

Nailsea and District Croquet Club
Minutes of Committee Meeting held on 23rd September 2019

Present: Graham McCausland, Meriel Forshaw, Mike Tracy, Linda Shaw, Andrew Wimshurst, Brian Roynon, Coral Harrison, Peter Dyke
In attendance: Joan Timmins

1. Apologies - None

2. Minutes of the meeting 27th August 2019 - agreed and signed as a correct record following one amendment. The Selectors weekend should read 2021 and not 2020.

3. Matters Arising – Are covered within the agenda with the exception of the following:-

- 3.1 Tournament Dates for 2020 - A sub-committee of Graham McCausland, Peter Dyke and one other would meet with Kathy to discuss. The committee agreed that the sub committee were empowered to make the final decision.
- 3.2 James has agreed to take over the SWF Autumn Short Croquet arrangements for Nailsea.
- 3.3 The committee agreed that 'Mad Mondays' would remain frozen for the coming year.
- 3.4 Christine Haley's mallet has now been given to the club and will be inscribed with her name. A quote for undertaking this work is awaited.
- 3.5 Tuck shop – Income and expenditure has balanced during the last month.

4. Treasurer's Report – discussed and noted

The club has now received the Federation payment for the 'Spring Short Croquet' event. Income from the CA is still outstanding.

The future of the TORO maintenance is still to be agreed. Andrew will speak to Geoff and Terry.

Action: Andrew

5. Property Report

The work morning went very well with lots of members giving their time.

The committee thanked Tony Willoughby for replacing the stop boards under the central bench.

First Aid – At present, first aid provisions, incident/accident book and guidelines are located in the kitchen. Following discussion the committee agreed that it would be more appropriate if these items and first aid information were in a more prominent position in the main room of the clubhouse. Eye wash solution is available with the general first aid items and there will also be eye wash solution made available within the work shop area.

Action: Brian

6. Membership Report

Two ladies will continue with their coaching sessions in the New Year, then hopefully join as members.

The club has one new junior member and his coaching fee has been paid for the remainder of the year.

The following was noted – Playing membership as at the month of September calculates the CA levy for the following year.

Andrew still has to update the CA website information.

Action: Andrew

Some committee members will attend the funeral of Sandra Bath who will be remembered as a lovely lady who was an active member of the club and bridge group.

7. Lawns Report – Discussed and noted

An advert has been submitted for the sale of the scarifier.

8. Website - continues as work in progress.

Information regarding 'Safe Guarding' will be updated, confirming Linda Shaw as the Safe Guarding contact person. Linda will contact Geoff with this information.

Action: Linda

9. Winter Coaching - Linda's email to members dated the 18th September -

Linda requested members to let her know if they were interested in coaching sessions during the winter period. She also asked members if they would be interested in, for example, - a one off/short series of coaching sessions - a mix of indoor and outdoor sessions.

Also mid to high AC handicappers possibly getting together and focussing on mutual support, basic strokes, strategy etc..

Linda and the committee wished to thank David Hunt, Ryan, and Kathy and Erica and their team who have given their time to coaching sessions during this year.

A reminder to all 'We must only play on the lawns when they are fit to be used'. Poster to be created.

Action: Linda

10. On Line Booking – continues as work in progress.

Dave Kibble has offered to set up the on-line booking system for the club for which there will be an annual fee for the management of this service. It is anticipated the system will be online by 1st March 2020.

From that time two lawns will be bookable on line, leaving two lawns that can be booked at the clubhouse as normal. Linda has discussed the above with Kathy.

Action: Linda

11. Constitutional Changes

Any proposed changes to the Constitution need to be sent to the secretary and received by Saturday 19th October. The proposed changes will be circulated to members two weeks before the AGM and presented at the AGM on the 9th November 2019.

Notification of the AGM will be sent to the members six weeks prior to the AGM.

Action: Meriel

12. SWF AGM Proposals/Nominations

The deadline for nominations has now passed. The deadline for any proposals to be made is the end of September 2019. Graham McCausland and Peter Dyke have agreed to attend the SWF AGM as Nailsea's delegates.

13. Recruitment/ Tournaments/Competitions

The couple whose son paid for a taster session for them earlier in the year have enjoyed their first croquet experience. It is hoped they will have lessons in the spring and bring along their son Matt when he is home.

