

**Nailsea and District Croquet Club**  
**Minutes of Committee Meeting held on 26<sup>th</sup> November 2020**

**Present:** Bryan Roynon (acting as chairman) Andrew Wimshurst, David Hunt, Peter Dyke, Sandra Morgan, Erica Malaiperuman.

1. **Apologies:** Graham McCausland
2. **Minutes of meeting held on 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2020:** Agreed and signed as correct
3. **Matters arising:** none
4. **Treasurer's Report:discussed and noted**  
-We may well lose some of our usual income this year due to COVID, It is vital that we generate £10,000 income for the year. This can be generated from 66 members minimum. Membership renewal should take place at the beginning of the year. Sandra queried whether, since play had been limited this year and maybe also next, we could consider renewing membership at a later date. David explained that we could not change the constitution. It was agreed that forms for renewing membership will be sent out as usual at the beginning of the year. **Action** Andrew.  
  
-David confirmed that we did not pay Business Rates and therefore the letter sent from NSCouncil regarding "Financial support for businesses during Lockdown" for small businesses would not apply to us.
5. **Property Report:** nothing to report
6. **Lawns Report:** discussed and noted.  
The committee acknowledged all the hard work and research that John is constantly doing. It was noted that **all** clubs do have a problem with winter play damaging the lawns, Andrew stressed that we must be more realistic about possible winter play for the moment and take encouragement from the steady improvement in root growth.
7. **SWF AGM**  
Full details are on the website. The notion of a green plaque for green initiatives was raised at the AGM The committee felt that we did not have anything to contribute at the moment. Peter explained that it was also possible that the definition of whether a club was small or medium might change in the future, perhaps depending on number of members rather than number of lawns.
8. **League fixtures report:** discussed and noted.  
Peter has managed to extend the time for deadlines for team entries, it is also possible that matches may be delayed if we are still in lockdown tiers 2 or 3.  
Peter hoped that we would be able to hold the Short Croquet competition in the Spring.
9. **CA club Competitions 2021**  
The proposed dates forwarded by Kathy present no problem, **Kathy** will go ahead and confirm with CA
10. **CA Bid invitation 2022 and 2023**  
It was agreed that we should not bid for any other competition in 2022 .We are already holding the GC Students' Championship, 9<sup>th</sup> April. For 2023 we would like to bid for the Spencer Ell Cup, or the Treasurer's Tankard as a second choice. **Action:Peter**
11. **AOB**  
-Peter raised the question in his report of **What are Club's priorities for 2021:**  
Brian – more members having more lawn time  
Andrew – increase membership.  
Peter – retain as many members as we can. Keep our members safe  
Sandra – we have to get more members.

Quite intense discussion followed here, questioning having an open day; how to keep new members interested after coaching course; the question of changing attitudes to GC as a way of getting new members; how to get younger members, bearing in mind that our workforce is getting older.

It was decided that all these ideas should be discussed at the next meeting

**Action: Erica to contact other clubs to find out how they give new members instruction and how they nurture them.**

-Make a list of members who are keeping club mallets at home.

**Action: Erica**

-Draw for 100 club. Brian will send out application forms for the 100 club and explain that the next draw will take place during the next committee meeting.

**Action: Brian**

11. DONM

January 7<sup>th</sup> at 10.00 Erica to notify Mike to arrange the zoom meeting.

Meeting closed at 11.30.

Signed as a true and accurate record

Name.....

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

Treasurer's report for NDCC committee meeting 27<sup>th</sup> November 2020

This report has been prepared on 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2020.

Spreadsheet for the new financial year is also 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 unpresented cheques £15,155.04. The year is showing a deficit of £1,248.60

There has been little financial activity since the last meeting. I have paid in the 2 cheques (£45) that were hanging from last year. As I reported at the AGM, the council have claimed the rent due for last year which has been paid. Rent becomes due on 29<sup>th</sup> September and has already been paid for the year commencing 29<sup>th</sup> September 2020.

