

**Nailsea and District Croquet Club**  
**Minutes of committee Meeting held on Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> October at the clubhouse.**

**Present:** G.McCausland, A.Wimshurst, D.Hunt, P.Dyke, S.Morgan. E. Malaiperuman

**Apologies:** B.Roynon

**Minutes of the last meeting:** Agreed and signed by Graham. Incorrect report of Intermediate League (central) corrected to a win for Nailsea (3) against Taunton (2)

**Matters Arising:** None

**Treasurer's Report:** noted and discussed. £80 from SWF for hosting the Federation League Final still to be added. At the moment we are just breaking even but we need to consider raising our income.

Subscriptions were further discussed and the new amount of £165 was agreed, they will be due in January.

Further discussions followed regarding other areas where the committee felt there should be increases

- Match fees to be raised to £5 per player
- Travel expences remain the same at 25p per mile
- Competition fees to be raised to £5 per person
- Croquet lessons to be raised to £60.00 for 6 lessons followed by the amount shown by the sliding scale (in the handbook) when beginners join the main club in the same year. Kathy's vouchers for beginners lessons to remain at £30.00
- cleaning costs and the impact on subs – see details below in Brian Roynon's Property Report.

**Membership:** There have been 18 new members this year, a record for the club.

**Recruitment:** Kathy's report (to be found at the end of the minutes) noted and discussed. The winner of the beginners' competition was Mike Atkin-Smith. Those members who watched the competition were impressed by the skills of the beginners. Frenetic Friday has not yet taken place.

**Competitions:** noted and discussed.

The dates for the 2022 finals were agreed. It is possible that the finals date will clash with SWF finals, as they did this year, we need to be flexible and if necessary players needed to play in the SWF finals should play their matches on a different day.

10/11 September Club Semi Finals

24/25 September Club Finals

**OBE Tournament:** Terry and Libby will organise and manage this tournament on 17<sup>th</sup> May

**Tournaments:** noted and discussed.

Kathy has been contacted by the CA since her report to explain that there would be a slight increase in the rate that clubs may charge the CA for the use of their lawns during a CA tournament. These increases dont apply to our CA Club Tournaments, only to CA events like the Treasurer's Tankard or the GC U25s. The entrance fee that Nailsea charged for our CA Club Tournaments this year was £20 this year, in line with other clubs. Post meeting it has been decided that we would charge £22 for our CA Club tournaments in 2022.

The dates for CA tournaments in 2022 have now been agreed upon:-

- 18/19 June Advanced Singles AC handicaps 0-9 (two classes) Managed by Robert Upton
- 23/24 July Advanced Singles AC handicaps 2-12 (two classes ) Managed by KathyWallace
- 6/7 August Open Advanced Singles weekend AC Managed by Marcus Evans
- 13/14 August CA fixture - U25 GC Championship CA to appoint a manager
- 16<sup>th</sup> August National Series GC B Class handicaps 3+ Managed by Peter and Graham  
(if Peter has commitments in the afternoon)

It was also decided that lunches would not be provided for the CA tournaments, except for 'Marcus's Tournament'. Marcus would liaise and make arrangements for how the lunches would be provided.

In future the Manager of the individual tournaments will be responsible for liaising with volunteers to assist with the daily running of the tournament. (setting up lawns for the day, organising refreshments, clearing up, etc)

It was agreed that clearance on hoops for the Under 25 GC tournament would be 1/16th, for the Open Advanced Singles Tournament, 1/32nd; for the B Class and C Class the clearance should remain the same. Managers to make the final decision.

Apart from the ongoing management of the lawns, there is a great deal of preparation before and during a tournament, especially a CA tournament.