Tournaments

The Treasurer's Tankard was a great success and put Nailsea firmly on the croquet map.

Competitions – continue and will be completed on the finals weekend 4th, 5th and 6th October 2019

The committee wished to thank Kathy and her team for their commitment to the above activities.

14. League Fixtures Report

Peter was pleased to report Nailsea has had a very successful season. Andrew's team beat Broadwas 6:1 this game was played at Nailsea.

There are two Nailsea teams in the Federation league final, Nailsea Central and Nailsea South; the game will be played at Nailsea.

We also have a team in the Golf croquet league final.

15. Committee Diary –on going

16. Christmas Lunch – 7th December 2019 at the Masonic Hall, Nailsea

The cost for the lunch will be £25 pp for three courses.

Coral will be sending out information and menus to members. Members will need to return their menu choices and payment to Coral by the 1st November.

The hall has been booked for lunch in December 2020 and Mike will be contacting the booking secretary, David Mason, to book the hall for 2021.

Action: Coral/Mike

17. Any Other Business

Car park - work on the track leading to the club has been delayed for the present time. It is hoped that some work will take place towards the end of October (after finals weekend).

Trophies – reference email from Brian McCausland .
Following discussion it was agreed that advice on this matter would be sought from Brigit. Graham will contact Brigit.

Action: Graham

First Aid – reference article in the Croquet Gazette, September 2019 page 9.
Following discussion it was agreed that contact would be made with the Nailsea and Backwell St John’s ambulance service to obtain free information on general First Aid principles and basic life support instructions. This information could be displayed in a prominent position within the clubhouse for members. It was also agreed to ask if they would be able to provide short sessions at the club for members on emergency cardiac resuscitation.

Action: Graham

General Reminder

Committee members felt that there were times during the season that members may like to be updated on activities that were taking place,

For example:

Finals weekend 4th, 5th and 6th October concluding with an American supper on the Sunday.

AGM on the 9th November 2019 at the club house.

Christmas Lunch 7th December 2019 at the Masonic Hall, Nailsea

Meriel to send reminder re the above to members.

Action: Meriel

DONM: Tuesday 29th October 2019 at 10.00hrs

The meeting closed at 12 noon.

Signed as a true and accurate record

Name.....

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

Reports

Treasurer's report for NDCC committee meeting 23rd September 2019

This report has been prepared on 18th September 2019.

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 unrepresented cheques is £9,529.93

The deficit for the year is £108.93. Without the £2,500 part of the loan still outstanding we would be £2,608.93 in deficit.

As agreed at the last meeting, £2,500 of the CA loan has been repaid though the cheque has yet to be presented. I have asked the treasurers of the SWF and the CA to pay the outstanding sums due to us before the end of September (the close of our financial year) if possible. The SWF owes us lawn hire for the spring Short Croquet teams, 10 X the daily rate which is of the order of £35 and the CA owes us for 20 X the daily rate of £40 plus the outstanding balance of the tournament entry fees which is currently showing at £319.75. It has been pointed out (repeatedly) to the CA office that two people played for only one day in the advanced open tournament whose entry fees have not been taken into account in this calculation but this issue has been neither acknowledged nor dealt with. The money involved is quite small, so I can say that we are owed about £1470 with reasonable confidence.

The catering profit from the Treasurer's Tankard was £235.62. Marcus' kind donation of wine to be provided for the competitors in return for a cash donation raised a further £110. In addition, the competitors, with some members, had a get together at a pub when it turned out to be quiz night. They won first prize of £36 which they decided to donate to the club thereby showing their approval of the club's facilities and the welcome they received. In total the event produced a profit of £1,181.62

M Tracy

18/09/2019

Tournaments

The Treasurer's Tankard was a great success and our hoops put Nailsea more firmly on the croquet map. The players were very complimentary about every aspect of the club and enjoyed their time here enormously.

