

Nailsea & District Croquet Club
Draft Minutes of Committee Meeting held on 2 November 2016

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

The meeting opened at 10am and Geoff Hughes was present for items 1 and 2

1. Apologies None

2. Plaque

Geoff had suggested that a plaque be placed in the Clubhouse to commemorate John Jeffrey. The wording of the inscription, the choice of silver or gold and the positioning of the plaque were discussed. It was noted that the full name was John de Mowbray Jeffrey. Brigit will create a draft inscription for discussion by Geoff and the Committee. The decisions re colour and positioning were deferred as it was difficult to imagine when not in the Clubhouse.

BC

Geoff reported that the cost would be about £100 including VAT

Geoff left the meeting at 10.22am

3. Minutes of Committee Meeting held on 28 September 2016

The minutes were signed as a true and accurate record of the meeting held on 28 September 2016

Matters arising from Minutes of Committee Meeting held on 28 September 2016

Kathy had asked the CPO about the DBS checks for the junior coaches but they were still outstanding. Peter said he would pursue this for himself and Erica.

PD

Geoff no longer wished to purchase a cordless drill

The mowers had not been asked to make sure they put the grass cuttings into the ditch rather than leaving them at the edge of lawn 5. Andrew wondered if the grass could be transferred to the ditch on work party mornings. It was agreed that days other than Fridays should sometimes be arranged for these events to encourage better attendance

BR

Terry had offered the help of his son in providing sign-writing on the outside board. The work on the board would be done as a winter job.

BR

The query about worm treatment had been answered in the Lawn Maintenance Report for this meeting.

46 people had signed up for the Christmas Lunch. This meant that costs would be covered and there may be a few more people before the deadline. Linda offered to provide a quiz on literature and Brian was willing to organise the raffle. Kathy to invite members to donate prizes

LS
BR
KW

Kathy had booked two alleys at Clarence House for Saturday 4 February. Kathy would arrange for “stickers up” nearer the time. KW

Peter had arranged a B Class GC tournament for Tuesday 8 August. It was hoped that this would be included in the National Series. Peter would be Manager and Kathy Secretary

Andrew had made contact with Jo about the cleaning rota and she had indicated that she did not have time to continue in her role of organiser. Linda reported that the person who may be prepared to replace her has been on holiday but she will ask her shortly LS

Peter had not yet arranged a sub-Committee meeting re Mad Mondays although he had had a brief conversation with Robin. Linda asked if the meeting could be before Christmas and Peter agreed to this. PD

Coral is in contact with the daughter of Chris Jackson and will report back when she knows what Claire wishes to do in memory of Chris and Valerie.

Peter had not yet sent the report of the AC Handicap Committee to Kathy so she had not updated the tracking chart PD

Kathy was intending to send out the files with Gazette information about the new CA membership structure with the AGM final agenda. Mike would be mentioning the new structure in his report because of the financial implications for the Club. KW

4. Treasurer’s Report (Mike Tracy)

“Finance workbook attached.

Our surplus for this financial year (starting 1st October) is £40.15

Our bank balance at the time of writing is £18,566.19, with issued cheques to the value of £114.97 not yet presented, so our cash assets are £18,451.22

Note that the surplus/deficit figure is distorted by the income for Christmas lunches (£594), most of which will be passed to the caterer in due course. Also note that under the terms of the new lease, rent became payable on 29th September. The invoice was received a few days after this date and has been paid, so this expense has happened much earlier in the financial year than hitherto.

We will have very little income until subs become due, but considerable expenses (lawn chemicals, electricity, water, 100 club prizes etc.), so we can look forward to several months of growing deficit, but this is quite normal and no cause for concern. I think that we helped to make a significant contribution to the success of the end of season short croquet event at Budleigh Salterton with our entry of four teams. This did however come at a cost. Players paid the usual £3 match fee, but this only covers (or contributes towards?) the entry fee. The travel expenses for four teams came to about £173.50. I would like us to consider whether we wish to charge a higher match fee for this event or accept the cost to the club. For the record, I favour the latter.”

Mike reported that although the cost of travel to the Budleigh Short Croquet event far outweighed the match fees for it, the overall cost of travel to all matches (League and Short Croquet) was fairly well balanced with overall match fees. It was therefore decided not to increase the match fee for the Budleigh event.

There was concern that the costs and effort incurred by both the Budleigh and Nailsea clubs in hosting the Short croquet event was not rewarded financially by the SWF. As the SWF probably did not have the funds to increase their lawn hire payments significantly, the entry fee for teams would need to be increased. This was an issue to be taken up jointly with Budleigh

Mike would make minor changes to the wording of his AGM report

MT

5. **Property Report (Brian Roynon)**

“Pavilion

The hand driers

The walls beneath the hand driers have been getting wet, as you would expect, and some mould had started to grow in the indentations in the wall blocks.

