

Nailsea and District Croquet Club
Minutes of Committee Meeting held on 8th January 2019

Present: Graham McCausland, Meriel Forshaw, Mike Tracy, Andrew Wimshurst, Linda Shaw, Brian Roynon, Coral Harrison, Peter Dyke.

In attendance: Joan Timmins

1. Apologies: None

2. Minutes of meeting held on 27th November 2018 - agreed and signed.

3. Matters Arising

3:1 **Press Officer:** John Hancock has agreed to undertake this role. However, John will need input from team captains. Linda will check that the handbook identifies the responsibility of the team captain re. reporting on matches. Team captains could delegate the responsibility of reporting on a match to a member of the team.

Action: Linda

3:2 GC C Class Tournaments 2020

Graham has spoken to Chris Roberts and registered the clubs interest for 2020. Graham has looked at the dates for 2020 and they are similar to 2019.

Peter Dyke has agreed to run the above.

Confirmation is needed by the end of the season (i.e. end of September 2019)

4. Treasurers Report - discussed and noted

4:1 At the time of the meeting, Mike had four cheques and £69 to present to the bank. The report will be updated and sent to Meriel.

Action: Mike

4:2 Christmas Lunch raised a surplus of £141.25; this profit includes money raised from the raffle and quiz. The venue for Christmas Lunch, 2019 and 2020 has been booked.

4:3 An interest free loan of £5000 has been agreed with the CA treasurer. A loan form agreement needs to be completed and signed by the Chairman and Secretary. This loan can be paid back over five years or earlier if preferred.

5. Website

Each committee member had looked at the website. Following detailed discussion it was agreed that there are a number of sections on the website that were no longer relevant and these could be removed; other information needed to be updated and there was a possibility of creating a link to the CA web site. The general agreement is that the website needs to be kept fresh, up to date and informative. Is it possible that individual committee members could take ownership of certain sections? e.g updates on subscriptions could fall to the membership secretary.

Policies such as Privacy and Safeguarding will need to be reviewed and dated as appropriate. It was noted that our website is not password protected.

Peter confirmed that James Galpin will act as a conduit to upload/update match reports. Reference to 'the secretary' to be removed from heading on the website. Mike and Linda will work together in preparing the site for the future.

Action: Mike/Linda

6. Committee Diary

The committee agreed that there was a need to keep a diary, which would identify tasks that need to be undertaken and completed throughout the year.

E.g. Policy reviews, membership renewal, dates and venues to be booked etc..

Committee members to send Meriel dates of when things need to be done so that she can collate it.

Action: All

7. Skittles

As previously agreed Brian has looked at different venues for the annual skittles event. Clarence House at Portishead seems to be the only available venue with two or more alleys. Therefore, it was

agreed that the skittle event would be held at Clarence House, Portishead, on the 23rd February 2019 at 7pm. Two lanes have been booked. Brian will confirm the booking and calculate the cost. Brian to email members with the information.

Action: Brian

8. Property

8:1 The 'honours' boards have been taken down and will be updated. Stop boards around lawn one to protect the cars are being made; these boards can be removed when lawn one is being mowed.

8:2 Social bookings – we have had one enquiry for June 2019. This will be at a charge of £7.50 per person.

8:3 The new cooker has arrived, units have been adjusted to create the space and the cooker can now be connected following some adjustments by Brian and Terry.

Action: Brian

9. Membership

Application forms for 2019 have now been agreed and will be sent to members. It was noted that problems occur when trying to reconcile club membership with CA membership numbers. Therefore, in order to alleviate this problem, Standard CA membership will be obligatory in the future unless a member is already a CA Premium member. Andrew will contact all the parents of junior members individually to explain how this information is entered on to the database.

Action: Andrew

10. Membership rates for juniors

Kathy had asked for clarification on this matter. It was agreed that the junior rate is 30% of the full membership rate, which at the present time equates to £45. The information in the handbook is correct. Meriel will respond to Kathy.

Action: Meriel

11. Recruitment

11:1 Despite a difficult start to 2018, recruitment has been good this year. Bristol players have enjoyed winter membership. The Hoops for the Hospice/Open day has been pencilled in for Sunday May 19th 2019.