The change to our banking arrangements to increase the limit on BACS transactions to £1,000 has been auctioned.

I made an error when requesting changes to the signatories on our mandate for which I apologise. The intention was to remove Meriel and add David. Having submitted the paperwork I realised that David's signature was required which I had missed. I had already ascertained through a phone call to HSBC Customer Services (an hour of my life that I will never get back) that (1) the mandate change will not be auctioned until the end of the month and (2) HSBC do not inform you when the change is actioned. I have discussed this with David and he agrees that I should wait for the application to fail and then resubmit it. Having two requests to do the same thing in the HSBC system could totally confuse it. Once David is on the mandate I can then set him up as an online user, the final step being for him to remove me from online access and from the mandate. In the meantime I will continue to manage and record the financial activity and keep David informed as appropriate.

M Tracy

23/11/2020

## Fixture Secretary's Report

### 1. Report of SWF AGM

The full minutes of the SWF AGM can be found on the SWF website. I do not intend to go through them in detail, but I pointed out that David Hunt had been omitted in the Chair's report of those members who had received a CA Diploma.

Changes to timing of submission of league entries were discussed. Proposal (a) bringing the deadline for arranging fixtures forward by one week was passed (normal deadline is now 24 January instead of 31 January). Proposal (b) regarding special arrangements for 2021 were discussed. I pointed out that time allowed for arranging fixtures had been reduced from seven weeks to four weeks. While this may be fine for most clubs with only a few fixtures to arrange, Nailsea normally has a lot more fixtures than other clubs and it would be difficult to arrange all of our fixtures in the suggested timeframe. I therefore suggested putting two of the deadlines back by two weeks to allow more time for arranging matches. No-one objected to this and it was passed. The proposed deadlines are now as follows:

Early-February 2021	League entry forms will be sent to club Match Secretaries.
Sunday February 21 <sup>st</sup> 2021	Deadline for all team entries to be submitted by the clubs to the League Secretary.
Sunday February 28 <sup>th</sup> 2021	League Secretary to send out Blocks and Match venues to all club Match Secretaries.
Sunday April 11 <sup>th</sup> 2021	Deadline for agreed match dates to be sent to League Secretary, together with team captains and their contact details.
Sunday April 18 <sup>th</sup> 2021	League Secretary to send out all fixture lists and contact lists to club Match Secretaries, and to update the website tables.

Dates in red are the ones that have been changed. Stephen Custance-Baker, the SWF League Secretary, pointed out that all dates were just suggested dates and may be changed depending on what restrictions are in force in the early part of 2021.

### 2. Dates of Tournaments 2021

These have been circulated by Kathy. At the moment they are provisional dates. I cannot see a problem with any of them and recommend that we approve them so that she can go ahead and confirm the dates.

### 3. CA bid invitation for events in 2022 and 2023

**2022** – We are already committed to holding the GC Students' Championship in 2022; I recommend that we do not take on anything else.

**2023** – I would like to support Kathy's suggestion that we bid for one of the AC eights. I am happy to discuss this in more detail at the meeting.

#### 4. **South West Federation Short Croquet Teams Event 2021**

Are we happy to go ahead with this?

We do not need to make an immediate decision, but we may need to make one in the next couple of months (i.e. before the end of January 2021).

#### 5. **Financial Support During Lockdown**

Please see letter from North Somerset Council circulated earlier today.

#### 6. **What are the Club's priorities for 2021?**

I have my ideas. What are yours?

