

Nailsea and District Croquet Club
Minutes of committee Meeting held on 15th October 2018

Present: Andrew Wimshurst, Mike Tracy, Brigit Clayton, Coral Harrison, Meriel Forshaw.
In attendance: Joan Timmins

1. Apologies: Brian Roynon, Linda Shaw, Peter Dyke

2. Minutes of the meeting held on the 4th September 2018. Agreed and signed as a correct record.

3. Matters arising from the minutes dated 4th September 2018.

3.1 Press Officer – continues as work in progress.

3.2 Web site – It was agreed that there was a lack of up to date information on the web site; apart from Mike no one was updating the site and nothing had been reported on Mad Monday or Wild Wednesday relating to results for some time.

The committee agreed the following:

This section would be removed from the web site and the results would now be displayed in the clubhouse. (Annual results are also displayed in the clubhouse).

The club needs one enthusiastic person to input information on to the web site.

Establish what information members want to see on the web site.

3.3 Ryan's Proposal – responses to Ryan's proposals had been given by Peter Dyke and Linda Shaw.

It was noted that if the club intends to run more tournaments next year we will have to notify the CA.

The committee agreed to run a C Class GC event, the Tuesday after the AC C class date namely 11th June 2019.

It was identified that there would be a need for volunteers on the day.

Mike to liaise with Kathy and it is hoped that this event would become part of the national series. **Action: Mike**

Meriel to write to Kathy to ensure the tournament gets onto the schedule for 2019. **Action: Meriel**

The committee supported Ryan's request to go on a coaching course, and to become a member of the Handicap committee.

The committee agreed: Level GC play to take place throughout the season rather than on one day.

4. Treasurers Report – discussed and noted

Mike has now received the last invoice from Talbot, which was £1300.02; this was more than expected.

With so much uncertainty this year it is difficult to make a precise projection for next year, e.g. - Toro replacement and water charges.

A number of issues were discussed:

Possibility of leasing a Toro machine; asking for an increased loan from the CA, which would be interest free.

Due to the uncertainty of income for the coming year should the club increase subscriptions?

If members have not paid on time then they would not be eligible for league teams.

Do we need to bring payment of subscriptions forward to ease the cash flow issue?

It was agreed that subscriptions would be left as they are but may have to increase in 2019/2020.

5. Replacement Toro

Following discussion, the committee looked towards replacing the Toro machine in January 2019.

It was agreed to stay with the Toro agent, as to date they have provided a good and timely service.

6. Timing of Subscriptions

It was noted that subscriptions now cover winter membership.

Mike will confirm at the AGM that those members who have paid their subscriptions can play through the winter.

7. CA Diploma

Due to the timing when nominations have to be submitted this item has been deferred until next year.

8. Property Report

8.1 The hedges have now been cut, however there will be a need throughout the winter to keep the edges tidy.

8.2 Club keys – Coral has contacted members who have left and requested that they return their keys. Two keys still to be returned.

Bristol members will want keys to use over the winter period and unfortunately these keys take time to be cut. Coral has given her key to a Bristol member. **Action: Brian**

9. Membership Report – discussed and noted

Membership figures shown as at the end of September are relevant for CA levy.

The club has gained another student member.

We have now received seven enquiries from the Bristol club.

Data return to the CA is still an ongoing problem and the membership form for next year may have to be adjusted to capture information required by the CA.

10. Christmas Lunch

The date for the Christmas lunch is 1st December 2018 to be held at the Masonic Hall, Nailsea. Coral will send menus out to members and would like them to complete and return them to her by 1st November 2018 with payment. The caterers require final numbers early November.

11. The 100 Club

11.1 Sandra wishes to retire from managing the 100 Club at the end of the year.

Coral was nominated by Mike and seconded by Meriel to undertake and manage the 100 Club. Coral agreed.

The committee wished to thank Sandra for all of her hard work and hope that she will conduct the 100 club Christmas draw, at the Christmas lunch.

11.2 Spending the money from the 100 club: A number of suggestions have been put forward, - heaters, hand drier for the kitchen, replacement cooker, bench. Coral will speak to Sandra and members of the 100 club. **Action: Coral**

12. Lawn Report – discussed and noted

John has provided a detailed and thorough report on the work undertaken. The committee acknowledged how everyone has worked extremely hard during the year.

The committee wished to thank John and his team with special thanks to David Hunt.

