

Nailsea & District Croquet Club
Draft Minutes of Annual General Meeting held on
11 November 2017 at 2pm in the Clubhouse

Chair: Andrew Wimshurst

Present: 29 people present- list of names attached (hard copy only)

The meeting opened at 2.10 pm

1. As President, Pat Long welcomed everyone to the AGM and thanked them for coming. She remarked that the lawns weren't as green as we had been hoping but that we would hear about that later in the meeting. She hoped that members would be tolerant in 2018 if it turned out to be a short season. Pat encouraged members to help to recruit new members and to retain current members. It was important to help and support higher handicap players – both AC and GC.

Pat observed that apart from a few joint replacements, the members had stayed healthy. She then gave best wishes and congratulations to Linda and Dave on the occasion of their wedding.

Pat then handed over to the Committee.

2. **Apologies:** 19 apologies – list of names attached (hard copy only)
The reasons for absence included olive picking in Catalonia

3. **Minutes of last AGM held on 12 November 2016**
The Minutes were signed as a true and accurate record of the meeting held on 7 November 2015
Proposed: Mike Tracy Seconded: Pat Long

4. **Matters arising from the minutes of AGM held on 12 November 2016**

Mike Tracy commented that the SWF did not appear to have made much progress on the handicap situation. The plan had been to appoint Federation handicappers but this had not happened.

5. **Chair's report** – (Andrew Wimshurst)

“ In my previous two reports I have commented on how lucky we are at Nailsea to have so many willing hands to help run the club. That is still the case so once again I have to thank you all once again have kept the clubs running so well for the many occasions when you have stepped in to provide the welcome and hospitality for which the club is renowned. However there are a few areas about which cause me concern. Two involve succession planning and the third, in its way is also about succession, as it involves recruiting new and hopefully younger talent as members.

My first concern is who will be able to take the places of those who currently do in house all the vital jobs needed to run the club. We have to face the very real prospect that in the future there may not be a Geoff or a Terry or a John to keep our machinery alive and our lawns so green.

I think you will all agree that pre levelling, John did a wonderful job on the lawns this year and the condition of the grass was great throughout the season. The application of Revolution did indeed revolutionise the need to irrigate and while other clubs were all experiencing Dry Patch, our lawns were wonderfully green with minimal watering. We all appreciate that this did not happen by itself, but was brought about by the John's dedication to all aspects of the job. Once again the detail and lengths that John went to, were remarkable.

Once the new lawns are up and running we are going to have to look for someone else to take over from John, who can't be expected to go on devoting so much of his time and energy on our behalf.

We now have to face the real prospect that if there are no members with the time or energy to take on these jobs, we will have to resort to buying in services needed. Outsourcing many of the jobs currently performed in house is perfectly possible but comes at a price. Let us consider just one 'job' - the lawns. Budleigh spend £5000 per annum per lawn, and there they have economies of scale. Nailsea with 4 lawns would thus face a bill of £20,000. With a membership of 100, we would end up paying £200 just maintaining our lawns. A lower membership of 75 would increase that to £266. This prospect is rather daunting and while it still is great value for money, is a step change from what we are accustomed.

Second - is my concern about finding people to take on positions on the committee. Part of the problem is that those key roles - secretary, fixture organiser, tournament secretary and treasurer are filled by very able people who carry out the work with no fuss and it all appears to happen as if by magic.

No one has offered to take on the role of Secretary - which Kathy has carried out so efficiently for the past 6 years and no one as yet has come forward to take on my role as Chair.

There does seem to be a reluctance to take on maintenance and management jobs, something the committee will need to address in 2018. We are rightly proud of our club and the great image that outsiders get of the club. This is down to the great work that is done at all levels, but succession has become a priority to consider if we are still to provide this service and image to our members and visitors.

Third - this is a different sort of succession. I am struck by the fact that when I read the Croquet magazine it might well be the sister magazine to 'Saga' I am saddened by the realisation I too am one of those white haired senior citizens who feature in the magazine, and am only too relieved when I see the likes of James Galpin and others at the other end of the age spectrum, featured. At least there is some hope that this once most popular game is not just the preserve of the over 60's.

When compared to other clubs Nailsea, courtesy of Peter Dyke, has done extremely well in bringing on youngsters, but I would like to think we could do more. My experience with croquet at home and at Clifton, shows me that all ages enjoy croquet. My question of Nailsea, is whether we provide the opportunity? Most young have little time during the week, but some at weekends. However weekends are when we, who have the time during the week, play our matches and so the young have no access to our lawns, just when they have the time. The challenge for us all is to find ways to encourage the young to become members otherwise the club will wither.

So we have some challenges ahead and I am sure the committee will be trying to find workable solution.

Thank you all for attending this AGM and also for your invaluable help in running the club this year and I wish you all the best for the 2018 season."

