

**Nailsea and District Croquet Club**  
**Minutes of Committee Meeting held on 22 July 2021**

**Present:** G McCausland, D Hunt, P Dyke, B Roynon, S Morgan E Malaiperuman.

**Apologies:** Erica left the meeting at 10.30 (eye appointment)

**Minutes of the last meeting:** Errors corrected, Agreed and signed by Erica on behalf of G. McCausland

**Matters Arising:** It was decided that the committee would continue to cover fuel expenses for 2 cars for away matches for the rest of the season.

The matter of wilding the bank to be pushed back to next meeting

Chris Roberts has confirmed that 2 days would be necessary for an A class Golf tournament. Should we require a manager the SWF would be able to help us by providing us with one. Peter is still concerned that there are not enough volunteers to prepare the lawns for an extra tournament in the Nailsea calendar. Peter is also concerned that some captains have had trouble raising teams. He feels we are too reliant on the same people, namely John, Kathy, Terry and Geoff. We should be looking for younger volunteers. The matter will be raised again at the beginning of the year when Chris Roberts (C A) contacts all clubs to find out which tournaments they are happy to host.

**Treasurer's Report:** Noted and discussed: £130,000 is the sum required to insure the fabric of the clubhouse. ( Post meeting, this figure was run past John Malaiperuman who felt it was a reasonable figure)

**Membership Report:** Andrew had nothing to report. He was unable to be present at the meeting.

**Property Report:** Discussed and noted. Brian will also install new taps (automatically turn off) in both the men's and ladies' toilets, at a cost of £49 per tap. The old taps will be kept in reserve should they be needed at some point. He will also inspect the shutters which have become difficult for members to lock. Robin Hendry will help Brian with the repairs to the carpark, but the dry weather is preventing the work going ahead. Once again Brian raised the point that we were very low on volunteers for the last working party. Graham to mention this in his newsletter and to publicise the date of the next work party on August 12<sup>th</sup>.

**Recruitment Report:** Discussed and noted: The club is indebted to Kathy for the recruitment and the coaching timetable. The committee agreed that the commitment from Martin and Kathy is unsustainable. As Kathy mentions in her report, out of the 27 new members who have had or are still having lessons 5 have left but 11 have joined. However there may be more who might join after they have finished their lessons. If this is the trend for the next year the committee must take on Kathy's suggestions as to how these numbers should be managed without causing such work overload.

**Tournaments and competitions report:** Discussed and noted. It was decided that members should use their own mugs at tournaments and the opposition should be encouraged to bring their own. If members use cardboard mugs they should pay 20p for the mug, the opposition would not be asked to pay. However if the home team used any of the club mugs for the opposition then they should take those home, wash them and replace them.

**Fixtures Report:** Results of the league matches noted: Peter explained that it is very important that captains send him the full results of all matches, both home and away. The reason being that mistakes can be made. It transpired that the Advanced match against East Dorset had been incorrectly recorded on the SWF website and should have been a 3-1 **win** to Nailsea. Peter was intrigued as to how Nailsea could have lost to ED, (they normally win and both Marcus and James were playing) so he rang Marcus to ask what went wrong. It was only then that the mistake became apparent. Peter was able to bring this to the attention of the SWF and the result was rectified.

**Lawn Report:** discussed and noted. The committee were very happy with the report. John is still waiting for an appointment with the irrigation company. The Lawns Advisory Group at their last meeting has recommended that all lawns will be definitely closed during December, January and February. During November and March the default position is that the lawns are closed. However, that might well change should the weather and ground conditions allow, and play will be permitted at short notice. Players will need to go to the lawns booking system to check availability.

**Covid Restrictions:** It was agreed that only 6 people should be allowed in the clubhouse at one time and wearing a mask is recommended.

**A.O.B.** A letter of complaint was received regarding parking in Avening Close. This was discussed by the Committee and no further action needs to be taken.

**D.O.N.M.** Thursday, 26<sup>th</sup> August at 9.45

Reminder to put on agenda, subs for next year and wild flowers on the bank.

The meeting closed at 11.30

Signed as a true and accurate account

Name.....

Signature.....  
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Treasurers report to the committee Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2021

I attach Income and Expenditure Account made up to 21<sup>st</sup> July 2021 showing a balance of £27,662.82.

I am pleased that the Agenda for the meeting does not include a discussion of club subscriptions. I will ask Erica to include this for the next meeting in August before which I will send the committee an up to date report on the club finances.

