

**Nailsea and District Croquet Club**  
**Annual General Meeting on Zoom**  
**7<sup>th</sup> November 2020**

**Chair:** Graham McCausland

**Present:** 25 members attended (names attached hard copy only)

The meeting opened at 2pm.

### **1. Welcome by the President**

As President, Geoff Hughes welcomed everyone to the meeting. After a difficult start to the season due to the Covid restrictions and individuals having to self-isolate, he hoped that members understood that difficult decisions had had to be made. Geoff thanked committee members and individuals for their work during the year, namely John and Kathy Wallace for their tireless work maintaining the lawns, Linda Shaw for her work with the SWF; also thanks go to Mike, Meriel and Joan who will retire from the committee this year.

Sadly, one of our former members, and a past club treasurer Ron Harridge died earlier in October. Many of you will remember him and we extend our condolences to all his family.

**2. Apologies:** Tony Hinchliffe, Wendy Gibb, Polly Reynolds, Hamish Hall, Tony Willoughby, Coral Harrison, Robin Hendry, Pam Hendry, Sheila Ware, Liz Tracy, Andrew Buchanan, Pat Thompson, David Hogg, Don Clayton, Brigit Clayton, Mary Barnes, Tony Dowman, Denis Hall, John Malaiperuman.

**3. Minutes of AGM held on 9<sup>th</sup> November 2019:** approved and signed as a true and accurate record by Meriel Forshaw on behalf of Graham McCausland.

### **4. Matters Arising:**

The On Line Booking system was introduced at the start of the season after members of the committee had attended some appropriate seminars. This enabled the club to fulfil its commitment to the 'track and trace' requirements during this difficult time.

### **5. Chair's Report 2020**

Well it certainly was a season which we will all remember for a long time, for all the wrong reasons. Despite a delayed start to our season, a much reduced program of club competitions and cancellation of all South West Federation Leagues, a total of 55 members have played at least once this year, many on numerous occasions. I'm delighted that this number includes 4 new members

and the return of 2 of our juniors. A number of initiatives are planned to further promote recruitment of juniors, and new members for 2021, but much of course will depend on the progress of the current Pandemic.

I am delighted to announce, for those of you who do not know already, that David Hunt has been awarded a CA Diploma, in recognition of his services to the club over many years. Do please read his full citation which can be found on the CA website, and I believe Kathy will also post on the club website.

Several members have not been able to play this year due to the need to remain isolated, either to safeguard themselves, or close family. We wish them well and hope that by next spring, the worst of this will be over. I hope by then a vaccine will have been produced, so life can return to normal for everyone, although this may be wishful thinking on my part!

May I thank everyone who offered to provide support to those members who had to be isolated in the first lockdown, earlier in the year. Special thanks to James Galpin who throughout this period did regular shopping for Andrew Buchanan and Pat Thompson.

I would also like to thank everyone who has helped keep the club ticking over during this difficult season, which has not been easy for anyone.

I end with a note of thanks, to echo what Geoff has already said, for all the help I have received from the retiring committee members Mike Tracy, Meriel Forshaw and Joan Timmins.

For me the only good thing that has come out of 2020 is the introduction of an online lawn booking system, despite the general feeling against this at last year's AGM, which seems to have been well received by members.

Graham McCausland 7/11/20

## **6. Treasurer's Report**

Income and expenditure accounts have been published for the financial year ending 30<sup>th</sup> September 2020 with the previous year's figures shown for comparison.