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6(a) Treasurer's Report (Mike Tracy)

"Income and expenditure accounts have been published for the financial year ending 30th September 2017 with the previous year's figures shown for comparison.

The headline figures are a net surplus for the year of £1130.57 and a closing bank balance of £19,553.64 I have issued cheques to the value of £12.00 which had not been presented by 30th September, so our assets to carry forward to the next financial year are £19,541.64. My forecast for this year was a surplus of £6,500. This deliberately took no account of expenditure on the lawn levelling project as the timing of the payments was uncertain at that time. I paid an invoice for 25% of the total cost, £5,712.58, the first phase payment for lawn levelling, towards the end of September. Excluding this, our surplus for the year was £6,843.15.

This surplus is satisfactory, especially as our membership income dropped by some £700 and we had to have repairs to the pavilion roof at a cost of £775. Tournament entries were up, bringing with them an improved profit from tournament catering. Machinery maintenance costs were significantly lower, but the Toro, bought 13 years ago second hand, is showing signs of its age and we have spent £485.24 in October on having the cutting heads serviced.

Any questions on the current year?

Looking forward to next year, I am unable to forecast with accuracy because of the many uncertainties, many associated with the state of the lawns. The best situation would have the lawns ready to use at the start of May, having had a little overseeding in early spring as provided for in the contract. The bleakest outlook is that the germination of the grass seed fails or is so poor that we will have to reseed as early as possible in the spring. The contract includes some overseeding in the spring, but not on this scale, so there would be cost involved for this.

Anything between these extremes is possible. If the worst does not come to the worst, it is believed that some remedial work will be needed (e.g. additional rolling, seeding and top dressing) in either spring or autumn or both. We just cannot be certain at this stage. It has also become apparent that our main mower, the Toro, does not have many years of life left in it, perhaps two more. The main problem is that the reels on the cutting heads have been re-sharpened so many times that we are approaching the point when the cut cannot be set low enough for our purposes. The Toro was bought second hand 13 years ago, and the cost of replacing big ticket worn parts has to be weighed against the cost of replacing the mower with a much younger one. The cost of doing this is estimated at about £5,000.

It is usual to propose a small increase in the membership subscriptions every year to keep pace with inflation. In view of the loss of lawn time this autumn and the late start next year the committee has agreed that we should propose that membership rates should be held at their current levels. We cannot be more generous than that in view of the uncertainty of the cost of redeveloping the lawns and the need to have enough funds available to replace the Toro when that becomes necessary. We would like to make improvements to the parking area when funds permit, and the sooner the better.

I have prepared a budget that assumes that income from membership is maintained, that our tournaments run as planned and attract full entries as they have this year and that our usual outgoings are in line with this year's. I have also allowed for the purchase of four new sets of primary coloured balls at a cost of £105 per ball (£1,680). We will receive a grant of £5,000 from the CA towards the lawn work. This would lead to a net deficit of £7,220, bringing our funds to £12,320. If this forecast is anywhere near reality, we will be able to replace the Toro in time for the 2019 season and possibly ready to consider dealing with the car parking in 2020, but much depends on what happens with the lawns over the next year.

Are there any questions on what I have said about the coming year?

Our accounts have been audited by Phil Collinson, and I propose that he be appointed as our auditor for the coming year.

John Wallace has been managing the lawn levelling project, a task that has become much more onerous than anyone could have predicted due to the many delays caused by the weather. He almost lived at the club from the start on 4th September until the end of October, and I am sure that he will be keeping a close eye on the situation throughout the winter, seeking and taking advice from experts, notably Talbot Farm and Duncan Hector. However long it takes for the lawns to become established, we owe him a debt of gratitude for all the work he has put in. I will now invite John to speak to us about the lawn levelling project.”

John explained how the project had been repeatedly delayed by the rainfall which had been far greater than usual. The ground had been too wet for levelling to take place on schedule and too wet for seeding to take place. The contractors had had to change their methods from those planned and had had to rake by hand when the final surface was being prepared for seeding. After seeding had taken place there were further periods of sustained heavy rain and the seed had been washed out of position and into the grooves.

There was some germination on the sunny higher ground, just north of the levelled area. It was not clear what would happen to the areas that had been submerged for long periods or to any of the areas where germination was not yet visible. Re-seeding would take place at some point, either later this year or in the spring of 2018. The timing of this would depend on the weather conditions. Play might still be possible by May 2018 but it might be a bit later.

6 (b) Presentation of accounts.

