

Nailsea & District Croquet Club
Minutes of Committee Meeting held on 25 April 2017

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

1. **Apologies** Brigit Clayton

2. **Minutes of Committee Meeting held on 20 March 2017**

These were signed as a true and accurate record of the meeting held on
20 March 2017

3. **Matters arising from Minutes of Committee Meeting held on 20 March 2017**

The Club Handbook had been printed with the Competitions Handbook attached. The Safeguarding section had been updated and printed but the Safeguarding Officer had removed it for checking.

Peter reported an acute shortage of players prepared to play in the B league team. There was a discussion as to whether the team should be withdrawn now when it would cause less inconvenience to others than if we withdrew it at a later time. Andrew wanted the membership to be aware of the situation and asked Kathy to put out an e-mail to everyone explaining the problem and appealing for players.

KW

It was reported that Christine Haley is doing a superb job with the cleaning rota but there was concern that she might do too much herself if support was not forthcoming. This would be kept an eye on.

Mike and Andrew had held a meeting with Mark and Mike had circulated an explanation of Mark's ideas and the finances involved:

"The starting point is Facebook. Any FB user can launch an advertising campaign. The natural launch pad is the club's FB page. You define your target audience and input your card details, also your expenditure cap and the start and end dates of the campaign. This causes your advert to appear in the targeted FB users' news feeds. If anyone clicks on the link in that news feed a cost is incurred, the cost per click depending on some complicated FB algorithm. The click sends them to the club's 'landing page' which is typically not accessible from the website menu. This page gives a little information, typically about the event to which you wish to attract visitors, such as our Open Day, and invites them to register for a free visit. The registration process captures contact details (email address, phone number etc.). The design can now go two ways. The simplest way is to send an email to a designated contact address, e.g. yours or mine. It would then be down to that individual to make further contact with the person who has registered. The other way is to install and use an 'Automated Responder' which would store the contact details in a file and send an immediate response. This would be of the form 'Thank you registering with us. We look forward to seeing you on Open Day, 8th April.' Having captured this contact information, further emails can be sent offering more information

or reminding of the upcoming event. There is a freeware Automated Responder called DRIP which is limited to storing 100 sets of contact details. This might be adequate for us to trial the idea but not sufficient for full scale use. Other Automated Responders with a much bigger capacity are available with licence fees of £10 per month and upwards. We could also upload our members' email addresses to the Automated Responder and use it to disseminate information to the membership.

We now come to OptimizePress, the plugin to our website for which we were asked to pay £100. None of the above has any connection with OP. Mark observed when he first saw our website that it was not sensibly usable on mobile devices such as tablets or more particularly smart phones. If you are able to look at our website via one of these devices you will now see that the situation has been greatly improved. This is also nothing to do with OP. It would appear that the problem lay with with the corrupted php file that Alison has fixed. OP is a page building tool which Mark tells us enables users to create much more attractive web pages very easily. Kathy and I have found that as things stand it is not possible to arrange pictures on a web page or to combine pictures and text in a professional way. OP is easy to use and powerful in this regard.

It was originally the intention to use the strategy described above to boost the numbers and quality of the visitors to Open Day, and that has passed. Our discussion went on to see if we could create another opportunity to trial this system this year. We all understand the practical difficulties involved in accommodating recruits that are picked up as the year goes on. Andrew and I agreed that the committee would need to consider the desirability and practicability of attempting to recruit throughout the season. We could consider running another recruitment drive based on another open day sort of arrangement, and we both understand the practicalities of getting the support of our members once again and of arranging effective coaching. There seems little point in putting these arrangements in place for a trial unless there is some recruitment opportunity to aim at which can give us a guide as to the effectiveness of this method.

We advised Mark that the committee would have to consider all these issues before any decision could be made and that we may not be able to go ahead (if at all) until next year's recruiting campaign. In the meantime Mark offered to use OP to develop more attractive versions of our web pages and we agreed that he should go ahead. These versions would not replace the existing pages and would only be visible from the dashboard until we give our approval for them to be plugged into the menu structure."