The headline figures are a net surplus of £6,426.66 and a closing bank balance of £16,473.64. We applied for and received a Small Business Grant of £10,000 which was made available because of the pandemic and without which we

would have shown a deficit of £3,573.35. If the council had invoiced us for our annual rental charge of £500 the deficit would have been over £4,000. I made several attempts to obtain an invoice but without success. (Late information – I have just received an invoice for last year's rent and paid it). I indicated in last year's report that we planned to repay the outstanding £2,500 of the loan from the CA, which was done, also we purchased 4 new sets of primary balls at a cost of £1,520. This is the most significant component of the Miscellaneous Expenditure shown in the accounts. I believe that the CA will send us entry fees for the only tournament we ran this year, the Open Advanced and this will appear in next year's accounts. More late information – payment from the CA has recently arrived (£273.75), some for entries to the Open Advanced tournament, £186 being donations by people who had entered our other tournaments which were subsequently cancelled.

You will have noticed that our expenditure on lawn maintenance has approximately doubled since last year. John has been making valiant attempts to increase the density of the grass that we want and to reduce the amount of the grass we do not want, namely meadow grass, or Poa. A few words of explanation. Poa is short lived and spends most of its life generating seed, which it does very quickly. Unfortunately Poa is much more susceptible to drought than the species we sow, and so in dry conditions it dies off leaving bare patches of lawn and tufts of dead plants which make the surface uneven and bumpy. That is why so much effort goes into finding ways of discouraging Poa and encouraging and seeding with the varieties that provide good playing conditions. This has come at a price. In August all the lawns were overseeded using a machine which John's research had discovered and which had received nothing but high praise from the many golf clubs that have used it. It is called a Dynaseeder and comes, with a skilled operator, at a cost of about £900 per day. The cost of seed was in excess of £400. On top of this, all the lawns had to be irrigated for two days before the seeding and for two weeks after, morning and evening. I hope that everyone will understand that the restrictions on lawn use, which were kept to a minimum, were necessary to protect this investment in money and effort.

It goes without saying that the pandemic has had a profound effect on the club's activities and finances this year. Unfortunately there is no way of predicting what its effects will be next year. Every aspect of income is in question, but our outgoings remain fairly certain. There is, for example, no certainty that the Short Croquet Teams event will go ahead in April, and that is usually a valuable source of income. I have therefore begun to construct a budget, but it has many holes in it. We are fortunate to have £6,000 of the grant remaining to cover what may be another year of difficulty.

Looking to the future, once the club can return to normal, I see no reason why it should not resume its usual flourishing self. The lack of recruitment of younger people is however a cause for concern – we are all aging together and unless there is a change in this respect we will have to progressively buy in the services which we have always done for ourselves.

The committee has considered two large projects, namely the improvement of the car park area and the installation of permanent irrigation system. Neither of these projects can be afforded until the club becomes profitable and can build its reserves. The case for improving the entrance and approach to the pavilion is obvious. From time to time, but mostly in the winter, the ground becomes very muddy and slippery. The need for an irrigation system is less obvious unless you are one of the small number of volunteers who undertook after the seeding exercise to get to the club before 8am for two weeks to set out the portable sprinkler system and move it every half hour or so until all the lawns had been watered. Even those good volunteers may not be aware that most of the lawn treatments need to be watered in. John has used the weather forecasts to take advantage of rainfall whenever possible, but these are not entirely reliable. Consequently he has made many visits to the club, usually early in the morning or in the evening so as to keep the lawns open, to water in most of the treatments. Irrigation before and after overseeding is also very desirable if not essential. This is not a sustainable arrangement. Over the years we have spent thousands of pounds on grass seed which has either not germinated or which has germinated and then succumbed to dry conditions before the roots have developed sufficiently. We are getting neither value for our money nor the standard of sward that we desire. The committee has concluded that a permanent irrigation system should be installed as soon as practicable if we want to have good lawns.

Mike Tracy

7<sup>th</sup> November 2020

The Treasurer's report was agreed unanimously.

**Setting of subscriptions:** The treasurer proposed that the subscription rate be left unchanged. There were no dissensions.

**Appointment of honorary auditor:** Phil Collins, who has examined our accounts for the past seven years, is no longer available. Mike suggested that the new treasurer seek an appropriate candidate and offered his services if nobody else could be found. This is permissible as the constitution requires the auditor to be a person not on the committee.