To prevent this problem developing and hopefully to improve the appearance, tiles, courtesy of Terry, have been fitted by Brian and Robin under each drier.

Hand Basins

The taps on the basins have given a few problems during the summer.

I have purchased replacement sets, with the blessing of the Treasurer; These will be fitted in due course. At the same time I will install in-line ball valves to give local isolation points while the mains water is off.

The Roof

One of the roof hip tiles appears to have moved down making me aware of a possible pointing problem. I examined the roof with binoculars and it appears that several of the hip and ridge tiles could do with closer examination, re-bedding and re-pointing. With the committees agreement I will get a quote to see what this would cost to have done.

Hedges.

If we trim the tops of the hedges ourselves at the close of season to remove the new growth we may save ourselves a spring cut cost. There should be little debris to dispose of.

Social Bookings

We had a Social Corporate event on the 30th September when Worcestershire company Parkwood Consultancy Services met at Nailsea for a bonding weekend with their Exeter branch.

26 people came and were supported by 8 club members.

*The afternoon was a success and they all enjoyed the experience.
We may see them again.”*

It was agreed that Brian should get a quote for the roof work described in his report

BR

6. Lawn Maintenance Report (John Wallace)

“1. Lawns

Rainfall since finals weekend has been low (see figure 1) and no higher than the summer months whilst evapo-transpiration (ET) has fallen. The Revolution spray and lower ET have generally kept the lawns green but the north boundary dried out quite badly because of the tree roots sucking moisture out from underneath the root-zone. During the summer months the north boundary was flooded periodically to overcome this but flooding ceased in August. Constant machinery traffic and a dry, brown north boundary resulted in some loss of grass. In mid October, with some rain predicted the brown boundary area was flooded, tined and re-seeded. The result is that the north boundary is greening up and newly germinated grass shoots are now evident in the holes punched in the lawn with the tining machine. Similar drying-out problems arose in corner 1 of lawn 2 (again tree roots) and it was flooded/reseeded last weekend. Worms continue to be a problem, particularly the day after rain. Brushing with the lawn tractor helps to break up the casts but debris remains. As a result it is difficult to mow the lawns without rolling loose soil into the turf and inducing local spots of dead grass.

On Duncan Hectors suggestion a product called Rigel-G has purchased as a potential defence against Leatherjackets. It is actually designed to protect commercial crops from insect damage and protect against diseases. It claims to be derived from plant hormones and can be sprayed on without a licence. Apparently the grubs etc do not like ingesting foodplant containing Rigel-G. There is only anecdotal evidence regarding leatherjackets but the manufacturers claim that it is used by a number of golf clubs. At a cost of £132+VAT all LAG members felt we should apply it as there is no sensible alternative at present. There is some uncertainty about application rates but it will be sprayed on as soon as there is greater certainty on this issue.

2. Future issues – 2017 prior to levelling

There are a number of issues that need resolving for next season. Two of the more important ones are:

a. Regular Irrigation of the north boundary.

As mentioned above the tree roots do dry out the soil along the north boundary. The root-zone soil itself along the north boundary is also very sandy due to various levelling exercises carried out over the last 18 years. Revolution prevents the sandy soil becoming hydrophobic but is unable to allow moisture from deeper soil to migrate upwards because the tree roots tend to dry out this deeper level of soil. This year the grass within the croquet lawn areas green was kept green by periodic heavy watering with the large 32mm hosepipe. This is somewhat tedious and we require an alternative method (fed from the 32mm hosepipe) that is more convenient but continues to concentrate water application in a three metre wide strip. . (The main emergency irrigation sprinkler system waters too large an area). The details can be discussed by the LAG.

If finances do not permit purchase of any equipment in 2017 then we can continue with the existing method until 2018. However I think it is essential that with newly levelled lawns we are able to maintain adequate irrigation along the north boundary strip (and corner 1 of lawn 2). Revolution will ensure that the rest of the lawns stay green with minimal or no irrigation. The cost of water for this localised irrigation is low at perhaps £5 per application.

b. Revised method of cleaning the Toro triplex mower.

In September I asked Geoff and Terry if they could devise a quicker and more effective method of cleaning the Toro reels as the existing method is very tedious and not consistently effective. The proposal they came up with involves parking the Toro on the concrete area outside the machine room, running the engine at low speed in neutral and lowering the cutters which begin to rotate. The pressure washer squirts water on to the rotating blades and rapidly cleans both the blades and all the grass and mud that collects at the back of the bed knife.