Peter Dyke

(25/11/20)

### **Lawn Maintenance Report – November 2020**

#### **1. Lawns**

As expected, the weather deteriorated at the end of October and has remained wet ever since (Figure 1) with average rainfall of around 125 mm per 4 week period. The ground, as it was last year, is very soft and unsuitable for croquet. It reinforces the decision to close the lawns for the winter. By chance I received a copy of Nottingham's newsletter explaining why their lawns were closed for the winter. They have a professional groundsman who described all the autumn renovation work and concluded with the following:

*'Winter season play causes disproportionate wear to lawns, partly because they are wetter on average so there is more compaction, but also because the grass isn't growing, so instead of the constant self-repairing which takes place in the croquet season, all the minor harms from feet and mallets are cumulative.'*

Nottingham have a free draining sandy soil (no good for hoops!) whereas NDCC has a silt/clay that is not free draining. This makes winter play even more problematic.

Whilst taking soil samples for testing I observed that the depth of grass roots is still poor. There odd roots that penetrate down 75 mm but the majority seem to exist in the top 25mm which is mostly sand. This does not make for a healthy sward – hence my general desire to improve the soil biology using organic fertilisers and soil amendments. (Section 2 of October's report).

Table 1 includes all the soil test results completed since 2016 prior to levelling. Each set of tests was carried out by a different laboratory so some experimental variations could be expected. However, there are some important points to make:

- a. The soil is acidic with average pH around 5.6. Barenbrug's minimum recommended minimum is 5.8. This could partly explain why Rye grass does not appear to really thrive at NDCC at present. By contrast Bent thrives in acidic soils so hopefully things should improve as the Bent seedlings mature.
- b. pH has an impact on nutrient availability. (Figure 2). In particular it moderately reduces Nitrogen (N) availability and markedly reduces Phosphorus (P) availability. A shortage of P

results in stunted growth. The current P level of 16ppm is at the top end of what is required, particularly in the presence of mycorrhizal fungi to supply P to the Rye/Bent but not the Annual Meadow grass. Hence the “no P “ in fertilisers policy will continue.

- c. Low pH impacts on Sulphur(S) availability. The soil testing has shown that NDCC is consistently low in Sulphur. Granular Iron Sulphate was recently added to boost S (strictly SO<sub>4</sub> ions) and also degrade patches of moss.

## **2. Overseeding.**

I have been concerned for some time that the germinated Bent seedling stripes had more or less disappeared on Lawns 1 & 2. I therefore arranged for the Germinal Amenity seed rep. to call in and have a look at the lawns as he visited just after germination. (Germinal supplied the Bent seed). Sadly, he did confirm that we have much less Bent on lawns 1 & 2 than on 3 & 4. It is not caused the loss of so many seedlings but a lack of moisture after germination and possibly a shortage of readily available P to encourage rooting. We discussed the timing of a possible cold over-seeding and independently concluded that the end of January was better than November/December as there would be less loss of seed due to wet conditions/low temperatures. If I can get my over-seeder working by then that is what I propose to do. The partial loss of the Bent seedlings emphasises the need for an irrigation system to support lawn work and overseeding in particular.

## **3. Other lawn work.**

AJ Mowers have visited and raised the cutting height to 8mm. They commented that:

- a. The mowers had been correctly operating the DP click units to keep the reel/bed clearance as required.
- b. The bed-knife was worn and would need replacing at the start of next season.

The bed-knife wear is disappointing because to replace them and lightly regrind the reels costs around £480. However, to keep the Toro cutting correctly this is apparently what is needed. I was staggered to learn that Long Ashton replace their bed-knives every 4 weeks! To minimise cost they have their own grinding machine. The reels themselves do not seem to have suffered from the sand damage that occurred last year.

The reels themselves are partly worn and AJ Mowers suggested that we might need to replace them next year. However, they did agree that because our cutting height is higher than golf clubs employ we have a bigger margin before replacement is necessary. The worn reels are the cause of grass clippings not being thrown into the box when the latter become partly full. This is a nuisance as small clumps of clippings are left on the ground if the collection boxes are not emptied sufficiently often. New reels would cure this but the total cost (perhaps £1500 including labour) is not justified at present.

