

# **ECF Support for Grassroots Chess Development**

## **A. Introduction**

The recently announced funding for developing English chess by HM Government has given us the opportunity to earmark funds for grassroots developments across the country. Grassroots support will be provided by way of a strategic grassroots fund. This paper outlines the scheme, suggests some areas where grant applications may be applicable, and tells applicants how to apply for a grant.

We have split this fund across nine regions, based on the nine governmental regions. Each region will receive £10,000 in funding. In each region we have appointed a regional coordinator who will (liaising with other organisers as appropriate in their region) make recommendations to the ECF for awards from the grassroots fund. For those projects which involve more than one region a central fund has been retained.

The regions (and coordinators) are:

- North West (Richard Walsh);
- North East (Eddie Czesokowski);
- Yorkshire and Humberside (Andrew Wainwright);
- West Midlands (Tim Lane);
- East Midlands (Paul Mottram);
- East of England (John Wickham);
- South East (David Lettington); •
- Greater London (Vacant);
- South West (Nikki Forster).

At the ECF the central team assessing grant applications to the ECF comprises:

- Mick Riding (Grassroots Initiative Chairman);
- Yuri Krylov (Home Development Director);

- Rob King, (ECF Director of Operations);
- Alex Longson (ECF Financial Controller).

As well as the £10,000 per region, the fund has an additional £50,000 that the Central Team may draw down from to support a Regional initiative where that region has exhausted its budget or an initiative that demonstrates a wider strategic implication for English chess.

## **B. Outline Proposals**

There are over 500 active clubs across England, and we will target any funding/grants towards areas/clubs which need most support and/or where there is the most value for average players in the demographic we are trying to reach. Potential areas for development support include:

- Clubs;
- Congresses and other events;
- Equipment;
- Education;
- Online chess and content.

It should be noted that we are not looking to subsidise existing clubs or congresses to meet their running costs. The funds are not a substitute for supplementing low subscriptions or entry fees to be financially viable. Therefore a request from an existing club or congress for funds to e.g. replenish stock such as sets and/or clocks needs to be extremely well argued to justify approval.

## **C. Potential Areas for Development Support**

The following is not intended to be exhaustive, nor does an application based on one of these areas guarantee funding. It is intended as a guide only.

### **C1. Clubs**

**1.Start-up Support** - Support packages for new/ start-up clubs, for example:

- Templates/ guides for setting up a new club;
- ECF publicity, and funding for new clubs with financial support in exceptional cases;
- New club support could be targeted in areas where we know the number of over the board clubs is low in proportion to the population.

- Support to new and existing clubs by provision of funding for equipment (or arrangements for equipment sharing) – see ‘Equipment’ below.

2. **Safeguarding** - Grants to clubs for safeguarding training.
3. **Publicity** - Grants to clubs for a costed PR campaign to increase interest and attract new members.
4. **Website and Social Media** - Grants to clubs for costed plans to develop their websites.
5. **Education** - Two clubs in each union to get an annual GM simul and lecture.
6. **Social Chess Support** - Financial support for clubs to run social/community chess events using non-club venues. This could have a big effect on making over the board chess more visible and mainstream and on attracting more players to join clubs and play in leagues and congresses. This could be linked to the Tables in Parks initiative in partnership with local authorities and Chess in Schools and Communities. The funding could go either direct to the clubs or via leagues/associations to help run the events and maybe pay for some top-level players to appear.
7. **Junior Development Pathway** - There is a big demand for more junior clubs run on days and times that work for younger players and their parents. We need to publicise the Development Pathway more effectively, but we should also target more practical/hands-on support for those wishing to setup a junior club, for example by providing funding for coaching support, help with safeguarding, and advice/guidance on finding venues, maybe working with local authorities and with libraries, which generally work extremely well for junior clubs.
8. **Chess Centres** – There is a small but increasing number of ‘Chess Centres’ in England providing chess facilities in dedicated venues open throughout the week. Additional support could be provided to existing facilities and for setting up new facilities in areas which would benefit the most in this regard.

## **C2. Congresses and Other Events**

1. **New Congresses** - Support packages for new/ startup congresses (along the same lines as club start-ups), for example:

- Updated guidance on ‘how to organise a chess congress’;
  - ECF publicity, and funding for new congresses and events with financial support in exceptional cases;
  - New congress support could be targeted in areas where we know the number of congresses is low in proportion to the population;
2. **Equipment** - Support to new and existing congresses by provision of funding for equipment (or arrangements for equipment sharing) – see ‘Equipment’ below.
  3. **Top Level Player Participation** - Attracting more of our top-level players to ECF-organised and third party events, and also improve their visibility, in order to attract more grassroots players to engage with them, whether by playing or by watching.
  4. **County Chess** - Support for Unions and Associations in encouraging the recovery of county chess.