Marketing to be discussed in item 9

It was observed at this point that the Committee did not always have finalised versions of the minutes. Kathy undertook to circulate the updated version when she was placing it on the website

KW

The new white lining system and new recruits were experiencing teething problems – it was hoped these would be resolved.

Peter had been given the go ahead by the CA to undertake a DBS check and the same would apply to Erica. Peter would arrange these checks.

PD

The NS Times had published the article written by Mike but had told us when it was too late that the photograph was not sufficiently high resolution. This was frustrating.

There were many problems with the Committee work of the SWF. There was optimism that the situation would improve with the appointment of Linda Shaw as secretary.

4. Treasurer's Report (Mike Tracy)

“Treasurer's report for NDCC committee meeting 25th April 2017

Current balance at the bank less un-presented cheques is £24,163.57

The surplus for the year is £5,752.50

These figures were recorded on 20th April.

Membership subscriptions have reached £8,882.00 (including £50 for 'winter' membership late last year. We can hope for some more part year memberships later in the year after the beginners' lessons, but currently we are £1,397 down on last year which is very disappointing. There are still subscriptions due from people who have entered club competitions.

100 club subscriptions reached £600, which is for 50 units, a new high.

Hedge trimming is a significant expense later in the year and I have suggested to Brian that we do this in-house this year. My petrol trimmer is up to the job, but we would need support from a number of members to help with collecting and disposing of the trimmings. It is a tedious job, but we could save about £400 and with plenty of help it would not be too onerous.

Insurance is likely to cost us about £1,000 later in the year, and of course there is the ongoing cost of water, electricity and fuel for the machinery, which will total about £500. It is impossible to be precise, but I cannot see how we can achieve our budgeted surplus of £6,500. I am still hopeful that we will be able to pay for the levelling without going to the CA or our members for a bridging loan, but the CA's offer gives us certainty that the project can go ahead.”

There was now only one outstanding membership payment and it was fully expected that this would be paid.

It was hoped that some money could be saved by organising the members to carry out hedge trimming this year. A date of 13 June was fixed, starting at 9am. It might be possible to use equipment belonging to members, Kathy observed that machinery had a habit of breaking when used by people other than its owners. A big part of the task would be removing the cuttings.

Kathy to send e-mail inviting members to help with the process.

KW

Mike expected that the SWF teams weekend would have brought in approx £200 in tea/coffee money.. The lawn hire fee was now £32/lawn/day so that would be another £256.

5. Membership Report (Coral Harrison)

Attached is my usual Technicolor Membership List showing the state on the membership as of today. There is still one payment outstanding. Also attached is the current Membership List which I will send to all members after the meeting, along with the list giving Emergency Contacts.

*The good news is that we have gained 1 new member with the return of Kris but have lost 16 Full playing members (3 have changed to Social), 2 Social and 1 Junior. There has also been a financial loss of £70 with the member who transferred from Full to Country and another loss of £42 with the member who has transferred from Full to Associate membership
The current totals are;-*

*Full 62
Social 10
Country 3
Associate 1
Student 2
Life 5*

It was decided that the emergency contact numbers only needed to be on the copy of the Membership List that appeared in the Clubhouse but team captains would also have access to the numbers for use at Away matches.

6. Property Report (Brian Roynon)

Brian reported that the shutter on the main door was difficult for some members to operate. However, any service or modification would be very expensive – Geoff had been in contact HAG about it.

Peter said we needed more bisques, particularly when hosting the SWF Short Croquet. Tony Willoughby had made some and Brian would ask him to make some more. BR

Some of the pink clips were very pale and easily mistaken for white from a distance. Brian said there were newly painted pink clips in the end locker.

At this point there was a discussion on altering the due date for membership subs. This would be so that subs would be paid before competition entries were made. There was also a suggestion that fees might be reduced for the shorter season in 2018. This would have to be discussed at an AGM

7. Lawn Maintenance Report (John Wallace)

“1.Lawns

In order to prevent dry patch occurring, the lawns were sprayed with the Aqueduct left over from two years ago and then with Revolution 10 days later. Moisture measurements showed that all the lawns were drier than normal with lawns 1 & 4 being particularly dry. The lawns were thus irrigated for a total of about 10.5 hours to water in the Revolution. This was equivalent to rainfall of about 4mm on lawns 2 and 3 and 6mm on lawns 1 and 4. The North boundary was also flooded.