As a cleaning method it is excellent but there are two issues I wish to highlight:

a. The rotating reels do represent a health and safety hazard. I have therefore insisted that some form of guard is fitted to prevent hands and feet becoming entangled with the blades. Geoff has devised one solution but I think there are other possibilities if his proposal is deemed inadequate.

b. Initially, the procedure required two people as one person needs to sit on the Toro seat to keep the engine running. To overcome this Geoff devised a simple method of defeating the safety interlock such that the engine will continue to run without anybody sitting on the seat. The defeat mechanism (a strip of wood wedged in place to hold the limit switch down!) could easily be accidentally left in place so I intend to modify it so that its presence is obvious even with the seat down.

The chances of anybody being hurt are very low but I think the risks need to be evaluated and mitigated against. The procedure could also potentially invalidate our insurance and I would like the committee to consider the matter before it is introduced next spring.

3. Future issues – 2017/18 after levelling.

Once the lawns are levelled there are two issues that will need to be resolved:

a. Worms.

Worm-casts do present a significant problem that could easily begin to create local variations in the playing surface and result in locally dead spots of grass if rolled into the surface during mowing. Even if a method of removing the casts could be devised the constant removal of soil could create an uneven surface. An application of Ringer (a licensed product) would prevent worm-casts and I think it would be essential to apply it if it is still available. However, there are rumours about Ringer being banned next year so the way forward will remain uncertain for some time.

For budget purposes I think it should be assumed that the cost should be included in future budget planning exercises. I will let the treasurer know what the cost is likely to be.

b. Over-seeding

Over-seeding of all lawns should ideally be carried out every year. The “plantpot” approach to over-seeding involves punching holes in the ground using solid tines and then brushing the seed into the holes. Germination in the holes is excellent as can be seen from examination of the north boundary. Regular tufts of new grass are clearly visible. The approach also avoids lawn closures as the newly sown seed is protected in the holes.

We can accomplish this with the GA30 tining machine and the Countax brush attachment or the towed AstroTurf mat. However, for new level lawns there are some significant snags:

- Despite extensive experimentation, nobody has ever been able to avoid the tearing of the turf at the edge of each hole when using the GA30. The results are always inconsistent. Good clean holes in places but ragged holes a short distance away.*
- The hole spacing on the GA30 is too wide.*
- The GA30 tyres flatten and close over holes produced on a previous pass. It is not possible to brush seed into such holes so over-seeding/brushing has to*

take place after each pass. This is acceptable for small areas but not so when over-seeding four lawns

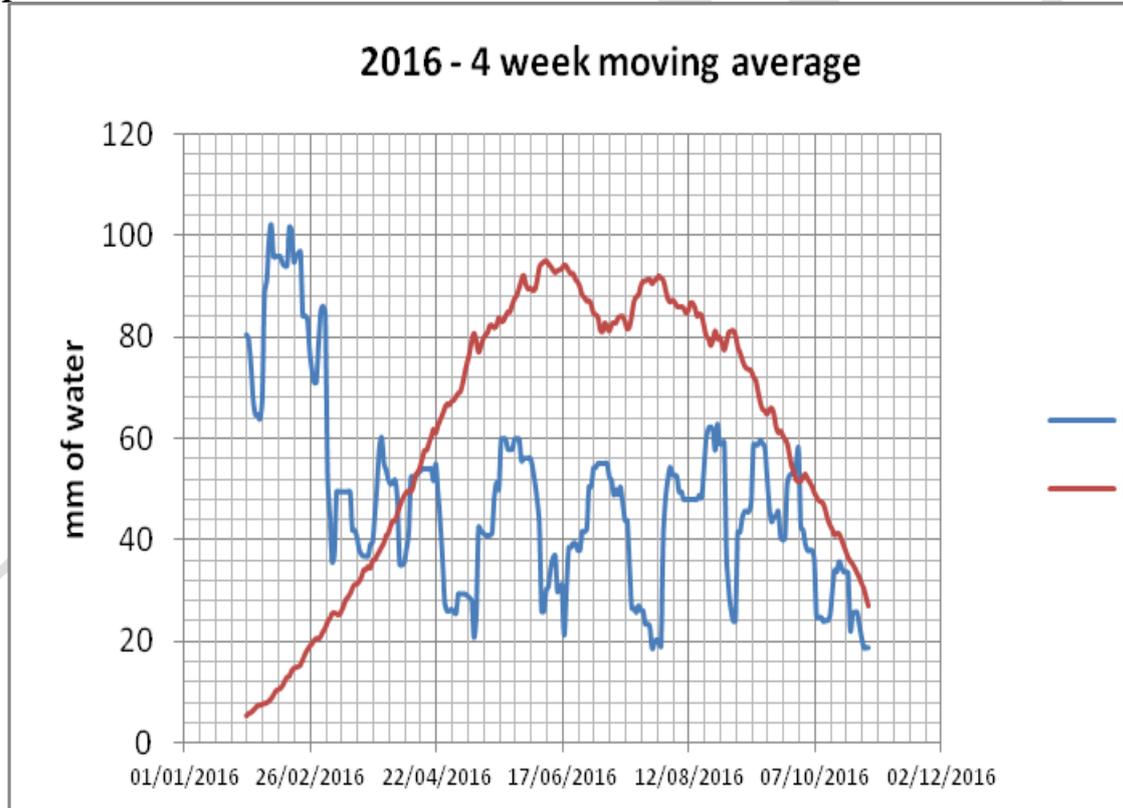
- The GA30 represents a maintenance burden despite only being used once a year.

