

Nailsea & District Croquet Club
Minutes of Committee Meeting held on 16 January 2017

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

1. **Apologies** None

2. **Minutes of Committee Meeting held on 5 December 2016**

The minutes were signed as a true and accurate record of the meeting held on 5 December 2016

3. **Matters arising from Minutes of Committee Meeting held on 2 November 2016**

Andrew thanked Linda for her notes on the Marketing Meeting that had been held on 11 January. The notes follow:

“ NDCC Marketing Discussion

Notes of meeting held on 11th January 2017

Present

Andrew Wimshurst, Kathy Wallace, Mike Tracy, Coral Harrison, Brigit Clayton, Linda Shaw, Mark Suter, Erica Malaiperuman.

Purpose

To discuss framework for marketing Nailsea CC to achieve sustainable level of playing members

Discussion

We considered:

- *Who are our potential membership*
 - *Working adults / part time workers*
 - *‘professionals’ - teachers, lawyers, ICT, maths, artistic/visual, creative/engineering, problem solvers, architects, police, financial, walkers*
 - *Students (11 - 25) - a long term investment*
 - *Retired / pre-retired*
 - *Players of other sports*
 - *Those with specific needs e.g. mental health, communication*

- *Their attributes - potentially very useful way of identifying potential members*
 - *Geography - 10 mile radius of Nailsea*
 - *Age range: 40 - 55*
 - *Male / female*
 - *Intelligent*
 - *Club people*
 - *Enjoy learning*
 - *Want to grow / compete*
 - *Agile*
 - *Aptitude*

- *Ways of reaching them*

- *What activities would attract and identify potential players*
- *What are we offering*
 - *Make learning more fun / engaging / nurturing*
 - *Support to coaches to achieve this*
- *The 'image' of croquet*
 - *Use videos on our website of current players etc*
- *Membership capacity*
- *Currently have around 74 active playing members*
 - *64 entered club competitions 2016*
 - *Target: 100 playing members in 4 years' time*
 - *Then review to ascertain sustainable membership level*

Having defined target group, a process of 'backward engineering' would be employed to recruit them

- *Programme of marketing to direct people to the website*
- *This should focus on an event: Open Day 8.4.17*
- *Need to tie in with CA initiatives and knowledge - not reinvent the wheel*

Implications

- *Improve format of beginners coaching*
- *Develop strong coaching / support team*
- *Improve accessibility of website*
 - *Ensure a team approach to this*
 - *Ensure mobile optimised*
- *Supplementary communication process to maintain contact with anyone expressing an interest - newsletter etc*
- *Social events*
- *Possible short term initiatives*
 - *Summer schools*
 - *Short intro series for specific groups*

Decisions

- *Aim to have 100 playing members by 2021*
- *To run pilot marketing project with Open Day 8.4.17 as target event*
- *To implement marketing plan*
 - *Initial focus on Facebook*
 - *Supported by poster campaign, streetlife, meet-up etc etc*
 - *Use of QR codes on written material*
- *To form marketing group: Mark, Erica, Kathy, Mike, Andrew*
- *Next meeting of this group: 1st February 10.00am at Erica's*

Summary of action points

- *Create library of videos of range of players including Nailsea members for website: Mark / Alison*
- *Source CA report on membership profile: Linda*
- *Identify budget available for marketing: Mike*
- *Identify costings: Mark*
- *Develop mock-up website: Mark*

□ *Provide statistics on previous marketing activities and their impact: Erica “*

Minor changes had been agreed for the commemorative plaque for John Jeffrey. Geoff Hughes was progressing the commission of it.

Linda would pursue the Safeguarding policy review – it was thought that pre-season was the best time for annual review

LS

Peter will provide the Committee with Handicap Committee Report/s

PD

Mike had queried the Christmas Lunch invoice and had established that we had been overcharged by £1 per head. The mistake had been rectified but the Lunch was still close to making a loss and it was agreed to increase the charge next year.

Andrew thanked Linda for writing the obituaries for SWAN

The Allocation Dates for tournaments had been amended as discussed

Andrew had spoken to Doreen and she was happy to continue to co-ordinate match reports provided by team captains and to send them to the local newspaper.

KW

Andrew had established that the Club that was known to make trading profits was registered as a CASC (Community Amateur Sports Club). Kathy would send Mike the links to the HMR website that had all the relevant information about the tax position for CASCs and charities.

