

Nailsea and District Croquet Club
Minutes of Committee Meeting held on 20th July 2018

Present: Andrew Wimshurst, Mike Tracy, Brian Roynon, Brigit Clayton, Linda Shaw, Meriel Forshaw

In attendance: Joan Timmins

1. Apologies: Coral Harrison, Peter Dyke

2. Minutes of the meeting 5th June 2018. Agreed and signed as a correct record.

3. Matters Arising from the minutes dated 5th June 2018.

Website: we are now paying Alison Jones to manage this.

4. Treasurer's Report: Discussed and noted.

4.1 Toro: The replacement of the Toro mower was discussed. It was agreed that we need to replace it, but only after the grass has developed and bound the sand together. The presence of loose sand blunts the cutting blades and it's expected that the start of next season may be the best time to go ahead. The cost of replacement is estimated at about £6000. The correspondence with Robert Moss indicates the the CA will make a loan available if we need one to make this purchase feasible. Mike is preparing a forecast to determine the size of loan required.

Action: Mike

4.2 Income: Subscriptions, Socials, B and C class tournaments all help to increase the income to the club. The committee acknowledged the exceptional work undertaken by Kathy in ensuring that the tournaments run smoothly.

4.3 Andrew raised the issue of covering the costs for watering the lawns during the dry season. Mike confirmed the club could cover the cost. The committee agreed that the lawns have to be watered

4.4 Management of the club's website has now been formally moved to Alison Jones' server and we now have formal support from her. Alison has been paid for the year.

5. Lawn Report: Discussed and noted.

John has booked out dates for seeding and rolling the lawns. However, this activity is weather dependent. Andrew will send out a general email to members keeping them fully informed and up to date.

Action: Andrew

6. Property Report: Discussed and noted.

6.1 The hedges and edges required cutting back; the committee acknowledged that this was extremely hard work. Following discussion it was agreed that Brian would explore the cost of engaging a contractor to undertake this work.

Action: Brian

6.2 Concerns were raised regarding the lawns situated near to the school. It has been observed that children were throwing large stones and sticks onto the lawns. Recently a number of large stones have been found on the lawn. Andrew agreed to write to the headmistress informing them of the problem.

Action: Andrew

6.3 Social bookings have been successful and more are booked for July and August. More volunteers are needed to support these evening events.

Meriel and Andrew agreed to cover the 7th August. Linda agreed to cover the 14th August. (GC B class tournament on 14th needs some alteration).

Action: Brian

7. Membership Report: Discussed and noted.

Kathy had brought to the attention of the committee the following proposal, - that the previously agreed scale of subscription rates for full membership for people joining the club part way through the year should also be used as the basis for associate and country membership, applying a reduction to 70% and 50% of the full rate.

The committee formally agreed Kathy's proposal.

A couple from Weston super Mare have arranged to join the club as Associate members and are attending coaching sessions.

8. Visitors

It was agreed that the term 'visitors' are those people who come to play croquet with an existing member of the club.

It was agreed that a person may make three visits in any one year, hosted by a member.

All visitors will be required to sign the visitor's book.

The cost would be £5 per visit.

The above will be implemented next season.

Brigit agreed to sort out a visitor's book.

Action: Brigit

9. Constitution

Andrew has two committee members prepared to discuss and work on the Constitution with him. The date for the first meeting would be either Monday 30th July or Tuesday 7th August. Andrew to confirm the date with Peter Longden and then inform Brigit and Mike. The meeting will be at Mike's house.

Action: Andrew

10. 100 Club

The committee acknowledged the work Sandra had undertaken to ensure that the 100 club worked this year. It was agreed that next year members will need to join at the start of the year or not at all; this is in line with the policy of previous years.

11. Equality Policy

The committee agreed to adopt the C A's Equality policy for the club.

12. 2018 SWF League Teams

Peter to write a report.

Action: Peter

13. 2018 Club Competitions

During the last month Linda has sent out a number of emails ensuring members are kept informed regarding all competitions.

Speed croquet – no entries – cancelled.

4 Pairs in GC doubles.

Alternate Strokes – 3 pairs have entered to date. Agreed this will be run during semis weekend.

A call for one more pair will be put out nearer the time.

The charity one ball competition will **not** take place this year as we are unable to find a suitable date in the crowded club calendar.

