

Nailsea and District Croquet Club

Minutes of Committee Meeting held on 4th September 2018

Present: Andrew Wimshurst, Mike Tracy, Brigit Clayton, Peter Dyke, Meriel Forshaw.

In attendance: Joan Timmins.

1. Apologies: Linda Shaw, Brian Roynon.

2. Minutes of the meeting 20th July 2018. Agreed and signed as a correct record.

3. Matters arising from the minutes dated 20th July 2018

Press Officer - continues as work in progress.

Lawn report – As previously agreed Andrew will be updating members on the situation and progress of the lawns.

4. Treasurer's report – discussed and noted .

4.1 Hedge cutting has been arranged for the 24th September 2018, and the cost of this activity was noted.

4.2 Insurance costs have increased this year. Mike has been looking at ways in which this cost may be reduced. However, this requires a detailed and valued inventory to be completed. A previous inventory compiled by Richard Delmas may have been passed over to Brian some years ago. Mike to contact Brian.

Action: Mike

4.3 Negotiations have commenced with the water company regarding reduction in the cost of water used for irrigation which is not returned to the sewer. Mike now has to complete a seven page document to achieve a minimum discount. The water provider informed him that 'a discount for water not returned to sewers is normally granted to properties where there is an ongoing problem.' Forms will be completed and discussions will continue. An application will be made shortly.

Action: Mike

5. Bank Mandate

The present banking practice and mandate do not conform to the constitution. The club has to create a new mandate, and due to the complexities of banking practice, it was agreed that the mandate will be revised after the AGM in line with the constitution.

6. Website

All committee members have looked at the website and put forward their comments.

It was agreed that the website would always be running behind unless we had a designated manager to update the site.

Suggestions for improvements:- updating information regularly, competitions, results of competitions, which could be undertaken by the tournament officer. Team captains to provide a report for the website and the newspaper, update the gallery section with photos. Valuable information that doesn't change, plus up to date news.

The main question: 'What should be on our website? What do members want to know?'

Response: information needs updating when it happens, this requires time and effort, and if we do this will it encourage people to look at the site?

Way forward: All members to receive an e-mail asking: 1) How often to you visit the NDCC website? 2) What are you looking for? 3) How can we make improvements? **Action: Andrew**

7. Property Report: discussed and noted.

7.1 Mike has contacted Sandra regarding the possibility of the 100 club money being used on items, which would be of benefit to the club and members. Sandra has put up a notice in the clubhouse asking members for suggestions on how some of the money could be spent. Eg. - a new bench. Brigit reminded the committee that there was a remembrance plaque on one of the benches and this would need to be placed on a new bench.

7.2 Repairs: Benches: Tony Willoughby had undertaken to repair the present benches and is also working on the stop boards. Trolley: Brian has now repaired the broken wheel on one of the trolleys.

7.3 Croquet Ashes - Peter will contact Harry Wallace re the Croquet Ashes for the Australian competition. **Action: Peter**

7.4 Gate proposal – following discussion it was agreed that a new gate could not be afforded at the present time.

7.5 Mike expressed his thanks to Brian and Brenda for all their hard work in ensuring that the socials were successful and for raising a substantial amount of money for club funds.

8. Membership Report: discussed and noted.

8.1 Correction to the report, - should read; full members 56; student members 4.

Losses and gains of members discussed.

8.2 It was noted that one junior had paid for 10 sessions but to date they had not been completed. When completed Peter will give the parent an application form for further lessons. Cost agreed £10 for the remainder of the season. Safeguarding forms are now available to be given to parents. **Action: Peter**

8.3 Mike and Coral are working together to update information on the CA membership website. Mike has been in contact with Mark Suter regarding the reliability of the CA database, the question being how the system deals with members who are members of two clubs, the website not being user friendly. **Action: Coral / Mike**

9. Lawns Report: discussed and noted.

9.1 Mike explained the following: The purchase of ‘Growth Regulator’ chemical for the lawns.

Fortunately, this chemical is relatively inexpensive. Unfortunately, it is a licensed chemical and requires an individual club member with a license to undertake the spraying of the lawns. The one off cost of spraying by a contractor is £50 .