11:2 Meriel received an email from the CA (via Kathy) looking for clubs to host CA events in 2018 and 2019 that had not already been bid for. We are already committed to hosting the Treasurer's Tankard this year and do not wish to take on any more. Most of the events where the CA needs host clubs in 2019 require at least 5 lawns. The CA will be looking for clubs to bid for 2020 events soon, so it was decided not to bid for 2018 or 2019 events, but to put in a bid for one or more of the 2020 events. Meriel to reply to Kathy.

Action: Meriel

11:3 An idea to offer a croquet lesson at school fetes as a raffle prize was suggested and Graham will follow this up with Kathy.

Action: Graham

12. 100 Club

Our new cooker arrived on the 7th January 2019; thanks to Brian for re-engineering the kitchen cabinets so that we have a space in which the new cooker can be fitted. After the purchase of the cooker the balance of funds in the 100 club is £70. It was agreed to leave the money in the fund for the time being. Coral will email members who did not attend the Christmas lunch to encourage them to join the 100 club. A licence was applied for and received and will be put up in the clubhouse.

Action: Coral

13. Lawns Report - discussed and noted

13:1 The committee expressed thanks to John for his detailed report. In line with John's suggestion the committee agreed that lawn two would be closed to play for the remainder of the winter. Graham will contact John.

Action: Graham

13:2 The committee agreed the expenditure on lawn seed etc..

13:3 Andrew will contact Geoff re machinery repairs; he has been talking with Wrington Mowers.
Action: Andrew

13:4 Excess machinery – it was agreed to defer this item until a future meeting.

14. Report on SWF AGM

References to the minutes of the above meeting have been circulated in the Cygnet magazine. Changes have been identified to the structure of the committee – Brian Wilson is now Chairman. Changes and decisions made were summarised; the full minutes are on the SWF website. There are new national and international Golf Croquet rules this year. It would appear that up to date information on these changes have not been shared as well as they might have been. There is information in Cygnet re workshops to enable clubs to update and there is a two page article in the December 2018 Gazette on the changes. SW Academy are holding update sessions and Cheltenham are holding sessions for their members; other venues may be available. Information will be in the January 2019 Cygnet magazine. Nailsea club will hold a workshop in February/March 2019. Linda to agree dates and inform members.

Mike will order copies of the AC and GC rules.

Action: Linda/Mike

15. Club Competitions

Kathy is the club competition secretary – programmes and entry forms will be sent out to members. Linda and Kathy have agreed that level play competitions will take place throughout the season, as had been agreed by the committee last year. Linda will contact Ryan re management of the Golf Croquet level play competitions and ensure that Ryan knows he is now a member of the Golf Croquet handicap committee. Peter had already been in contact with him about this.

Action: Linda

16. Fixtures Secretary's Report

Peter's report on fixtures has been sent to individual committee members. Bath needed to change the date of their Golf High Handicap league game to Thursday 4th July 2019. Other changes may have to be made.

17. Golf Croquet Ashes

Over the last few months there has been correspondence between Peter Coles (Australia), Peter Dyke, Harry Wallace and Robin Hendry (Nailsea). After reading the correspondence and taking into consideration the views of Peter, Harry and Robin the committee agreed that they did not wish this event to develop into a top level croquet ashes event. Harry and Robin have committed to the 2019 friendly event, which will be played on the 6th August 2019 at Nailsea. It was agreed that this would remain a social event with Nailsea. Peter will send an email to Mark Suter.

Action: Peter

18. CA Diploma

Deferred.

19. Any Other Business

19:1 Peter had received an email from Stephen Custance-Baker re the possibility of Nailsea hosting the Federation league or the Advanced league, Division 3 finals on 28th/29th September 2019. Two lawns would be required. It was agreed that Nailsea would offer to host the Federation League match on the 28th September 2019. If required, Coral would be available to provide lunch for this event. However, teams would have to pay for lunch. Peter to reply.

Action: Peter

19:2 SW Federation are running another handicap workshop Linda will remind Ryan of the date; Peter will remind captains.

Action: Linda/Peter

19:3 Coaching Qualifications - A two day course AC and GC will be run by Dave Kibble at Nailsea. Dave will not be charging for this event. However, there will be an attendance charge of £5 per person which includes tea and coffee. Linda will send email to members with information and provisional dates. Linda will also send out general information to members regarding coaching opportunities.
The committee wished to thank Dave for his continued support to the club.

Action: Linda

19:4 Date for the summer BBQ will be held on Friday 5th July at the home of Mike and Liz Tracy.