The Beginners competition is scheduled for 29th September providing there are sufficient people. Linda will liaise with Kathy.

Action: Linda

14. Coaching

14.1 Club coaches: A question was asked, how could the club encourage some members to become a club coach? Linda identified coaches within the CA who could run this course.

However, this would be at a cost. It was agreed with Linda that she would undertake the work on costing.

Action: Linda

14.2 Due to the club having a difficult start to the year it was noted that we were unable to have our usual 'Open Day'. Linda, Kathy and Erica are working with the new beginners. Ad hoc coaching is being undertaken and is working well.

14.3 Schools croquet: On the 19th June, Violet and Erica spent the afternoon at St Francis School. They had a good afternoon with 50 children from years 5 and 6 in 4 groups who

thoroughly enjoyed themselves, and as usual some showed good hitting skills. The head of school requested that the event take place again next year.

14.4 A recruitment report had been received from Kathy and Erica.

15. Press Officer

John Hancock has agreed to take on this role. A question was asked ‘What is the role and responsibility of this job?’

It was discussed and decided that team captains and competition managers should write two reports and send them to the press officer. Eg. - one for the CA and one for the press, which would be more suitable for the general public.

It was agreed that the club needs to keep the public aware of activities and competitions.

Linda agreed to summarise today’s discussion, suggesting a way forward and send this to Andrew. This would include a job description, how the club would report CA and club matches, tournaments, the use of Facebook, the website and the role of team captains and managers.

Andrew agreed to talk to the previous press officers.

Action: Linda/Andrew

16. Safe Guarding Officer

Linda Shaw has agreed to undertake this role.

17. AOB

17.1 Mike - the website is now hosted and supported by Alison, so is it possible to make better use of it? The website has a dual function - to keep members up to date, directing them to relevant information when required and also to inform the public.

It was agreed that committee members should look at the website before the next meeting, asking themselves the following, ‘If I had a question about Nailsea croquet club etc. would this website answer my question?’

Action: All

17.2 Linda requested that members’ contact details be available at the club as there had been recent difficulties in arranging matches.

Response: now that the membership list has been completed it will be placed at the back of the lawn booking book as previously agreed.

Action: Meriel

17.3 The club calendar needs to be circulated to members.

Action: Peter

17.4 Joan has been approached by a member re. the possibility of changing the format of the Monday Golf Croquet afternoon. It was agreed that any possible changes should be discussed with the players who attend on Mondays.

17.5 Andrew has received correspondence from Ryan Cabble re. Swift Tree surgery who sponsor Ryan and he would like to leave some of their cards in the clubhouse. This was agreed.

18. DONM: Tuesday 4th September at 10 am at Mike’s house.

The meeting closed at 11.45hrs.

Signed as a true and accurate record

Name.....

Signature.....

Date.....

Reports

Treasurer's report for NDCC committee meeting 20th July 2018

Current balance at the bank less unrepresented cheques is £8,972.97

The deficit for the year is £10,568.67

These figures were recorded on 13/07/20.

Income from subscriptions has passed the £8,200 mark. There may yet be a little more to come, but last year's total was £9,387.

The 100 club has had some more input (£285 compared with £624 last year. More people have joined since the decision was made to allow entries part way through the year at proportionately lower cost. Whilst this has been useful, if for no other reason than getting members back into the club, I would hope that we can revert to the 'Join at the start of the year or not at all' policy of previous years.

Our website has been moved to Alison Jones' server and we now have formal support from her. She has been paid the fee for domain registration and a year's support, £135 in total.

At the LAG meeting on 10th July John presented the costs incurred to date and those yet to come, some being more certain than others. The cost of irrigation stands out, estimated at £670. This of course is paid by Direct Debit, adjusted from time to time according to our usage. We are currently paying £86 per month, partly due to underpayment in the previous year. When the meter readings pick up our additional usage this will surely increase. My guess is that the DD could go up to say £120 per month, i.e. £1,440 per annum. I have undertaken to contact the water supplier to see if a reduction is possible as none of this water is returned through the sewers. Much of the lawn treatment in the coming months is going to be weather dependent so there is uncertainty about these costs.