13. Recruitment/ Tournament Report - discussed and noted

The 19th May 2019 was agreed as the Hospice open day.

Meriel to contact Kathy re putting the date on the web site.

Action: Meriel

It was acknowledged that the recruiting teams were doing an excellent job and the committee wished them well with the voucher scheme.

14. AGM/Nominations/Changes to the Constitution.

Nominations for the club committee have been received. Coral will be standing down as Membership secretary at the AGM.

Proposed changes to the constitution were discussed.

The Agenda for the AGM was agreed.

15. SWF League - discussed and noted

Attendance at the SWF AGM – two members usually attend this meeting.

16. Club Competitions

Throughout the season Linda has sent emails to members re club competitions. She has kept everyone informed encouraging them to take part and reminding them when games have to be played. A report on semis and finals will be circulated in due course. **Action: Linda**

17. GC C Class event

Discussed under Ryan's proposal.

18. Winter Croquet Activities

The following was agreed:

Continue with club activities, timing to suit daylight hours.

Keep Monday GC and Wednesday AC afternoons.

Agree some form of competitions for members to play during the winter.

Mike to discuss with Linda.

Action: Mike

19. AOB

Question: Have we put in our entries for the league teams this year? Mike to contact Peter.

Action:Mike

Noted: the award for best improved female player was not awarded on finals day this year.

It was agreed that for the future a criteria is required by which improvements can be measured.

Doreen Wallace had sought feedback from GC members who attend on Monday afternoons re the change in format of the afternoon. The feedback was helpful and encouraging.

20. DONM: Date and time of next meeting to be arranged after the AGM.

The meeting closed at 12.55hrs

Signed as a true and accurate record

Name.....

Signature.....

Date.....

REPORTS

Treasurer's report for NDCC committee meeting 15th October 2018

Spreadsheet for the financial year (which ended 30th September) attached. You can print the summary page if you wish by going to the High Level Actuals worksheet tab.

Balance at the bank less unpresented cheques was £9,689.76

The deficit for the year was £9,851.88

Our biggest expense was the levelling project, £18,056.82 in this financial year which was partially offset by the CA grant of £5,000

Other costs which were incurred during the year which have not appeared in the books include hedge cutting (£660), the invoice not getting to me in time to be included, our final invoice from Talbot which is expected to be about £1,200 and the cost of irrigation, estimated to be about £1,000. The effects of this last item will not become clear until our water supplier takes a meter reading and reassesses our direct debit mandate. I have now received expense claims for petrol (£180) and Pitchmark (£100), both of which would have been paid before 30th September in normal circumstances. I have also received cheques for entry to the B Class tournament (£36) and notification from the CA that the balance of our tournament entry fees will be paid shortly (£275). It would therefore be more realistic to say that our deficit for the year was £11,681 and that the amount left in the kitty was £7,860. This does not take into account the water charges.

I have not attached a spreadsheet which is more up to date than the end of year one as there have been few transactions since then. The hedge cutting invoice has been paid and we have received our first winter membership payment from a Bristol member, hopefully the first of several. We have also had to spend £98 on replacing the Karcher pressure sprayer which is needed for cleaning lawn equipment after use.

I will construct a more detailed, considered report on the club's financial trajectory for the AGM, but we are all aware of the issues, the top one being Toro replacement.

M Tracy

08/10/2018

Membership Report 15 October 2018

I have totalled the Membership as at the end of September which I understand is the date for the levy to the CA.

The figures are:-

63 Full Members (11 of these have joined very recently at a reduced rate)

13 Social

4 Associate

4 Student

2 Country

5 Life

I have been told that there is another Student member but as yet have not had the form.

I have had 5 enquiries from Bristol members regarding winter membership and have emailed them all with Membership Forms but to date, only 1 has joined but after the end of September so not included in the above figures. The problems with the Data Return to the CA continue and Mike and I have brought it up to date as far as possible at this stage, prior to the figure for the number of playing members being calculated and entered.

BRIDGE

The bridge sessions switched to afternoons from 9 October being the first Tuesday after the Finals Weekend. I intend sending out an email to all members advising them that informal bridge sessions take place each week. I hope that there maybe bridge players amongst the new intake.

CHRISTMAS LUNCH

I have assumed that I am taking responsibility for the lunch and have menus which will be available at the meeting.

