

Nailsea & District Croquet Club
Draft Minutes of Committee Meeting held on 23 August 2016

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

The meeting opened at 10am

1. Apologies None

2. Minutes of Committee Meeting held on 19 July 2016

The minutes were signed as a true and accurate record of the meeting held on 19 July 2016 but Peter observed that the Committee had never sanctioned any changes to the Mad Monday regulations. e-mails between members of the Committee had specifically indicated that no changes should be made during the remainder of the 2016 season.

3. Matters arising from Minutes of Committee Meeting held on 19 July 2016

The hedges had been cut back and this included a trim to the Leylandii in the adjoining garden. Consequently the letter to the neighbours had not been sent. There had been no complaints.

A representative from North Somerset Council, Sam Philips had complained about our treatment of the hedge adjoining the "wild area" created by the Friends of Trendlewood. Andrew had spoken to Sam and agreed that, in future, we would only cut our side of the hedge. It had been agreed with Sam that we could not remove the clippings because of the wild nature of the area and that in any case they would provide extra cover for the fauna.

Mike had pursued the issue of duplicate insurance between our own policy and that gained via the CA. The CA had agreed to arrange a reduction in the policy we paid via them. This was because our own Contents policy also provides cover for Public and Employers Liability.

The situation re our rent is covered in the Treasurer's Report which is in these minutes.

Geoff Hughes had been invited to talk to the Committee about his suggestion of a plaque. He had accepted but wanted to wait until he had gathered more information.

The DBS checks for the junior coaches were still outstanding PD

One new junior had still not paid membership but it had been promised. PD

There had been no further reports of Pokémon sightings other than in the adjacent field

4. Treasurer's Report (Mike Tracy)

Mike reported a surplus of £4699.50 and a balance of £18497.65

Mike's report:

"Current balance at the bank less unpresented cheques is £18497.65

The surplus for the year is £4699.80

The two major items of expenditure which have reduced our balance since the last meeting are the insurance premium (£951.27) and hedge cutting (£490).

The rent issue has moved on a little. I have received an email from Gareth Withers agreeing substantially with my calculations and promising an invoice to cancel the one sent in error in April (which has arrived), a second invoice to refund the rent already paid from the end of September 2015 to the end of March 2016 and a third requesting the £500 agreed under the new lease (neither of which have materialised). In short, we have a liability for about £310 when the council manages to send out the necessary paperwork. There are a few match fees outstanding and the potential for quite a few travel expense claims for league matches if members choose to make them, so the liability is uncertain. We will have a new fertiliser spreader and another roller for the Toro to pay for. Significant income will arise from the WI visit later this week and the balance of tournament entry fees due from the CA. I estimate that we are heading for an annual surplus of £5,000 +.

Catering for the August tournament was profitable to the tune of £74.78. A visit from the Nailsea 41 club raised £75.00 and from Tickenham Badminton Club a further £142.50

Bridge income has passed the £1000.00 mark.

The committee having ratified the LAG's recommendation to accept the tender from Talbot Farm Landscapes for the levelling project, the details of the contract are being finalised by John. The application for a grant or loan from the CA will be discussed later in this meeting. Peter Longden told me that Bristol Airport have a community fund and suggested that I look into obtaining a grant from that source. Having looked at the criteria for a grant I am not hopeful, but I will present the facts when we discuss the CA grant application. I have attached the application form which lays out the criteria and guidelines from page 6 onwards."

Mike also reported that the takings in the kitchen were down. It was feared that many people were forgetting to pay for tea and coffee or thinking that they were exempt.

Linda and Kathy to create notices to remind people to pay.

KW
LS

5. Tournament Secretary's Report (attached, hard copy only)

This item was taken here as the Membership Secretary had nothing to report

6. Property Report.

Brian reported:

“Car Park.

The matting at the entry /exit to the car park has not deteriorated further other than someone has mowed over it and cut a section out.