My judgement at the moment is that we should budget for annual professional dimple over seeding of our new lawns. Dimple seeding is very similar to the plant-pot approach but the dimple holes are closer together, not quite so deep and usually produced with random spacing. Unlike disc seeders dimple seeders do not disturb the grass roots. Germination rates are lowering than disc seeding as only the grass brushed into the dimples germinates but this is a price worth paying.

From memory I think the cost of over-seeding would be about £500 per year (plus seed). This is probably an unavoidable cost but there is a significant benefit in that new grass is regularly introduced to keep the sward vigorous and healthy. It also helps to keep shallow rooting annual meadow grass at bay (widespread on our current lawns).

John Wallace 31/10/16

Figure 1 Rainfall and Evapo-transpiration (ET) over a rolling 4 week period



The point raised in the report about the proposed new and improved method for cleaning the mower was discussed. The Committee felt strongly that safety measures should never be over-riden. Kathy to inform John

KW

The decision was made to sanction the proposed dimpled seeding to be done annually by a contractor.

7. NDCC AGM

The Committee agreed to submit Mike's proposal that the subscription for full members be increased to £140. This would take in to account two years worth of inflation and also the increased levy due to the new CA structure.

8. The Ladders and the website

This was deferred to be part of Item 9

9. Club Competitions 2017

Linda had submitted the following report

“Club competitions and coaching report: November 2016

This was a successful year for club competitions with 64 members entering 24 competitions - a total of 308 entries.

I would like the committee to consider the following suggestions for developing this programme next year:

- GC
 - *Reduce the default time limit to 50mins (at least for semis and finals)*
 - *Make the GC Doubles competition subject to handicap limits on pairings (as with alternate strokes) to encourage less experienced players and make a clearer distinction between this and the Buchanan*
 - *Confirm **Mad Monday** rules - I haven't given this any further thought*
- AC
 - **Beginners / high bisquers**
 - *In view of CA work on coaching generally and its potential impact for teaching beginners (i.e. using garden croquet as a first step), think about making this more of a skills test and having the high bisquers competition open to people who are in up to and including their 3rd season with a handicap of 18 or higher*
 - *Review handicapping formula for **1 Ball handicap***
 - *Have a **short croquet** competition running through the season - this could replace the 'on the day' format we have been using and would be a good chance for higher handicappers to gain competitive experience including against lower handicaps*
 - *Introduce an **Advanced Handicap** competition to be run as a block throughout the season - Mark has suggested this and has offered to provide the trophy*
- *Ladders - suggestions made by Geoff and others*
 - *These have done well this year, especially AC, but I'm not sure if there will be time to run it next year or whether we should delay until 2018*
 - *Start the competition at semis weekend which would be a good use of any spare lawns and get the ball(s) rolling*

- *Play AC ladder as an 18 point game to cope with colder weather and shorter days*
 - *Decide whether or not results should go on handicap cards - they should probably go on yellow cards anyway*
 - *There have been frustrations and blockages which may be avoided if we turn it into a circular format, so everyone has someone to challenge, and increase the number of people you can challenge to 3 or 4*
 - *Need to think about best way of keeping ladder up to date and players aware e.g. using the website*
- **General**
 - *Martin has agreed to learn how to manage the competitions and I will be working with him over the winter and next year*
 - *Doreen has expressed an interest in helping competitions but is more interested in 'on the day' activities*
 - *I am working on revamping a summary / description of the competitions which should make it easier for people to see what they would like to enter for - will bring this along to next meeting*

Coaching

The Thursday morning sessions being run by Kathy are proving a great success for beginners and improvers and are indicative of the demand for coaching in the club. They are also providing opportunities for peer-support and identifying future coaches.

