

**Nailsea & District Croquet Club
Annual General Meeting held on
10 November 2018 at 2.00pm in the Clubhouse**

Chair: Andrew Wimshurst

Present: 31 people present – list of names attached (hard copy only)

The meeting opened at 2.00pm

1. Welcome by the President

As President, Pat Long welcomed so many to the AGM. The mild weather had enabled members to play longer and she hoped that that would continue. She had been against the lawn levelling but she had been wrong and it was a great success thanks to John Wallace and all his helpers - she was very grateful. Pat also thanked the Committee for all their hard work in running the Club. Pat hoped that the members who were unwell, would be better soon and be able to play again in the spring. She welcomed Geoff Hughes as the new President; he has been a member of the club for twenty years and had become the on site mechanic!

2. Apologies: Hamish Hall, Tony Griggs, Erica and John Malaiperuman, Pat Thompson, Rob Royffe, Tony and Sandra Bath, Harry Wallace, David Hunt, Joan Timmins, Mike Powell, Peter Longden, Tony Hinchliffe.

3. Minutes of the AGM held on 11 November 2017

The minutes were signed as a true and accurate record of the meeting held on 11 November 2017. Proposed: Mike Tracy; Seconded: Brian Roynon.

4. Matters Arising from the minutes above

There were no matters arising.

5. Chair's Report - Andrew Wimshurst

I must start my report with some comments on the state of our lawns as they are today. Quite honestly it is absolutely astounding, and no one could possibly imagine what they were like this time last year.

The weather as we all remember caused considerable delay to the project which meant that we were only able to seed when the ground had begun to cool. We then had serious flooding of large areas. This inevitably led to poor germination which by the spring were large bare areas in spite of overseeding. Unfortunately the bare patches were colonised by meadow grass, the one thing that we did not want. This then was hand sprayed and later seed introduced into the bare patches where the meadow grass had been. This took hours, all done by John and his band of helpers. The lawns are now level and as the sward gets thicker, they will become even better to play on. We are getting compliments already

No one could possibly appreciate what John has been through - the time and effort John has invested in the project does not bare thinking about and we are all deeply indebted to him.

Looking through my previous reports I am reminded that in 2015 we had to re-negotiate our lease so that Mike could make an application to Sport England in regard to the cost of the levelling project. In spite of all the work put into making the application it was sadly not successful. However we had the funds so the committee gave the levelling project the green light. The following year saw John develop the spec for the project and then evaluate the tenders, resulting in the award to Talbot so that they could begin in the autumn 2017. That was the easy part! The nightmare of last year's winter was to follow.

We are now through that and out the other side and I know that we will receive nothing but compliments about our lawns during the 2019 season.

Two other subjects run through my reports. One is the need to find people to carry on the all the jobs that have to be done to maintain the smooth running of the club. The second is the need for new members.

In respect of finding new/younger people to take on some of the myriad jobs that need to be done. With no apparent candidates for much of the physical work, this problem becomes ever more pressing. None of us are getting any younger and we are soon going to have to accept the prospect of buying in services we can no longer physically manage ourselves. We do already contract out the hedge clipping and we can probably do other jobs gradually, selecting some jobs to be done first that can easily be farmed out ie strimming the perimeter. As more and more assistance has to be bought in, this will inevitably mean an increase in our subs. We are not planning to start this in 2019, but this is an early warning that it is very much on the cards for 2020, unless new figures materialise.

The second theme of my earlier reports has been the need for new members. In spite of the state of the lawns over the past twelve months, membership has held up remarkably well so credit to you all for remaining loyal.

In regards to the drive to recruit new members against all the odds Kathy and Erica have done an excellent job this year. The number of winter members from Bristol is most encouraging. With the club firing on all cylinders once more, I am sure there will be even more success in 2019.

I would like to pay tribute to all of you who give up so much of your time to keep the club running. I would though, especially like to thank those looking after the clubhouse, whose work is taken for granted. Also those who turnout to provide lunches and teas for our visitors, without their support the club would never have gained such a reputation for hospitality. So thank you one and all for your support, helping to make Nailsea Croquet Club an example that other clubs can only aspire to.

I stand down as Chair this year, having been supported throughout by the excellent experienced and hard working committee. I have enjoyed my stint as Chair, so thank you all for the opportunity.

