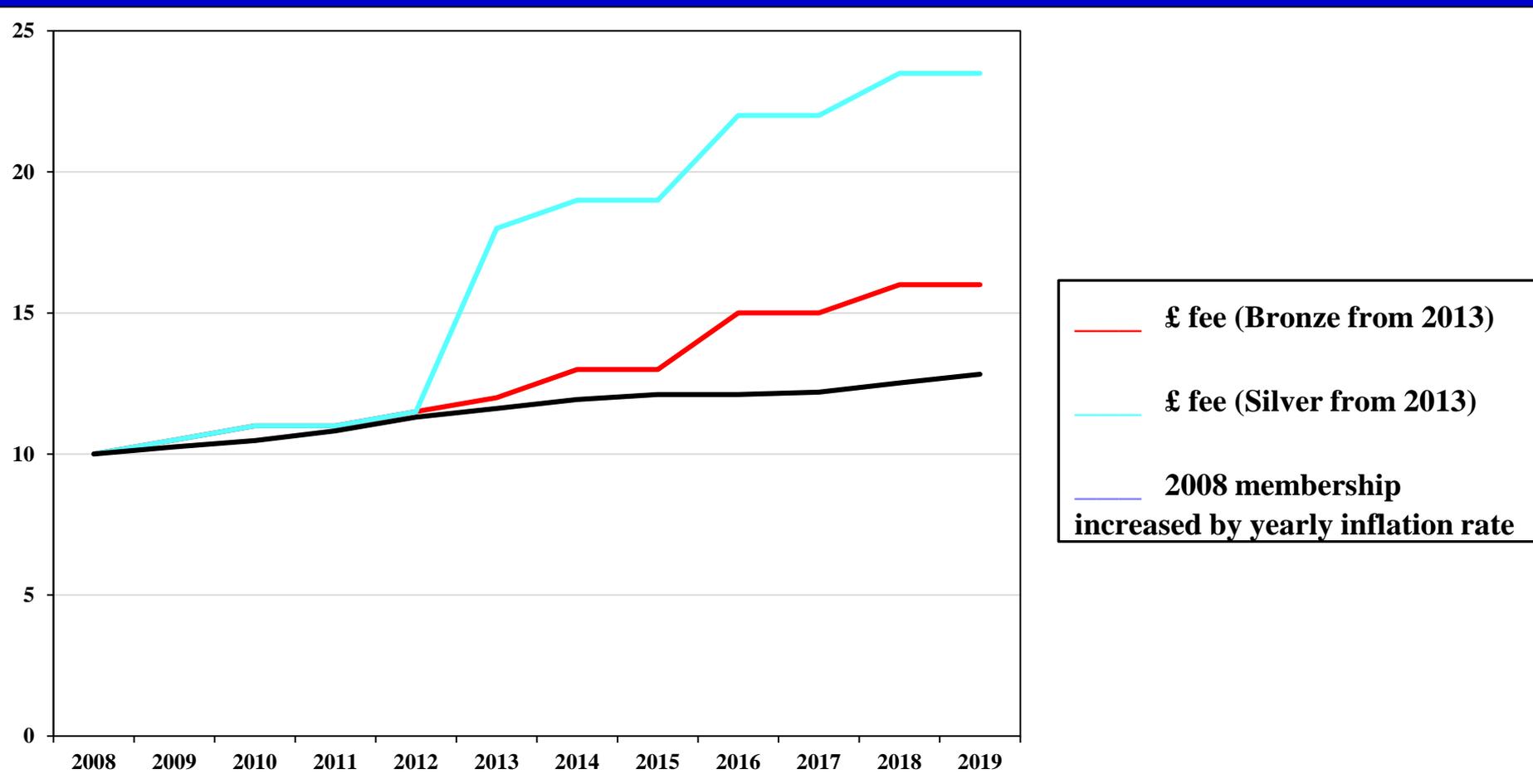
We are pricing our game out of the pocket of current and prospective players in the face of so many other hobbies and electronic games.



