

Nailsea and District Croquet club
Draft Minutes of Committee Meeting held on 17th January 2018

Present

Andrew Wimshurst, Mike Tracy, Peter Dyke, Brigit Clayton, Coral Harrison, Linda Shaw, Brian Roynon, Meriel Forshaw.

Joan Timmins in attendance

Andrew welcomed everyone to the first meeting of the year.

Apologies

None received.

Minutes of the meeting 22.11.2017

Agreed as correct and signed.

Matters Arising from meeting 22.11.2017

Treasurer's report

The outstanding debt of £391 to the water company has to be paid off. It is expected that this debt can be paid within the next six months, then the direct debit mandate will be re-negotiated.

Bank mandate – discussion took place regarding relevant signatures on the bank mandate.

Agreed status quo to remain at present.

Action: Mike

Appointment of Secretary

It was agreed Meriel would be co-opted as secretary and Joan would take the minutes at meetings until further notice.

Treasurer's Report

See report below which was noted.

Membership Report

See report below which was noted.

Property Report

See report below which was noted.

Brian has now purchased items necessary to complete the work required. He hopes that all work can be undertaken within the next week.

The committee congratulated him on his bargain purchase of dead blow hammers.

Linda noted the present club mallets were looking untidy and suggested that the handles could have new binding applied.

It was agreed that Brian should approach Tony Willoughby to undertake this task.

Action: Brian

Lawns Report

See report below which was noted.

Further discussion on impact of Friday closures before tournaments with regard to Junior session – to be discussed further. **Action: Peter**

CA Matters (Tournament Bids)

It was agreed that the club would support the hosting of the Treasure's Tankard for 2019. Hosting further dates would not be considered at present.
The secretary would advise Kathy of the decision. **Action: Meriel**

2018 SWF League Teams

All league fixtures are arranged apart from two intermediate games.
Problems have been resolved with SWF league regarding Golf Croquet fixtures.
There are still some outstanding intermediate matches to be organised – these matches may have to take place during the week.
Captains for Federation League Central and Golf croquet level play still need to be agreed. **Action: Peter**

2018 Club Competitions

Depending on the condition of the lawns, numbers of competitions for 2018/2019 may have to be reduced.
Linda will prepare a schedule for the next meeting. **Action: Linda**

Coaching

See report below which was noted.

Agreed to continue with coaching along the lines suggested.
Linda will devise a programme and advertise sessions where members can sign up to and be committed to attending. **Action: Linda**

Recruitment

The committee agreed a budget of £250 to be made available for recruitment.
Kathy and Erica to continue with recruitment planning.
Open Day – Unfortunately, due to the uncertainty of when the lawns will be in a condition for play it was agreed to postpone the planning for the open day until a later date.
Possibly consider an open event when the new lawns are ready.
Meriel to inform Kathy. **Action: Meriel**

Constitution and Handbook

Handbook – Brigit confirmed that the current version of the Handbook on the website requires updating – everyone to look at this and suggest updates to Meriel . **Action: All**

Constitution – Should have been updated on the website following the AGM.

Andrew to organise a working party to review the constitution.

Action: Andrew

Mad Monday

See email from Tony Hinchliffe below.

Following detailed discussion and a vote taken, it was agreed that at present Mad Monday will remain as it is. This decision was taken as the 'Objective' for Mad Monday is to get the higher handicap players to become more competitive.

Peter has agreed to continue managing Mad Monday for the coming year.

Meriel to inform Tony of the committee's decision.

Action: Meriel

Skittles

See Kathy's email below and Brian & Brenda's response.

Due to unforeseen circumstances, the date for the skittles evening will have to be changed.

Brian agreed to communicate with Clarence House to agree a new date.

It was agreed three lanes would be required for the event plus 'sticker uppers'

Price would remain at £10 per person to include food.

Brian would contact Kathy.

Action: Brian

Dishwasher

Since the AGM, Mike has looked at a number of dishwashers. All appear to be for domestic use only, none appear suitable for use within the club.

The problem being, the machine will not carry a warranty if purchased for a club.

However, there are actions that can be taken to improve hygiene within the kitchen area, e.g use the hand washing sink and paper towels, provide a bin for used tea towels or take them home, wash and return etc..

All the pros. and cons. of this issue were reflected on and discussed and a vote was taken. It was agreed that a dishwasher would not be purchased..

AOB

Brigit asked if the club was required to have a written record which confirmed that all annual safety checks are being carried out, e.g. club has a first aider, appliances such as fire extinguisher, electrical items, sockets etc. have had safety checks.