Normally, in a year the lawns would require to be sprayed 4-5 times at a cost of £250.

Option 1) to identify a member who holds a license. 2) Identify an appropriate course and a willing member to attend. 3) Protective clothing would have to be purchased. 4) Use a licensed provider.

Due to the current financial situation the committee will reconsider the longterm plan for use of this chemical. **Action: Mike**

9.2 Winter Play: It was agreed to accept John Wallace’s offer to email members and inform them of what will be happening over the winter period. **Action: Meriel**

10. Constitution

The proposed amendments to the constitution were discussed and a document will be prepared to highlight the amendments ready for the AGM in November.

Action: Meriel

Andrew thanked those individuals who had helped in reviewing the Constitution.

Andrew agreed to send out a newsletter to members.

Action: Andrew

11. AGM

The AGM will be held on Saturday 10th November at the NDCC clubhouse.

Notice/Information will be sent to members prior to the meeting in line with the Constitution.

The roles of President and Chair will become vacant in the coming year.

Matters for AOB, proposals/nominations must be submitted at least 3 weeks before the date of the meeting and must be submitted on the appropriate forms and sent to the secretary.

Anything received after this time will not be considered.

Action: Meriel

12. Recruitment Report: discussed and noted.

The committee expressed its thanks to Kathy and Erica for their hard work.

13. Dates for next season: discussed and noted.

First day of season	Sat 30 March
Charity one ball	Sunday 31 March
SWF Short Croquet Teams	Fri 12 April - Sun 14 April
Easter weekend	20/21 April
Hospice event/Open Day	18 or 19 May?
C Class Advanced Tournament	8/9 June
B Class Advanced Tournament	6/7 or 13/14 July
Open Advanced Tournament	10/11 August
B Class GC Tournament	Tues 13 August
Treasurer's Tankard	Thurs 5 Sept - Monday 9 Sept
Club semi-finals	21/22 Sept
Club Finals	5/6 Oct

Events in bold are set in stone. Tournaments should be 4 or 5 weeks apart for hoop setting reasons and the managers must be available.

Advise Kathy dates have been agreed and she can now inform the CA. **Action: Meriel**

Request Brian McCausland to organise a team for the short croquet event at Budleigh Salterton. **Action: Peter**

14 SWF League Report: discussed and noted.

Peter presented his report, highlighting results and positions as presented in the table.
The recent game against Taunton Deane was discussed and the question of handicaps raised.
Nailsea have a team in the final GC level play on the 15th September 2018.

14.1 Nailsea are hosting the final GC handicap league game on the 30th September 2018.
Peter referenced an email received from John G. re the condition of the lawns at Nailsea.
Peter has replied to him. Unfortunately Peter may not be available to manage the day but
would approach Brian Roynon to see if he would be available. **Action: Peter**

14.2 We need to consider the league teams for next year. Proposal to enter B league again and
also High Handicap GC; we would need a minimum of eight players for the HHGC.
Action: Peter

14.3 Kathy would like to put up a league table fixture list on the notice board for AC ; Peter
would do the same for GC. The committee agreed that this was a good idea as players would
be kept informed and up to date. **Action: Peter**

15. Club Competitions

Linda prepared a report to be discussed in her absence; unfortunately, due to lack of time
discussion did not take place

16. GC C Class event – not discussed.

17. Ryan's Proposal

The committee agreed that Peter would contact Ryan and discuss his proposal. **Action: Peter**

18. AOB

18.1 SW Federation AGM – Proposals must reach Linda Shaw by the 30th September 2018.

18.2 Visitors: it was agreed that the £5 charge would be per day. The book for recording
visitors' attendance will be ready for use and in place in the clubhouse after the AGM.