I am completing the pre renewal report in connection with the Clubs Insurance Policy. The only item which needs to be brought to your attention is the Building's declared value of £134,000. + 15% = £154,000.

I hope to be soon recognised by HSBC as the Primary User of the Bank Account and will thereafter be able to make Inter Bank transfers.

I need a list of the various team captains so I can keep track of payment of Match Fees ( I'm only including this so I don't forget to ask.

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**The Property Report  
for Committee Meeting  
22<sup>nd</sup> July 2021**

**Work Morning**

A work morning was held on the 16<sup>th</sup> July to tidy up the outfield and car parks in preparation for the International tournament weekend. Although a call for helpers was sent out the response was VERY disappointing.

As I was away Geoff was running the morning and he was alone!

**Nobody** turned up to support him when we needed a good effort before a prestigious event when we would have liked the Club looking its best!

I appreciate some of the people who are among the small band of members who regularly support the work mornings were away or incapacitated but a better response should have been forthcoming before a showcase event and money earner for OUR Club.

**Trolley Maintenance.**

I have not made any progress with finding a supply of suitable wheels as yet but will keep trying.

The decking in front of the summer house is in need of attention so I will speak to Tony.

**The temporary repair to the carpark**

A work in progress.

**Social Events**

The one social evening booked for this season (so far) went off without a hitch. Thanks to Polly and Tony W for helping Brenda and Brian to run it and raise £120 .

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### **Recruitment Report for July Meeting**

A total of 27 have had lessons or are still having lessons. To date, 5 have left after the completion of their course and 11 have joined the club. The Scouts Evenings led to two young people requesting lessons and Marcus and Ryan agreed to take this on. Unfortunately, the two Scouts had to isolate so no sessions have actually taken place yet. The DBS checks for Marcus and Ryan have made some progress but it is a tortuous process. This was not simplified as much as I had hoped, by the CA input and became very confusing for Ryan.

The Thursday evening practice sessions have been popular with 8 and 11 attendees on the first two occasions. These have been valuable social opportunities as well as practice sessions. It is hoped that we won't need a facilitator after a couple more weeks.

If this level of recruitment continues next year, we will need a new system. The time given by Martin and myself, in particular, is unsustainable. John Hancock, Linda and John Wallace have also given many hours of their time. Brigit gave valuable time as an assistant coach. John Hancock may not be so flexible next year if his working pattern returns to normal. John Wallace helped because of the extreme need but he would not wish to repeat this exercise. The disparate levels of ability within groups make it impossible to manage with just one coach for several people. Graham and Sandra have taken on a small amount of GC coaching.

These levels may not continue next year. If they do, we will have to consider aptitude groups so that coaching can be more efficient with larger groups per single coach. If these ran at the same time, there could be movement between the groups. This happened to a certain extent on Wednesday evenings with my second group and John Hancock's second group. This was also when John Wallace was also called in to trouble-shoot for a lady who is highly intelligent and desperate to succeed but couldn't acquire a successful striking action. With a change of grip and a shorter mallet, much progress has been made.

I have not had time to play any of my club matches, have withdrawn from one competition and may well withdraw from the other. The classes drag on with weather, illness, injuries, isolation and holidays intervening and a desire from our side to not lose any potential new members.

Kathy Wallace

### **Tournaments and Competitions Report for June meeting 2021**

#### **Tournaments**

The July Class Advanced Tournament is full but both reserves have been called in. The August GC Tournament was also full, but there has been a withdrawal. The August Advanced Tournament has 10 entries but there may well be more to come.

#### **The GC Home Internationals**

This was a great success and Ian Burrige would ask us for a repeat visit if he found himself in the same position in the future. A small number of Club members shared a huge amount of work. Hoop-setting in the heat was an unreasonable and exhausting task for elderly members. We need more to share the effort. The catering was shared to a certain extent but Libby and Terry did a lot more than most. Again, the lack of provision of lunches was not a problem and was barely mentioned. Apparently many clubs were moving in this direction before the Pandemic.