Agreed - Procedures will be checked at the beginning of the season.

A budget will have to be identified for this purpose next year.

Note – PAT testing – depending on type of equipment, there is no statutory requirements for testing

Action: Brian / Brigit

Peter informed the committee that the SW Federation's application to hold the finals weekend will clash with our own finals weekend. New date to be negotiated if possible

Action: Peter

Peter had been presented with the Golf Croquet level play trophy. Each player in this event will hold the trophy in line with the number of times they played for the team.

Club website - Mike suggested the committee and all members contribute to the club website. Mike is prepared to assist anyone if required.

Next meeting

14th February 10.00am at Mike's.

Meeting closed at 12.20hrs.

DRAFT

Reports from Committee Members

Treasurer's report

Spreadsheet attached.

I have cheques to the value of £120 for the 100 Club yet to be paid in and about £100 in cash from Coral's lunch event and bridge.

Current balance at the bank less unrepresented cheques is £5,333.19

The deficit for the year is £14,208.45

These figures were recorded on 11/01/2018.

We have the CA grant of £5,000. The Christmas lunch realised a surplus of £150.61. Our supply of Revolution for next year has been paid for (£1,032.00) as has our dues to SWF for the levy, league entries and Short Croquet Teams entry (£222.00)

Mike Tracy

Membership Report 17.01.2018

No changes in the membership except for one mobile no. amendment but I intend sending out a new list to start the New Year and to update the Committee listing and Dates for your Diary. In a normal year, I would send out renewal notices at the end of February but doubt that would not be appropriate this year and as Subscriptions are not actually due until April suggest a later date.

Bridge

There was a 2 week gap over Christmas and New year but the group met again with great enthusiasm on January 2. There was an 'End of Term' session before Christmas with Mike organising a duplicate bridge session and mulled wine and mince pies were served. This involved 20 players so a very handy income of £40 in one afternoon. This amount was also received on January 9 when again 20 players were present for advice from Mike. Bridge continues to be a very useful source of income.

Social Event

Violet organised dates for Social Events to enable members to stay in touch during the winter and I had a lunch at my home on January 8 which, due to lack of space was restricted to 18 places. There were 20 people wanting to attend but 2 had to withdraw through illness. A profit of £68 was made as there was a charge of £7.50 per head to include a glass of wine. The idea of these meeting being a way of keeping in touch was lost on this occasion as only 3 people (and 1 of those the partner of a bridge player) were not part of the bridge playing group.

Coral

Property report

Pavilion

The new light fittings have been purchased to replace the failed one in the kitchen.

The porch light is going to be replaced with the PIR one supplied by Mike and I have purchased the necessary fittings.

The toilet cistern in the gents toilet appears to be leaking in a similar fashion to the one that had to be replaced in the ladies last year.

I have purchased a replacement cistern and hope to install it on Thursday.

I have purchased 2 new dead blow hammers for £2 each in a sale (Normal price £9.95) they will be easy to spot as they are bright orange.

Brian Roynon

Lawns Report

1.Lawns

At this time of year I am normally preparing the lawn maintenance schedules. However, this year a definitive programme of work is not possible because of the lawn levelling. The levelling has been significantly affected by the ongoing wet weather. Some of the lawn areas have been continuously flooded since the first week in November. Every time these areas begin to dry out along comes more rain. As a result, there is little or no grass in these flooded areas.

The ground remains saturated and the weather remains unpredictable but cold and/or wet. Both Talbot and the Barenbrug seed rep visited the club in December to discuss progress. We developed an outline plan of what to do in the spring as follows:

1. NDCC will spray the lawns every 3 weeks with Dispatch when possible in order to maximise water penetration into the ground. This will have to be done by backpack spraying so I will be recruiting a few volunteers when this starts! At present the ground is still too wet to walk on. Once Revolution spraying starts (April?) Dispatch spraying will cease.
2. NDCC will attempt a speculative hand re-seeding of the bare flooded areas as soon as they have dried out. 1 bag of seed has been purchased for this purpose. This will probably be in late Feb/Early March. This will be an attempt at getting the bare areas closer to the state of the rest of the lawns prior to the general over-seed.
3. Talbot Farm will return to carry out the first cut and will also roll the surface with a 3 tonne roller. Timing of this is weather dependent but it will probably be in March.
4. Talbot Farm will carry out an over-seeding operation across the entire surface, paying special attention to the bare areas. This will probably in March or early April. If, as usual, the weather suddenly turns dry, we may have to irrigate the new seed! A synthetic pre-seeding fertiliser will be applied as this is less temperature sensitive than the normal "bio" fertilisers that we employ.