Action: Brigit

18.2 Mike asked the question: what would members prefer - paper towels or hand drier in the
kitchen. For further discussion.

Action: Mike

19. DONM: Monday 15th October at 10am at Mike's house.

The meeting closed at 12.45 hrs.

Signed as a true and accurate record

Name.....

Signature.....

Date.....

Reports

Treasurer's report for NDCC committee meeting 4th September 2018

Spreadsheet attached. You can print the summary page if you wish by going to the High Level Actuals worksheet tab.

Current balance at the bank less unpresented cheques is £9,226.43

The deficit for the year is £10,315.21

These figures were recorded on 29/08/2018.

The figures above are similar to those in my previous report, but there has been significant activity. Our insurance premium has been paid, up almost £100 from last year at £1,045.46. We may be able to do a little better in the future by shopping around, but to do this I need an adequately detailed and valued inventory. I will have to ask for help in this area. We have received a grant from the Bristol Airport Platinum Community Fund of £500 and I have sent thanks for this. We have also had a number of 'social' visits. The contribution for these over the year has been £692.50. My thanks to Brenda and Brian for looking after the booking and organising of these evenings.

Expenditure for the next few months is subject to a number of variables.

- Electricity charges will continue at £39 pcm. Water charges are currently £86 pcm, but when they are next revised these will increase significantly.
- John's estimate of water costs for irrigation a few weeks ago was £700. I am trying to negotiate a reduction because the water used for irrigation is not returned to the sewer. If the application is successful it will not make a huge difference. (The sewerage charge is normally based on the volume of water consumed. Water not returned to the sewer reduces the charge by 5%, so the most we could hope for is a proportion of 5% of the sewerage charge). I do not hold out a great deal of hope for this initiative as it is a one-off, but we will have to wait and see. In any event, I do not know when the direct debit will be revised and to what extent.
- Chemicals purchase for this year is almost complete (we may obtain growth regulator, cost about £60). Purchase for next year would normally be done before the end of the year to avoid price rises, but this could be deferred until the spring. John has calculated that next year's chemicals will cost £1,774. Delaying the purchase would help cashflow when considering the purchase of a new mower, but only if changes are made to the constitution to bring forward the payment of membership subscriptions.
- Talbot has quoted £1,302 for rolling (already in the original contract) and dimple seeding the whole area. This work is planned for September 6th/7th, weather permitting.
- Match fees, league match travel expenses and the Christmas meal should be close to financially neutral.

- We have an Open Advanced tournament on September 2nd but at the time of writing there are no entries for this, so the financial outcome is unknown.

Replacing the Toro mower is the big question. Here is my forecast for where we will be at the end of March, which is about the time the purchase will be made. In round numbers, we have £9,000 in the kitty at the moment and will have spent £270 on electricity, £1,300 on rolling and reseeding, maybe £1,000 on water charges and £660 on hedge cutting, leaving £5,770. I assume here that subscriptions will not have been received. I am hearing suggestions that the replacement mower will cost somewhere between £5,000 and £6,500 + VAT, i.e. £6,000 to £7,800. We will be choosing between machines with varying ages and hours of use. I suggest that we request a loan from the CA of up to £5,000. This will enable us to buy chemicals for 2019, spend £8,000 on the Toro replacement and have £1,166 in the kitty before subscriptions come in. If subscriptions arrive earlier I can draw down a smaller loan.

4th September 2018 Property Report

Hedges and Edges.

The hedges are being cut on the 24th September by Swift Tree Surgery at a cost of £660. They will cut the tops down to about 6ft and the inside back as far as possible on all 3 hedges. The work will start at 8.30 am.

Bench Repairs.

The bench on the South end of the lawns is showing its age and falling apart. Tony Willoughby has been asked to carry out repairs to keep it going a bit longer. He is also doing some work on the stop boards.

Trolley Repairs.

One of the wheels on lawn 1 trolley has been smashed either by a ball or from being taken up or down the steps. I have fitted a new one. Could I remind player not to take the trolleys up or down the steps but use the ramp and board access points.