Overseeding was discussed. Dimple seeding gives a much superior germination rate than broadcast seeding over the lawns. Since the seeds drop into the seed holes, the operation is much less weather dependent and does not require the closure of the lawns, apart from the seeding operation itself. The downside is that the new grass appears in tufts similar to the waffle pattern that can be seen on lawn 3. We agreed that dimple seeding should be done in early September (cost estimated at £340 for seed and £540 for labour) and then after our finals weekend, if the weather conditions are suitable, to do further broadcast seeding by hand in selected areas at a cost of £170 for seed.

The purchase of lawn chemicals has previously been done before the end of the year so as to avoid price increases. This cost could be deferred until the spring if this helps with cashflow. It would be helpful if a decision could be made about changes to the timing of subs becoming due when trying to plan for this sort of issue. John is almost apologetic about the costs that have been incurred, but without his efforts and watchful eye we probably would not have any grass. My feeling is that getting a decent surface on the lawns is our top priority and that we spend what we need to spend on this.

I previously reported that we have made our final payment to Talbot. This is not quite accurate. There is provision in the contract for the first cut of the new grass

(clearly no longer needed) and rolling (clearly very much needed). The rolling operation, like everything else, is weather dependent. The soil has to be moist enough to give, but not soggy. When it is eventually done the charge due will be £360, although this may be reduced as there is no first cut.

The big issue is the Toro. The reels (i.e. cutting cylinders) were reground in the winter, then again in June and are blunt again. This is thought to be due to picking up sand from the lawn surface which is grinding the cutting edges. If the reels are reground any further we will not be able to set the cut as low as we need. One of the rollers failed with bearing collapse. There are 5 more rollers of the same age hanging like Damocles' sword over us. Added to this, this old model requires a great deal of laborious work to change the cutting height and our octogenarian engineers are finding this is becoming more and more of a problem. In short, the Toro has to be replaced with a younger model which has reels made of harder steel, cutting heads that can be readily adjusted for height and more years of reliable life left in it. Incidentally, the newer model runs on diesel (red diesel is readily available and much cheaper than petrol) and has the facility to run the reels in reverse so that they can be sharpened by us in a process called 'lapping'.

You may have heard that Geoff has made an approach to the Bristol Airport Diamond fund requesting a grant of £6000, the typical cost of a younger second hand machine. I am pleased to report that they have promised £500. This does not solve the problem but certainly helps. I have also contacted the SWF development officer, Robert Moss, to enquire about an interest free loan from the CA. After checking with the CA he responded very quickly and positively. I will forward the email to you all. I will have to do some work to decide how much we need to ask for, another issue where the timing of subs is relevant, and take it from there. It would not be sensible to rush into this, even if we had the money waiting to be spent. We need the grass to develop and bind the sand together before putting a new mower on the lawns.

Lawn Maintenance Report - July 2018

1.Lawns

The lawns opened on June 16th as suggested with a playable but slow and bumpy surface. The uneven grass coverage played a part in creating the bumpiness but another less obvious factor was that the Toro mower was not cutting the grass correctly. These plagued the run up to lawn opening and cutting height was only reduced to 6mm on June 15th. Examination of the blades showed that the presence of loose sand had blunted the reground blades and in-situ lapping was ineffective at restoring a sharp edge. A week of cutting provided some surface improvement for the C class AC tournament. After the tournament the cutter reels were removed and reground using a new contractor who proved to be both knowledgeable and cost effective. Cutting performance improved and consequently the surface is now adequate, but not ideal. Speed is fine and rushing balls is now possible provided the ball is hit without topspin but the uneven grass coverage does occasionally cause problems, particularly on delicate shots. Rabbit runs are prevalent because the grass has not yet thickened up and formed a firm sward. Some repair work will be attempted after the hoops are moved for the B class AC tournament but the degree of success will be weather dependent.

The hot dry weather has resulted in lawns around the country turning brown. Revolution spraying usually prevents this happening at Nailsea but eventually when all the soil moisture is gone, the grass will still go brown. The hole in the ground that supports the “bird” goes down about 15 inches and is bone dry, indicating that the water table has fallen substantially from spring time. (Don’t be fooled by the umbrella stand hole that is replenished by leaking pipes during irrigation!). Figure 1 shows the usual evapo-transpiration and rainfall data. During June we received 3mm of rain and lost something in the region of 90mm of water. To prevent the newer grass resulting from the April reseeding operation dying off, twice weekly irrigation of each lawn was initiated. This provides the equivalent of 6mm of rain per week which is about half the normal summer rainfall. However, because the soil remains porous rather than hydrophobic thanks to Revolution spraying, the irrigation water soaks in to the ground and appears to be just about keeping the younger grass alive. Even at this minimal level, irrigation is costing £60/week so it is not undertaken likely. Since April some 146 hours of irrigation have been applied (mostly for germination reasons) which corresponds to a cost of around £700.