#### **Competitions**

Nothing to report – matches proceeding.21/7/21

**League Secretary's Report** for the committee meeting on 22 July 2021

**Secretary's Shield**

Chester 4 Nailsea 1 loss

**South West Federation Association Croquet Fixtures**

**Advanced League Div 1**

Taunton Deane 1 Nailsea A 4 win

East Dorset 1 Nailsea A 3 win

**Advanced League Div 3**

Cheltenham B 3 Nailsea B 4 win

**Federation League (Central)**

Nailsea 1 Bristol 4 loss

**Intermediate League (Central)**

Camerton & Peasedown 2 Nailsea 3 win

**Short Croquet (North)**

Nailsea v Kington Langley – match postponed; this will now take place on Tuesday, 24 August.

Llandaff 0 Nailsea 7 win (walkover)

Llandaff unable to raise a team due to two members leaving the area.

**South West Federation Golf Croquet Fixtures**

**Level Play (North)**

Nailsea 10 Cheltenham 10 draw

**Handicap League**

Nailsea North 11 Bristol 9 win

Nailsea Central 8 Bath 12 loss

Camerton & Peasedown 11 Nailsea Central 9 loss

**High Handicap League (North West)**

Llandaff 9 Nailsea 0 loss (walkover)

Nailsea unable to raise a team; two other dates offered by Llandaff, but we were still unable to raise a team. Llandaff have won the North West section of the High Handicap League having won their other matches.

Nailsea v Bath NW – match postponed due to severely hot weather; new date to be arranged.

Peter Dyke (21/07/2021)

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**Lawn Maintenance Report – July 2021**

**1. Lawns**

The combination of rain and hot weather has left the lawns in a good state. Feedback from both NDCC members and players at the Home International last weekend has been positive. There is an element of luck involved in this in that the rain has prevented the annual meadow grass dying back. A prolonged period of drought would cause more problems. Hopefully, a combination of more overseeding with Bent and continuation of what appears to be a successful lawn treatment programme will lead to continued improvement.

**2. Irrigation System**

In hot weather a lawn can easily lose 3-4mm of water per day due to evapotranspiration (ET). In the three weeks up to 11<sup>th</sup> July we had 130mm of rain leaving the ground soft and the lawns green and somewhat slow. In the following 7 days, we had no rain and lost about 24 mm of water through evapotranspiration. The cost of replacing this water with irrigation would be about £240 whilst the

value of the rain that fell was about £1300. These figures illustrate why the proposed irrigation system will not be used to compensate for dry weather except in extreme circumstances.

The ET data is interesting in that I run a daily calculation of ET using weather data from local weather stations. The calculated deficit of 24mm is almost exactly the same as the STRI figure of 25mm of water loss per week in hot dry weather.

After last month's committee meeting, I contacted the Irrigation consultant mentioned and sent him a brief of what was required. I heard nothing, despite repeated secretarial promises that he would ring back. Eventually I did speak to him and was told that his company was working flat out but would try to visit Nailsea in the near future. This illustrates the current problem of contractor overload that I had already picked up. It does mean it may well be difficult to achieve installation by February next year. It also means that prices are likely to be higher.

### **3. LAG Meeting**

The LAG met on July 8<sup>th</sup> to discuss various lawn matters. The notes are appended to this report. There were some important decisions made:

- A. Toro reel replacement will proceed in the Spring of 2022 at a cost of about £1500. The new reels should last the life of the Toro as the existing reels were new in 2012 and were used continuously by Long Ashton Golf club until we purchased the machine.
- B. Autumn overseeding will take place using my prototype seeder to evaluate the "cold overseed" technique recommended by Germinal Amenity. This represents a saving of £864/year.
- C. I have estimated the cost of a commercialised version of my prototype over-seeder to be in the region of £1500 as it will be twice as wide as my prototype. I am preparing detailed drawings for commercial CNC machining of the components. However, I need to have detailed face to face discussions with the CNC companies in Clevedon and Portishead before getting quotations in. I am not prepared to do this until Covid 19 has subsided. The maintenance cost of this seeder will be zero and overseeding can be carried out whenever lawn and weather conditions are appropriate. These are significant advantages compared with hiring the likes of the Dynaseeder.
- D. The winter closure programme was discussed. The principal conclusions were:
  - a. December , January and February – Lawns closed**
  - b. November and March – The default is that the Lawns are closed but will be opened on particular days (via the booking system) if weather and ground conditions permit.**

Committee members of the LAG can explain the thinking behind these decisions.

