

Nailsea & District Croquet Club
Draft Minutes of Committee Meeting held on 16 March 2016

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

1. Apologies Coral Harrison

2. Minutes of Committee Meeting held on 16 February 2016

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

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

It had been noted that the pine tree overhanging lawn 2 was now leaning at a greater angle. Brian would measure its current position as a bench mark. Andrew would compose a letter to the Council and Kathy would send it in the post as a formal letter. BR
It was hoped that if the tree were becoming more dangerous, we would get permission to have it made safe. AW
KW

Mike would write a paper to brief the Committee so that we could compare and discuss the options re CASC (Community Amateur Sports Club) status and Charity status MT

The first day of the season arrangements were in hand with Violet and the Roynons liaising with each other. The cost for lunch would be £2.50 as it had been agreed not to change the price from last year. BR VD

Progress was being made with the DBS checks and Linda would continue to liaise with Fran LS

As Chairman of NDCC, Andrew had been invited to Camerton & Peasdown for the GC World Teams Championship Second Tier event and hoped to attend with his wife.

Jo Vansittart had very kindly taken over organisation of cleaning of the pavilion again and had held a well attended and successful pre-season cleaning day. The Committee will continue to support her by encouraging members to complete the rota. ALL

The Calendar had been late in its completion because there had been an unprecedented number of requests for changes to dates after they had been submitted for SWAN inclusion. WSM (N) Intermediate team had had to withdraw completely. Peter to send the Calendar to Kathy for the website and the notice board. PD

4. Treasurer's Report (Mike Tracy)

Mike reported a surplus of £373.88 and a balance of £13 863.60 less un-presented cheques. This was on target for a £6000 surplus at the end of the financial year:

He also reported:

*"Income for subscriptions is £5,004.00 For 42 members.
Take up for the 100 club has picked up to 40 units paid for so far. Between Sandra and myself we will send out another encouraging email to see if we can push even higher before the first draw at the start of the season.
Bridge income has passed the £550.00 mark.
We have paid for our annual levy to the CA which was £770 this year, exactly as per budget.
I have received the invoice for non-domestic rates which has included the full discretionary relief as in the last few years. With the invoice came a notice that all non-domestic rates will be subject to a revaluation in 2017. I have registered my email address so that I will be notified as the process proceeds. It appears that there will be an opportunity to challenge the new valuation, which is a path we may need to take. Even if we obtain CASC status and get 80% mandatory relief, we would still have to pay 20%, and I would want it to be 20% of the smallest figure possible.
EDF are sending an engineer to the club to install a Smart Meter on 17th March. I will be in attendance."*

5. Property Report (Brian Roynon)

"Trolleys.

The trolleys are ready for the start of the season. All the CVD modifications have been made to the paint work on the secondary clips.

The Club House.

6 more packs of boarding for the loft have been purchased, at £8.99 a pack. A saving of £6 from what was expected. These will be laid in due course.

Hedge Cutting.

The contractor Tom Williams who came and cut the hedges on 1st February. Has been asked (3 times) for the receipt but I am still waiting."

Payment had been made by cheque but Mike would like a receipt for his records

6. Lawn Maintenance Report (John Wallace)

"1. Lawns

The lawns have been sprayed with 20Kg of iron (the recommended Duncan Hector dose) for the first time. This is twice the level applied last year and required four separate sprays of 95L water. It was only economically possible to do this because we now possess our own sprayer.

The lawns have been marked out and white lines applied. The hoop positions for two sets of competition hoop holes and a separate set of social golf holes have been pegged out on the full lawns together with hoop positions for eight small lawns. Holes have been drilled and backfilled for the main competition hoops using a splendid vertical drill stand constructed by David Hunt. Hoop setting is taking place this week. Rob Royffe has refurbished the nets and refitted them to the lawns.

Once hoop setting is completed (Wednesday) the lawns will be brushed, spiked and cut in readiness for the first Aqueduct spray. As the weather is dry the new irrigation system will be used to water in the Aqueduct.