## **7. Fixture Secretary's Report:**

### **Fixture Secretary's Report for the AGM 2020**

#### **South West Federation Leagues**

I have very little to report this year. No league matches took place because too few clubs wished participate due to the risk of their players catching coronavirus (covid-19). Normally I would be sending our entries for next year's leagues to the South West Federation league secretary at this time of year. However there is a proposal to postpone league entries until February 2021 which I will not be opposing. So I may contact members towards the end of January regarding which leagues you wish to enter. Hopefully we will be able to play league matches next year, but I anticipate that it is unlikely that we will be able to start as early as we normally do so we will probably not enter as many Nailsea teams in the leagues as we have done in recent years.

#### **Tournaments**

Only one of our four tournaments, the Open Advanced AC Tournament, took place. Initially there were eight entrants, but one dropped out a few days before the tournament due to an injury. So that one player was not sitting out waiting to play the manager had the ingenious idea of getting the players to play two games simultaneously. The tournament was won by Marcus Evans.

#### **Club Competitions.**

We had a reduced programme of club competitions, but 23 members played in at least one of the seven events.

There were just two entrants for the AC Open Advanced Singles so they played the best of three. Marcus won the first game +14, James Galpin won the second +26. In the third game Marcus pegged out two balls reducing the decider to a fascinating battle of wits as well as skill. James triumphed 26-23.

Pat Long won the B class beating Andrew Wimshurst in the final, 26-20. Graham McCausland won the level play AC event. In the final of the Open Handicap Singles, Pete Longden beat Tony Hinchliffe by five on time.

Andrew Wimshurst won the short croquet beating Brian Roynon in the final.

There were just three golf croquet competitions. In the level play James Galpin won the upper band with Andrew Wimshurst as runner-up. Graham McCausland won the lower band, runner-up Steve Durston.

Unfortunately South Wales went into lockdown before the final of the Sergeant Cup could be played and as one of the finalists lives in South Wales it still has not been played. The two finalists, Robert Upton and Peter Dyke, have agreed to play each other as early as possible next season.

### Notable Achievements

I normally mention outstanding performances by individual members. James Galpin (ranked 86 in the world rankings) was selected to play in the World AC Championship which took place in Melbourne, Australia, in February. He did extremely well in the block stages, coming second in his block – better than many entrants ranked higher than him – and qualified for the knockout stage of the Championship (top 32), but he was knocked out in the first round of the knockout by Ben Rothman (USA, ranked 4).

James was selected for the top GC eight and won the Bowl. In AC he was selected for the Chairman's Salver (the second eight) and came second equal. These are all very notable achievements. Well done James!

### 2021

We look forward to next year which we hope will be more normal and hope to have a fuller programme of events.

Peter Dyke  
(07/11/2020)

## 8. Election of Committee

Name	Role	Proposer	Seconder
G r a h a m McCausland	Chair	Meriel Forshaw	Mike Powell
David Hunt	Treasurer	G r a h a m McCausland	Mike Tracy
E r i c a Malaipuruman	Secretary	G r a h a m McCausland	Brian Roynan
Peter Dyke	Member	Meriel Forshaw	Joan Timmins
A n d r e w Wimshurst	Member	Joan Timmins	Meriel Forshaw
Brian Roynan	Member	Terry Young	Libby Howard- Blood
Sandra Morgan	Member	Doreen Wallace	Joan Timmins

As there was only one nominee for each committee member, the election was agreed by one unanimous vote.

**9. Any Other Business:** Terry Young asked whether the club should apply for a community grant. Graham replied and said that as the club had already received a significant grant, the committee felt that this was not an appropriate time to seek further assistance, especially as there were other clubs that may benefit more from such grants.

**Date of Next AGM**

**Saturday 6th November 2021**

The meeting closed at 14.45hrs

Signed as a true and accurate record:

Name.....

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