Figure 1 and 2 shows the flooded areas (about 25% of the levelled areas) whilst Figure 3 shows the maximum and minimum temperatures since January 2017. It should be noted that the pictures were taken just after rain. By 14/1/18 the flooded areas had shrunk substantially (no pictures as my camera battery was flat!). The flooded areas remain a significant problem as in some cases there is no evidence of any grass. Until these areas dry out no re-seeding can be attempted. Similar comments apply with regard to average temperature (and hence soil temperatures). This really needs above 10C in order to get good even germination. At present ground conditions are too cold to make re-seeding worthwhile. Note that it is the end of Feb when temperatures start to rise in a meaningful way. We need warmer weather and at least a week of dry weather to re-seed the bare areas.

The worst case scenario is that no re-seeding of the flooded bare areas takes place until early April. If this were to happen, there would probably be no possibility of playing croquet until June. If re-seeding can be accomplished by early March there is reasonable possibility of play during May. (The Bar Extreme seed can generate some sort of playable surface in about 8 weeks if the weather is warm). The playing surface will improve steadily over the summer.

The over-seeding of the entire lawns is designed to thicken up the sward and a late March/Early April operation should be satisfactory from this point of view. Duncan Hector's own experience is that the existing germinated grass will thicken up considerably as the temperatures rise.

2. New Tournament Preparations Arrangements for 2018

The current tournament preparation arrangements were developed in an era where hoop moving took all day and involved drilling new hoop holes with an electric drill. Thus normally grass cutting and hoop moving were scheduled two days in advance in order to cater for bad weather. The revised arrangements trialled last year were successful in reducing the hoop moving time to about 3 hours.

The two day interval created several problems:

- a. The grass generally needed a double cut early in the morning prior to tournament commencement. (7am start)
- b. Cutting took place with hoops in place so within the critical hoop area the grass was long even at the start of play and it tended to affect gentle, controlled hoop running.
- c. The swap to newer tournament balls always had to take place late in the evening before the tournament to avoid them being used for general play.
- d. Club play between hoop setting and start of tournament did require hoops to be reset on the evening before the start of play.

As all the work associated with the above fell on my shoulders I was keen to reorganise the tournament preparation. My proposal for 2018 onwards is therefore:

- a. The lawns are closed from 1.30 on the day before a tournament
- b. The person scheduled to do the normal Friday cut carries out a double cut with all the nets removed, starting at 1.30 and finishing by 4pm
- c. Hoop moving/setting takes place between 4pm and 7pm
- d. White lining takes place in parallel with hoop setting.
- e. The lawns are opened about 7pm for Tournament Competitors only to practice.
- f. The hoop setting team or the manager ensures that all the old balls are safely stored away and the tournament balls are in the correct tubes next to the trolleys from late Friday afternoon onwards.
- g. Normal Friday afternoon activities will have to be re-scheduled for Thursdays.

I trust the committee will agree to these revised arrangements. It will slightly inconvenience some members but tournament playing conditions will be improved (no long grass in the hoops) and it will save me a lot of work!

John Wallace

CA matters (tournament bids – KW's email)

This (below and attachment) arrived just before Christmas, as you know, and has to be responded to before 31 January

In my opinion and that of the Lawn Manager, we should honour our commitment and confirm the hosting of the Treasurer's Tankard for September 2019.

It is up to the Committee whether or not we bid for anything in 2020. My personal opinion, for what it's worth, is that we shouldn't. These events need great effort from many people, lawns team and catering team in particular, but also a myriad of bit-parts. To host a major event every year might be too much to ask of an ageing workforce. If we do manage to recruit a lot of new people, we may well have a chance to pick up some sort of an event closer to the time if we particularly want it - possibly something shorter than an Eights event and at a different time of year. I would suggest that we see how we get on with the TT and also with recruitment and hope to hold something in a future year.