Coral

Lawn Maintenance Report - October 2018

1. Lawns

Talbot Farm came and rolled the lawns and dimple seeded them. However, as I feared in my last report the ground was too dry and the rolling had minimal effect. The dimple seeding mostly failed for the same reason. We cannot avoid paying the bill but I would be cautious about attempting dimple seeding again in September using a contractor for the simple reason that they are very busy at that time of year. A small value contract is low down the priority list. To be fair to Talbot they did have staff off sick/hospitalised but the key office person was on holiday so communication was difficult.

Part of the problem with the dimple seeding was that the small bare areas where meadow grass had been killed were lower than grass level and the dimples, resting on the grass crowns did not penetrate the soil. To enable re-seeding of these bare areas this David Hunt constructed a small spiker with 20mm spacing. By standing on this device it was possible to punch 8mm holes into the ground and sprinkle seed into the holes. As expected the grass seed readily germinates in these holes and most bare spots now have small green shoots of new grass growing in them. This an extremely labour intensive job, with each half lawn taking 4-6 hours. The exercise is complete but will not be repeated!

Some newer clumps of annual meadow grass are present in the lawns. My original plan was to glyphosate these new clumps and re-seed them with the spiker. However,

based on experience of reseeding the bare areas, it has been decided to leave these clumps for the time being. I plan to rely on the action of the rye grass boosted by mycorrhizal fungi crowding out the meadowgrass over time. To ensure that the existing clumps do not seed next May, Primo Maxx growth regulator will be applied during the spring and summer months. Primo Maxx stops the production of gibberillic acid and hence the rye grass puts its efforts into developing more roots rather than top growth. In the case of annual meadow grass it also prevents the seed from ripening and hence spreading. It's a win-win situation. The only snag is that we need supervision to spray it at £48/session.

Duncan Hector brought a 1L container when he visited the club on October 5th at a cost of £72. This will cover the whole of next season - the main limitation is the supervision cost.

Duncan Hector's general reaction was that the lawns were amazing, given the history. This is probably true but there is a fair way to go before they could be considered good. The new Toro will cut the grass more cleanly and facilitate a lower cutting height. Both will help to improve lawn speed which is a bit slow at around 10 plummers, even when newly cut. The Primo Maxx will also slow re-growth so the grass should stay shorter between cuts.

Like the LAG members, Duncan noticed that the existing Toro is tearing the grass tips and advised us to replace it as soon as possible because of the increased risk of disease. He also confirmed that the current crop of fairy rings are probably type two (there are three types) and can be ignored as they are unlikely to cause damage. The fungi that cause fairy rings are also associated with local dry patch so they are not welcome visitors. We used to have fairy rings before the Revolution spraying was introduced and so I expect them to gradually disappear.

Since Duncan's visit I have been having discussions with him about winter feeding. Having experimented with it himself, he is recommending we consider winter feeding using dilute liquid fertiliser. I have told him that we are short of cash for this year but will consider it for next year.

2. Top Dressing

The lawn surfaces would benefit from a light top dressing smoothed out with a precision lute. However, as this involves contractor expenditure and some lawn closures the earliest this could be considered is next Autumn. Mike Tracy has some concerns about next Autumn (cash, lawn availability) so top dressing may well be delayed beyond 2019 - a bit like Brexit. The focus for the next 12 months will be on improving the grass sward.

3. Future over-seeding techniques.

Most of the lawn area has now been over or re-seeded. However there is 3 yard strip along the North boundary that still needs attention. Geoff Hughes has constructed a disc seeder similar to the plywood version I made in February. He re-used old scarifying blades and I plan to use this to make narrow grooves in the bare soil on the North boundary. Grass seed will be scattered and swept into these grooves. The only requirement is that the ground is soft. The depth of the groove is controlled by the number of bricks piled on the frame. Crude but probably good enough!

4. Toro Replacement

The current Toro is in a sorry state. The alternator has failed so the battery has to be left on trickle charge between cuts. The blades are blunt and the quality of cut is not good. However, the reels cannot be sharpened.

AJ Mowers are expecting a couple of mowers from local golf clubs in January 19. From the outline description, one in particular should be well matched to our needs. Both have modern DPA units with hardened cutter blades and easy adjustment of cutter height and reel/bedknife clearance. This clearance needs regular adjustment to maintain the correct scything action (Not scissor action). It also allows reel rotation to be reversed and hence facilitate blade lapping in between re-grinds. On the current Toro both of these activities requires significant physical effort as does cutter height adjustment.

Easier maintenance and better cutting performance should come from a replacement Toro.

