

**Nailsea & District Croquet Club
Draft Minutes of Committee Meeting held on 10 May 2016**

Chair: Andrew Wimshurst
Present: Kathy Wallace, Brigit Clayton, Peter Dyke, Mike Tracy, Linda Shaw
Coral Harrison

1. Apologies Brian Roynon

2. Minutes of Committee Meeting held on 16 March 2016

The minutes were signed as a true and accurate record of the meeting held on 16 March

3. Matters arising from Minutes of Committee Meeting held on 16 February 2016

Andrew would make contact with the neighbours whose hedge was to the west of lawns 2 and 3. He would tell them that we would like to cut the hedges. AW

Fran had made contact with Jean Hargreaves CA Child Protection Officer re DBS checks and had sent instructions to Peter and Erica on how to obtain an application form. The personal documents provided would have to be verified by the Club Secretary. We would also like Alison to contact Fran. By subscribing to the Personal Update Service she would be able to use the same clearance at the Club and any schools she visited. Andrew to liaise with Alison. AW

It had proved impossible to recruit sufficient people to play in the SWF GC High Handicap League team so the decision was made to withdraw the team. Peter to inform the SWF League Secretary and Kathy to inform Chris Jackson PD
KW

The WI have placed a booking for their day at the Club. Mike will forward the confirmatory e-mail to Kathy for the records MT

4. Treasurer's Report (Mike Tracy)

Mike reported a surplus of £4567.65 and a balance of £18 109.37 less un-presented cheques.

He also reported:

"Income for subscriptions is £9,580.50 which is £1,847.50 less than budget. The budget includes £250.00 for people taking up part year membership which of course has not happened yet. The deficit is due to the number of full members dropping to 67, with only a couple of subscriptions expected. This is a cause for concern. Income from beginners' coaching is £330 compared with a budget of £300. Given our decline in membership we should make every effort to encouraging these beginners to stay with us after the coaching sessions come to their formal conclusion and then to do our best to draw them into club activities. John Wallace drew my attention to an item in the budget in which it was stated that

for businesses with a rateable value of less than £12,000, mandatory relief of 100% was to be made permanent, i.e removed from local authority discretion. I sent an email to the council seeking confirmation of my understanding of the new situation and an explanation of the consultation process in which we invested considerable time. A copy of this correspondence is attached. The important answer is that unless and until central government reverses or otherwise changes this decision, the club will not be liable for non-domestic rates. I can therefore see no reason to look further into the club obtaining CASC or charitable status and consider this action closed. I will however check the club's rateable value when the nationwide review happens in 2017. It is clearly important that it be less than £12,000 and might be important if the chancellor changes the new policy. It would then be advantageous for the rateable value to be as low as possible.

It became clear when the invoice for rent was sent out at the beginning of April that the council department that was responsible for arranging the new lease had not informed the department that collects the rent of the change. We were invoiced for the old amount. I have emailed and spoken on the phone to the head of the Income Section and He will arrange for a new invoice to be sent. In the fullness of time. I will check it carefully.

Bridge income has passed the £700.00 mark."

The rateable value of the Club is £2500 – well below the £12 000 as above

Mike reported an e-mail from Kevin Carter wondering what had happened to the NDCC Charity 1 ball money. Mike to ask Marcus

MT

5. Membership Report (Coral Harrison)

"This has been a really bad year for resignations, in fact the worst one that I have been involved in.

We have lost a total of 18 Full members plus a death and 2 Full Members have changed to Social so in effect, we are losing a possible 21 Full members as the switch to Social is a financial loss. We have gained 2 new members as Alan and Lynda Longdon have rejoined.

During 2015 we had a total of 19 new members including the 5 who joined in the autumn. From those 19, 9 have resigned and 1 has switched to Social membership. I have checked through recent years to try to get an idea of the percentage of new players that we are likely to lose in the short term

2012	<i>18 new members but only 4 are still with us another 4 stayed for an extra year or two</i>
2013	<i>7 new members but unfortunately I am unable to trace the number leaving</i>
2014	<i>11 new members, 9 were still with us the next year</i>

It is obviously impossible to draw any sensible predictions from these figures, which may not be 100% accurate but certainly would show a trend.

Attached are Membership Lists, one my usual Technicolor one which shows who has left and the revised one as membership stands today. The revised list is on the wall in

the Pavilion and will be emailed to all members today”

6. Property Report (Brian Roynon)

“The Club House.

The loft boarding is complete.

*The hand dryer has been fitted in the Gents and is now working.
2 new tubes have been fitted to florescent lights in the main hall.*

Car Park.

Brian & Robin purchased 4 bags of chippings which they laid through the car park matting in the areas with large hollows beneath it.

It lasted 2 days until the weekend tournament, which was very wet. After which the gravel had disappeared.