John Wallace

21/7/21

## NOTES FROM THE LAG MEETING OF 8/7/21

### 1. Autumn Overseed Strategy

In view of the success of the lawn 5 experiment using the prototype overseeder it was concluded that we should focus on use of the prototype rather than expend £864 on hiring the professional Dynaseeder.

Three options for overseeding in the Autumn were considered:

- a. Overseed with Bent in late September, followed by three weeks of nightly irrigation
- b. Cold overseed in November. No irrigation required due to winter rainfall
- c. Delay overseeding until the irrigation is installed.

The main snag with option a was thought to be the irrigation requirement. Nobody felt that a team of volunteers could be found to implement nightly irrigation. The option was therefore eliminated for consideration.

Option b was thought to be much more attractive. The main disadvantage is that germination would take place over several months and that some seed would probably rot in the ground. Germinal Amenity have since said that this strategy is being adopted by more and more golf clubs as it avoids interfering with summer play.

Option c was suggested because of the current difficulties in progressing the irrigation system due to contractors being overloaded with work. The irrigation consultants are suffering with the same problem. The main snag with this option is that there would almost certainly be no overseeding taking place until the irrigation system is installed. As the date for this is unknown option c was rejected.

Returning to option b, it was decided that two lawns should be overseeded with the prototype overseeder. This would cost around £250 in seed and give the LAG a chance to evaluate cold seeding effectiveness.

### 2. Progress on commercialising prototype overseeder.

JNW outlined his current activities in terms of refining and simplifying the design and preparing drawings suitable for CNC manufacturing companies to prepare quotes. Two local companies have suitable facilities (CAM Machines, Clevedon and CEL Portishead) so it should be possible to get quotations from them both, following detailed discussions about design issues. Email exchanges with CAM Machines have already yielded some useful information about the potential difficulties of simplifying the seed distribution unit.

JNW has carried out a very rough costing exercise which suggested that the bought in standard components would cost about £750 but total cost was more likely to be of the order of £1500 if some of the components from the prototype can be re-used. With the current design this looks feasible.

### 3. Winter Closure Strategy

The consensus LAG view remains that the lawns should be closed from November through to March because during the winter months the ground is always soft and the turf easily damaged. Golf croquet is a particular problem in the winter because of the footfall that occurs around hoops.

The decision to gradually convert the lawns from Rye to Bent means that such damage is more likely to occur and be more difficult to repair during the winter months. Last winter it would have been impossible to play during November because the lawns were flooded much of the time. The LAG considered the feasibility of making a daily decision on opening lawns when ground conditions an weather permitted. However, it was felt that nobody would want to take on the onerous task of lawn inspection every morning around 9.0am. It was also noted that from previous experience that members are over optimistic about what constitutes “fit to play” conditions.

However, in view of the fact that a few members want to play in the winter the LAG decided on the following arrangements:

**c. December , January and February – Lawns closed**

**d. November and March – The default is that the Lawns are closed but will be opened on particular days (via the booking system) if weather and ground conditions permit.**

#### **4. Progress on Irrigation System**

JNW described how, having sent the Irrigation Consultant some comprehensive notes, no immediate response was forthcoming. Eventually, phone contact was established. The consultant said the notes were very helpful but they were overloaded with work but would visit NDCC as soon as they could. They hoped this would be in the next few weeks.

The consultant indicated that he was pleased with the notes and photographs and wondered if we would consider sprinklers within the lawns as per football pitches. This option was rejected by JNW and the LAG because of the possible disturbance to lawn levels during and after installation.

#### **5. Preparation for the July tournaments**

JNW commented that there did not seem to be an overall coordinator. AW took an action to find out who was doing what and confirm that all was in hand.

#### **6. Toro Situation**

Having heard from AJ Mowers that the reels date back to 2012, the LAG has decided to replace them in the spring of 2022 at a cost of around £1500. If bedknives look worn (not expected) these will be replaced during the reel replacement. It is expected that the new reels will last the lifetime of the Toro.

Reel/bedknife clearance will continue to be maintained by end of the week operation of the click units. AJ Mowers will be called in to adjust cutting height when JNW wants to implement a change.

During the winter months JNW will carry out all mowing operations when lawn conditions permit. There is therefore no need for a winter rota.

#### **7. Lawn 5 Stopboards**

The LAG discussed the Lawn 4/5 stopboards. These cause damage to the lawns and represent considerable nuisance to those involved in lawn maintenance. Lawn 5 is rarely used and the LAG view is that the boards should be removed.