NDCC Ashes.

The ashes have been produced for the Ashes Tour. What should I do with them. (politely)

Gate Proposal.

A member made a suggestion that I think could be worth considering in the future. It has been suggested that if we replaced the gates with a 2 metre high metal gate arrangement we would be secure enough to leave the hoops in.

Social bookings.

We have now completed the six social bookings for this year and all were successful and enjoyed by the participants.

Thank you to all the members who assisted with the running of the events.

Membership Report 04.09.2018

We have welcomed 4 new members since the last meeting, 2 are Associate Members and 2 Full Members. This brings the total membership of the Club to 84, made up of:-

Full members 56
Social 13
Country 2
Student 4
Associate 4
Life 5

Mike has been helping me with updating the membership data for the CA database but we encountered various difficulties which we hope to overcome fairly soon. There are problems establishing whether members are prepared to have their details fully available to all CA members etc. to comply with GDPR regulations.

Bridge was cancelled for July and August as there were valuable Social Bookings for 6 of the 8 Tuesday evenings. However it resumes on Tuesday September 4 and will be in the evening until after Finals Weekend when it will change to the afternoon.

Coral

Lawn Maintenance Report - September 2018

1.Lawns

During August rainfall has returned to more normal levels (Figure 1) and as result the grass has responded with more vigorous growth. The emergency irrigation programme was halted on August 4th in response to weather forecasts. Although the total cost of around £950 was high, it is noticeable that the young grass sown on April 20th has generally survived the summer drought.

The grass surface is much improved but still bobbly. This is because the dwarf rye grass initially spreads by tillering (lateral shoot growth from the central crown of the plant). On a longer time-scale the roots and crown spread out. At present the latter process is not complete and the grass exists as a series of tufts with small gaps - hence the slightly bumpy nature at present. This will gradually disappear as the lawn matures. Lawn speed after preparation for the Open tournament was 10.6 plummers which is on the slow side because the grass cutting height is stuck at 6mm. This is a Toro restriction at present. Next year cutting height will be reduced to 4 or 5mm, depending on rainfall. Grass growth was assisted by the application of a slow release granular fertiliser impregnated with mycorrhizal fungi on August 4th. The latter plays an important part in a developing healthy turf by:

- a. Augmenting the nutrient supply to the grass roots (In particular, phosphorous in exchange for carbon - a classic symbiotic relationship)
- b. Creating micropores in the soil and cementing these in place by virtue of excreting a chemical that binds the soil particles together. This substantially improves soil structure.
- c. Assisting in the suppression of annual meadow grass. Tests have shown that with the correct balance of soil bacteria and mycorrhizal fungi the dwarf rye grass will thrive whilst the meadow grass will not.

Soil structure was lost during the levelling process (hence the winter flooding) but is gradually returning. The effects of grass roots and regular Revolution spraying have gradually created a more porous soil structure that is less prone to flooding. This was evident last weekend when, despite heavy rainfall only a few puddles appeared (mostly on Lawn 1). Within four hours of rain ceasing, all the puddles had disappeared. Photographic evidence of this was distributed to the LAG. By comparison, in amongst the very dry summer weather there was some heavy rain at the end of May. This took several days to clear.

I am hopeful that as the grass roots and mycorrhizal fungi develop the soil porosity will develop further and lawn puddles will only occur under severe weather conditions. Around the country high quality lawns such as Bowdon also suffered from puddling last weekend.

The last Revolution spray was applied on 24th August, just before the rain arrived, thus avoiding the need for irrigation to water it in. The effects will last until the end of September by which time there should be sufficient rainfall to avoid any dry patch development. During the winter months I plan to do some spraying with Dispatch which was acquired over the winter to help minimise flooding. Dispatch is simply a water dispersant (into the soil) but as the lawns and soil structure are still developing it may help to keep the surface drier than would otherwise be the case.