Work mornings

The work morning on the 5th August was very poorly attended. For the 1st hour there was only myself, Bridget and James so only I could use the machinery. Brian McCausland came after an hour and did the strimming. Robin was there white lining while Geoff and Terry were working on the mower. There were six members playing/practising. Very disappointing.

The hedges have been cut and the leylandi cut back.

Some paper towels have been placed on the window sill in both the gents and the ladies toilets. They need a weight on top to stop them blowing out of the window when it is open.

Social Bookings

The social booking that was cancelled due to rain and which had been re booked for 2nd August was cancelled yet again due to rain. This time they have not rebooked.

A big thank you to all those members who made themselves available for these evenings

It was decided to target particular members in an effort to get better attendance at Work Mornings and to publicise the types of task involved. We would also vary the days of the week as Fridays might be inconvenient for some people.

BR

Coral would look at the membership forms to see what people had volunteered to do

CH

7. Lawn Maintenance Report (John Wallace)

“1. Lawns

Apart from a deluge on August 1st there has actually been very little rainfall since the end of June and certainly less rain than last year (See figure 1). Evapo-transpiration (ET) continues to be well above rainfall as is illustrated in figure 2. Despite the lack of rain the lawns have stayed green and have been considered to be on the slow side due to a thicker sward and reasonably high soil moisture level. As an experiment, the cutter height was therefore lowered from 4mm to 3mm which resulted in a approximately 10% in lawn speed from 10 to 11 plummers, generally to players approval.

In the week beginning August 15th the hot dry weather did begin to affect the lawns. For the first time small brown areas began to appear and soil testing confirmed that the soil was generally drier than had previously been the case. However, the soil is still not hydrophobic (ie no dry patch) and readily absorbs water. The 15mm of rain in the last couple of days should therefore be easily absorbed and the small brown areas “green-up” fairly quickly.

The lawn speed was measured at about 11.2 plummers on August 17 which is not particularly fast. However, the firmer ground did begin to expose the usual undulations in the surface and result in more balls wandering off course.

Duncan Hector visited on August 17 and took some soil samples for testing. Thatch was measured at a consistent 10mm which compares with about 18mm in 2015. This is encouraging as it suggests that the combination of fertilisers, regular aeration from Sarel spiking and adequate soil moisture level due to Revolution is resulting in the planned composting and hence elimination of thatch without scarifying. Some thatch will always be present but the target is 5mm or less.

Duncan commented that our lawns were actually greener than Letchworth and that at both sites the effects of applying Revolution seemed to be significant. He also noted the usual extensive brown local dry patch areas on lawn 5 which is not treated with Revolution. One interesting side effect of Revolution is that the lawns show no sign of flooding, even in the presence of heavy rain.

2. Hoop Setting and Balls

One of the positive side effects of the new soil moisture levels is that the hoop resetting process is easier. For the Golf B Class tournament no pre-watering of the new hoop hole areas was required. However it was eventually necessary to partially backfill some of the hoop holes as the old holes had not fully recovered. This problem occurs because in the weeks following a hoop move/set players tend to bang the hoops in too hard and create a hoop hole that is too wide and too deep. As I would prefer to avoid backfilling once the lawns are levelled, some method of avoiding this situation needs to be developed.

The Golf B class was arranged for a Tuesday which caused additional work for setting hoops and mowing the lawns. (The hoops had to be set twice and timing of grass cutting awkward). It would be helpful if, in future, mid week tournaments were avoided.

Whilst practising recently, I noticed that the old balls seemed to be clearing the recently set hoops quite easily. I therefore decided to compare the diameter of the old balls with the newish tournament balls. On average, if one compares the old primaries with the tournament primaries the difference is now over 0.6mm (compared with 0.4mm in 2012). This is quite close to 1/32nd of an inch (0.8mm) and means that hoops set to 1/16th with tournament balls are effectively 3/32nd hoops with old balls. This is actually quite convenient as a 1/8th hoop has to be set within the range of 1/16th to 1/8th and a 3/32nd hoop is nicely in range. It follows that no adjustment for

KW

club play is required, particularly as hoops tend to loosen as they are moved/reinserted. In truth, ground moisture levels have at least as much of an impact on hoop difficulty as the hoop clearance setting. With the advent of Revolution and resulting higher soil moisture levels the hoops have generally not been difficult to run this season, even when newly set with tournament balls in use.