The lawn size remains 27/28th of a full size lawn. Lawn position is about 30 inches South of last year in order to avoid some of the dry ground on the North boundary.

2. Irrigation

The contractor supplied an extra camlock male/female connector and this allowed us to cut the 50m section layflat hosepipe into two more manageable 25m sections. Geoff Hughes has constructed an extremely efficient winding mechanism that allows us to wind up the three 25m sections into narrow reels for easy storage. The design of the winder ensures that water flows out of the hosepipe and allows it to be reeled in flat for compact storage.

The specified dual nozzle sprinklers have yet to be delivered by the contractor. Pending delivery he has returned the original single nozzle sprinklers to us and has not yet submitted an invoice. In anticipation of the delay, I contacted another larger supplier and purchased three dual nozzle sprinklers directly from them at a cost of about £20 plus postage. These are the nozzles that will be used to irrigate this week.

3. Sarel Spiker

When I was using the Sarel Spiker I noticed that a proportion of the 189 spikes were loose. Each is held in position by a Nylock nut that needs to be tightened periodically. This requires the rollers to be removed from the main shaft. Whilst I was tightening the spikes, Geoff Hughes noticed that the shaft was suffering significant wear because of the metal on metal bearing/shaft arrangement. One spike required replacing because of a stripped thread. I ordered 3 spares (cost £10) and fitted one of them. I contacted the manufacturer (BMS) and complained. BMS refused to supply a new shaft and said that we should lubricate the metal bearings once every 4 weeks – an absurd maintenance burden. When it was pointed out that the instructions did not refer to this 4 week lubrication regime they simply reiterated that a new shaft would cost us £45 plus delivery and VAT. I then contacted Duncan Hector who supplied the Sarel Spiker. He was astounded by the lubrication issue (they don't do it at Letchworth) but got the same blanket refusal as I did. He then wrote a formal letter to BMS, who then caved in and supplied NDCC with a new shaft at no cost to us. In parallel with this I decided to permanently eliminate the need for lubrication by replacing the 3/4inch shaft with a 5/8inch shaft and nylon bushes that I made up from Ertanol, an oil impregnated nylon material designed for low speed, high load situations. The shaft was manufactured in Darlington (!) in EN8 grade steel and delivered at total cost of £23. Assisted by Geoff Hughes, Terry Young and myself fitted the new shaft and bearings on 13/3/16 and all seemed well. The revised shaft arrangement should need to further maintenance.

4. Lawn levelling

Once the current burst of activity dies down I hope to start drafting the specification for lawn levelling. The intention is to invite tenders/site visits during the spring/summer and have firm costs available for the LAG and committee in late summer."

7. Membership Report (Coral Harrison)

“The total number of Membership Subscriptions received to date (15.3) is 45 being 37 full members, 4 social, 2 country, 1 associate and 1 student giving a total of £5329.00

There have been 8 resignations. This included three who had been new in 2015 and three who had taken temporary winter membership because their primary clubs had closed their lawns

Next week I will send out a ‘chasing email’ to those who have not paid in anticipation of receiving payments at the Start of the Season day

A possible new member has been joining in the Tuesday bridge sessions on the understanding that she will pay for Social Membership prior to her having croquet coaching. I have suggested that this Social membership payment could be offset against the payment due when she joins the Club after the coaching has ended.

Tuesday afternoon bridge will switch to evenings week commencing 28 March”

8. Competitions update to include Mad Monday issues

Linda had arranged two Refresher course sessions for the beginners of 2015 during the first week in April. Jim Gregory would assist with these.

There had been e-mails from club members in complaint about the handicap limit of 4+ being imposed on the Mad Monday competition. The issues they raised involved discrimination, divisiveness, a loss of opportunity (and possibly a precedent) to play on some Club afternoons and, in one case, a feeling that this was intended to exclude that member personally.

