

**Nailsea and District Croquet club**  
**Minutes of Committee Meeting 20th March 2020**

Due to circumstances beyond the control of the committee, the meeting which should have been on 17th March did not take place. However, the meeting was rearranged for 20th March on 'Zoom'.

**Present:** Graham McCausland, Meriel Forshaw, Mike Tracy, Andrew Wimshurst, Peter Dyke, Brian Roynon, Sandra Morgan

**1. Apologies.** - Joan Timmins who was unable to connect with 'Zoom'.

**2. Minutes of meeting held on 4<sup>th</sup> February 2020:** agreed and signed as a correct record. (Signed by MF on behalf of GMc)

**3. Matters Arising** - None

**4. Treasurer's Report:** discussed and noted

Mike expressed his wish to pay off the CA loan as soon as possible. The committee agreed.

**Action: MT**

**5. Membership Report:** discussed and noted

There is no significant change in membership numbers this year; 60 paid up whereas it was 80 last year.

**6. Student Category:** discussed

It was agreed to keep the age of this to 25 years and to include apprentices and those in full time education.

**7. Car Park:** Graham had contacted North Somerset Council. The Council did not appear to have a problem with the club creating a suitable car park within the club boundaries. However, final approval would be required. In view of the current situation, this is put on the back burner at the moment.

**8. Property:** Report noted

**9. Recruitment:** It is unfortunate that all the hard work undertaken in this area has had to be put on hold for the time being. Obviously, with the club now being closed for a few months, the taster sessions and scout evenings will no longer be happening. The committee will continue to review the situation.

The committee agreed to the suggestion that a certain member should be nominated for a CA diploma. Meriel will contact KW.

**Action: MF**

**10. Lawns Report:** Discussed and noted.

The club is indebted to John for all his hard work in trying to get the lawns ready for the start of the season. Concern was expressed regarding those involved in maintenance often being on their own at the club. Andrew will speak to JW. **Action: AW**

**10a. Hoop Holes:** To avoid any confusion, the following is an exact copy of the advice given by JW in his report of the 15th March 2020.

“As part of the discussion, it was agreed that a third set of hoop holes would be created for the use at the beginning and end of the season. (i.e. up to the first tournament and after the last tournament). This third set replace the little used golf holes and give the two main sets of holes time to benefit from vigorous spring grass growth. This third set will be used for both AC and GC.

Thus, there is only one set of holes in use at any point in time. In spring and autumn it will be the third set and in the summer the main pair of hoop holes will alternate as usual.”

**11. Corona Virus:** A letter has already been sent to all members of the NDCC and the decision to close the club completely was a unanimous decision made by the committee. This means that apart from those who are involved in lawn maintenance etc. nobody is allowed to enter the grounds or the clubhouse. All those involved in maintenance to wear gloves which are provided in the club house.

**12. League Fixtures:** At the moment we do not know what the South West Federation (SWF) committee intends to do about this season’s leagues. If they go ahead, Nailsea will withdraw from all leagues apart from two, namely the Advance League Division 1 and the Golf Croquet level play league. Peter to inform the SWF committee of our decision. **Action: PD**

**13. League Captain’s Responsibilities:** deferred to next meeting

**14. Safeguarding:** Linda Shaw has revised the policy. However, the committee felt that further discussion was required. All of the committee to review it again before the next meeting. **Action: All**

**15. Flags for the Home International:** Deferred

**16. First Aid:** On the 15<sup>th</sup> February 2020, 17 members attended a training session on ‘Basic resuscitation’ and the club welcomed three members of the St John’s Ambulance Service. They demonstrated basic life support techniques with and without the use of a defibrillator. Members thanked the three trainers who had given up their Saturday afternoon and £100 was donated to the St John’s Ambulance. Meriel to write to Joan expressing the committee’s thanks for organising such an excellent event.

**Action: MF**

**17. Committee Diary:** Brian will bring a Health and Safety Risk Assessment for the next meeting. **Action: BR**

**18. Any Other Business:** Important to keep in contact with members and to keep them informed. Graham will email updates every month. **Action GMc**

Meriel to inform Greta Stringer that she is to receive life membership. **Action: MF**

**19. DONM:** Friday 17th April 2020 - 10am - Zoom

The meeting closed at 11 am.

Signed as a true and accurate record

NAME.....

SIGNATURE..... DATE.....

## REPORTS

Treasurer's report for NDCC committee meeting 17<sup>th</sup> March 2020

This report has been prepared on 13<sup>th</sup> March 2020.