5. Winter play

I had plenty of volunteers for the winter work. Rotas have been issued and work has commenced, starting with the leaf clearance team. Brigit and Brian can give you all chapter and verse on this as the first clearance was on Friday. As is the way, by Saturday when I came to Sarel roll, lawns 1 & 2 were covered again and the Countax had to be employed again! Fitting or removing the leaf collector takes a few minutes so I used the Toro to tow the Sarel roller and left the Countax set up for leaf collection.

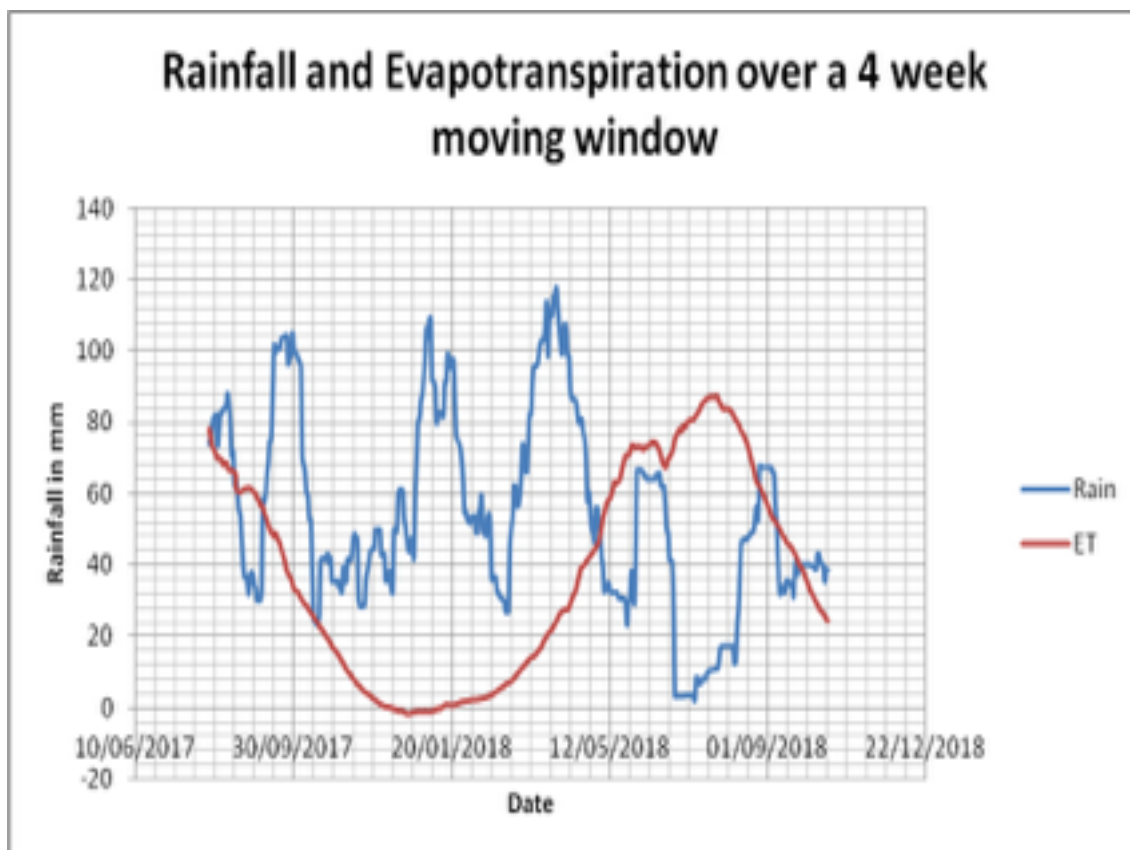
At present, the North boundary area of lawns 3 & 4 is available for play. Once reseeding is complete I plan to shorten the North boundary by 3 yards but keep the lawns open. This should minimise disturbance of the newly seeded area without closing the lawns completely.

6. Weather

Rainfall has settled down at moderate levels and the weather was surprisingly dry during the re-seeding process. Figure 1 shows the usual evapo-transpiration and cumulative rainfall over a 4 week period. We are now into the period where rainfall on average exceeds the water being lost. If the warmer temperatures persist, the re-seeding of the North boundary bare areas should be successful.