4. Treasurer's Report (Mike Tracy)

Treasurer's report for NDCC committee meeting 16th January 2017

Current balance at the bank is £16119.98 (no un-presented cheques)

The deficit for the year is £2,091.09

The Christmas lunch produced a surplus of £189.62 (after taking into account the cost of hiring the venue, which was paid for last year). Part of this results from £125 made by the quiz and the raffle and a further £44.00 from two members who paid but could not come. Their places were fortunately filled by two other members who also paid, the first couple not being refunded. Without these elements our margin was £20.62. This event is not intended as a profit maker, but in my view this margin is too tight, so I suggest that next year we increase the price a little.

John Wallace has suggested that because of the increasing incidence of worm casts, which is making lawn maintenance more difficult and time consuming, we use a product called Ringer to suppress the worm activity. As this product has to be applied by someone with a spraying licence, we will have to get Green Thumb in to supervise the spraying operation. The cost of Ringer and the supervision will be £150 including VAT. This is sufficient Ringer for 3 treatments. This cost was not in the budget.

We are committed to spending £760 on repairs to the pavilion roof. This cost was not in the budget.

Geoff Hughes has advised us that he and Eileen are intending to downsize this year and so his land will not be available for the disposal of the turf stripped off at the start of the levelling project. As a consequence we will have to go with the quote from Talbot Farm to do this which will add £474 + VAT to the cost of the project.

*My feelings on avoiding optional expenditure have strengthened.
The levelling project itself is not currently in the budget because at the time of drawing it up I did not know how the payments would be staged and on what dates. I am inclined to continue this way so that it remains clear how we are performing relative to our normal baseline. I will however make a record of the anticipated size and date of each tranche of payment.*

Following the report, it was decided that the charge for the Christmas Lunch next year would increase by £1 per head in addition to any increase made by the caterers. CH

The CA Major Grants Committee had approved the recommendation by the Development Committee for our grant of £5000. In addition, they had suggested that we apply direct to the CA Treasurer if we needed a loan to help with cash flow problems. We were appreciative of this offer and would take it up if necessary. Mike had not been told when, precisely, the levelling contractors, Talbot Farm, would require payment. Kathy to ask John to clarify this. MT
KW

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

“Pavilion

The Roof

*I have had the quotation from Steve Mansfield following his inspection. He found 12 ridge tiles loose, 2 broken tiles and pointing required around the other ridge tiles. The quote for this work was £760 for the work and materials.
I have, with the agreement of the committee, instructed him to proceed.
He will contact me when his current job is completed and the weather is favourable.*

Hoops

David Hunt has taken the primary hoops and is going to paint them.

It was thought that the telephone number on the board should be changed to that of Erica. Brian would ask for her permission for this BR

7. **Lawn Maintenance Report (John Wallace)**

1. Lawns (Worms!)

The lawns are generally in a reasonable state but the frequency/density of worm casts has been causing problems. As in the Autumn, lawns 2 and 3 have a significantly higher frequency for reasons that are not obvious. Corner 1 on lawn 2 and corner 2 on lawn 3 are particularly badly affected. The worm casts in the reseeded corners make the ground very uneven (and muddy) to the point where it is impossible to cut the newly germinated grass.

In an attempt to overcome the problems in early January the lawns were brushed and rolled with the tractor and light roller. Most of the casts stick to the roller and could thus be scraped off at the side of the lawns. The roller also smoothed the ground but did squash some casts into the grass, potentially creating local dead spots. Having removed most casts, it was possible to cut the grass at 8mm but with repeated stops to clean the rollers with the power washer. The lawns were then Sarel spiked and rolled again. The new method cleaning the Toro reels was used in anger and proved effective.

Overall, the above process improved the lawn surface appearance. However, a week later, the worm casts had begun to reappear and I came to the conclusion that an

application of Ringer (cost about £102) was required – probably in late February. This is a licensed product so we will need to pay for supervision by Greensleeves (£48). LAG members were consulted and agreed to this unplanned expenditure. Greensleeves have recommended that the Ringer is applied with a PH buffer to prevent the active chemical breaking down rapidly. They also recommended that Sarel spiking plus lawn irrigation or rain are required to ensure the chemical penetrates into the soil. The PH buffer that Greensleeves use is Headland Glow (cost £35 inc VAT). A second application in August prior to the commencement of levelling in September may be required/desirable as worm casts would cause considerable problems in mowing newly re-seeded lawns. This will be discussed with the LAG.

Ringer is banned from use after August 31st so I have been searching around for an alternative. Duncan Hector is busy moving house at present so cannot be consulted. However, I did ask John Quinn, an expert bowls greenkeeper what he suggested. Normally he recommends an application of Sulphur to lower PH and discourage worms. However, our lawns are already quite acidic and I doubt that Sulphur would be effective – anecdotal reports are very mixed. John Quinn has since suggested a mixture of Iron. Copper and Salicylic Acid has been found to help. However, caution was advised re the addition of Copper to the lawns. I will discuss this idea with Duncan Hector when he becomes available.