19:5 Handicap Cards - Those members who have played in competitions during the winter should keep a record of their scores, in order that they can complete their handicap cards at a later date. Peter is presently in the process of checking the handicap cards. Linda will email members regarding the importance of recording scores on the main board.

Action: Linda

19:6 Club Referees - The committee recognised the lack of referees within the club. Peter to check with Brigit Clayton and confirm if she is an assistant referee or a qualified referee.

Action: Peter

19:7 Apps Hely Award

The application has been completed and passed to Paul Francis. Andrew thanked members who had assisted him in the completion of this application.

19:8 Engraving - Peter has spoken to Brigit re the poor quality of this years engraving of trophies. Brigit had also been concerned and felt if they go back to the engraver they may return in an even worse state. The engravers have used a new type of stencil over the last two years and that is why the quality and typeface is different from previous years. Peter has taken photos and will ask Brigit to address this issue with the engravers. It is possible that the club may have to change engravers for next year.

Action: Peter

19:9 Apps Memorial Bowl - Although our application for the AC award was late it was accepted. The Award went to Daniel Gott from Bath. The GC application was not accepted.

20. DONM: 15th February 2019 at 10.00hrs

The meeting closed at 12.40 hrs

Signed as a true and accurate record

Name.....

Signature.....

Date.....

Reports

Treasurer's report for NDCC committee meeting 8th January 2019

This report has been prepared on 23rd December. There may be significant updates to report at the meeting, but predictable expenditure is mentioned below.

Spreadsheet for the financial year 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 is £7,467.54

Revised balance, 8th January 2019 £7,293.54

The deficit for the year is £2,234.22

Revised deficit, 8th January 2019 £2,408.22

These figures were taken on 23rd December 2018

I have four cheques (£84 total) for the 100 Club to pay in. This brings the units sold up to 36.

The Christmas lunch showed a surplus of £141.25, the raffle and quiz contributing £115.00 to this.

Our fees to SWF (levy, league entries, short croquet teams) have been paid totalling £252.00.

I have completed the online return to the CA for our annual levy. We will receive a request for £853.00 arising from 64 full playing members @ £12.95 and 5 students @ £5.00.

Members who are registered with the CA as having another club as their primary membership are excluded from this return.

At some point we will have the new cooker to pay for. Coral can advise on the cost.

We are now paying £115 pcm for water and £49 pcm for electricity, so our monthly outgoings for these utilities is £164, an annual expense of £1,968.

I have corresponded with the CA treasurer about a loan and he has readily agreed that we can have an interest free loan of £5,000 to be repaid over 3 years, although we can clear the debt earlier if we can do so in comfort. I had originally suggested that the loan could be repaid possibly this year or definitely in 2020, but he suggested a three year term to cater for unexpected eventualities.

M Tracy

23/12/2018

100 Club

The membership of the 100 Club is currently 36, all members were at the Christmas Lunch so the placing of the forms on the chairs proved very productive as this is a considerably higher membership than we had last year. I intend contacting all members who have not joined, after the Membership Forms have been emailed out but to contact the 'snail mail' people at the same time as their membership forms are posted to them.

I have today purchased a cooker from John Lewis . It became rather Hobson's Choice as most freestanding cookers are dual fuel or well in excess of our £400 budget. However a Hotpoint one which fulfilled our requirements was available at the bargain price of £299 (plus £20 for removal of the existing one) as it had been a cancelled order. The full 2 year warranty etc still applies and it is due to be delivered on Monday 7 December. I will be at the Club to receive it.

Does the Committee want to spend the balance of approx £70 or to roll over until the end of 2019?

Coral

Recruitment

All is in hand for promoting "Hoops for the Hospice" on Sunday 19 May. An email has been sent to members.

Vouchers for beginners' lessons are still on sale. None have been sold to date but only minimal expense has been incurred.

Tournaments

All SWF League Secretaries have been informed of our tournament dates so that clashes between them and League matches will be avoided if possible.

Club Competitions

I am looking forward to organising these again. Linda and I have agreed how the GC tasks will be split between us. Linda will make all managerial decisions on the format of all GC competitions and will be responsible for GC "on the day" competitions, liaising with managers of these where appropriate.

I will take entries in for all the AC and GC "through the season" competitions and publish the blocks and knockouts for them all. I will pester people to get their AC and GC matches played and organise the "on the day" AC competitions.