**Lawn Maintenance Report:** noted and discussed – to be found at the end of the minutes .( Please read carefully.)

In response to John Wallace's September Lawn Report it was decided to hold a special Committee meeting to be held after the AGM to identify the tasks and address the problems raised by John. In particular, but not limited to:

1. The appointment of someone to coordinate the activities – mowing, white lining and hoop setting – required for Tournament preparation.
2. The appointment of someone to undertake, inter alia, weeding and minor repair work to the lawns at present done by John and Kathy
3. How to continue with and fund lawn treatment after John steps down from this role after 2022-  
In this respect it was noted that Bristol CC outsource twice weekly mowing and lawn maintenance at the cost of £900 per month.

**Fixtures Secretary Report:** noted and discussed

**SWF League Block Sizes:** Nailsea has been asked which size of block would they prefer for 2022 matches, either 3/ 4, or 5/ 6. It was decided that the larger size would be preferable. 4 matches would also be acceptable, but definitely not 3. Peter to reply to SWF.

**Nailsea Team for SWF Short Croquet tournament in Budleigh:** Only one team put their names forward to play in this tournament over the weekend of 8/9/10 October.

**SWF Short Croquet Tournament at Nailsea CC:** It was agreed with John Grimshaw that 8th/9th/10th April would be the best date to hold this Tournament. Peter to confirm

**Property Report:** discussed and noted. Leaf clearance teams have been organised and will begin at the beginning of October.

**Trolley modification:** Brian has now finished the trolley modification which was admired by the committee, Brian will purchase 2 sets of wheels at £8.22 each.

**Christmas lunch:** It was decided that there should be 3 courses and that for Covid precautions only 6 at each table. There was a request that there should be no raffle this year. Brian and Brenda will send out the details of the Christmas lunch to the members and get the numbers attending and their choices.

**Clubhouse cleaning:** Brian has found a cleaning company which could clean the clubhouse. The charges could be presented to the membership at the AGM should there be a request for an outside cleaner. 2 hours a week for 6 months followed by 2 hours a fortnight for 6 months would cost the club £1102 per annum. Shared between 60 members would be a cost of £18 per person.

**Safeguarding:** Nothing to report.

**AGM:** The AGM will be held on Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> November at 2.00 An email to be sent out by Erica in order to give members a choice of venue (clubhouse or zoom).

**Post meeting revealed that survey was inconclusive and the choice would now be between outside (if weather clement) and zoom. Erica to set up zoom meeting with Mike, if necessary.**

Erica to send out email (posted to those without email) to members by Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> October with attachments for the nomination form and minutes of the last AGM. Replies for nominations must be returned by Friday 15<sup>th</sup> October.

There will be one vacancy on the committee due to Peter standing down.

Geoff has been President for 3 years. Peter Dyke has been invited to take on this role which he has accepted.

**A.O.B.** None.

**D.O.N.M. T.B.A**

The meeting closed at 12.45.

Signed as a true and accurate account

Name.....

Signature.....



## Treasurer's Report to the Committee October 2021

At the recent committee meeting held to discuss annual member's subscriptions it was decided:

The annual adult subscription should be raised to £165

An option should be given to pay the subscription by 10 equal monthly payments of £17 by Standing Order

No discount would be offered for membership by couples

No discount would be offered to adult members in their first year of full membership.

With regard to an increase in Match fees and Club Competition entry fees the amount raised in previous years was:

	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016
Club comp entry fees	250	104	496	250	427	564
Match fees	285	72	762	658	735	800

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### **The Property Report for Committee Meeting 30<sup>th</sup> September 2021**

#### **Work Morning**

A work morning was held on the 9<sup>th</sup> September to tidy up the outfield and car parks in preparation for the last tournament of the season.

A Big "Thank you" to all those members who came and gave their time and support.

#### **Trolley Maintenance.**

I have now purchased steel to modify the trolley on a using as a prototype.

#### **The Temporary repair to the car park**

A work in still progress. I will purchase 2 bags of chippings and Robin will help me in the next few weeks.

#### **New Taps on sinks**

The new taps have been fitted. Thanks to Robin for his assistance in fitting them.

## **Hedge Cutting**

I have contacted Ben Swift re booking the hedge cutting.

