

Nailsea and District Croquet Club
Minutes of Zoom Committee Meeting 26th August 2020

Present: Graham McCausland, Meriel Forshaw, Mike Tracy, Brian Roynon, Peter Dyke, Joan Timmins. Sandra Morgan

1. Apologies: Andrew Wimshurst

2. Minutes of the meeting held on the 31st July 2020: agreed and signed by MF on behalf of GMc.

3. Matters Arising:

(a) **Hedges** – The issue with the council continues as work in progress. An update will be provided at the September meeting. **Action: GMc**

4. Treasurer's Report: discussed and noted

Payments by cheque are becoming expensive; BACS transfers are more convenient and used where possible. However, at present there is a limit of £100, which needs to be raised. Mike outlined the recent experiences when trying to make large payments.

The committee agreed to consider increasing the limit and will discuss at the next meeting. **Action: All**

The committee agreed to Mike's original recommendation regarding the grant we received.

SWF Autumn Short Croquet Team Event at Budleigh Salterton has been cancelled this year and the committee agreed to accept the refund of our entry fees.

5. Christmas Lunch:

Due to the present circumstances, the committee agreed that the Christmas Lunch would be cancelled this year. Mike to liaise with the Masonic Hall re a refund or carrying over our paid deposit to 2022. **Action MT**

6. Property Report: Nothing to report

Tony Willoughby has very kindly changed the flowers in front of the clubhouse.

7. Membership Report:

An updated list of the membership was sent to all members on the 19th August. Total membership now stands at 81.

8. Lawns Report: Discussed and noted

The Lawns Advisory Group met on the 25th August and following discussion the committee agreed with the proposals put forward. Mike will contact JW.

John Wallace will identify which lawns will be available via the booking sheets.

Graham McCausland will include the updated information in the newsletter.

A full copy of the LAG notes can be found at the end of the minutes.

Action: MT/GMc

9. Recruitment Report:

Tournaments - Looking ahead to 2021, the committee agreed that along with the GC tournament in July and the Selectors weekend in September our own tournaments should be pencilled in on the calendar.

The advanced tournament weekend held in July - Marcus has submitted reports and thanked everyone for making the weekend a success. A report and photos will go into the local press and onto the website.

CA webinar - Saturday 29th August - topic Ethnicity and Diversity. Peter is hoping to attend this meeting, unless circumstances prevent him doing so. **Action: PD**

The committee reinforced the following ‘Nailsea and District Croquet Club will promote croquet and is open and inclusive to all.’

10. League Secretary's Report: discussed and noted

Following the CA's latest advice, the committee agreed that there could be up to six players on the lawns for junior coaching purposes only.

Covid 19 - The committee agreed the following changes :-

Handling of Balls - For Association Croquet only, - balls may be handled when playing. The balls must be wiped before and after play, this can be done as follows:-

Members bring with them a wet soapy J cloth in a plastic bag, or use the wipes provided on the table inside the door. **Hand gel MUST NOT be used for this purpose.**

Time to take responsibility - members must take responsibility to ensure their own cleaning and safety measures and those of others.

Joan will reinstate the hand washing and cleaning advice which again will be placed on the table inside the door. **Action: JT**

Brian will undertake a risk assessment relating to Covid.

Action: BR

Peter will update the Covid information based on what has been agreed today.

Action: PD

Graham will update the members via the newsletter.

Action: GMc

Short croquet - the short croquet team event at Budleigh Salterton has been cancelled. The committee agreed to keep the Short Croquet event planned for April 2021 on our programme of events for the time being.

League Fixtures – Peter’s proposals regarding teams for next year were discussed. The committee felt there is still sufficient time to make a final decision for 2021 before the AGM in November.

James Galpin has been selected to play in the ‘Chairman’s Salver’, the second association croquet eight. This event will take place in Nottingham on the 10-13th September. The committee wished James every success.

11. Coaching:

Junior coaching is going well and juniors continue to improve. Brian and Brenda have agreed to help Peter.

Concerns remain regarding the lack of club coaches.

12. Any Other Business:

Brian mentioned that William Ormerod from Swanage passed away on the 31st of July 2020, a gentleman who will be sadly missed.

Graham will inform members that the AGM will take place via Zoom this year.