2. Top Dressing

I have been asked about top dressing the few areas that puddle with a view to completely levelling these areas. For the moment I have no plans to do anything until the effects of the rolling and dimple over-seeding/general lawn development are evident. The problem with top dressing is that it requires the lawns to be closed whilst the sand settles down and the grass grows through. If the lawns need to be closed because of broadcast over-seeding after finals weekend then some top dressing may be considered. The subject needs an LAG discussion but the committee view on lawn closures would be a useful input. Members

have put up with a long lawn closure due to levelling and I am keen to minimise future disruption over the coming winter/spring.

3. Future over-seeding techniques.

Over-seeding the sparsely covered areas of the lawns is a priority this year - hence the two stage strategy that involves Talbot Farm dimple seeding in September and NDCC following this up with broadcast seeding in October.

Over-seeding every year is generally a good idea because individual grass plants lose their vigour after two or three years. A regularly over-seeded thick, vigorous sward discourages unwanted weeds and grasses and tends to minimise the effects of pests and diseases. In future years it would be useful if the over-seeding could be effected without the use of a contractor. Mechanisms to achieve this are worthy of an LAG discussion.

4. Toro Replacement

The need to replace the Toro with a newer, easier to maintain, version has been accepted. Apart from maintenance problems, our inability to cut the lawns at anything lower than 6mm is causing members problems. Immediately after mowing grass growth starts from 6mm and quickly results in long grass that makes the lawns slow and difficult to play on.

Toro themselves have set up a direct sales team that supplies new machines to golf clubs, taking in older machines in part exchange. To support this activity they are creating approved maintenance companies. In Bristol the company is AJ Mowers who appear to be both responsive and economical. My initial discussions with AJ Mowers suggests that most second hand Toro's will become available in the spring as golf clubs buy in new machines for the new season. This is quite convenient from an NDCC point of view as it gives us the Autumn/Winter to develop the grass coverage and eliminate any sandy spots from the surface. If the mower picks up sand onto the rollers/cutting reels it rapidly blunts the blades.

The plan is therefore to keep the existing Toro (complete with not very sharp cutting blades) going until the spring. This does mean incurring some maintenance expenditure such as a new battery (cost£70) but ensures that the replacement Toro will not be exposed to significant sand pick up on the reels.

5. Winter play

The plan has always been to keep the lawns open over the winter. Some members seem uncertain about this so it might be worth the committee mailing everybody. If requested I will email them myself.

The only caveats are:

- a. Play will not be possible if excessive rain leaves the ground muddy - no change from previous years.
- b. No play if the ground is frozen or frosty.
- c. Members are prepared to mow the lawns and maintain the white lines/ hoop holes.
- d. If over-seeding in October is required some temporary (say 3 week) lawn closures will be required to allow the broadcast seed to germinate.

Recruitment Report for meeting on 4 September 2018

2018

Linda, Erica, Tony Hinchliffe and I have given/are giving beginners lessons to 8 people. One was a member from late last season; 3 have joined recently; one has expressed an intention to join; I am hopeful that another 2 will join for the remainder of this season but unsure beyond that. The 8th one is being coached only by Linda and I don't know about his intentions.

In addition to these 8, I have been coaching 2 players from another club. They are Associate Members of NDCC this year but I am very hopeful that they will become full members in 2019.

There are new juniors attending sessions and some are members

We have also recently acquired a new Junior and her father who is an established player has joined so that he can play croquet with her at the club.

Recommending some people to go straight to GC coaching has worked well this year. Tony Hinchliffe did the majority of it but Erica organised it and Doreen and Harry also ran one session. All 3 takers have joined the club (the 3 mentioned above)

2019

We are very much hoping to run the Hoops for Hospice event that had to be postponed last year. I see this as a different version of our traditional Open Day. Recent Open Days have not been very productive in terms of recruitment and I feel that we need to do something different. By involving the Hospice, we might attract interest from a more varied section of the community whilst also raising money for them. I propose an entry fee of about £2 or £3 (free for school age children). This entry fee would include a taster game of GC - as given in previous Open Days. There would be the option of further competitive games of GC, for both individuals and teams. A charge would be made for this competition. (£1/person?). There would also be sideshows with AC skills competitions - again £1 to enter? Refreshments

would raise additional funds for the Hospice on the basis agreed by the Committee last year.