Let me know both the decisions and I will relay them to the CA

Coaching summary 2017 Sessions run

Session	Coach	Attending
Beginners	Polly, Erica, Kathy, Linda	8

AC refresher	Linda, Terry, Erica, Kathy, Rob, Pat, David Hunt, Jim, Robert, Brian R, John H,	12?
GC refresher	Peter, Jim	10?
3 Ball break	Richard Jackson	10?
AC Pods	Dave Kibble	8
Other	SWCA, GC Pods, SWA Lots of resources on Oxford Croquet website	

*The aim of the AC refresher series was to

- To revise basic strokes and tactics
- To involve other high handicaps
- Encourage peer learning
- Develop social relations

They were run weekly with various coaches (not all qualified) and were a mixture of participant requests and coaches' perception of need.

Topics included

- Stroke play
- Croquet strokes
- Creating a break – playing first, playing second
- Openings
- Maintaining a break
- Rushes
 - in context of hoop approaches and break maintenance
 - to various hoops from corners
- Hoop running

Coaching questionnaire

1. To those who have helped with coaching

Polly, Erica, Kathy, Terry, Brian R, Rob, Pat, David Hunt, Peter, Jim

Thanks for providing coaching to club members during the year. I'd really appreciate it if you could provide a bit of feedback about your experience and how we might develop things over the next couple of years.

Overall we seem to have had a successful turnout and lots of enthusiasm for the principle of a more structured approach to this. So I'd like to develop this further next year, without losing the informality and friendliness of the approach.

Also we are planning a couple of indoor coaching sessions in the club house during the winter – using the magnetic board, discussions, etc. etc. – to keep people engaged til next year's late start. So please let me have your thoughts on this and whether or not you'd like to lead a session or so.

You can let me have your ideas in any way you choose but the following might help:

- What did you enjoy about the sessions you led?
- What do you think people gained from these?
- How do you think coaching might be improved in the club?

- Ideas for winter indoor coaching sessions:
- Any other comments:

2. To all members

This year we started a more structured approach to coaching within the club and many of you have attended some of the sessions. I'd really appreciate it if you could provide a bit of feedback about your experience and how we might develop things over the next couple of years without losing the informality and friendliness of the approach.

Also we are planning a couple of indoor coaching sessions in the club house during the winter – using the magnetic board, discussions, etc. etc. – to keep people engaged til next year's late start.

So please let me have your thoughts on this. You can let me have your ideas in any way you choose but the following might help:

- What did you enjoy about the sessions you attended?
- What did you gain from these?
- How do you think coaching might be improved in the club?
- Ideas for winter indoor coaching sessions:
- Any other comments:

Feedback

- Take into account the range of handicaps in any group****
- Encourage focussed practice
- Value of alternate stroke play with more experienced player
- Careful use of magnetic board – not everyone finds it helpful
- Value of a range of coaches
- Importance of continuing support for beginners / improvers
- Value of external coaching
- Have different times – some people work / have other commitments
- The non-coaches prefer to help in other ways e.g. watch and comment (Pat)
- Active learning better than the theory for many
- Share with other clubs
- Use club afternoons to match low / high handicaps
- Be patient – people can feel embarrassed if they feel they're not making progress
- Encourage Advanced play
- Specifically – be progressive:
 - Basic feedback on grip, stance etc
 - Follow on from Beginners' course
 - Tactical use of bisques
 - 3 ball break
 - Intro to playing without bisques
 - Simple peels
 - For Advanced players – leaves, peels
 - Playing an adventurous game
- Indoor coaching
 - Quiz
 - Topics that lend themselves to magnetic board
 - Snooquet
 - Watch videos and comment

2018 and beyond

'The Mental Approach' session with Dave Kibble before the season begins.

Supporting members to become club coaches

Facing a late start this year we need to balance lawn use against maintaining enthusiasm and skill and need to consider holding weekly sessions again building on last year's experiences and feedback. Particularly using our own members' skills.

We have access to the following external resources:

- SW Croquet Academy
- Other Academies / CA
- Andrew Dutton – Brookwood Croquet programme
- Federation coaches
- Pods
- Bob Whitaker
- Oxford croquet site
- Books

Recruitment (KW/EM)

As you know, I am hoping to have a big influence on recruitment this year. Erica and I have a lot of ideas but can't do anything concrete until we can feel confidence in having lawns by a particular date. In the meantime, it would be helpful if the Committee set a budget for recruitment. Most of the ideas won't cost much but most things inevitably eat a bit of money.

We will consult the Committee if we plan anything that might be controversial.

At the moment ideas include:

1. decent modern glossy flyers to be distributed in large quantities. These would be used to promote number 2 idea and/or croquet in general. They could be planted discriminately - possibly with some sort of incentive (free taster session?) to local businesses in Nailsea, Backwell, Portishead and Clevedon. I think we have to be more flexible and get away from thinking that it has to be the right time in the season. The most promising players pick things up very quickly and then make progress by getting involved at the Club and watching other players. These days they also use the internet to learn.