He said he was fully booked until February 2022.

I asked him to book us in for February which given the lack of much more growth this year should be OK. I also asked him to bear us in mind if he had a cancellation.

He phoned me back the next day to say he could cut our hedges on the 24 th Dec starting at 8.30am which I accepted. He will get to the club and have a look then give me a quote when he can.

(This will also push the expenditure into another year.)

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## **Recruitment Report for September Meeting**

The coaches are still working hard to complete the integration of the new members and encourage them to rejoin next year. There will be 6 players in their AC competition and a different 6 in the GC event. Both competitions will take place on Friday 1 October. A further three AC players and one GC player are unavailable or are injured but it's hoped that some of them will play in a day designed to mimic Wild Wednesday – probably on 8 October. I hope that Club members will come to watch the beginners' competitions during the day and/or join us for tea. It will be an important day for the future of the club as new blood is desperately needed.

We have already started a list for next year and the people on it will be contacted early in 2022.

One new recruit paid £80 for membership starting in July, this year. He has only been to the club twice. This is due to his own lack of availability. However, he hopes to have more time for croquet next year and I wonder if we can offer him a reduction of £80 on his 2022 membership? Marcus

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

It's now time to plan for 2022 and the CA has invited editing of the Fixtures Calendar entries which they base on last year's entries.

Robert Upton has agreed to be Manager and Secretary for the Class Tournament for which he is eligible to play.

The dates last year worked very well with plenty of entries for all the tournaments. The wider handicap ranges helped to boost numbers with many players taking part in both the June and July Tournaments. As these dates were so successful, suggested to the managers that we use the equivalent dates in 2022 viz:

18/19 June; two classes 0-8 range; manager Robert

23/24 July; two classes 2-12 range; manager Kathy

13/14 August; (open) Advanced Tournament; manager Marcus

16 August; GC B Class (3+); manager Peter

Robert, Marcus and I are all happy with that. However, Peter would like someone else to manage the GC Tournament. I haven't yet checked the date with Chris Roberts as I would like to be sure we have a manager before I approach him.

We were due to host the GC Students Championship in April 2022 but that event has been cancelled by the CA. We have been asked if we would like to host the U25 GC Championship instead. The date suggested clashes with our August Advanced Tournament. The initial response from Marcus was that he is reluctant to change his dates and I would fully support him in that. We are invited to suggest an alternative weekend for the U25 GC. I have said I will report back after the Committee Meeting. My own view is that if we offered anything, it would be a weekend in May, preferably not a Bank Holiday weekend. A May weekend would complement our own schedule of tournaments and create a sensible pattern for our hoop moves. David Hunt will have an opinion about this. I have told Richard Bilton that we will respond after the Committee meeting.

I suggest 10/11 September for semi-finals and 24/25 September for Finals but am open to other possibilities, so long as we have at least two weeks between semis and Finals.

Now is the time to decide whether to increase the entry fees for tournaments as it has been suggested that we are on the low side of average, particularly for the GC tournament. I would suggest £22 for the weekend tournaments and possibly £14 for the one-day GC tournament if a manager for this can be found.

Should we offer lunches for tournaments? Before that question is answered, we need to know if we have enough people who will prepare the lunches. As it stands, we have 7 tournament days plus the possibility of two more for the GC U25. Do we have 7/9 lunch chefs? Do we have 7/9 teams of washers up? Would Ploughmans and a cold dessert, all served on paper plates be a good compromise? The catering supervisor clearly needs to be consulted on these issues and will be in the best position to make the judgement.

Scroll down for Competitions!

## **Competitions**

Semi-finals and Finals weekends went well. Due to there being fewer events this year, most matches were scheduled for afternoons and this contributed to the efficiency and to the atmosphere. It also enabled some morning mowing and removed the need for an early start on wet grass (often a problem in the autumn). Had there been heavy winds, bringing leaves down, the mower would have cleared them. I am grateful to Pat, Geoff and Andrew for providing Open Advanced matches to contest the runner-up spot after Marcus won the event outright. There were a lot of exciting matches with close endings and the sizable crowd was well entertained.