(Income and Expenditure analysis for this and previous financial year attached, hard copy only)

6 (c) Setting of subscription

Mike announced the Committee proposal that the subscription for a full member remain at £140. Mike formally made the proposal. It was seconded by Andrew Wimshurst and carried by a large majority

6 (d). Appointment of Honorary Auditor

Mike proposed that we retain the same auditor. This was seconded by Brian Roynon and the proposal was carried by a large majority

7. **Tournament Secretary's Report** – (Peter Dyke)

Peter began by presenting the report of internal Club Competitions, provided by Linda Shaw:

“We enjoyed a good level of support for the competitions this year despite a slight reduction in the numbers of people playing competitively.

Not including Mad Monday and Wild Wednesday, 48 members comprised 221 competition entries this year compares with the previous year when 52 members comprised 262 entries.

So a slight reduction in competitive games - but hopefully no reduction in the level of pleasure.

This year saw 19 different people win first place in the competitions compared with 21 the previous year - it's good to see a range of players achieving success and shows that it's always worth entering.

Thanks are due to those who helped manage the competitions on the day throughout the year and who supported the smooth running of the semis and finals weekends. It's important to spread these organising skills around the club and I'd love to support more people to develop the skills to run and manage the club competitions, so do let me know.

Next year may present more of a challenge to us with regard to getting the competitions played, although we should be able to continue later into the year. But we may need to think about how we can fit more into less to tide us over.

And as a bit of an aside to this report, but very much related in terms of developing our playing skills, we have trialled a series of coaching sessions to encourage better play particularly amongst the high and middle ranging handicaps in both AC and GC.

These have been well supported and have built on sharing the skills we have right here in the club, supplemented by some outside support.

We will continue to do this and this will hopefully link in with SWF and CA initiatives.

I have sent round a coaching questionnaire to all playing members, so please take the time to think about this and respond, so our programme next year can build on the successes of this year.”

Peter then presented his own report:

In 2016 all our open tournaments were won by Nailsea members; this year all of our Association Croquet tournaments were won by members of Bristol Croquet Club. David Goacher won our Open Advanced Tournament (runner-up Mark Suter), Andrew Wise won our B class tournament (r-u John Wells (Cheltenham)) and Frances Ransom won our C class tournament (r-u Kathy Wallace). Robert Chatwin (Wingrave and Wrest Park) won our B class golf croquet tournament (r-u Brian McCausland).

South West Federation League Tables 2017

Association Croquet

League	Team	Played	Won	Lost	For	Against	Position	% games won
Advanced	Nailsea	4	3	1	18	11	2/5	62.1
Advanced	Nailsea 2nd	6	2½	3½	15½	16½	2/4	48.4
Advanced	Nailsea 3rd	4	3	1	13	11	2/5	54.2
Federation	Central	5	3	2	20	13	3/6	60.6
Federation	South	6	5	1	29	11	1/7	72.5
Intermediate	North	5	3	2	18	9	3/6	66.7
Intermediate	Central	5	4	1	23	12	2/6	65.7

The Federation South team, captained by Andrew Wimshurst, qualified for the play-offs. Unfortunately and we lost to Bath North by 2 games to 5 in the semi-final; they had a rapidly improving player and we were missing a couple of our key players. The overall percentage of games won by our AC handicap teams was 64.8%.

Golf Croquet

League	Team	Played	Won	Drawn	Lost	Points	For	Against	Position
Level Play	North	3	3	0	0	6	45½	14½	1/4
Handicap	Central North	5	2	0	3	4	51½	48½	4/6
Handicap	Central South	6	3	0	3	6	51½	68½	5/7
Handicap	South East	6	2	0	4	4	52	68	7/7

None of our Handicap Golf Croquet teams qualified for the play-offs this year. The overall percentage games won by our handicap teams was 45.6%. Our Level Play Golf Croquet team has had a much better season than last year. They won the North section of the league to qualify for the play-offs. They beat Kingston Maurward 10½-5½ in the semi-final and beat Taunton Deane, 14½-5½, in the final. The percentage of games won by our GC Level Play team including these two results was 73.4%.

Notable Performances:

Mark Suter won the Chairman's Salver, the second of the CA Eights. Well done Mark on this huge achievement.

At his third attempt, having been runner-up for the past two years, **James Galpin** won the National Junior Singles Championship. Peter presented James with the trophy for this.

8. Committee proposals

Committee Proposal 1

The Committee proposes that Item 17 on the Constitution be amended to ensure that all members have the information they require for the AGM in a timely manner. The amendment also clarifies how the business of the AGM is conducted.

Current wording:

17. An Annual General Meeting of the Club shall be held in November each year. At least 14 days notice of the time and place of the meeting shall be given to all members.

Proposed amendment to wording:

17. An Annual General Meeting of the Club shall be held in November each year. Initial notice of the AGM will be given 6 weeks prior to the agreed date.

Ordinary members may submit proposals suggesting amendments to the Constitution. These proposals will be considered and a vote taken at the AGM. Ordinary Members may also submit items for discussion under AOB.