Animal damage was again evident in the hoop 3 area of lawn 1 (much scraping of the ground with claw marks). The affected areas have been repaired with new grass seed and soil and covered with pegged down netting.

2. 2017 Rotas

The new 2017 summer rotas are nearly complete in draft form and they will be circulated for comment at the end of January. Four members are not available or not rejoining the club and hence will not be included in the schedule. To date, two new volunteers have been identified to fill gaps in the mowing and Sarel spiking rotas. The post levelling work will be covered by separate rotas as the work content is markedly different to normal. Irrigation, leaf blowing and frequent mowing will be required.

The report had flagged up a shortage of manpower as various members had indicated that they would not be members next season. Mike and Andrew both wondered if they could help with spraying. Mike would contact John to ask what it entailed.

MT

7. Membership

The application form would be amended to reflect the new CA membership category of Premium Member.

KW CH

Country membership was clearly available for someone who lived more than 25 miles away. Special arrangements for payment of subscriptions would always be considered with caution

AW

8. Skittles evening

Due to the popularity of the Skittles Evening this year, the 3rd alley and another sticker-up should be booked. The extra cost would be £25

KW

9. Masonic Hall Nailsea Community Day

We had been invited to have a stand at the Masonic Hall on Saturday 24 June to promote the Croquet Club. Many local organisations were taking part to show their part in the Nailsea community and it was felt that the Croquet Club should be there. We might be able to show videos on a laptop and generally give information about croquet and the club. The details could be discussed at the marketing meeting on 1 February. There was concern about what action we might be able to take at the end of June but prospective players could be invited to the Club and further plans formulated then. KW

10. Sponsorship Offer

We had been offered £60 sponsorship in exchange for displaying a link on our website. As the company concerned sold equipment suitable for Garden Croquet, it was not considered appropriate to advertise it as our inexperienced members might be misled into buying unsuitable mallets. Kathy to inform the company KW

11. SWF Short Croquet Teams 2018

As a result of the levelling work on our lawns, our season will not start until May in 2018. This means that we are unable to host the SWF Short Croquet teams event in April. Following a late start, our schedule will be too busy until the autumn. Kathy to inform the SWF Committee and John Grimshaw. KW

12. CA Tournament bids

The CA had invited bids to host some of its tournaments in 2019. It was felt that this would involve a huge amount of work by Club members with catering and lawn preparation but some events would carry prestige and provide a show case for our new lawns. It was decided to make a bid to host the Treasurer's Tankard, 5-9 Sept 2019 KW

13. Club Competitions

Linda is in the process of compiling the Competitions Handbook and had circulated it as it stood. The sub-committee to discuss Mad Mondays had met and Peter reported back. The decision had been made to limit entry to those with a handicap of 4 or above so that high handicap players were not put off. Players whose handicaps rose to 4 during the season would be able to take part from then onwards. The number of games per day would be reduced to 5. There would be an additional prize for the player with the best results who had an initial handicap of 8 or above.

The Committee voted (unanimously apart from one abstention) that the results of these matches should be recorded on AHS cards. This was with the proviso that the games were regarded as competitive matches and no help/advice were given during them.

Peter and Linda were both prepared to manage some Mad Mondays. To avoid confusion, Linda volunteered to be the contact every month for booking places and she would pass on the information to the appropriate manager. Brian would keep Robin up to date on the decisions made

BR
LS KW

The Competitions handbook would become part of the main Club Handbook

14. Coaching

Linda had collated ideas and requests from members for coaching. She was planning to deliver a beginners’ refresher course for the beginning of the 2017 season and hoped that coaching would be available for all handicap levels.

It was felt that those coaching beginners should be prepared to use initiative, depending on their class and not to stick rigidly to the CA manual. It might sometimes be the case that beginners should be advised to convert to GC if they were not making progress with AC. GC coaching would then be provided for them

Andrew thanked Linda for her hard work.

15. Safeguarding

This had been dealt with under agenda item 3

16. AOB

A member had suggested that we keep a record of emergency contact numbers in case members were taken ill whilst at the Club. This seemed a good idea. The information will be recorded on the membership list as a copy is always available on the notice board CH

Peter had discovered some transcription errors on the Fixtures List and would correct them and send the List out again when he had made the few remaining Fixtures. PD

17. Date of next meeting

This will take place on Monday 20 February at 10am

The meeting closed at 12.30pm

Signed as a true and accurate record

Name.....

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