2. some sort of opening event for the "new lawns" to be combined with a one ball competition, open to the public, with proceeds to a local charity (Childrens Hospice?). This might be instead of or as well as traditional Open Day. My feeling is that it would be "instead of" as Open Day hasn't been fruitful lately. Clearly this would be a Committee decision and we can't really set a date yet.

3. use of any contacts we have in local sports clubs. I have 2 Clubs in mind and also the staff of Nailsea School and would love to hear of others where people have inside contacts. We could arrange some sort of competition between groups from these sources. Clubs other than Sports Clubs could feature in this but the emphasis must be on trying to attract youngish (under 55?) players. Again one-ball might be used for the event/s.

4. The sale of gift vouchers for a set of croquet lessons. We tried this in 2004 and sold quite a few. The price was the same as the current price of lessons. None of the recipients took up croquet beyond the lessons but we could try it again. We might just have been unlucky last time. Also we can reach a different and wider audience these days via Facebook.

Please let us know our budget for recruitment and also any other recruitment ideas or Clubs where someone has an inside contacts. Also tell us now if you don't want any of these initiatives so that we won't waste time on them

Kathy

Constitution & Handbook (KW'S email)

I have updated the Constitution with the changes made at the 2017 AGM and am attaching it in WORD. I will put it on the website in a minute as a pdf.

I have updated the Handbook with personnel changes to date and with the Constitution changes. I have highlighted three areas that need updating before the hard version is published:

1. is about the All England Hcap (in the competition section) . I never managed to make Linda's detailed Competitions handbook integral with the main Handbook as there were formatting issues. The shorter Competitions section still remains and that's where the All England is highlighted for updating. I quite like having the important general stuff where it is and having the detail as an appendix. I'm sure Linda will be updating the detailed parts so I haven't attached that.

2. concerns the two new trophies (Jackson Cup and GC BC Class tournament trophy). I'm sure Brigit can update that.

3. is Safeguarding. The printed version was updated in the Handbook in 2017 but, again, I have not been able to integrate it into the digital Handbook because of formatting issues. I am attaching it separately – with and without Appendix 1. As far as I am aware, Fran is still i/c safeguarding.

There may well be other updates required to the Handbook as a result of Committee deliberations over the winter so I see no point it being printed or put on the website just yet. I will pass the hard copy to Brigit for safe keeping until someone takes responsibility for it.

Sorry if this sounds complicated – I'm just trying to tie up loose ends

Kathy

Mad Monday (Tony Hinchliffe's email)

Dear Committee,

Can you please consider the following.

Mad Monday. Golf Croquet.

Can you please allow all handicaps to play and not just +4 and over.

It seems that the club would benefit for all handicaps to play, especially if the club charged £2 Per ma£ Monday to play.

The handicap level doesn't apply to wild Wednesday Association day and again a small charge per month would help club funds.

Come on committee think outside the box.

Skittles (KW'S email)

The Skittles Evening is booked for Sat 10 March. I need permission to book a sticker-up for each of 3 alleys. I also need a price as I will be emailing people very shortly with advance notice. The costs will be the £50 for the alleys plus the cost of stickers up, which I think was £15 each, plus the food. In the past we have charged £10 per person. I think we could increase that to £11 or £12 on the grounds that we have booked all 3 alleys this year so there will be a better experience but we have to pay the extra sticker-up as well as the extra alley cost. Last year we had about 40 people paying although there were some ill on the day, as always. A few people ask to come to the evening as a social event but not actually play skittles. I think we have charged them the full amount in the past but would appreciate clarification of this.

I am happy to do all the liaison with Clarence House and with our members and sort out the teams. If Brian and Brenda organise the food and any raffle as usual, that should work very well. Otherwise, we could consider not offering food – crisps, nuts etc will be on sale at the bar. The price would then be suitably reduced.

Kathy

Brenda and I think we should stick to 2 alleys as we don't know how many people we will get and it is expensive if we do not get a big attendance. If we get a large number wishing to attend there is always the chance we can get the third alley nearer the date.

If we don't do the food it will be a less enjoyable evening. Many people who come do not play skittles regularly and come to support the club, enjoy the company and the food. If no food is involved they are basically playing a game they are not bothered about in a place in desperate need of a make-over!

Brian Roynon

DRAFT