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 is £13,249.09 and there are no unrepresented cheques. The surplus for the year is £3,272.11. Since our last meeting we have spent £1,520 on 4 new sets of primary balls and £2,638.81 on lawn chemicals, offset by a refund of £430 for the hire of the unsatisfactory dimple seeder. As I reported to the membership, the winter social program netted £451.05 and the bridge sessions a further £245.90.

The redundant bank account has been closed.

We have to repay the outstanding part of the loan from the CA this year (£2,500) or start paying interest. I can see no need to delay this payment and recommend that we now pay off the balance.

Andrew's membership report will show that a significant number of the 2019 membership have not yet renewed. If subscriptions have not been paid by 1<sup>st</sup> March then membership ceases. It was made clear when the change to the membership year was implemented that one of its objectives was to ensure that our league teams would only be populated by club members. Similarly only club members can play in club competitions. It is apparent that we have no mechanism for checking that club competition entries and requests to play in league teams have come from paid up members. It may be that all the entries and requests have come from people who have paid their subscriptions, but I suggest that this should be checked now and that we put in place a process which will be effective in the future.

M Tracy

13/03/2020

**NDCC Committee Meeting  
17<sup>th</sup> March 2020  
Property Report**

### **The Track**

Although the track was repaired by members in October/November it has been flooded on several occasions since in the area of the repair.

## **Equipment repairs and maintenance**

Tony Willoughby has done sterling work refurbishing the hoop trolleys and painting the hoops.

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## **Social Bookings for 2020.**

Apart from the 3 evenings with the Backwell Scouts we now have a booking, from one of our regulars, Clevedon 41 Club.

## **Report for meeting on 17 March 2020**

### **Recruitment**

Awaiting decisions from Committee re potential cancellation of Taster Sessions and Scout evenings because of Coronavirus

### **Tournaments**

There has been an encouraging response to the new format AC tournaments with wide ranges of entries so I think we made good decisions. Some players have entered both the B/C and the Super B/B tournaments. The GC tournament was over-subscribed. I followed the procedure to allocate places, as laid down by Chris Roberts, to the letter, but I am not happy with it! Its two merits are that it is transparent and applied across all the GC series events (assuming that all Tournament Secretaries understand it!) The players who didn't get places in the Nailsea tournament have gone on the waiting list as reserves and have accepted it without query.

### **Competitions**

Many entry forms have come in although some will probably leave it until the last minute.

### **General admin**

The Lawn booking file for the new season will be put out by the time of this meeting.

### **CA matters**

We have received an e-mail from the CA inviting nominations for CA Diplomas. I would like to suggest that we nominate David Hunt. He has made huge contributions to the Club over a prolonged period in a wide variety of ways: team captain, team player, mower, hoop setter, LAG member, molehill soil procurer, general dogsbody. He has always been invaluable to managers of both competitions and tournaments because of

his willingness to make up numbers or drop out at short notice. I would be happy to write and submit the citation – it's not due until July.

Eugene Chang is doing a great job for the CA re young people. I have told him in round terms who we have as juniors.

## Lawn Maintenance Report -February 2020

### 1 Lawns

The bare patches on lawns 1, 2 and 3 were over-seeded on 6/2/20 and covered using 9 of the 10 green waste bags. Unfortunately, February has been so wet that little of this seed has germinated. Subsequent repeated attempts at broadcast seeding have not been successful either. The dip/bare patch on the south boundary of lawn 4 was seeded at the same time but sand rather than green waste was used to cover the seed in order to fill in the dip. This was also unsuccessful due to constant flooding. On March 7<sup>th</sup> the sand was removed, the ground re-seeded and the area covered with the contents from the last green waste bag. This week has seen a continuation of the rain and at present this dip is just a boggy mess. However drier weather is on its way and some germination may take place in the coming weeks. All the bare areas were broadcast seeded on March 14 on the off chance that some of the seed would get washed into the green waste by heavy rain expected on March 15. More green waste will need to be ordered if the season progresses.

Application of the mycorrhizal fungi granules proved to be difficult because of the timing and methodology. I had extensive email iterations with the distributor (AGS), the manufacturer (PlantWorks), Prof Alan Gange at Royal Holloway (part of London University) and Francesca Baylis who carried out the research into the benefits of the particular mycorrhizal fungi granules and PGPR bacteria. With need to avoid UV exposure, rain to wash the spores into the ground and suitable holes for the spores to collect in, timing and technique for hole generation was difficult.