I see from the minutes of the August meeting, on the Club website, that the Committee feels that there should be further consultation re the tournaments for 2020. The schedule I suggested was:

16/17 May B/C Class Advanced: h'caps 1+ with entries split into two classes

20/21 June	B Class Advanced: h'caps 0-9 with entries split into two classes
18/19 July committed to this weekend)	GC Home Internationals on behalf of Wales (we are firmly committed to this weekend)
15/16 August is more good players prefer	Open Advanced. Marcus is very happy with an August date and it is more likely to produce the challenging conditions that good players prefer
18 August persuade us extra work for the lawns team)	GC B Class (liaison with Chris Roberts is required; he might try to persuade us to have 11 August but that would create a lot of extra work for the lawns team)

Perhaps the proposed May and June tournaments seemed too similar. I didn't emphasise that the suggested June tournament has a lower limit of 0. In the past our B Class lower limit has been 1. Players have often said to me that they had enjoyed our B Class tournaments in the past and wished they could still enter but their handicap had fallen to 0.5 or to scratch. There are others who frequent B Class tournaments around the country but have been barred from ours. This is an attempt to include them for the first time. It could possibly be called Super B/B and would be split into two classes as is customary in many of the bigger clubs.

There would be an overlap with the suggested B/C tournament but the dates would probably suit different players and some might come to both. The C Class, in tandem with our Parkstone 3rd team, has encouraged Nailsea players with relatively high handicaps to begin to play Advanced Rules - this can only be seen as progress. 1+ might attract handicaps as high as 12 or 14 if they know that they will be in a class say from about 4 or 5 upwards, depending on the entry.

I gather from brief conversations with some Committee members that the possibility of holding a Handicap Play tournament had been raised. Handicap Play tournaments are poorly supported these days. Last time we held one, we had 8 entries, all from Nailsea members apart from Robert Upton who subsequently joined the club. Bristol CC had a similar pattern this year. They had 12 entries, all Bristol members apart from one from Sussex, one from Camerton & Peasedown, one from Cheltenham (he lives in Dursley and used to be a Bristol member) and.....Robert Upton! People just don't travel to Handicap tournaments any more. I see no point in holding a Handicap Play Tournament that would only be supported by Nailsea members - we have plenty of competitions for them already.

The order of the B/C (May) and superB/B (June) was chosen to give the lower handicapped players the more difficult conditions, as the lawns dry out during the Spring and make the lawns faster and the hoops firmer. Marcus chose August for the Open Advanced Tournament with the same principle in mind.

Competitions

Please let me know the decisions on tournaments so that I can get our Fixtures Book entries sorted out. I have now received the paperwork from the CA to do this.

As ever, some people entered more competitions than they could cope with. I have had to compose the schedule for semi-finals whilst still waiting for some results. If all semi-finalists had been available, it would have been 72 hours of play to fit in - that's without any time between the games of best of 3 GC matches and without extension periods in AC matches. It's also without any Advanced Play matches. I was hoping that the single block competitions would require play-offs. In the Open Advanced, one of the players declined to play many matches. This was very disappointing and his attitude was also quite insulting to the Club. In the other single- block Advanced and Ladies competitions, there were outright winners. It's a great pity that there will be no Advanced Play at the semi-finals and Finals weekends and a situation that I hope to avoid next year.

Recruitment

The parents of Shanghai Matt finally made contact and enjoyed a taster session. They both proved to be gifted and will have lessons next spring. They are hoping to bring Matt to the club when he is home a few days

I was pleased to hear about the approach from St Francis' school. Nottingham CC is doing a splendid job with school children. They played Pirates at early sessions and were very noisy so obviously having fun!

Lawn Maintenance Report -September 2019

1. Weather and Lawn Speed

The weather throughout the year has been generally dry with two bursts of heavy rain in early June and early August. The dry weather has continued in September (Figure 1) apart from some heavy rain just before the Treasures Tankard. This is showing up on the lawns with the Annual Meadow grass (AMG) once again beginning to wilt and creating brown blotches on the lawns. The effect is most noticeable on lawns 3 & 4 which is consistent with the rate of drying out observed during the levelling project. The North end of the lawns dries out quicker than the South end because of tree shading. To confirm this I measured lawn speed after semi finals on 20/9/19. Lawn 1 was running at about 10.5 plummers whilst lawn 4 was running much faster at 12 plummers. The players on lawn 4 had some difficulty in controlling the ball because of the increased speed.

2. Revolution spraying

The four weekly Revolution spraying continues to be successful. It has kept the lawns green through what has been a dry summer. This week, for the first time, the North boundary is just beginning to dry out. However, with rain due over the next week it does not require any specific irrigation.