I hope that in 2022 we will have enough High Bisquers to be able to run a meaningful Alternate Stroke Doubles Competition as well as a High Bisquers Competition. It would be nice to see the return of Speed Croquet as well. I also hope that the high handicap class of the GC Level Play will be better supported. This year only the matches involving one particular player ever took place.

Kathy Wallace 27/9/2021

will aim to coach him on an individual ad hoc basis.

The DBS checks are now making progress, at last. Next spring we will target two Scouts groups and then use Facebook (probably parents who will see the posts) and word of mouth to get the Youth Croquet group up to size. Marcus and Ryan are both fully committed mentally to it.

Kathy Wallace 27/9/2021

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**League Secretary's Report** for the committee meeting on 7 October 2021

**Selectors Weekend – Robert Upton** was a late entry for this event, but he did extremely well to win Block A, losing only to Cliff Jones and beating four players with a lower handicap. He was unlucky to lose 22-26 to Nick Steiner in the final after accidentally pegging out his own ball when pegging out his opponent's forward ball.

**SWF Federation League Final** at Nailsea. Winterborne Valley beat Worcester Norton 4-3. Both teams enjoyed their day at Nailsea. They liked our lawns, but were not so keen on our hoops. I informed the Winterborne Valley team that the hoops had been set to 1/8<sup>th</sup> inch clearance. They asked what they were normally set to and were amazed when I replied 1/16<sup>th</sup> inch clearance. The youngest player in the Winterborne team was 20 year-old Teddy Wilmot-Sitwell and oldest player on the Worcester side was 90 year-old Don Clay. Teddy won both his singles and Don played just one game of singles which he also won.

### **South West Federation Association Croquet Fixtures**

Nailsea has been involved in only two matches since our meeting in August.

#### **Advanced League Div 1**

Nailsea A 3 Sidmouth A 2 win

Marcus Evans had a good day beating Richard Wood (- ½) with a triple peel and Roger Mills (1) with a quadruple peel. Ryan Cabble and Pat Long narrowly lost the doubles, 14-16, in the morning. Ryan (1½) did exceptionally in the afternoon to beat Richard Wood, 26-5.

#### **Intermediate League (Central)**

Wellington 2 Nailsea 3 win

Our team did well to beat Wellington away. This set up a three way tie between Wellington, Nailsea and Taunton Deane . However Wellington won the block on net games between the three teams.

Nailsea came second. We needed to beat Wellington 4-1 to win the Central Block.

The following table shows the number of wins, losses and **final** positions of each of our AC teams:

League	Team	Played	Win	Draw	Loss	For	Against	Current Position
Advanced League Division 1	Nailsea A	4	3		1	10	10	2 <sup>nd</sup> /5
Advanced League Division 3	Nailsea B	4	3		1	16	12	2 <sup>nd</sup> /3
Federation League	Nailsea	3	1		2	5	8	3 <sup>rd</sup> /4
Intermediate League	Nailsea	3	2		1	8	7	2 <sup>nd</sup> /4
Short Croquet League	Nailsea	4	1	1	2	28	27	4 <sup>th</sup> /5

**Bristol** has won the **Advanced League Division 1** and we came second.

Cheltenham B won the **Advanced League Division 3** North section and we are in second place. Cheltenham B should have played Budleigh Salterton the winners of Division 3 South to determine which team is promoted to Division 2 next year. However they declined the invitation to play at Budleigh and our team was invited to take their place. Unfortunately the play-off clashed with our Finals Weekend and as three members of Pat's team were involved in our finals on the date of the match Pat also turned down the invitation. So **Budleigh Salterton** have been given a walkover and are promoted to Division 2.

**Federation League:** Worcester Norton beat Bristol, 4-1, in the semi-final, but lost, 3-4, to **Winterborne Valley** in the final.