3. Irrigation

No general irrigation has been necessary. The spraying due on August 1st was split in two with the liquid fertiliser being applied on July 31st (quick drying conditions) and Revolution applied in the rain of August 1st (ideal). The North boundary has been locally flooded twice with a hosepipe as the tree roots tend to suck out moisture locally. The same is true on the West boundary near the conifers where even the bank has gone brown

4. Lawn Maintenance costs

During his visit Duncan Hector demonstrated the type of spreader he now employs at Letchworth. The design provides an even distribution of granular fertiliser at a rate that can be precisely controlled. He will be sending us a new one at a cost of £152. We also discussed the chemicals order for next year. I explained that for 2017 only, I want to reduce the cost by eliminating the use of Aqueduct, Primo Maxx Growth Regulator and Autumn Granular Fertiliser. This will save us about £890 which helps to pay for the levelling. Revolution, Fertilisers and Iron application will continue as usual. The eliminated items will be re-introduced in 2018.

5. Lawn levelling

Having selected the preferred contractor the LAG met with Talbot Farm to finalise some of the details of the contract. A draft schedule of specific agreements was subsequently sent to them. Talbot Farm have agreed the schedule without change and we are now in a position to make a formal offer to them. There is some urgency to this in order to ensure that we achieve the 4/9/17 start date. (see below). The contract documentation will consist of :

- a. A formal offer letter from NDCC referencing items b,c and d below.*
- b. The tender specification*
- c. The Talbot farm price schedule and method statement*
- d. The schedule of specific agreements*

I had a phone call from Diana Wright at Kington Langley on Friday (19/8/16) asking me about our contractors. They are planning a levelling/construction project next year and she wanted to compare notes after they had come to their own conclusions. They invited tenders from Talbot Farm, Fineturf, Avonmoor, Ecosolve and Greensward. They came to the same conclusion as us and are now recommending Talbot Farm to their committee!

GRAPHS ON NEXT PAGE

John Wallace 20/8/16

The Committee unanimously agreed that we should proceed with placing the contract. Kathy to inform John who would deal with the paperwork as described above and get the contract signed by both parties

In view of the disparity in size between old balls and new, it was suggested that players of Advanced Rules should use the older secondary colours as these would correspond to a narrower setting (due to reduced use compared with primaries). This would be a better solution than using the new tournament balls – that would inevitably lead to more people knowing where the key was kept and eventually to the balls getting mixed up