The ability to avoid summer irrigation is useful in combating AMG which thrives on wet conditions. In the drier weather it dies off and if other lawn treatment can encourage the spread of rye grass during such conditions then the presence of AMG can be reduced.

3. Review of Lawn Maintenance programme

I mentioned last month that I was not happy with the state of the lawns. As a result I have been conducting extensive research into how to reduce the presence of AMG and encourage the development of a thicker sward. I have talked to numerous people about the problem and summarised the options in Table 1. The details will be discussed at the next LAG meeting on 24/9/19 along with some other research I have carried out. The latter has been summarised in emails to Duncan Hector and LAG members.

I have also felt for some time that we need more objective measurements regarding the state of our lawns. Duncan Hector did not seem interested in carrying out a soil analysis so I commissioned one from a third party. Long Ashton golf club carries out such analysis every year in order to keep their maintenance programme up to date. They pay £75 for their lab reports but as I also wanted an independent interpretation of the results I obtained one via John Quinn at a cost of £95.

The results and report, based on 17 soil samples from our lawns arrived on 19/9/19 and were very informative. The full report will be forwarded to LAG members after I have finished this report.

Comparing the findings with the basic STRI test prior to levelling reveals the following:

	Latest test	Original Test
pH	5.8	5.3
%sand	69	60
%silt	17	25
%clay	14	15

The two sets of tests are comparable but with a significant difference in pH. The silt/ sand changes may simply be on of classification differences.

The key items identified by the latest test were:

- a. The Cation Exchange Capacity of 8 is adequate but can be improved (target 15)
- b. The Base Saturation level of calcium is low (47% compared with a target of 70%). This can have a significant effect on nutrient uptake.
- c. Trace elements generally ok but Iron levels a too high.
- d. Organic matter (humus) is low at 3.75% (Target 6%)

John Quinn's report proposes a number of items already covered by Duncan Hectors programme. The most significant additions are:

- a. Addition of Limestone to boost calcium levels. (Not a surprise to anybody who observed the positive impact the lime based old white ling paint we used to employ)
- b. Improved soil biology by the use of Compost Tea and other bio stimulants.

It is obvious that the normal gardening procedure of adding compost to soil to improve soil fertility is not appropriate for amenity lawns. The solution for the latter is the regular application of what is known as compost tea. It is made by fermenting compost in aerated water for 24-48 hours. Aeration is important to ensure that the aerobic bacteria develop as it is these that improve soil biology (coupled with regular aeration using sarel rolling/solid tining). Mycorrhizal fungi are also added to the mix as fungal domination is accepted as being important for the development of perennial grasses rather than AMG.

My research revealed that a number of golf clubs have changed over to applying compost tea with anecdotal reports of positive reports. Long Ashton has been using compost tea since 2010. Quantitative research measurements of the benefits are much harder to find. Eventually I found a PhD thesis that explains qualitatively why compost tea has been useful to golf clubs. In essence, the soil in many greens was inert at the point of creation and kept that way by widespread use of artificial fertilisers with high salt index and widespread use of fungicides. The same is true at Nailsea where the levelling process probably brought much inert soil to the surface. The PhD thesis pointed out that whilst the bacteria return to inert soil relatively, the mycorrhizal fungi only spread slowly from surrounding areas. Regular application of compost tea helps to rapidly build up the mycorrhizal fungi levels in the soil and keep a balanced supply of beneficial aerobic bacteria in the soil.

Research suggests AMG thrives when there is bacterial dominated soil but does not thrive when mycorrhizal fungi are present in equal amounts. The perennial grasses do thrive under such conditions because they strongly associate with the mycorrhizal fungi, exchanging phosphorus for carbon. It has been claimed that the AMFG does not associate with the mycorrhizal fungi but the PhD thesis proved there was some positive association. However, it postulated that the arrangement is detrimental as the AMG suffers a net loss of energy by exchanging carbon for phosphorus.

In essence, the theory behind compost tea is not fully developed but the practical results do seem to be positive. Just to add to the theoretical confusion, Plant Growth Promoting Rhizobacteria (PGPR's) for perennial grasses have also been identified and these may also be present in the compost tea.

Several sources, including our seed supplier (Barenbrug) confirmed that a mycorrhizal fungal dominated soil biology is good for perennial grasses such as dwarf rye grass.