Action GMc

13. DONM: Thursday 24th September 2020 via zoom at 10am.

The meeting closed at 11.25hrs

Signed as a true and accurate record:

Name.....

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

Reports

Treasurer's report for NDCC committee meeting 26th August 2020

This report has been prepared on 21st August 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 less unrepresented cheques is £17604.27. The year is showing a surplus of £7,627.29. Without the grant this would have been a deficit of £2,372.71. Significant outgoings since our last meeting are the insurance premium (£875.21) and expenses to John Wallace (£639.17) the largest part of which was for grass seed.

My views about the use of the grant remain unchanged. Without the grant this year will show a significant deficit, the effect of the pandemic on next year's activities and income is uncertain but definitely negative and the cost of lawn maintenance/development will continue to be higher than in the past. We will need these funds to survive and should not use them for any other purpose until the situation returns to normal, whatever that may be.

M Tracy

21/08/2020

Report for meeting August 2020

Recruitment

In spite of Covid 19, we have 4 new members this year and I am confident that at least 3 will renew next year. It has not been possible to be proactive and I think we have dealt very well with people who have approached us. Many thanks are due to James, Andrew and Tony Hinchliffe. Other Clubs have been quoted as running successful recruitment campaigns but we did not have a pool of potential coaches willing to host taster sessions or to take groups of beginners during the Pandemic. We are very short of active and fully available coaches even in normal times and the loss of David Hunt and myself because of shielding made any concerted recruitment effort totally impossible.

I really hope that we will be able to organise recruitment events in 2021 – taster sessions, invitational events between sports clubs/organisations, and exploitation of the Tuesday evening social events to encourage the participants to take lessons. Hopefully Covid 19 will not prevent these events from happening.

Tournaments

The Advanced Tournament was the only one not to be cancelled this year. Marcus did a splendid job managing the event and also winning it. I have seen many photographs taken by John

Hancock and the players all seemed to be enjoying themselves. A photograph of the socially distanced presentation is on Facebook and has attracted much attention. John Hancock has been waiting for a report to send to the NS Times with some of his photographs and this should now have appeared in the paper. Prior to the tournament, Andrew went beyond the call of duty improving the hoops in blistering heat and single-handedly. As with so many areas of the club these days, we are desperately short of hoop setters. David Hunt has been out of action and has been sorely missed.

Looking ahead to 2021, we are committed to hosting the GC Home Internationals (July) and also the Selectors' Weekend (September). I suggest that we pencil in the equivalent dates for our own tournaments that we scheduled for 2020. I hope that I will be able to manage the two B/C Advanced Tournaments and I will confirm my availability for the specific dates when a few dates in the bigger world are announced and the situation with Covid 19 becomes clearer. Entries were encouraging in 2020 and I think the new style tournaments would have been successful.

Competitions

The competitions have gone well in most cases but a few people have dragged their feet, as always, and some appear to have dropped out, without saying anything. I have not chased players this year. Two competitions have already been won (both by the Chairman!) and the certificates for these have been printed on photographic paper and laminated. All the results to date are on the website. It has been quite time-consuming keeping the website up to date, particularly as I am not a code writer. In a normal season, I would not have time to do this so we will revert to the notice boards in 2021 (hopefully!)

There will be semi-finals and finals and a small number of Block matches outstanding in September. This was all part of the original plan with players having been asked to complete Block matches by the end of August. The subsequent decision to re-seed all the lawns at the same time (as opposed to using germination blankets on one lawn at a time, whilst always leaving at least two lawns available for play) has rendered these plans unfortunate. There is the usual conflict between the ambition to have better lawns in the future and the need to allow members to use the lawns now.

CA matters Nothing to report

Tournament Secretary's Report for the meeting on Wednesday, 26 August 2020.

League Fixtures 2021

I have not enquired who expects to be available to play league matches next year. Initially there seemed to be no particular urgency. Recently I have come to the conclusion that there is no point in us entering any leagues at all next year as our members are not allowed to handle balls or use clips. We cannot expect visiting teams to come to Nailsea and forbid them to handle the balls or use clips when they are allowed to at their own clubs.