### **C3. Equipment**

The ECF is open to providing funds to help member organisations and clubs (particularly new startups) purchase equipment.

### **C4. Education**

This is an area with big potential, and there is a real demand for affordable/top level coaching and education for club players.

This could maybe include a fund for clubs to engage ECF registered coaches at club evenings.

We will also look at further funding for the ECF’s Certificate of Excellence scheme and National Curriculum, which are getting increasing levels of interest from coaches, schools and clubs.

### **C5. Online Chess and Content**

Online/streaming. This could include a weekly online question and answer lecture for ECF members with a grandmaster, and more financial support for the online commentary for ECF events that we already do well.

Regular online masterclasses for ECF members could also be considered; Lorin D’Costa’s, Keith Arkell’s and Danny Gormally’s masterclasses have gone down very well, and there seems to be a big market amongst grassroots players for more of the same.

As well as more funding for online commentary, we also need to build up our base of content on YouTube, as well as perhaps having some exclusive educational/ coaching content for ECF members linked to the National Curriculum.

## **D. How to Apply for a Grant**

Making an application is simple. Please complete the form here:  
<https://britchess.wufoo.com/forms/ecf-grassroots-chess-initiative/>

... remembering to select the appropriate region from the drop-down menu at the bottom. The more information you can give in support of your application the better. For applications which cross more than one region please choose the option at the bottom of the ‘Regional Coordinator’ drop-down menu on the application form. You can apply at any time, but we intend that assessments will be made quarterly on or around:

- 1st September
- 1st December
- 1st March
- 1st June

If the application is urgent, please include a note to that effect in the ‘Summary’ section of the application form. Grants will normally be paid in arrears on production of evidence of expenditure. For any general enquiries please contact the scheme Chairman, Mick Riding ([mickriding@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:mickriding@hotmail.co.uk)).

Please note that grassroots funding for each region is of necessity limited. We therefore recommend that individual requests for funding should not exceed £1,000 to ensure a reasonable spread across a number of projects. Applications above this level will be considered, but are less likely to succeed except in exceptional circumstances.

## **E. Reporting Arrangements**

Reports from grant recipients on how their project was implemented and what the project outcomes were will be expected. We hope to include regular articles in *ChessMoves* based on those reports.

## **F. Invoicing for Services and non-Standard Equipment**

Once your initiative is approved sets, demo boards and clocks will be purchased from Chess and Bridge by the ECF Grassroots team unless specifically agreed otherwise with yourself.

For other services and equipment, invoices need to be from the service/product provider, itemised and reflect the purpose for which funding was approved. A summary level of (say) £500 for (say) Website Development posted by (say) the applicant, will not be refunded.

Please be very clear where a request is being made to fund a service that will be delivered by the requestor.

The sum of any invoices (including sets and clocks) should not exceed our maximum support of £1,000.

## **G. Considerations**

In order to give your initiative best opportunity sign off and success please look at and (say) 'mark' your application against the following -

### **RC Approval**

A GR request will not be considered by the FA panel until it has the support of the RC Additionally.....

Whilst approval by the RC is significant in influencing approval by the Central Team (CT), CT review is not a tick box exercise and there will be push back if RC support is not full and explicit e.g. are there no opportunities locally to share equipment, are the clubs doing enough themselves e.g. are membership fees realistic, does the proposed new congress have a cost model and are expectations based on realistic evidence?

### **Sets and Clocks**

For a start-up club we will look to support with a set of equipment that will get the club underway, including clocks. But this needs to be realistic e.g. supporting evidence of membership and (say) minimum requirement to participate in local league/s.

For a start-up congress the same. However, GR funding is not an inexhaustible pit and we would expect Congress Organisers to factor hire of sets and clocks into their cost model. Therefore we are more likely to approve a year, or even two years rental of equipment to give start up congresses the initial leg-up they require.

## **Web Sites**

There have been requests for a number of these. The maximum we will grant for a web site is £500. We will also expect the applicant to have set up something on another social media site e.g. Facebook advertising their initiative and reflecting a demand.

## **Sustainability/Value for Money**

It is important that we can reflect in our Grassroots investments. To this end FA is not 'job done'. I consider it part of our remit to reflect delivery against investment, pull together an overall success story and be wary of repeat applicants who have great vision but do not deliver.

In particular, we will be supportive of applications that commit to their project on a longer term e.g. will this happen next year regardless of ECF Grassroots, particularly start-up congresses.

## **Conclusion**

Heavy reading. But many applications have been supported and successfully delivered in the last twelve months and we need you to help build on these. The Regional Co-ordinators, Central Team and ECF are here to support you in all elements of your initiative, so please use us whenever. In the meanwhile, thank you for your continued efforts and good luck in making your initiative a success.