John Wallace 13/10/18

Figure 1 Rainfall and Evapotranspiration



Recruitment Report October 2018

Considering the lack of proactive recruitment due to the lawns situation, 2018 has been a really good year for recruitment. We are optimistic that most of the eight beginners and also the two refugees from another club will rejoin in 2019. The situation at Dyffryn (movement to poor lawns near Bridgend) will probably lead to at least another two full members. The Juniors group is larger than it has been for a while and has brought in a parent as well - hopefully, as an ex croquet player, he will rediscover his love for the sport. The winter membership for Bristol players will help the coffers and who knows what else might come out of it.

The Hoops for the Hospice/Open Day is now pencilled in for Sunday 19 May. (Sat 18 May is the FA Cup Final so best avoided).

We will launch the vouchers for lessons in the build up to Christmas and continue from then onwards, with special attention to Mothers Day and Fathers Day and they will be on sale at the HH Open Day.

Tournament Report October 2018

The AC C Class Advanced, AC B Class Advanced and the GC B Class tournaments were all popular and successful and proved a wonderful platform for a certain junior member to launch his senior career. The Open Advanced tournament suffered more

than the others from the lawns situation, in spite of the best efforts of Marcus to entice people. It was a successful weekend in spite of the low number of entries and provided excellent entertainment as scalps fell, incredibly graciously, to.....James. An August date has been set for 2019 and we hope to get the number of entries back to normal. Curiosity about the new lawns and the fact that we have the Treasurer's Tankard here in September should help the cause.

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:

Nailsea 4 Bristol 5

With both teams having played three matches and Nailsea winning all three and Bristol having won two, this was effectively a league final. Each team had three players - Marcus Evans, Kriss Chambers and James Galpin played for Nailsea. They played three rounds of singles. Nailsea got off to a good start winning all three games in the first round, but Bristol won all three games in the second round. In the third round Marcus won and James lost so the result depended on Kriss Chambers' game. His opponent got off to a good start building up a substantial lead, but Kriss came back and caught up. However the Bristol player hit in and finished to win by four points - a close and exciting final match.

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

Association Croquet:

League	Team	Played	Won	Loss	Current Position
Parkstone Division 1	Nailsea	4	3	1	2 nd /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 played Taunton Deane in the semi-final at Nailsea on Sunday, 2 September. Three of the Taunton players played much better than their handicaps and Taunton had a convincing win: **Nailsea 2 Taunton Deane 5.**

Note: Taunton lost 3-4 to Kington Langley in the final.

Golf Croquet:

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

Nailsea has won the Northern Section of the Golf Croquet Level Play League played in the final at East Dorset on Saturday, 15 September. **Result: Nailsea 6 East Dorset 14.** Several games were close and the match was closer than the result suggests.

Golf Croquet Handicap League Final

Nailsea hosted the Golf Croquet Handicap League Final between Abbey and Swanage on 30 September. The Abbey captain, Pamela Branley, contacted me a week before the match to find out the arrangements. When I informed her that we would be charging for lunch she immediately replied, "I will not be having lunch and I doubt if any of my team will, but I will let you know." I heard nothing more from her. Two days later the Swanage captain contacted me. It was quite clear that Pamela had already been in touch with him and he informed me that he did not think his team would require lunch either, but he would let me know. Three days later he confirmed that his team would not be having lunch.

On the day of the match Pamela turns up with her own tea bags and said to Doreen, "I hope you don't intend to charge for hot water." Later in the day she disputed my decision when I faulted her for a blatant double-tap!

The result of the match: **Abbey 15 Swanage 5.**

In my opinion three of the Abbey players played much better than their handicaps and I felt that it was a pity that there was no CA handicapper present to adjust individuals' handicaps if necessary.

Thanks to Coral Harrison for offering to provide lunch. I am sorry that the offer was not taken up. Thanks to Doreen Wallace and Jim Gregory who helped set up the lawns and to Doreen, Libby Howard-Blood and Terry Young who helped serve coffee and teas during the day. Thanks also to the teams who prepared the lawns. John Wallace and the LAGs have done a fantastic job during the season getting the lawns into a good state - the Swanage captain commented on how much they had improved since his team visited Nailsea on 8 July. Thanks also to the members who mowed the lawns and marked the white lines.

One small criticism: I checked the hoops before the match and found that every single one was tight for a handicap league match. I was prepared for them being tight on lawn one, but was surprised to find them tight on lawn two also. I did not have time to adjust them all so I considered it best to leave them. In future I feel they should be set properly for a league final.

Peter Dyke
(10/10/18)