The usual AC competitions will run. I hope to breathe new life into some of them, particularly the Unequal Bisques and the Alternate Strokes. I am assuming that we will invite entries for both the All England Handicap (AC and GC) but not offer Nailsea trophies for them. This was the arrangement before our two shortened seasons. In the past, when we offered Nailsea trophies, we attracted entries from players who had no intention of proceeding to the Area/National Finals. This was not a satisfactory situation.

CA liaison

I have not yet had any paperwork from the CA about the All England Competitions or about the National Short Croquet Competition. This may all arrive shortly so it would be useful if the Committee made decisions at the January meeting about entries.

Kathy Wallace, Jan 2019

Lawn Maintenance Report - January 19

1. Lawns

As planned, the lawns have been left open for the winter and have provided a reasonable playing surface. December was very wet (see figure 1) and there have been days when minor flooding/surface water has prevented play. However, unlike last winter, the flooding has not persisted. The development of grass roots and some mycorrhizal fungi activity has obviously helped to return some structure to the soil in the rootzone. The Dispatch spraying (a water dispersant) may also have helped but it is difficult to separate out the effects of spraying from other factors.

The wet weather seems to have encouraged the perennial form of annual meadow grass (poa annua annua) to grow more vigorously. Neither David Hunt nor myself feel that we should attempt to kill it using glyphosate because of the resulting small holes in the playing surface and the monumental effort required. The plan is to develop a healthier rootzone containing mycorrhizal fungi and to regularly over-seed the lawns. Over a period of years the prevalence of meadow grass should gradually reduce.

The over-seeding of the small holes created by glyphosating of rampant annual meadow grass last spring has largely been successful. The playing surface is generally much smoother than it was when the lawns opened in the spring. Geoff managed to adjust the Toro reel clearance and this has also improved cutting performance, albeit at a minimum of 6mm cutting height. This has also contributed to a smoother playing surface. Prior to Christmas, the constant 6mm cutting height was lower than the recommended winter value of 8-10mm. This was a deliberate decision in order to maintain lawn speed by way of compensation for the late start to the season. Mowing has ceased in mid December and will restart in February at 8mm to reduce the stress on the grass.

A granular fertiliser application in January is often recommended but Duncan Hector's alternative method utilises monthly four times diluted Liquid Bio fertiliser spraying as a cheaper alternative . The LAG decided that it was worth experimenting with and the first application was on January 3rd. This should assist in getting the lawns off to a healthy start to the new season at a normal cost of about £120. This year we are using more expensive liquid bio fertiliser left over from last summer (too dry to apply then) but it will need to be replaced in the 2019 spring chemicals order. This order has been delayed to minimise cash flow problems but should arrive at the end of March. Total cost of chemicals is now estimated to be about £2232 based on last years prices. However I have read that fertiliser prices have risen since then so the final cost may be higher. Duncan Hector will be sending a firm quotation in the near future. The estimate is a little higher than earlier estimates as the LAG has decided to apply Primo Maxx growth regulator this year and also to experiment with liquid bio fertiliser in the Jan to March period.

At present the plan is still to replace the Toro in March with a newer machine that will facilitate easier adjustment and lower cutting heights. A cleaner, better quality of cut is also expected. The price is still uncertain because the supplier (AJ Mowers, Toro service company in Bristol) is not certain of the servicing costs of the replacement prior to sale to NDCC. However I have had no indication that the final cost will be outside the £5000-£6500 (+ VAT) range previously suggested.

During November the hoop holes were moved East 6 inches outside the normal hoop positions to give the latter time to recover. Fortunately this hoop move took place before

lawn damage around hoop holes from squirrels began to occur. Wire mesh squares were prepared to cover the holes and this seems to have prevented further damage. The mesh will probably be removed when mowing restarts in February. The damage to the lawn 3 hoop holes was extensive and hence the hoops were left in place pending new grass growth. Things will return to normal in February when the hoops are moved to their other “winter” position. The seed around the damaged hoop hole areas has taken some time to germinate but should be in a satisfactory state by April.