The spraying/irrigation took the whole of a late afternoon/evening and whole of the next day/evening. This was tedious (!) and if it were to be repeated I think some volunteer effort to assist would be required.

The grass cut height is still at 6mm but because of the dry weather the lawn speed of around 11 plummers is quite acceptable. Grass growth is also low because of the colder weather. As a result, the North boundary is not recovering as quickly as hoped. Repeated testing and sampling of the soil in the North boundary suggests that the very high localised sand area does not retain moisture and thus retards grass development. When the levelling takes place in the Autumn, the intention is that the sandy soil is redistributed across the lawns and replaced by more typical soil.

The cold weather in April 2016 meant that there was relatively little benefit derived from the granular fertiliser applied on March 31st. Thus in this year's programme the granular fertiliser application has been delayed until April 24th (today!). The ongoing dry weather means that irrigation will be needed this evening/tomorrow to water in the granules. There may be some rain next weekend, but with league matches and short croquet competitions taking place it is desirable that the granules are well dispersed by then.

2. Rainfall

The Met Office has recently announced the driest winter for twenty years. This is reflected in the rainfall and evapotranspiration data in figures 1 and 2. Note the drop off in rainfall during April means that the rainfall is currently half what it was during any time last summer.

If the drought like conditions continue it is possible that the Revolution will not be able to prevent dry patch occurring. The next Revolution spray is due on May 8th and heavy irrigation will be applied if there is no rain. However irrigation cannot replace normal rainfall.”

The irrigation was proving very tedious and time consuming for John. The acutely dry weather was making this necessary. Andrew agreed to assemble a team of people who would be available to help, probably on Monday 8 May. (weather dependent)

AW

8. Open Day

There had been various problems with the run-up and delivery of Open Day this year. There were a lot of good ideas for the future and Kathy outlined the ideas of Dave Gunn, the new CA Development Officer. These included different uses of social media for recruitment purposes. Dave would soon be sending information to all Clubs to help them with recruitment. Mike observed that Garden Croquet could be played on Lawn 5 as it worked best for beginners when the hoops were very close together. There would be enough space for two sets of hoops. Wire hoops could be used as they are easy to insert and easier to run than our usual hoops. We may hold an Open Evening after we have received the advice.

9. Marketing /Recruitment

This had been dealt with under the previous item.

10. Ideas for September – May

As the lawns will be closed for longer than usual over the winter of 2017/8, some diversions would be useful

Kathy suggested a second Skittles Evening – so one in October as well as the usual one

Mike suggested a quiz and would be happy to be Quiz Master

Linda suggested indoor coaching on AC tactics. GC tactics could also be covered

Kathy would approach Bath Croquet Club to see if our members could apply for winter membership there

Linda suggested walks – as in the past

The Christmas Lunch, bridge and table tennis would all take place as normal.

11. AOB

Peter raised the suggestion made by Brian McCausland that we host GC C Class tournament in 2018. It was felt that, due to the shortened season in 2018, this would not be possible. Kathy to inform Chris Roberts and to indicate that we would review the situation for 2019

KW

Linda reported that lessons for beginners had commenced with 3 on Monday and 1 expected on Wednesday. 4 members had registered for Refresher sessions

Various coaches had indicated their willingness to do some coaching and Linda also hoped that some Nailsea members would become new Club coaches or upgrade their status.

Violet had approached the Committee to report that at least 9 members were celebrating their 70th birthday in 2017. They were wondering if they could organise a social event. The Committee were very happy to say yes to this.

Brian reported one firm social booking and one enquiry

13. Date of next meeting

This will take place on Monday 22 May at 10am

The meeting closed at 12.30pm

Signed as a true and accurate record

Name.....

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