The large lawn hoop holes (which are not in the normal position) have all been filled with green waste and Bent seed incorporated into the top layer. It will be interesting to see if any of this seed

germinates in the spring. The small lawn hoop holes have left as these will be required next season.

All the corner tubes have been located, cleaned out and replaced. These tubes are a vital part of marking out hoop holes, correctly locating corner flags outside the playing area and facilitating the marking out white lines using string lines. Unfortunately, when white liners don't use them regularly, the lines drift and the tubes become covered over and invisible. This makes their use more difficult on subsequent occasions.

Sarrel rolling is completed whenever the ground is sufficiently firm. The same will apply to the occasional mow during the winter months. The monthly spraying programme continues with a dilute liquid bio fertiliser and the Essentials plus soil amendment.

The Praxys herbicide spray has clearly killed some of the weeds but new small clumps of Trefoil and Pearlwort have appeared since the spray. I have attempted to keep these under control by applying 17 litres of Weedol using my own back pack sprayer. (The Weedol is made from a concentrate). This may be a futile gesture as herbicides really only work when weeds are growing vigorously. Under low temperature, low growth conditions the weeds grow but seem to be almost impervious to herbicides. Another Praxys spray is planned for the Spring.

The patch of ground next to lawn 5 was cleared during the summer. My suggestion to Graham McCausland was that we should spray the ground with Glyphosate next Spring, cultivate and level the ground and then re-seed in the Autumn. At present, it is not possible to mow this area with the Toro.