Iron spraying of the whole lawn (to discourage disease) was avoided this Autumn because of the adverse effect on the boom sprayer pump. Unfortunately, some patches of Fusarium disease occurred on Lawn 4 as the daylight hours reduced. Historically Lawns 2 & 3 used to experience Fusarium but it has moved! Interestingly it was Lawn 4 that also experienced Fairy Rings in the Autumn. These have now disappeared. Normally Fusarium does not cause major problems at Nailsea but, at Duncan Hectors suggestion, the diseased areas were sprayed with Iron using a cheap backpack sprayer purchased from Screwfix at a cost of £15. (The clubs official backpack sprayer no longer works - probably because of the effects of Iron spraying). The iron seemed to help but some further patches have appeared in the last few weeks. All patches were therefore sprayed again with Iron on January 3rd. Some moss in the SW corner of Lawn 2 was also treated with iron.

2. Re-seeding and Over-seeding techniques

As everybody is aware, a 3 yard strip on the North boundary was closed in order to allow the bare areas to be re-seeded. Initially, re-seeding was attempted using Geoff’s prototype disc seeder. This was unsuccessful because the discs did not penetrate sufficiently deeply into the soil and turf but also tended to clog up. A further attempt will be made with a modified arrangement.

Two attempts were made at broadcast seeding of the North boundary strip but a combination of dry weather, seed being blown about accidentally by leaf blowers and pigeons eating the seed meant success was limited. Further reseeding was carried out in November and early December by covering the broadcast seed with green waste. This has been more successful and small grass seedlings are evident in most areas despite the cold wet weather. The dwarf rye grass we use (Barenbrug Ultrafine) will germinate down to 4C which means that winter re-seeding or over-seeding is viable most of the time, albeit that germination can take a month.

The young seedlings coming through now should be well enough developed by the end of March to allow the North boundary strip to be opened up in time for the start of the new (summer?) season in April.

Of some concern are the west and south boundary areas of Lawn 2. These receive little direct sunlight in the winter months and the grass always becomes bedraggled and threadbare. This has always happened and it has nothing to do with levelling. Ideally, this area should be over-seeded in January/ February using the green waste technique employed on the North boundary. However, it would mean closing lawn 2 until the start of the new season as germination would be take several weeks. **The LAG would be interested to hear committee views on the closure aspect.** The grass will probably slowly recover without over-seeding but with a relatively thin covering and over-seeding would be helpful. There is also a cost implication in terms of purchasing green waste that will need to be discussed at the next LAG meeting. A verbal quote from Veolia who supply the graded lawn conditioner green waste was £117 for 25 bags delivered on a pallet. This is a lot cheaper than the normal single bag cost but it is still represents an additional cost. We have just about sufficient grass seed left over to complete the re-seeding operation but

it would necessitate ordering another bag of seed for future repair operations. The cost of this would be between £100 and £140 depending on the supplier.

More generally, the lawns would benefit from a regular Autumn over-seeding to thicken and invigorate the grass sward and gradually crowd out the meadow grass. The cost of seed would be in the region of £400-550 but the process of completing the over-seeding operation is the subject of ongoing discussion. In an ideal world, we would purchase a dimple seeder and over-seed as soon as Finals weekend and weather permit. However, the capital cost is none trivial (perhaps £3500 upwards). Hiring equipment or a contractor with equipment costs in the region of £500/year with the disadvantage that timing is not under our control. We could use the GA30 tining machine to create regular holes in the ground and brush/drag seed into the holes. (The plant pot approach) This would ensure seed germination at almost any time of the year but the hole spacing is much wider than that that produced by a dimple seeder and so new grass coverage is uneven. It can only be done in the late Autumn/Winter when the ground is soft because the lawn surface becomes uneven until rain smooths things out. The over-seeding issue will be discussed again at the next LAG meeting.

3. Machinery Repairs

The 24 inch Hayter cylinder mower has a clutch problem. Andrew Wimshurst agreed to organise the repair of this item but I am not aware that any repair has yet been effected.

4. Top Dressing

The heavy rain in December highlighted the fact that there are a few low spots on the lawns. However, the LAG view has been that that the cost of top dressing to remove these low spots is beyond the clubs means at the present time. The treasurer will obviously keep this issue under review.

5. Summer Maintenance rotas.

The rotas are nearly complete in draft form. They will be circulated to volunteers so that holiday commitments can be built in where known.

The Treasurers Tankard in September will require additional manpower to keep the grass and hoops in order over the five days. The requirements to reset hoops everyday and cut every other day (probably every day in practice) when daylight hours are reducing requires careful planning. I have a specific proposal in mind but have not yet agreed it with David Hunt.

John Wallace 3/1/19

Figure 1 Rainfall and Evapotranspiration