After much scrutiny of weather forecasts I decided to apply the mycorrhizal fungi on March 7<sup>th</sup> just before dusk, knowing that heavy rain was forecast for that evening (7mm was duly delivered). . With drier weather forecasts for mid March onwards I decided that solid tining would potentially leave the lawns bumpy. I therefore Sarrel rolled both N/S and E/W before applying the granules. We can only hope that at least some of the fungi spores found their way into the sarrel roller holes. Temperatures have been just about ok (5C minimum) but colder weather is due to arrive in about a week's time. This may affect desirable colonisation of the roots by the fungi. The effect will not be obvious for some weeks yet. PGPT spraying will commence when soil temperatures rise to 10C or higher.

Spraying has continued as planned. The last winter dilute fertiliser spray was carried out on 24/2/20. The first two summer sprays were carried out on March 14 and 15 as heavy rain was expected. At the time of writing rainfall has reached about 17mm which is more than sufficient to wash the fertiliser into the ground. All this years fertilisers are slow release to minimise nutrient leaching. This has been a major problem this winter because of the continual rain since last October.

Figure 1 shows the usual rain and evapotranspiration graphs updated to March 15. It is obvious that rainfall has been extreme this winter and has made it almost impossible to re-seed bare areas of the lawns. Nutrient leaching (mainly Nitrogen and Potassium) is also in evidence. AGS carried out a soil test in early February that illustrated this effect. Last September showed Potassium levels at 156 ppm but in the AGS test Potassium (which is known to leach) this had reduced to 104 ppm. The lawns are not in a good state at present but I am hopeful that this years redesigned maintenance programme will boost dwarf rye grass vigour and gradually degrade the annual meadow grass. Overall I am more hopeful about the dwarf rye grass rejuvenation but am more uncertain about the annual meadow grass degradation.

The Toro mower cutters have had to be re-ground as a result of sand damage. The bed-knives did not need replacing but various springs and reel drive bearings were replaced. AJ Mowers said that it is common to replace these every year. An invoice will be available later in the week.**2. Hoop Holes**

Hoop setting for the 4 large lawns took place on Feb 11. Two sets of summer holes were drilled out and backfilled. A third set of hoop holes was created in the WestWest (WW) position from spring and Autumn use. The hoop setting team kindly took delivery of all the chemicals as delivery had been arranged for the same day. The hoop holes for the 8 small lawns were set out on March 14. The minutes of the last meeting did not reflect what I said about hoop holes in my February report. To avoid confusion this is the original text:

*As a part of the discussion, it was agreed that a third set of hoop holes will be created for use at the beginning and end of the season. (ie up to the first tournament and after the last tournament). This 3<sup>rd</sup> set replace the little used golf holes and give the two main sets of holes time to benefit from vigorous spring grass growth. This 3<sup>rd</sup> set will be used for both AC and GC.*

Thus, there is only one set of holes in use at any point in time. In spring and autumn it will be the third set and in the summer the main pair of hoop holes will alternate as usual.