Figure 1 Cumulative rainfall since 1st May

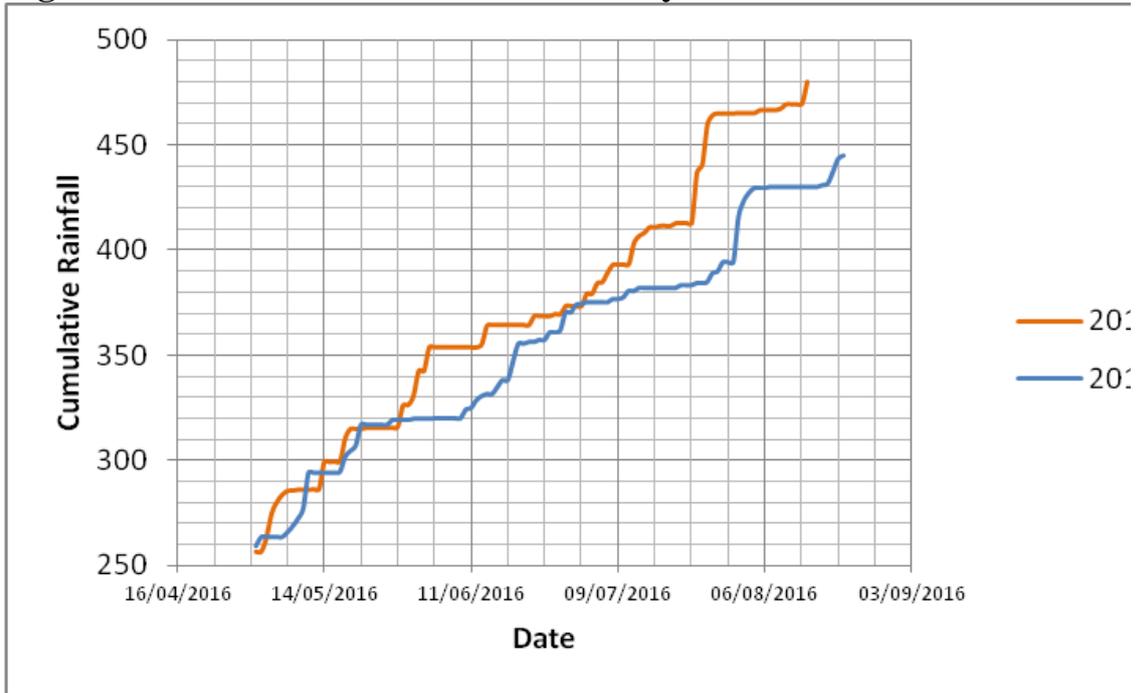
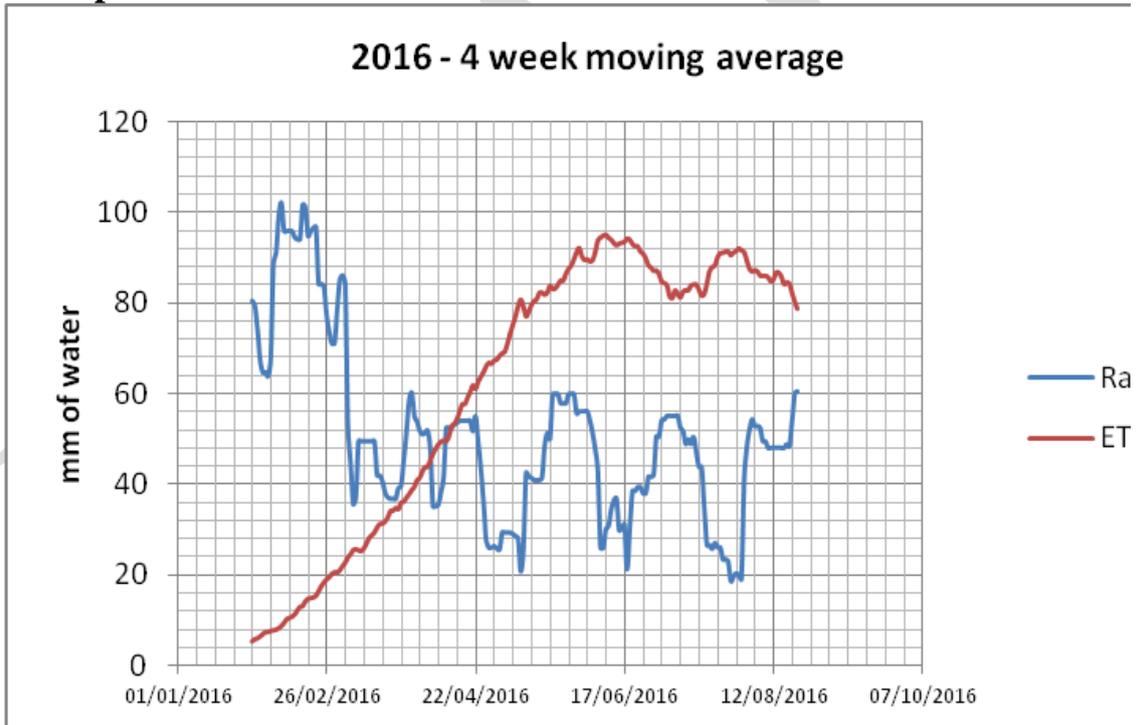