2. Lawn Advisory Group (LAG) meeting

The LAG met on July 10th to consider both short term and longer term issues. There were a number of interrelated issues discussed. These included:

- a. Recent and future expenditure
- b. Ongoing irrigation
- c. Sward development
 - Annual Meadow Grass management
 - Use of Growth Regulator
 - Reseeding techniques
 - Rolling
 - Lawn closures
- d. 2019 Chemicals budget
- e. Toro triplex mower replacement.

Mike Tracy thought that most of the lawn expenditure was containable within club revenue resources but item “e” needed a different approach. The need for a Toro replacement has become urgent because:

- a. The cutting reels cannot be reground again as the correct cutting height could not be achieved.
- b. Replacement roller and other maintenance expenditure is becoming prohibitive.
- c. Geoff and Terry are finding the maintenance and adjustment of the cutter units increasingly difficult.

The LAG concluded that a replacement needs to be purchased over the Autumn / Winter. Toro have advised that a 5 year old 3250 mower would cost in the region of £5000 +VAT . Mike Tracy and Andrew Wimshurst believe this is best funded by a short term CA loan. The newer Toro would be red diesel powered (hence cheaper to run),

facilitate cutter lapping, reel clearance and cutting height adjustment without cutting unit removal. It should also be noted that Toro's Bristol service unit (AJ Mowers) now appear to offer a cost effective repair and maintenance service, thus reducing the burden on Geoff and Terry. Mike Tracy will obviously deal with the issue in his financial report to the committee.

The need for the ongoing irrigation was discussed and endorsed. Arrangements are made on a week by week basis so that as soon as some rain appears irrigation will cease.

The main conclusions regarding sward development are described below.

Annual Meadow Grass is to be managed by improving soil fertility and in particular increasing the proportion of Mycorrhizal fungi in the rootzone. The dwarf rye grass roots become more effective under such conditions whilst the meadow grass does not benefit from the fungi. Hence the dwarf rye grass gradually crowds out the meadow grass. This provides an effective permanent solution to the problem which is important as meadow grass seeds can survive for 20 years in the ground.

To achieve this goal a "zero phosphorous" granular fertiliser inoculated with Mycorrhizal fungi will be applied in early August (as recommended by Duncan Hector). The fertiliser will be slow release so no liquid bio spraying will be required. The cost of the granular fertiliser is about £360 but the value of the liquid bio fertiliser is £500 which can be deducted from the 2019 chemical budget.

Growth Regulator

The Primo Maxx growth regulator is not expensive (£55 for a season). However it is a licensed product and we need to be supervised by a licensed sprayer at a cost of £48 per application. Growth regulator does provide a useful reduction in grass top growth but its real purpose is to encourage root development which improves the quality of the sward. Duncan Hector uses it all the time so the LAG decided to purchase the chemical for 2019 but defer the decision on its use until the grass development over the Autumn and Winter can be evaluated.

Over-seeding and Rolling

It is evident that there are various small and large areas of the lawns that are bare and thus further over-seeding is therefore required. The LAG has agreed that the optimum way forward is a two stage approach:

Stage 1 During September (the best month for seeding) the lawns will be dimple seeded by Talbot Farm. The lawns will be rolled at the same time as both activities require the ground to have some "give" in it. Neither activity can take place with hard ground.

Dimple seeding has the great advantage that lawns only need to be closed whilst seeding is taking place (either one or two days). However, because the date is weather (rain) dependent, it is awkward from a lawn closure point of view. I have therefore marked up the lawn booking sheets with numerous days (mostly Thursdays and Fridays) in September where closure is possible. This does not mean that the lawns cannot be booked but somebody is going to be unlucky and have their booking cancelled. I will agree the wording of a warning to club members with Linda or the committee - whichever is preferred.

Stage 2 Depending on how well the dimple seeding germinates and develops during September and early October, it may be necessary to hand (broadcast) seed some areas of the lawns. If the LAG decide this is necessary, then the proposal is that two lawns are closed for two or three weeks immediately after finals weekend. The second pair of lawns would be closed at the end of October when the first pair of lawns would re-open. Germination at the end of October is not good but the only alternative is to close the all the lawns after finals weekend for two or three weeks until germination is established.