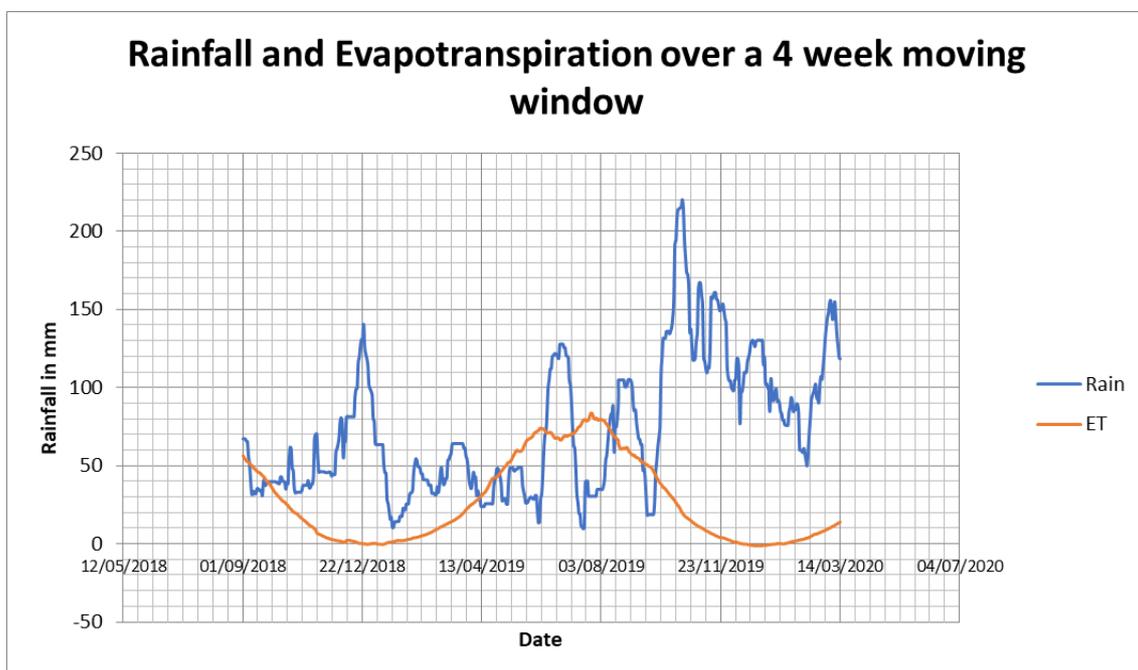
### **3. Corona Virus**

Both Kathy and my son are extremely vulnerable to corona virus and thus we are all of are effectively self-isolating. I am unsure at present as to whether I can continue to carrying out spraying as the season develops. Inherently, spraying is a solitary activity, but I want to avoid other people and touching contaminated items/surfaces whilst at the club. I will review the situation when I see the committee's response to the virus. I think the committee needs to develop a protocol for any use of the club and maintenance work. Everything needs regular wiping down with dilute bleach (Milton) and I would

advise mowers etc to wear gloves when working. Hand washing needs to be a regular part of the routine. Note that only cold water is normally available – less than ideal.

With rumours about all those over 70 being self isolated for four months appearing, I would imagine that most of the summer tournaments and competitions will need to be cancelled. The CA is certainly thinking about this and I presume the committee will also discussing the situation.

JNW 15/3/20



### **League Secretary's Report** for the meeting on 17 March, 2020

There was a minor error on the original calendar that was sent to members. The club Speed Croquet was listed twice: on 6 June and 14 June. 6 June is the correct date.

Camerton and Peasedown are unable to raise a Federation League team, so our Federation League matches on 25 July and 1 August are cancelled.

Eight members have expressed an interest in playing in the Secretary's Shield (a national competition between winners of the previous season's Federation Leagues) so we have entered a team.

In view of the rapid spread of COVID-19 (coronavirus) including a death from the disease in Nailsea we need to consider if we are willing to host the SWF Short Croquet Team Event in Nailsea on 17-19 April this year.

It seems highly likely that all people over 70 will be confined to their homes for three months this spring/summer due to the rapid spread of COVID-19. This will have a devastating effect on the league programme and it is possible that they will be cancelled altogether this year. I suspect that the only team we have with no members over 70 is our Advanced Division 1 Team (Marcus Evans, Kriss Chambers, Ryan Cabble, James Galpin are all under 40). Should we enquire how many of our league players are under 70, to see how many teams we are able to raise if this happens?

The confinement of over 70s to their homes for three months, if it happens, will also affect our Club Competitions programme. We are likely to have even more members than usual trying to complete their games at the end of the season.

Also I will be unable to coach juniors during the confinement period.

Peter Dyke

15 March, 2020

### **League Secretary's Report**

Update for the meeting on 20 March, 2020

Things have progressed rapidly since I wrote my report on 15 March. Extra restrictions are already in place due to the spread of Covid-19 and it seems likely even tougher measures will be put in place to slow down the spread of the virus. It seems increasingly likely that we will be required to minimise social contact for at least twelve weeks. If this is the case it will not be possible to play any league matches during the confinement period.

The South West Federation (SWF) Short Croquet Team event due to be held at Nailsea on 17-19 March has been cancelled.

At the moment we do not know what the SWF committee will decide to do about the leagues. However, if they decide that they should all go ahead, it will be impossible to rearrange all of our matches that should have taken place in April, May and early June in what is left of the season. I therefore recommend that we withdraw from all leagues except two – the Advanced League Division 1 and the Golf Croquet Level Play League – if they take place. These are two leagues that we normally do well in. With any luck the advanced league matches will not need any rearranging as their first match is not until Sunday, 28 June. However, we will have to wait and see what restrictions are put in place and for how long. I would have liked to have included a handicap league as well, but it would be very difficult to decide which team should play and which to cancel. Also by limiting us to just two leagues this will allow more time to play a full programme of club competitions, which I consider equally important.

For the time being I suggest we do not withdraw from the Secretary's Shield, but we wait and see what action the Croquet Association (CA) decides to take. They have

already said that if any player or any club decides to withdraw from a CA event this year that they will receive a full refund.

Peter Dyke

20 March, 2020