Figure 2 Rainfall and Evapo-transpiration (ET) over a rolling 4 week period



8. CA Grant Application (draft attached, hard copy only)

The form was discussed and some changes in details of wording agreed. Mike will create a second draft and also include the invitation to tender as well as the response from Talbot Farm MT

Brigit observed that some waste disposal companies who take material to landfill choose to use an option to make a contribution to a fund to give grants to community projects instead of paying the landfill tax.

It was suggested that we seek sponsorship as some companies had Community Funding available. Andrew to contact Hargreaves Lansdown. AW

9. WI Croquet Day arrangements

There had been a splendid response from members to fill slots on the rota but we needed a Committee member to be responsible at both ends of the day. Coral agreed to take the lead in the morning and Mike agreed to take the lead at the end of the day. CH MT

Post meeting minute – Mike remembered a previous commitment and Linda took his place.

10. Mad Monday

Robin had agreed to take over the management of Mad Mondays, following the sad and sudden death of Chris Jackson. There were various problems with the Regulations for Mad Monday, mainly caused by conflicts between the stated objectives of the competition. In particular, the recording of results on CA handicap cards was inconsistent with opponents helping and advising each other during games. Robin had tried to address some of these issues at the August Mad Monday but some players were not happy with the outcome. Robin had subsequently decided to stand down. The Committee were acutely aware of the conflicts between objectives and hope to create a new set of Regulations for 2017.

In the meantime, the Committee feels that no changes should be made to Regulations for competitions that are already in progress. Peter offered to manage the September Mad Monday if no-one else came forward. He would do this using the original Regulations agreed for 2016. Andrew would also attend. Linda would send out an e-mail two weeks before the Mad Monday, inviting people to register to play. PD AW LS

The Committee was grateful to Robin for stepping in to manage the July (when Chris was gravely ill) and August sessions and disappointed that that the problems with Mad Monday were continuing.

11. Complaints about opposing league teams

There was a real concern about the GC handicaps of another Club that had teams playing in the SWF. In spite of repeated success, the handicaps of the team members did not seem to improve and they appeared to have no knowledge of any assessment process. There were also concerns about the behaviour and etiquette of members of that Club during league matches. Peter to talk to John Grimshaw as SWF League Secretary and to Ros Key-Pugh as SWF GC Adviser.

12. GC B Level Tournament feedback

The tournament had been a great success with positive feedback in e-mails from at least two participants. One was a visitor who was hugely impressed by the Club facilities and atmosphere. From a Club point of view, the fact that it had been held on a single week day had created a lot of extra work without the financial rewards of a weekend tournament. Because of the Tuesday date, the hoop setting had been more complicated to organise and required duplication.

13. AOB

Brian reported that the handicap system used for the one-ball competition had been unfair on GC- only players. Peter said that it was also inappropriate for very low GC handicap holders. As manager, Kathy agreed with both these comments and will report back to Linda with suggestions for improvements.

KW

It was noted again that jump shots could easily damage the lawn and that players should use the repair tools. It was suggested that GC Improver sessions might be held to educate new players. This could be a feature next year, possibly as part of Mad Mondays

An incident of a player arguing and being unpleasant with a referee had been reported. Andrew to have a word with the player concerned.

AW

Kathy had given a taster session to two people. Linda to invite them for further time on the lawn this season and then lessons next season.

LS

Kathy would like to start the process of deciding dates for tournaments next year and will talk to all the likely managers and to Linda before presenting a suggested programme for approval.

KW

14. Date of next meeting

This was arranged for Wednesday 27 September at 10am

The meeting closed at 12 45pm although Coral had left at 12.30

Signed as a true and accurate record

Name.....

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