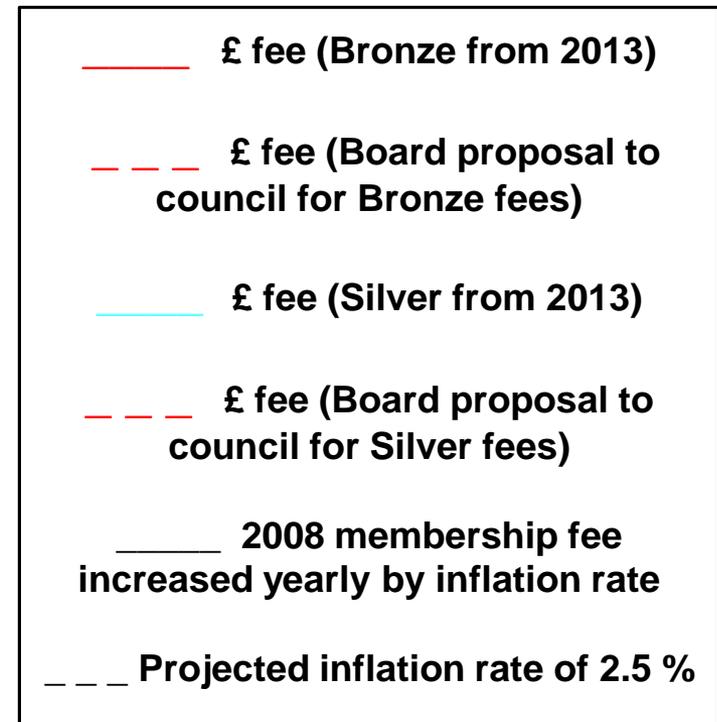
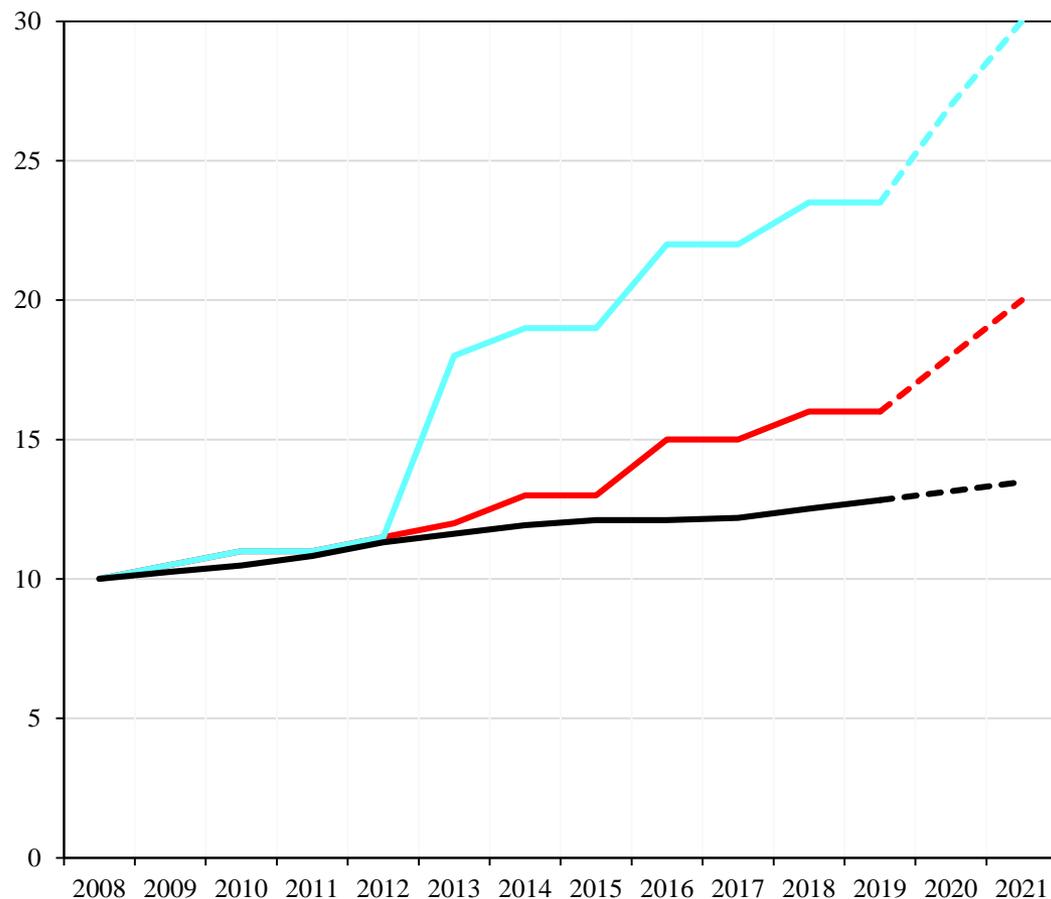
Membership fees since 2008



Membership fees since 2008 versus inflation



Membership fees with suggested Board increases



**Note in particular the very large hikes in Silver membership.
Why are congress players (and voluntary organisers) so
unfairly taxed compared to league players?**



**Clearly we can no longer increase membership fees
without killing the goose that lays the golden egg**

**All of us agree that youth chess development is essential
for the future of the game. But first we must ensure that
the game has got a future.**

**Therefore monies for youth development MUST come
from the cash-rich trust funds.**

No use saving them all for some future rainy day –

THAT DAY IS HERE NOW!