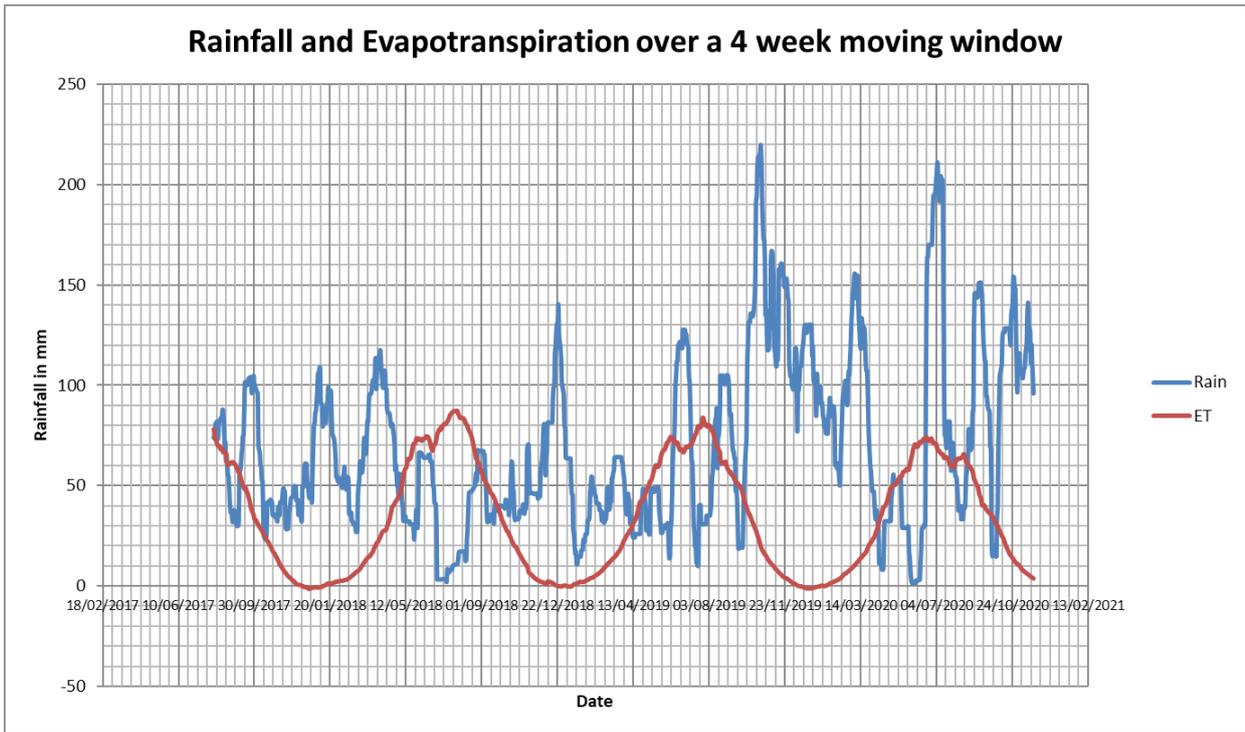
#### **4. Teams**

The leaf collection teams have done an excellent job in keeping the lawns free of leaves. My concern for next year is that we may well be short of White Liners and Hoop Setters. The latter are particularly important next year because we have two major events (GC International) and Selectors Weekend in addition to the usual tournaments.

