



## **THE BRAILLE CHESS ASSOCIATION (Founded 1932)**

**Registered Charity no. 263049  
"Bringing Chess to Visually Impaired People"**

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### **BUSINESS PLAN 1st October 2020 - 30th September 2022**

#### Vision Statement

To spread and advance the playing of chess among blind and partially sighted people throughout the United Kingdom by organising tournaments and providing coaching and reference material.

Chairman – Norman Wragg OBE

Secretary – Dr Guy Whitehouse

Treasurer - Mrs Gill Smith

Fund-raising Officer - Linda Innes

Accountant – Dunkley's, Bradley Stoke, Bristol

#### Structure of the Braille Chess Association ("BCA")

The BCA is the sole provider of chess services to blind and partially sighted people in the United Kingdom and caters for people of all ages. It is affiliated to the English Chess Federation, Chess Scotland, the English Federation for Correspondence Chess and the International Braille Chess Association.

The BCA is a registered charity, governed by its constitution adopted in 1982 and last amended in March 2018. The BCA complies with the principles set out in the latest edition of the Good Governance Code for Trustees. We are also mindful of the guidance on public benefit issued by the Charity Commission. The BCA is unincorporated being administered by a board of trustees all but one of whom work on a voluntary unpaid basis. The trustees are all elected by the membership on an annual basis. The committee are also supported by sub-committees and other members of the association acting as volunteers. The registered address of the association is that of its secretary, Dr Guy Whitehouse: 58 Earl Russell Street, Leicester, LE2 8LH

## Mission Statement

To enable blind and partially sighted people to enjoy the game of chess, to improve their chess playing techniques, and to have their voice heard in the world of chess.

## Services provided by the BCA

Members can take advantage of a wide range of services including:

1. correspondence chess in which moves are sent in Braille, on cassette or by email;
2. a new telephone/Skype-based (TESSLa) format tournament designed to enable members to play time-limited games while conforming with social distancing guidelines;
3. "over the board" chess tournaments held in this country and overseas;
4. free access to a library of chess books, periodicals and other instructional material in accessible formats;
5. coaching and analysis of members games by players of superior strength;
6. advice on all chess matters including adapted chess equipment, chess computers and software suitable for visually impaired players.

The Association runs a lively web site containing news, information, games, etc. (Go to [www.braillechess.org.uk](http://www.braillechess.org.uk)). There is also an email discussion list.

## What we plan to do over the next two years

All of our activities have been seriously affected by the pandemic; however we aim to remain as active as possible on several fronts.

By way of recognition of the importance of junior development, We have made the post of Junior Development Officer a committee post. Voldi Gailans (London) is now in charge of this work, and before lockdown was introduced, visited the Royal National College for the Blind in Hereford to promote the association. He has also tried to promote interest in chess at RNIB New College, Worcester. We will try to maintain online contact with these schools, and when the virus situation improves we will try to organise another visit.

We are aware that more and more visually impaired young people are going through mainstream education rather than specialised schools and, as a

consequence, it is more difficult to make contact with them. We are only too happy to devote significant funds to this vital work, although this will obviously be affected by the conditions under which schools re-open.

Once over-the-board tournaments can restart, we will continue to pay the full cost for young players participating in BCA domestic events or in international events. We will also aim to provide a more structured junior coaching programme when numbers justify it. If a junior appears particularly keen and willing to practice, we will make an extra set available to them so they will have one both at home and at school.

Due to the pandemic we had to cancel the AGM congress scheduled for 2020. The autumn international tournament has been moved online and games will be played via phone or Skype. The AGM congress scheduled for 2021 has also been postponed till 2022. An online AGM and tournament will be organized and will run as separate events in March 2021.

We still hope to be able to run over-the-board events starting in the summer of 2021 beginning with our Chairman's Cup and British Championships combined into one week-long event. Likewise we hope that by the autumn of 2021 it will be possible to renew our normal over-the-board programme, including two weekend events and one week-long event per year. In addition, The chess theme break which used to be held at Windermere Manor is scheduled to take place in Bournemouth in January 2022.

Our participation in international events scheduled for 2020 was also curtailed by the pandemic. However, if it safe to do so, we envisage participating in those international events which have become an established part of our activities, specifically the Olympiad, the Individual World/European Championships, the Six Nations tournament and the friendly IBIS tournament in Haaksbergen.

We definitely intend to run our usual BCA correspondence chess league and championship and also our properly constructed email tournaments in which the winner of the top division is now awarded a trophy. We will also build on the huge success of our new TESSLa format tournament which has been running all summer and enables our members to play by telephone, email, Skype or any other format mutually agreed.

We will continue to try to raise awareness of the association and the redesigning of our website has been an important part of this aspect of our activities. At our last meeting we decided to look into establishing a presence on some internet platforms specifically aimed at visually impaired people. We also continue to update our Facebook page and our Twitter account.

An important aspect of the Association's work is to ensure that blind and partially sighted chess players have access to chess sets and clocks of an acceptable

standard. We have purchased adapted magnetic and peg-based sets from a supplier based in Italy and from Chess Baron; we make these sets available to members and sometimes to enquirers from outside the association. We have purchased for evaluation purposes a talking digital clock from DGT which has been approved by the governing body of world chess FIDE. We also maintain a small stock of the talking digital clocks produced in Spain.

We will continue to make available to members a wide range of chess books and study material. We maintain a library of audiobooks and we circulate a monthly recording of articles selected from Chess Magazine. We are looking into whether it would be possible to increase visually impaired people's access to chess puzzles, and we continue to monitor the chess ebook scene so that we can alert members to any new format which might make ebooks accessible to them.

We are continuing to run BCA's Congress Support Scheme, designed to encourage BCA's less experienced Members to enter mainstream Chess Congresses. The Programme is administered by a Congress Support officer and offers limited grants from general funds to qualifying Members.

Finally, provided it is safe to do so, we will try to organise coaching activities for members of all playing strengths. Members can currently claim an allowance of up to £120 to fund private coaching. Skype coaching has been successful in previous years, and while we cannot currently host coaching weekends for groups, remote coaching is being promoted.