We know the pods have been reasonably well attended by our members and it is to be hoped that if similar facilities were to be offered to mid - low handicappers and to GC players, that they would show a similar level of interest.

I contacted around 20 club members to establish who might be interested in playing a part in a more structured coaching programme for AC and GC at all levels.

Responses summarised here:

	Hcap	Qualified		GC	
		Grade	Further?	Range	Topic
Jim					
Linda	7	No		Beginners	
Peter					
Polly	8	Club		High hcaps	
Richard B	-1	GC		All	Strategy Using extra turns Practice routines Knowing the laws
Richard J					
Rob					
Terry	6	No			General help

	AC				Topic
	Hcap	Qualified		Range	
		Grade	Further?		
Alison	0	No	Club L1 / 2	Any	poss Mon / Tue eves triple peels break building
Brigit	14	No	No	20 - 14	ad hoc group or 1:1 problem solving - strokes, break play, tacti
David	5	No	L1	Oct-14	
Doreen	20	No	Club	24 - 20	
Erica		No		20 - 14	break building using bisques wisely
Geoff					Not interested
Jim					
Kathy	6			20 - 14	4 ball break 3 ball break setting up breaks with/out bisques
Linda	11	Club	L1	Beg - 18	
Libby	14	No			Assist coaches Setting up bisques with breaks Getting the rushes
Mark					
Mary	14	Club	No	24 - 16	
Mike		No	No		Support beginners course - with Andrew
Pat		No			General help
Peter					
Polly	16	Club		24 - 18	
Richard B	12		?	24 - 18	
Richard J	5	2			Breaks without bisques - day course 3 ball breaks Canons
Rob					
Terry	14	No		20 - 14	Assist coaches Back to basics - revision Confidence Stance

We have a good level of support for AC beginners and improvers but our resources begin to look a bit thin as we get to the mid-range and lower and to GC.

This could have an impact on regular handicap assessment and it would be helpful if the handicap committee could bear this in mind. They might also wish to consider having a couple more trained handicappers within the club.

It looks as though we are looking at this at the right time as the CA is doing a lot of work on it and wants to involve the Federations more - as evidenced by Richard Jackson's recent email.

Also I hope to be elected Secretary of SWF so would have first-hand knowledge of what was going on.

At the moment my thinking is:

- We enumerate our resources - coaches, assistants, training/practice routines*

- *We assess demand for training coaches and consider running this at Nailsea (to include other clubs) early next year*
- *Through the SWF we link in and share resources with local clubs and bear in mind suggestions made in the feedback received so far*
- *I start pulling this together in the form of a club coaching handbook (to include practice routines etc)*

The suggestion of reducing the default time limit for GC games from 1 hour to 50min was rejected.

The suggestion that the GC Doubles competition should require each pair to have at least one player with a handicap of 8 or above was accepted. Progressive Doubles might also be considered.

It was felt that the beginners should play matches rather than take Skills Tests in order to contest the trophy for the Beginners Competition

It was decided that the High Bisquers Competition should be restricted to players who were in their first, second or third year of coaching and who still had a handicap of 18 or higher.

The new winter ladder competitions had proved very popular and many matches were being played. There had been a suggestion that the current state of the ladders be put on the Club website so that players could see who they were in a position to challenge. It was thought that some players would not report their results instantly so this would not work very well. It was also considered unnecessary

As the 2017 season will finish earlier than usual, it was felt that Short Croquet should be played “on the day” for the moment but the suggestion that it be played through the season could be reconsidered for 2019.

The idea of a Handicap Advanced Competition was approved. It was hoped that it would encourage players with slightly higher handicaps to begin to play Advanced Rules.

10. Coaching

The coaching part of the report was deferred to the next meeting as time was short

KW

12. Dishwasher proposal

This item was deferred to the next meeting as time was short

KW

13. SWF AGM –the proposals (attached, hard copy only but also on SWF website

The Committee voted against support for Proposal C

Peter was opposed to proposal D

The Committee was happy for Peter to make the decision on proposal F

The Committee voted against Proposal I and for Proposal J

Peter, Andrew and Mike would all attend the meeting, Mike as an observer. All should be entitled to claim for their lunch expenses

14. AOB

There had been a request that a member be offered free membership for a year to acknowledge his service to the Club. This was rejected

Brian would like to tidy up the toilets by removing the soap dispensers and the paper towel holders. This was agreed

15. Date of next meeting

There will be a short meeting of the newly elected Committee immediately after the AGM.

As there were no nominations for new Committee members, the next full meeting could be arranged and this was set for Monday 5 December

The meeting closed at 12.30pm