Note that both Stage 1 and 2 are subject to weather conditions.

Chemicals budget for 2019

At present this looks like it will be lower than budget of £2200/year but offset against this is the additional by additional expenditure on granular fertiliser this year.

John Wallace

15/7/18

Membership Report 20.07.2018

Attached are 2 Membership reports, one for the Committee showing the members who have left or changed membership category.

An additional current Membership List is also attached and this one will be sent to Members.

Unfortunately 16 members left but the Club benefited from 2 people rejoining.

Currently there are 54 Full Members, 14 Social, 2 Associate, 3 Student, 2 Country and 5 Life giving a total of 80 Members

In addition, there are 2 more students and 4 adults starting coaching who hopefully will be joining at a later date.

Bridge

Bridge has been stopped for 2 months and will resume at the beginning of September. During August, 3 of the 4 Tuesdays had Social Bookings and another has been arranged for August. Clearly these bookings which are a very valuable source of revenue need to take priority over bridge. In addition some of the bridge players had matches and others had grandparent duties making it very difficult to get even 2 tables arranged.

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Property Report

Not much to report this month.

Hedges and Edges.

While the grass has not been growing the hedges have not stopped and need cutting.

Social bookings.

At the time of writing we now have had 2 successful social bookings completed and have 3 more with the next on 17th July.

Thank you to all those members who have helped to run these evenings they are a valuable contribution to the club funds. We need volunteers for the remaining dates:-

Tuesday 24th July and Tuesday 14th August.

Tournament Secretary's Report

The results of matches played since the last committee meeting are as follows

Association Croquet:

Advanced League (Parkstone Trophy) Division 1:

East Dorset 1 Nailsea 3

Advanced League (Parkstone Trophy) Division 2:

Nailsea 2nds 2 Bath 3

Advanced League (Parkstone Trophy) Division 3:

Nailsea 3rds 4 Sidmouth A 3

Nailsea 3rds 7 Sidmouth B 0

Federation League:

Nailsea Central 3 Camerton & Peasedown 2

Nailsea Central 5 East Dorset 2

Weston super Mare 3 Nailsea Central 4

Cornwall 3 Nailsea South 4

Lym Valley 4 Nailsea South 3
 Nailsea South 3 Budleigh Salterton 4
 Nailsea South 0 Sidmouth 3 w/o

Intermediate League:

The Bears 5 Nailsea North 0
 Nailsea North 1 Kington Langley 6
 Nailsea Central 2 East Dorset 5
 Nailsea Central 6 Bristol 1

Golf Croquet:

GC Level Play League:

Nailsea 17½ Dyffryn 2½

GC Handicap League:

Weston super Mare CN 12 Nailsea Central North 8
 Nailsea Central North 10½ Bristol 9½
 Bath Central North 8 Nailsea Central North 12
 Nailsea Central North 11½ Kington Langley 8½
 Nailsea Central South 11 Dowlish Wake Central South 9
 East Dorset South East 11½ Nailsea South East 8½
 Nailsea South East 12½ Kingston Maurward 7½
 Nailsea South East 6 Swanage 14

The following tables show the number of wins, losses and current positions of each of our teams:

Association Croquet:

League	Team	Played	Won	Loss	Current Position
Parkstone Div 1	Nailsea	1	1	0	2 nd =
Parkstone Div 2	Nailsea 2nds	3	1	2	3 rd
Parkstone Div 3	Nailsea 3rds	4	2	2	2 nd *
Federation League	Nailsea Central	4	4	0	1 st
Federation League	Nailsea South	5	2	3	6 th
Intermediate League	Nailsea North	4	2	2	3 rd

Intermediate League	Nailsea Central	3	2	1	2 nd =
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*Note that all the matches in Parkstone Division 3 have been completed so this is a final result.

Golf Croquet:

League	Team	Playe d	Won	Loss	Current Position
GC Level Play League	Nailsea	3	3	0	2 nd
GC Handicap League	Nailsea Central North	5	3	2	2 nd
GC Handicap League	Nailsea Central South	2	1	1	4 th =
GC Handicap League	Nailsea South East	4	1	3	7 th

Peter Dyke
(26/07/18)