6. Treasurer's Report - Mike Tracy

6.1 Presentation of Accounts

Income and expenditure accounts have been published for the financial year ending 30th September 2018 with the previous year's figures shown for comparison.

The headline figures are a net deficit of £9,839.88 and a closing bank balance of £9,701.76. These figures are distorted by a number of items of expenditure which relate to this financial year and which are usually paid for in this financial year but for which payment was not requested until October. They amount to about £1,600. We are also due a payment from the CA for tournament entry fees of £285. Further, we incurred water charges estimated at about £1,000 for irrigating the lawns which will be picked up by an increase in our direct debit payments during the next year. For comparison with previous years it is therefore more realistic to regard our assets going forward into this year as being about £7,385. Our income for the year was boosted by the CA grant of £5,000 towards the lawn levelling project and a grant of £500 from Bristol Airport Platinum Fund towards the replacement of the Toro, so if we remove those once off exceptional item, our income was down by about £2,500, due to a reduction in membership subscriptions and the shortened playing season.

Are there any questions on the current year?

When compiling this report I read through my report for last year when, if you recall, 30% of the lawns were under water and the future was uncertain. I outlined the best and worst case scenarios, and the appalling weather through the winter and spring followed by the summer drought turned out to be the worst case I described, all the lawns having to be reseeded in the spring. I mentioned that the Toro mower had perhaps two more years of life left in it, but it turns out that this season is its last. We have spent a great deal on maintenance, kept to a minimum by Geoff's efforts, but the poor thing just will not do the job for us next year, even if it keeps going. We will have to replace it early next year. The local Toro agent has told us that he will have a machine that will suit us, probably in January, at a cost of about £5,000 + VAT, depending on how much he has to do to it before sale. I have budgeted £5,500 + VAT, i.e. £6,600 for this. We (i.e. the Lawn Advisory Group, lead by John Wallace) do not plan to spend any exceptional money on the lawns next year (e.g. top dressing, contracted overseeding, rolling) because (a) we cannot afford it and (b) we believe that it is best to exercise patience by giving the new grass time to develop before undertaking further treatment. I hope that everyone agrees that John's efforts on the lawns project have produced exceptional results, especially in view of the weather, and John is to be congratulated and thanked for getting us this far.

It is clear that next year is going to be tight financially and it is to be hoped that having lawns of this quality, open throughout the year, will help us to recruit and retain new members with plenty of activity and a recovering financial situation. There will almost certainly be a cashflow problem at the start of the year because of the need to replace the Toro, and I plan to bridge this with the help of an interest free loan from the CA which I would like to be able to pay off before the end of the financial year. One exceptional source of income will be the hosting of the Treasurer's Tankard in September. Every year the CA holds 'Eights Week'. The top eight players in the country are invited to play in the top event (the President's Cup), then the next eight play for the Chairman's Salver, the next eight play for the Spencer Ell Cup and the fourth eight play for the Treasurer's Tankard. These events are played simultaneously around the country and run from Thursday until the following Monday. Having lawns of a sufficient quality to enable us to host events of this stature was part of our case when applying for the grant. We will receive the CA lawn hire fee (which I believe will be £660) and have the opportunity to profit further from catering. I am pointing this out now so that members will not be taken by surprise when the lawns become unavailable for 5 days (in reality usually

4 days, the Monday being reserved for any play offs that may be necessary) and will understand the very welcome financial benefits that will accrue.

I have prepared a budget for next year based on reasonable expectations in some areas and wild guesswork in others. The purchase of a replacement for the Toro is the big ticket item, and my budget anticipates a deficit of £2,500. Depending on how well reality compares with my guesswork, we may or may not be able to pay off the loan from the CA, but we will certainly survive with a modest pot upon which to build for the future.

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

For this and other reasons which I will talk about later, it is highly desirable that I receive subscriptions earlier than hitherto. Bringing the date when subscriptions become due forward could be perceived as having a year when the subscription is actually paying for less than 12 months of membership. For this reason the committee has decided that despite the decline and projected decline in our financial position we should postpone a request to increase subscriptions until next year.

I propose that the subscription for full membership remains at £140.

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

6.2 Setting of subscription

Mike proposed leaving the subscription at the current rate of £140 but a proposal from Geoff Hughes, seconded by Terry Young proposed the subscription be increased to £150. Proposal carried by 22 for and 2 against.

6.3 Appointment of Honorary Auditor

Mike proposed that the same auditor, Phil Collinson be retained for the coming year. Seconded by Pam Hendry and carried unanimously.