JNW

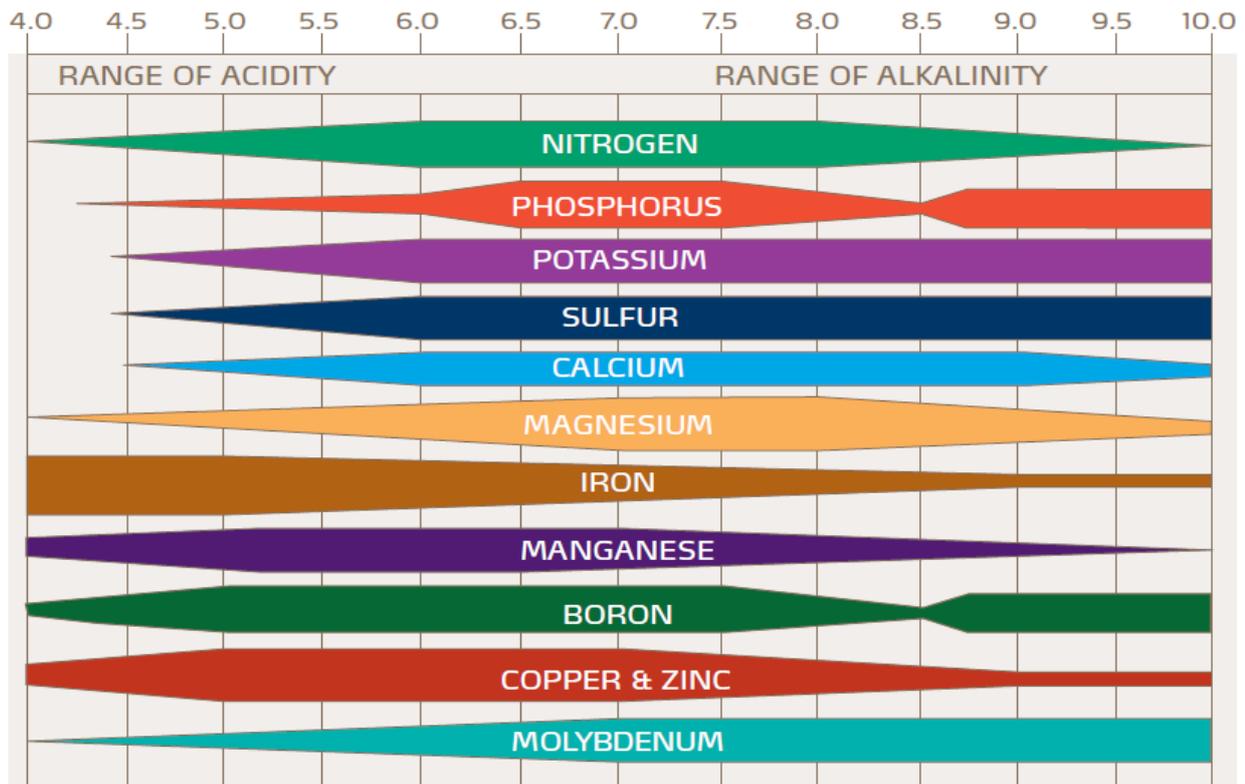
23/11/20

**Figure 1 Rainfall and ET**



**Figure 2**

**The Influence of Soil pH on Nutrient Availability**



**Table 1 Soil Testing Results**

		Apr-16	Sep-19	Feb-20	Oct-20	
Item	Unit					Suggested Target
Calcium	ppm		755	835	1060	600-1200
Potassium	ppm	41	156.3	104	119	80-120
Magnesium	ppm		75.5	79	99	40-65
Sodium	mg/L		9.5	16	32	2-30
Phosphorus	ppm	1	13.4	18	16	5-15
Iron	ppm		167.1	1275	1231	20-60
Sulphate	ppm		29.8	2	4	25-60
Manganese	ppm		23.1	83	92	6-8
Copper	ppm		5.4	5.9	8.8	2-5
Zinc	ppm		20.6	6.7	15.4	3-6
Boron	ppm		0.5	0.63	0.96	0.7-1
Molybdenum					0.02	
Cation Exchange Capacity	meq/100ml		8	7.6	9.7	5-15
Electrical Conductivity( sat CaSO4)	uS/cm		2044			1900 - 2100
Organic Matter	%		3.7			2-5
pH		5.4	5.8	5.8	5.6	6-7
%Base Saturation						
Calcium	%		47.2			55-70
Magnesium	%		7.9			3-10
Potassium	%		5			2-3
Sodium	%		0.5			0.2-2
% Base Saturation of other	%		39.4			20-40

## Report for meeting November 2020

### Recruitment

We got great publicity mileage out of the pumpkins. Nanny McPhee and the Minions were all superbly well made. A passer-by joined in the fun with a suggestion that Nanny McPhee had been behaving badly and this led to an accusation that she had murdered one of the Minions in a jealous rage. The photo (by Libby) of Nanny McPhee being laid to rest was brilliant and attracted a huge amount of Facebook interest. Many thanks to Libby, Terry, Maggie and Graham, and Pete Longden for all their hard work and enthusiasm. Here is the photo of Nanny in her grave and a photo of the Minions in their prime:



The Nailsea Active Fb page has been very “active” encouraging people in the town to join in with running, walking yoga, etc. We will tap into that in the Spring. They reach a lot of people via Fb and also via the Tyntesfield GPs who fund the organiser, Glen Shmidt. I will invite him to the club as soon as possible – and also the passers- by who showed particular interest.

### Tournaments

As per my separate e-mail, I have entered our tournament dates into the CA database.

19-20 Jun 2021	June Advanced Singles (AC) Class Tournament	H:0–9	manager Kathy
24-25 Jul 2021	July Advanced Singles (AC) Class Tournament	H:2–12	manager Kathy
14-15 Aug 2021	Advanced Singles Weekend (AC)		manager Marcus

17 Aug 2021 Golf Croquet B-Level (3+) Series tournament GC:3+ manager Peter  
Please let me know of any problems. They started out at the “preliminary” stage. I have moved them on to “draft”. I would like to move them on to “confirmed” very soon so that the CA admin can check them.

### Competitions

With the recent vaccine news, it’s possible to have more confidence in having a fuller programme in 2021. We might be a bit late getting started so I would like to leave the competition for the Greta Stringer trophy until 2022 and possibly omit the Alternate Stroke Doubles. If we have a good year for recruitment, we could hope to revitalise that competition in 2022 and get it back to its roots – an encouragement for high bisquers to play with lower handicap players. I feel that it’s been a bit stale and not well supported of late.

### CA matters

I am forwarding a CA e-mail re new grant opportunities. Our wish list is an irrigation system and a weatherproof car park but I have no idea if they could be shown to qualify!

Kathy Wallace23/11/20