As table 1 indicates, there are a number of potential changes/additions to the maintenance regime that may help with reducing the presence of AMG in our lawns. The LAG will debate these in more detail at the next meeting.

4. Equipment disposal

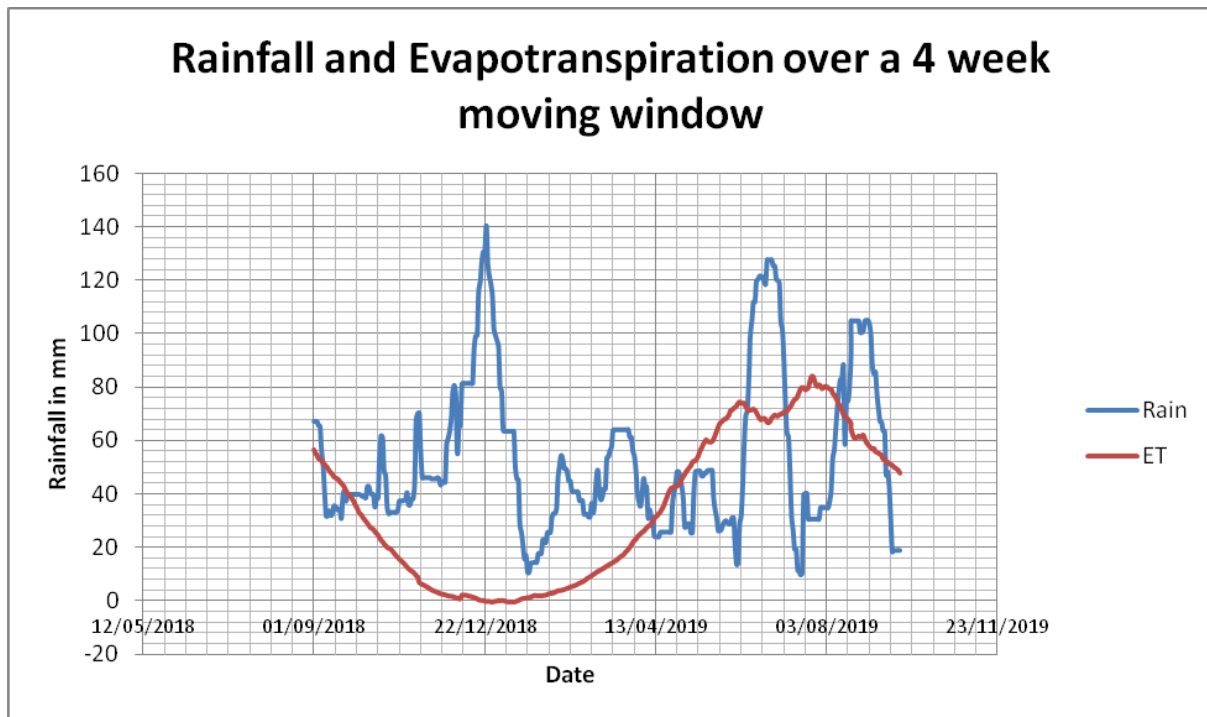
Geoff and Terry have prepared the Ryan Mattaway scarifier for disposal and are arranging for the sale to be advertised.





After the last LAG meeting I had a conversation with John Braithwaite, the green-keeper at Long Ashton. It was a wide ranging discussion but at one point we discussed aeration and the damage that the GA30 created using solid tines. He was aware of this and the conflict with play on greens that have just been tined. His solution is to use fine (6mm) tines which he believes avoids the damage issue in the same way that the sarel roller fine spikes do. He felt quite strongly that winter sold tining to a depth of 4 inches was beneficial in encouraging deeper rooting. My recollection is that Brian Roynon tried something similar with Phil Randal but that the tining was carried out in the summer when the holes do not repair themselves due to generally drier weather/soil. (Apologies if my recollection is inaccurate). Long Aston also employ sarel rolling as we do.

In light of this, I postponed the GA30 disposal until the LAG had a chance to discuss the issue in more detail.

JNW 21/9/19

Figure 1 Rainfall and Evapotranspiration



<p>SUSTANE Compost Tea</p> <p>+ Symbio Fungal additive ?</p> <p>AGS BioRefine LP for RYE</p> <p>+ Endo Myco Spray</p> <p>Solid 6mm Tining</p>										
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