While the gravel has now reappeared it is not very satisfactory and a longer term solution will need to be found.

Work mornings

We must have some organized work mornings.

I would like to suggest the following dates:

Thursday 2nd June or Friday 3rd June

Friday 8th July,

Friday 5th August,

Friday 2nd September”

It was agreed to have the Work Mornings on the days suggested by Brian. Kathy to inform the members

KW

7. Lawn Maintenance Report (John Wallace)

“1. Lawns

The granular fertiliser was applied on March 31 in order to catch forecast rain and avoid the Short Croquet Teams competition. In retrospect, due to the cold weather that persisted throughout April this was too early and the grass did not really benefit. The rate of grass growth was well below normal due to the low average temperature. Following the two applications of Aqueduct, the first Revolution spray took place on April 11th. As there was 11mm of rain that day it was not necessary to irrigate afterwards.

During the application of the granular fertiliser it became evident that the spreader was not distributing the granules evenly. When Duncan Hector visited on April 19th I was concerned by a number of slightly brown areas that reminded me of early signs of local dry patch. However, in the course of his visit we took 16 core samples of soil, all of which were moist to the touch. The moisture meter readings also confirmed that the rootzone generally was moist although on the dryish side of ideal. As the brownish areas were generally in E/W bands, Duncan postulated that it was the lack of fertiliser (Nitrogen in particular) caused by uneven spread that was the cause, not dry patch.

To confirm this theory, I then applied some additional old fertiliser from previous years and washed in with the hosepipe/sprinkler attachment. (Tedious!). The result

has been vivid green patches of lawn, thus confirming Duncan Hectors theory. The rest of the lawns remain under-fertilised as evidenced by the paler green colour. The May 9th spray contains liquid bio-fertiliser so hopefully the lawns will return to a normal, even shading, after application.

I also contacted Aquatrols/Farmura in late April, asking if Revolution was as effective on heavier clay soils as sandy soils. The answer was a definite “yes” but they did point out that it would take several applications for the product to be effective as it has to gradually percolate down through the soil.

2. Hoop Setting

The hoop areas were heavily irrigated on May 4th and the first hoop move took place on May 5th using the pre-drilled/filled holes. The result was a success. David Hunt reported that 22 of the 24 hoops were inserted first time without backfilling and that minimal effort was required to bang them in. The whole process was completed in a leisurely 3 hours with much reduced physical effort, aided by the fact that a younger working-age member was part of the team. Further experience in dry summer conditions is needed to be sure that process works under all conditions.

3. Irrigation

The contractor has now supplied the correct sprinklers and the invoice submitted/paid. The system was used in anger for the first Aqueduct spray. Irrigation was been avoided on the second Aqueduct spray and the Revolution spray by timing the spray to coincide with rain. Rain is forecast for the next Revolution spray on May 9th. However, as liquid bio fertiliser has to dry on the leaves, it will have to be applied separately on May 8th in the evening after the tournament is finished.

These adjustments to the timing are only possible because we now have our own sprayer. The result is more work but hopefully a better result.

4. Fertiliser Spreader

At the end of last season Geoff Hughes managed to repair the corroded shaft on our spreader. However, experience has shown that it does not spread evenly and I think a replacement is required. Duncan Hector recommends the Earthway range which have 3 separate holes for the granules to fall through. Cost varies considerably, depending on the quality of product purchased but for NDCC the cost is likely to lie in the £60-£200 range. The details will be discussed at the next LAG meeting.

5. Lawn levelling

A draft tender specification was circulated to LAG members and a meeting held on April 13th. The most important issue discussed was that of possibility of adding sand to the rootzone during the levelling process. This is a conventional thing to do but it is expensive as large quantities are required. A sandy rootzone also requires more nutrients and water to keep it in shape. The option of not adding any sand but maintaining correct rootzone moisture levels using Revolution is therefore attractive.

It was decided that we should have the NDCC soil tested by the STRI in order to shed more light on the subject. The 16 soil samples taken while Duncan Hector was here have been sent off. Results are awaited. Once the results are available, the specification will be updated and circulated for final comment.

6. Access to lawns for maintenance

To prepare for tournaments (plus Finals weekend), hoop setting on Thursday evening and a two way competition grass cut on the Friday are required. Hoop setting means only 3 of 4 lawns are available for play at any one time whilst for the competition cut two- way cut) only 2 lawns out of 4 are available. The result is that players have to move lawns. On May 6th I did experience some resistance to moving because people were playing matches and I had to hang around for several hours in order to cut the second pair of lawns.