I hope that the event described above would engage all our members and not alienate any. I also hope that it would showcase the two different codes. Application forms for lessons would be very much on hand, as would gift vouchers for sets of lessons (again, on the financial basis agreed by the Committee last year). It would be advertised as a fun day to help the hospice with the proposed flyer for last year being suitably edited and presented to the Committee for approval. The Hoops for the Hospice slogan would still be part of the publicity campaign

I would favour a May date when the likelihood of a warm dry day is higher than it is in April. The fact that coaching would start later is unimportant - flexibility has worked well this year.

Erica is keen to help with this event. If the Committee wants a traditional Open Day in addition to the Hospice Day, Erica might be willing to organise it but she doesn't want to be involved in both. Neither do I! Also the publicity budget would have to be shared and I really want to blitz the area with flyers, posters and social media posts. More businesses will take posters for a Hospice event than for a croquet event. I might be able to get radio and TV involved.

I have suggested 18 or 19 May. Not sure whether a Saturday or Sunday would work best. I suspect people have more free time on Sundays. We need to avoid major sporting events like the Cup Final. We also need, if possible, to avoid sending lots of teams involving good workers to Away matches that day as we will need a lot of helpers.

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:

Dyffryn 4

Nailsea 5

Nailsea 5

Cheltenham 4

Advanced League (Parkstone Trophy) Division 2:

Nailsea 2nds 2 Budleigh Salterton 3

Nailsea 2nds 1 Taunton Deane 4

Federation League:

Bath Central 1 Nailsea Central 4

Nailsea Central 6 Bristol 1

Nailsea South 1 Taunton Deane 6

Intermediate League:

Swindon 2 Nailsea North 3

Kingston Maurward 0 Nailsea Central 3 w/o

Nailsea Central 3 Weston-super-Mare Central 2

Golf Croquet:**GC Level Play League:**

Camerton & Peasedown 5 Nailsea 15

Nailsea 12 Cheltenham 8

Nailsea 10½ Bristol 9½

GC Handicap League:

Nailsea Central North 10 Abbey 10

Weston-super-Mare CS 15½ Nailsea Central South 4½

Nailsea Central South 10 Taunton Deane 10

Nailsea Central South 5 East Dorset Central South 3

Nailsea South East 13 Dowlish Wake South East 7

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 Division 1	Nailsea	3	3	0	1 st /5
Parkstone Division 2	Nailsea 2nds	6	1	5	3 rd /4
Parkstone Division 3	Nailsea 3rds	4	2	2	2 nd /3

Federation League	Nailsea Central	6	6	0	1 st /7
Federation League	Nailsea South	6	2	4	6 th /7
Intermediate League	Nailsea North	4	2	2	3 rd /4
Intermediate League	Nailsea Central	5	4	1	2 nd /6

Nailsea Central has won the Central Section of the Federation League and will play Taunton Deane in the semi-final at Nailsea. This will be played on Sunday, 2 September. The final is at Cheltenham on Saturday, 29 September.

Golf Croquet:

League	Team	Played	Won	Draw	Loss	Pts	Current Position
GC Level Play League	Nailsea	6	6	0	0	12	1 st
GC Handicap League	Nailsea Central North	6	3	1	2	7	3 rd
GC Handicap League	Nailsea Central South	5	2	1	2	5	3 rd
GC Handicap League	Nailsea South East	6	3	0	3	6	3 rd

Nailsea has won the Northern Section of the Golf Croquet Level Play League and will play in the final at East Dorset on Saturday, 15 September. Nailsea is the “home” team.

Peter Dyke
(01/09/18)