7. Tournament Secretary's Report - Peter Dyke

2018 has been quite a difficult year. As our lawns were levelled and reseeded at the end of 2017, there was some doubt as to when they would be ready for play this year. It was hoped that we would be able to start our season on 1st June and I did not arrange any home matches before 16th June. In the end we were unable to start until 16th June and it was decided that the first weekend would be for members only and four home matches had to be rearranged. Three other matches also had to be rearranged due to illness and non-availability of some of our players. This put a lot of pressure on lawn availability later in the season. However we still managed to play most of our matches and only one cancellation was our fault. When we started our season our lawns were still in poor condition with several bare patches, but the lawn maintenance team did an incredible job throughout the season and by September our lawns were in better shape than most other South West clubs that had suffered badly due to the dry weather during the season.

Association Croquet									
League	Team	Played	Won	Lost	For	Against	Position	% games won	
Advanced	Nailsea	4	3	1	17	14	2/5	55%	48%
Advanced	Nailsea 2nd	6	1	5	12	20	3/4	37.5%	
Advanced	Nailsea 3rd	4	2	2	15	13	2/3	54%	
Federation	Central	6	6	0	25	11	1/7	69%	56%
Federation	South	5	2	3	15	20	6/7	39%	
Intermediate	North	4	2	2	7	13	3/5	24%	49%
Intermediate	Central	4	3	1	17	9	2/6	65%	

Our top Advanced team had a good season and went into their final match undefeated. Their opponents were Bristol who were also undefeated. Nailsea started well winning all three games in the first round, Bristol won all three games in the second round to level the score. In the final round Marcus Evans won and James Galpin lost so the result depended on the remaining game between Kriss Chambers (Nailsea) and Richard Smith (Bristol). Smith got off to a good start, but Chambers fought back. In the end Smith hit in and won by just four points; 5-4 to Bristol.

The Federation Central team qualified for the play-offs. Unfortunately we lost to Taunton Deane by 2 games to 5 in the semi-final; three of the Taunton players played extremely well for their handicaps and totally outplayed our players. The overall percentage of games won by our AC handicap teams was 52%.

Looking forward to next year we intend to enter three teams in the Advanced Leagues, two in the Federation League and two in the Intermediate League.

Golf Croquet										
League	Team	Played	Won	Drawn	Lost	Points	For	Against	Position	% won
Level Play	North	6	6	0	0	12	81½	38½	1/7	68%
Handicap	Central North	6	3	1	2	7	59	61	3/7	49%
Handicap	Central South	5	2	1	2	5	38	50	3/7	43%
Handicap	South East	6	3	0	3	6	48	52	3/7	48%

Each of our Handicap Golf Croquet teams came third in their sections of the league. The overall percentage of games won by our handicap teams was 47%. Our Level Play Golf Croquet team won the North section of the league, but lost to Taunton Dean, 6-14 in the final. The percentage of games won by our GC Level Play team including the final was 63%.

In golf croquet we intend to enter one team in the Level Play League and three teams in the Handicap League next year. There is also a High Handicap League and if there is sufficient interest I would like to enter a team in this event – we need a minimum of six players (preferably eight) who would like to play.

Notable Performances:

We may not have won any of the leagues this year, but one of our members has had an incredible season. **James Galpin** won our C class Association Croquet (AC) Tournament beating Peter Dyke in the final. He was runner-up to David Warhurst in our B class AC Tournament and he won the Bristol B class Tournament. During the season his handicap had come down from 7 to 1½, so I suggested he entered our Advanced Tournament, thinking there was a reasonable chance that he might win one game. In the first round he beat Marcus Evans (-1½) by four; he then beat Kriss Chambers (-1½) by three and, in the final, he beat Mark Suter (-2) by 14. At the end of the tournament his handicap was reduced to 0, a twelve step improvement over the whole season. He has also won the National Junior Championship for the second successive year. During the season he played 42 games of Association Croquet and won 36 (86%). He is now ranked 150 in the World Rankings and 67 in the UK rankings.

In golf croquet he won our B class Tournament, beating Andrea Huxley (Guildford and Godalming) in the final, and qualified for the National B-series final, which he also won. He also played in two of our league teams (Central North in the handicap League) and our Level Play Team. He played a total of 79 games of Golf Croquet and won 62 (78%).