The Committee debated the issue at length; the main points made were:

1. As the handicap system is designed to give a fair competition between players of widely varying ability, handicap competitions in general do not have a limited handicap range. Exceptions are competitions divided into sections that cover the entire range and also competitions for High Bisquers. If Mad Monday is intended to be a High Bisquers competition, then the lower handicap limit should be much higher, say 6 or 7. The proposed limit of 4 would not have the desired effect of shielding the less able players from strong opposition, nor would it be fair to any of the stronger members who would like to play in such a competition. In addition it would set a precedent.
2. The better ranking members of the club are as entitled to join in on club afternoons as much as anyone else. There are no handicap restrictions on AC club afternoons or in the Wild Wednesday competition.
3. Everyone believed that Chris’s objective had been to prevent weaker players from being overawed by high calibre players. However, the fact that it was only likely to affect a very small number of members made it appear to be directed at them.

4. High handicap players learn from playing more experienced and lower handicap players

Various options were considered:

- a) Run the competition as last year, with no handicap limit.
- b) Introduce a higher minimum handicap than 4, perhaps 6, 7 or 8.
- c) Allow players of all handicaps to take part, but manage the draw so that the lowest handicaps do not play against the highest.
- d) Divide the competition into two sections at some handicap value.

Option (b) was ruled out because it was feared it would have a significant effect on the number of eligible players

Option (c) was ruled out as it was not considered a sensible arrangement in an all-inclusive competition. It would also be likely to result in practical difficulties for the manager.

Option d) was ruled out because Chris may have found it unworkable.

As the competition had been so successful last year, it was agreed that on balance the best option would be to make no change to the regulations from last year in this respect.

i.e. players of all handicaps would be eligible for Mad Mondays

Andrew would inform Chris Jackson of the decision and explain the reasons for it. He would also inform the members who had written to the Committee about the issue.

AW

9. Handicaps update (Peter Dyke)

The GC Handicap Committee (Peter, Jim Gregory, Andrew Buchanan and Chris Jackson) were due to meet that afternoon.

10. League teams update

Violet, Brigit and the captains had sorted out the squads for the AC teams. Peter reported a problem finding enough players for the team that had been entered in the GC High Handicap League. The distances for Away fixtures in this League was an issue for some. Others wished to play in the same team as another member whose handicap was below 8.

11. Open Day update

Kathy reported that Erica had plans in hand for all the aspects of publicity for Open Day.

Brigit, as Committee co-ordinator for the day itself, was liaising with the coaches so that we could be clear when lessons for beginners would take place. Linda reported that the coaching course that she had enrolled on had been cancelled. She had been offered a place on an alternative course at Hamptworth but the dates were not

convenient.

Rob did not feel able to make a regular commitment because he was likely to be away quite a lot. Linda was happy to continue with her usual Wednesday evening slot. It was wondered if Jim might take a Friday slot instead of the usual Monday as Monday sessions were problematic on Bank Holidays and Mad Mondays. Mike would be happy to coach but couldn't promise to give 100% availability. Kathy was willing in principle to step in for any coaches on an ad hoc basis.

Brigit to make enquiries and to liaise with Erica on the finalisation of the forms for applications for lessons. BC

12. AOB

Mike reported that following our response to the WI stating a cost of £400 for exclusive use of the clubhouse and lawns and to include a cream team for the competitors, the WI had replied. They were wondering if they could hire a limited number of lawns for a smaller cost. We did not feel able to do this as the presence of the visitors in the Clubhouse and on some of the lawns would be distracting for Club play. In addition, a Club member would have to be in attendance all day, and we would have to see a significant financial return to make it worth our effort and lawn closure to the members. Kathy to reply to the WI

KW

Peter reported that a Nailsea member who was also a member at another club had been given an initial GC handicap there and Peter wished to query it.

Peter noted that the CA had asked us to inform them of misbehaviour such as persistent lateness for tournaments. This was so that they would be aware of the overall picture and would be able to deal with it.

Peter also noted that the CA would like sequence Umpires at all GC Tournaments. Peter felt this was unrealistic and impractical and that he would not be able to comply with it at the August Tournament. The Committee were in full support of this stance.

13. Date of next meeting

This was arranged for Tuesday 10 May at 10am

Signed as a true and accurate record

Name.....

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