Proposals and items for inclusion under AOB on the Agenda must be submitted to the Club Secretary three weeks prior to the agreed date and must be proposed and seconded by Ordinary Members of the club.

Nominations of Committee Members must be submitted to the Club Secretary on the appropriate form three weeks prior to the agreed date

The final agenda, including proposals and nomination details, will be circulated to members two weeks prior to the agreed date.

Committee Proposal 2

The Committee proposes that Section 12 is amended by the addition of the following sentence:

Each candidate must be proposed and seconded by Ordinary Members of NDCC.

Section 12 would now read:

12. Seven persons shall be elected annually from among the Ordinary Members. Additional members up to a maximum of eleven active Committee members may be co-opted by the Committee for specific duties. Each candidate must be proposed and seconded by Ordinary Members of NDCC.

Committee Proposal 3

The Committee proposes the following amendment to Sections 9 and 19:

Delete 19a and create 9h so that all the types of membership are defined in the same section. This amendment also requires all members to be aged at least 16 before they qualify as Ordinary Members and hence be given constitutional rights.

to be deleted:

19a An Ordinary member is a person who is a Full, Associate, Country or Student member of the Club

to be inserted:

9h An Ordinary Member is a Full, Associate, Country or Student Member but must be aged at least 16

Committee Proposal 4

The Committee proposes the following amendment to Section 13. This is to remove the role of Tournament Secretary as a named post on the Committee in order to reflect changes in personnel and their roles on the Committee.

Current wording

13. Four Committee members, to be specifically elected at the AGM, will hold the offices of Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer, and Tournament Secretary. Vacancies in these offices will be filled as necessary from elected or co-opted members. The Chairman shall hold office for up to three years, after which he must stand down. In the event that no other candidate is nominated he may be invited to stand for re-election for a further year if at least 50% of those attending the AGM vote in his favour. The vote shall be by anonymous paper ballot, and the President shall have a deciding vote should it be necessary.

Section 13 would now read:

13. Three Committee members, to be specifically elected at the AGM, will hold the offices of Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer. Vacancies in these offices will be filled as necessary from elected or co-opted members. The Chairman shall hold office for up to three years, after which he must stand down. In the event that no other candidate is nominated he may be invited to stand for re-election for a further year if at least 50% of those attending the AGM vote in his favour. The vote shall be by anonymous paper ballot, and the President shall have a deciding vote should it be necessary.

All four Committee Proposals were carried

9. Election of Committee

The following were proposed by John Wallace, seconded by Brigit Clayton and elected unopposed

Name	Role	Proposer	Seconded
Mike Tracy	Treasurer	Coral Harrison	Sandra Bath
Peter Dyke	Tournament Secretary	Geoff Hughes	Alan Longdon
Coral Harrison	Member	Sandra Bath	Mike Tracy
Brian Roynon	Member	Brigit Clayton	Kathy Wallace
Linda Shaw	Member	Kathy Wallace	Sandra Bath

There were no nominations for Secretary or Chairman

In accordance with the Club Constitution, an anonymous paper vote was held to ask the members if they would like to ask Andrew Wimshurst, as current Chairman if he were willing to serve for a further year. The vote was unanimously in favour and Andrew accepted the role.

10. Any Other Business

(i) Request from Doreen Wallace that the Club buy a dishwasher

Doreen explained that she was concerned about the standards of hygiene around washing up in the kitchen. Cups that had been inadequately washed were frequently found in the cupboards and tea towels were sometimes left to dry and used again.

A discussion followed. The points raised against buying a dishwasher involved the expense, the space required, the time taken for a cycle and the logistics of getting it loaded and emptied. Commercial as well as domestic models were discussed. A commercial model would cost £1000 and take 30 minutes to warm up before use. Some people thought that the hygiene problems could be avoided by the encouragement of better practice in the kitchen or use of paper roll for drying. Those who were in favour of a dishwasher quoted the huge amount of items to be washed at tournaments and League matches.

Andrew explained that it would be a Committee decision but a poll was held to establish the views of those at the AGM. The results were:

Commercial dishwasher – 2
Domestic dishwasher - 14
No dishwasher - 8
Abstentions - 1

- (ii) Peter Dyke informed members that there was a photograph of James on the CA website – taken when Quiller Barrett was presenting the Junior Championship trophy
- (iii) John Wallace referred to a statement in Andrew's report. He had said that we might at some point in the future have to buy lawn maintenance services in from contractors if not enough volunteers came forward. John observed that this was unlikely to be good value for money and the present regime was infinitely preferable if it could be sustained.

11. Date of next AGM

The next AGM was arranged for Saturday 10 November at 2pm in the Clubhouse

The meeting closed at 3.40 pm

Signed as a true and accurate record

Name.....

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

DRAFT