I would like to circulate the following statement to members in order to avoid a

repeat of this situation:

“ Before each Weekend tournament and Finals weekend it is necessary to cut the grass on the Thursday morning, set the hoops on the Thursday evening and cut the grass both ways on the Friday. Timing is weather dependent. During hoop setting only three lawns will be available and during grass cutting only two lawns will be available. Players are welcome to play during these activities but they **MUST** be willing to move lawns to accommodate maintenance activities. If players wish to avoid changing lawns during matches then matches should be arranged for other days/times. Similar principles will apply to the B class GC tournament but the timing of the hoop setting/cutting arrangements will be different as it takes place on a Tuesday.”

I would be grateful if the committee would endorse the above or offer an alternative.”

The Committee felt that lawn maintenance had always taken priority over croquet and that this should continue to be the case. They also felt that the e-mail should come from the Committee and not from the Lawn Manager. It was decided that the Booking File for the days mentioned above should be annotated to make the situation clear. There had always been a section in the handbook about this (applying to all days) and this should be reinserted if it was no longer there.

KW

8. Open Day feedback

Brigit supplied the following data:

OPEN DAY 2016 Analysis of Publicity

Poster (unknown location)	3
Posters on trees	1
Walked past Club	1
Poster B'well Lake	3
Poster Station	2
Poster P'head (St Peter's Rd)	1

11 Poster total

Through Club Member	9
Plus later contacts	4

**Word of Mouth
13 total**

Local magazines (unspecified)	1
Newspaper	2
Nailsea Living	1
Gordano Living	4

8 Publications total

OPEN DAY 2016

Number of Visitors	35
Number Signed up & paid on the day	8
Forms taken away	12
returned +ve	3
contacted but -ve	5
unlikely	4
Forms given out pre & post Open day	5
Returned +ve	4
Total no. of Beginners signed up	15

Lesson allocation

Mondays	3
Tuesdays	3
Wednesdays	9

Note: More visitors than last year but fewer signed up on the day; follow-up and additional contacts increased final total for lessons. Publicity is evenly spread across the three methods with additional personal contact proving successful. (*see accompanying stats sheet*)

One person had been recruited via the “Meet-up” group.

Some children who had visited the Club with Golden Valley School had shown interest in Junior sessions.

Erica is still chasing others who had shown interest.

It was clearly important to retain as many of these new people as possible. There will be a Social evening for them and the class of 2015 on the evening of Wednesday 15 June. Coral will provide nibbles and Kathy will provide Pimm’s. CH KW

Linda also offered to build a programme of opportunities for “improvers”. This might be tuition and/or practice sessions. Kathy and Brigit offered to help with this KW BC

9. Club AC sessions (to include Short Croquet)

The Committee felt strongly that the Draw should be random and not allow players to choose their opponents. It was decided to canvas the members for their opinions on the general format of both Monday and Wednesday Club afternoons. An e-mail will be sent out to all members.

KW

The options on Mondays would be a random draw or allocation in order of arrival. Opinions would also be sought on possible change of groups for second games.

On Wednesdays, the options would be the current arrangement of one game (tea at 4pm) and two shorter, 14 point games with tea between the two games. Opinions about the possibility of one Wednesday per month when Short.Croquet/small lawns would be available would also be sought.

10. Lawn bookings

It was decided to just keep 4 small lawns available during the remainder of the season. Members would be advised to make it clear when booking a lawn whether they were booking a small or large lawn. They would also be asked to indicate whether they were playing GC or AC and to stick to one line – ie primary or secondary as double banking might sometimes be necessary.

KW

Kathy to amend the lawn layout notice and inform the members

Members would also be asked not to book lawns and then not use them. They should use pencil and erase when necessary. An online booking system was not considered a good idea as only a minority of members had smart phones so would not be able to book lawns when they were at the Club. In addition, it was thought that most of the people who didn't turn up would not cancel the bookings whatever the method. Bookings might be made more casually and the problem would be exacerbated.

11. Catering supervision for 2017

Violet had indicated that she would not be able to carry on in this role next season. The item was deferred to the next meeting

KW

Pat had taken over the purchase of kitchen supplies from Mary

12. AOB

The hoops on Lawn 5 should be removed. This was to give easy access for the machines and also for lawn 5 grass to be cut. It was not considered a good idea to leave any hoops in position when they were not in use.

Peter reported that the handwash in use early in the season was irritating his hands due to a particular chemical. Kathy had experienced the same problem. The handwash had been replaced with a different type. Peter would check whether or not the new type had the offending ingredient

PD

Mike appealed for us all to keep the website up to date. He had created a new category

in which old posts could be placed until we had a better archiving system for the website.

Linda raised the possibility of a defibrillator and Andrew will make enquiries about them

AW

14. Date of next meeting

This was arranged for Tuesday 14 June at 10am

Signed as a true and accurate record

Name.....

Signature..... date.....

DRAFT