Junior Croquet

I had hoped to concentrate on Association Croquet this year, but have had to abandon that idea because of my own inability to place balls accurately for croquet strokes without using my hands. We have been concentrating on skills practice and both juniors have shown a huge improvement in some of their skills this season. They have also played pirates and played the first golf croquet game in the “best of three” junior golf croquet competition.

The latest advice from the CA (issued on 2 July, 2020) allows up to six players on a lawn for coaching. When the juniors return to school in September James will not be able to assist me. I have asked Brian and Brenda if they would be able to help with juniors. If we all attend there will be five members on one lawn. I would like the committee’s permission to have up to six people on a lawn for coaching.

State of the Lawns

I am concerned at the number of “rabbit-runs” that have appeared in the hoop-runs.

SWF Short Croquet Team Competitions

The event at Budleigh Salterton this autumn is cancelled. Unless the situation improves dramatically over the next six months I recommend that we cancel the spring competition at Nailsea in 2021.

Covid-19

I do not visit the club very often – once or twice a week, but when I do I always find members who are not following our covid-19 regulations. I spoke to one member who was not wearing gloves when putting away equipment. He described our rules as ridiculous – he washes his hands and cleans any equipment that he touches before and after use. In his opinion this was far safer than wearing gloves and he intended to continue to operate this way. I have observed a few games of association croquet and both players have handled the balls. **By far the worse breach of our regulations in my opinion is the lack of social distancing – some of our members are particularly bad at observing this rule.**

I have to confess to breaking one rule myself. Occasionally, without thinking, I pick up a ball – unfortunately I find it very difficult to break the habits of 59 years of playing association croquet.

James Galpin

James has been selected to play in the Chairman’s Salver, the second association croquet eight. This year the event is scheduled to take place at Nottingham on 10-13 September.

Lawn Maintenance Report – July 2019 – Budget Commentary

1. Lawn Over-seeding and Closure

The weather is playing havoc with the over-seeding programme and is now more likely to take place on Wednesday (August 26) than Tuesday (August 25).

Looking beyond the actual operation the Lawn Advisory Group (LAG) have been debating how to protect the new grass seedlings. There is an obvious conflict between what is best for the lawns and members natural desire to play croquet. Winter play during the last two seasons has done much damage to the lawns because players are eternally optimistic about playing conditions. However, with NDCC having invested £1500 in an over-seeding operation that is aimed at improving the lawns, LAG members are concerned that the benefits are not lost. It is therefore certain that the LAG will recommend winter closure of the lawns. The main debate is about timing. There is a rearranged Zoom meeting on August 25th to discuss the matter and finalise a recommendation to the August 26 committee meeting.

JNW

22/8/20

LAG ZOOM Meeting 25/8/20 to discuss Lawn Closure

The lawn over-seeding operation scheduled for today has been postponed until tomorrow because of weather. The operation is expensive and is aimed at improving sward density with all the consequential benefits that flow from this.

In the previous two years the lawns have been kept open during much of the Autumn and Winter months to the detriment of the lawns. Guidance about not playing when the surface is soft, wet or frosty has quite often been ignored. As result, significant wear and tear lawn damage has occurred. With the high cost (£1500) of the re-seeding operation there is clearly a need to find ways of protecting the new seedlings until they are established next spring. The only really effective way is to close the lawns until the start of the new season. Thus, a lawn advisory group (LAG) zoom meeting was held earlier today to discuss how best to resolve the natural tension between protecting new grass seedlings and club members wishing to play.

Ideally, the lawns should be closed as soon as the competitive matches have been completed in mid-September. However, this would obviously cause disappointment to the (limited) number of people who like to play on after the end of the competitive season. Most competitive matches have been played but some semi-finals are to be played during early September.

Progress on these matches partly depend a few individuals completing their outstanding block matches. The proposal from the LAG is therefore:

1. To close the lawns completely from the end of October.
2. Keep two out of four lawns open between mid-September and the end of October on a rotational basis. Thus, each lawn would alternate between being open for a week and then closed for a week. This would be facilitated using the on-line booking system.
3. Move the hoops 2 metres to the East of the current position so that the normal hoop approach areas are subject to less wear and tear.
4. Close the lawns early if the weather deteriorates during October (as it did last year)

It is likely that the over-seeding operation will be required for a few years so next years arrangements will need to take account of experience this year.

JNW, 25/8/20