Going back to the Golf Croquet National B-series final, two more of our members qualified. **Graham McCausland** came 9th and **Brian McCausland** came 12th.

Most Improved Female Member of the Club (AC):

Finally I have been criticised for not presenting an award to the most improved female member of our club (AC). It has been pointed out to me that one of our ladies has improved, so I would like to apologise for overlooking her and wish to present the award to **Erica Malaiperuman**.

8. The Committee proposals for changes to the Constitution – attached

All were accepted unanimously.

Proposed Amendments to the NDCC Constitution - August 2018

Following a meeting of Mike Tracy, Brigit Clayton, Peter Longden and Andrew Wimshurst to review the constitution the following changes were suggested for consideration by the committee and then to be approved at the AGM. These have now been considered and below is the final draft - with additions & corrections!

Title

Peter thought that a change was necessary and we agreed that it should now be:-

Paragraph 1. The name of the club shall be the Nailsea and District Croquet Club.

Membership

Paragraph 7. This will now read:-

A person's membership will be deemed to have lapsed if his/her subscription remains unpaid on the 1st day of March

Paragraph 9b. Associate Member. This needed clarification, and will now read:-

Full members of other Croquet Clubs that are affiliated to the Croquet Association who wish to avail themselves of NDCC's facilities.

Paragraph 9d. Social Member. The addition of the word croquet was felt necessary, so the first sentence reads:

Members who do not play croquet but wish to remain involved with the club.

Committee and Officers

Paragraph 13. The length of time that individuals should hold their posts was discussed at some length and as no real consensus could be reached, we agreed to leave it as it is with just the one change - "he/she must stand down" It will thus read:-

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

Paragraph 15.

It was decided to increase the quorum required for meetings from 3 to 4. This will now read:-

The Quorum at Committee meetings shall be four, one of whom must be one of the officers named in Paragraph 13 above.

General Meetings

Paragraph 21. This paragraph concerns the quorum required at an AGM and what happens if the quorum is not attained was felt to need clarification.

An additional sentence is proposed:-

If the Quorum is not attained, the meeting will be abandoned and reconvened within 4 weeks. If at this meeting a quorum is not attained, the club will technically be in default of the Constitution, having no officers and the Trustees will be asked to dissolve the club.

Paragraph 22.

Should the secretary not be present to take the minutes at the AGM then someone else would take the minutes, so the sentence should now read:-

The Secretary or designated person shall take the minutes of the proceedings of all General Meetings.

Subscriptions, Finances and Accounts.

Paragraph 25.

In line with other clubs and in order that members may be eligible for team selection, the date on which subscriptions become payable has been brought forward. This paragraph will now read:-

Thereafter subscriptions are payable on the first of January each year.

Paragraph 29.

In order to facilitate the work of the treasurer it was decided to amend the second sentence to read:-

Cheques drawn on the club's account must be signed by two Committee members one of whom must be a committee officer.

Guests.

Paragraph 36.

Clarification of this paragraph was felt necessary and will now read:-

Subject to the availability of lawns and equipment, members may invite non-members to play with them as guests, as regulated by the committee.

Mike Tracy mentioned that a book was available for members to sign in visitors and the payment of £5 per visitor was to be put into the Committee Box. It was felt that 3 times a year was the maximum expected but in very exceptional circumstances, this could be extended by the Committee.

9. Election of Committee

<u>Name</u>	<u>Role</u>	<u>Proposer</u>	<u>Seconder</u>
Graham McCausland	Chairman	Andrew Wimshurst	Mike Tracy
Mike Tracy	Treasurer	David Hogg	Pat Long
Meriel Forshaw	Secretary	Mike Tracy	Andrew Wimshurst
Peter Dyke	Member	Meriel Forshaw	Mike Tracy
Linda Shaw	Member	Mike Tracy	Joan Timmins
Brian Roynon	Member	Mary Barnes	Polly Reynolds
Andrew Wimshurst	Member	Meriel Forshaw	Mike Tracy

All were accepted with a unanimous vote.

10. Any Other Business

A request had been received for consideration for alterations to be made to the Gents Toilet area for a urinal to be installed. There was insufficient support for this proposal.

11. Date of next AGM

Saturday 7 November 2019 at 2.00pm in the Clubhouse

The meeting closed at 3.30 pm.

Signed as a true and accurate record:

Name.....

Signature..... Date.....