**Intermediate League:** Wellington won the Intermediate league Central division, but lost to Kington Langley in the semi-final. In the final **East Dorset** beat Kington Langley, 3-2.

Bristol A won the North Section of the **Short Croquet League**, but they lost, 7-9, to **Bath** in the final.

**South West Federation Golf Croquet Fixtures:**



We had already completed all our golf croquet matches before our August meeting.

The following table shows the number of wins, losses and final positions of each of our GC teams:

League	Team	Played	Won	Draw	Loss	Pts	For	Against	Current Position
Level Play League	Nailsea	3	1	1	1	3	31.5	26.5	3 <sup>rd</sup> /4
Handicap League	Nailsea North	3	2	0	1	4	31.5	28.5	2 <sup>nd</sup> /4
Handicap League	Nailsea Central	3	0	0	3	0	20	28	4 <sup>th</sup> /4
High Handicap League	Nailsea	3	2	0	1	4	22.5	26.5	2 <sup>nd</sup> /4

Bristol won the North section of the **Level Play League**, but they were beaten, 8-12, by **Winterborne Valley** in the final.

Swindon won the North section of the **Handicap League**, but lost 8-12 away at Beckford in the quarter-finals. Camerton and Peasedown won the Central section of the Handicap League, lost away at Dowlish Wake in the quarter-finals. Dowlish Wake beat Beckford in the semi-final and **Plymouth** narrowly beat Dowlish Wake, 11-10 in the final.

Llandaff has won the North West section of the **High Handicap League** and beat Cheltenham 11.5-8.5 in the semi-final, but narrowly lost to **Budleigh Salterton**, 9.5-10.5, in the final.

#### **English National Golf Croquet Doubles Championship**

I should have mentioned this in my August report. **Ryan Cabble** and his partner, **Louise Smith** from Sidmouth, won the English National Golf Croquet Doubles Championship. They came second in block B to qualify for the Championship knockout. In the knockout each match was best of three games and all three of their matches went to three games. They did extremely well to win this Championship against strong opposition. Congratulations to Ryan and Louise on an outstanding achievement.

Peter Dyke (06/10/2021)

**Please read John Wallace's Lawn maintenance Report, as this has implications regarding volunteers needed to maintain the lawns for the next few years.**

### **Lawn Maintenance Report – September 2021**

#### **1. LAG Meeting on 15/9/21**

The management of the mowing, white lining and tournament/competition preparation was delegated in the Autumn of 2019 but because of COVID only really started this year. Unfortunately, the arrangements have not worked well. In view of this, I called an LAG meeting on 15/9/21 to consider possible changes to the organisation of mowing and white lining and my own role in Lawn Maintenance.

The conclusions of the meeting are documented in Appendix 1. I started the meeting by drawing attention to the fact that:

- a. In addition to all the normal lawn related work I have three significant projects to undertake over the next twelve months:

- a. Construction of a new hoop clamp that clamps hoop carrots rather than hoop uprights.
  - b. Commercialisation of the prototype Bent seeder.
  - c. Design and Installation of an Automatic Irrigation System
- b. These projects represent a major additional time commitment. By contrast there has been an obvious reluctance by those involved in managing and implementing the lawn work to commit sufficient time as to carry out tasks properly.

For example, tournament preparation has consistently not followed the guidelines I set out and as a result I have had to complete additional double cuts around hoops. This represents an additional 3 hours of evening work for me on top of completing the early morning double cuts during the tournament. For the Selectors Weekend it was proposed that hoop setting should take place the day before mowing, thus compounding the problem of uncut grass in the immediate vicinity of the hoops. When I corrected this error, it took a week and another reminder to remove the lawn booking. It thus denied members the opportunity of utilising the time for unfinished competition matches. In general, tournament preparation has consumed more lawn time than it actually requires or used. These bookings encroached on more potential match sessions than necessary. Club members, including beginners have remarked on this.

In general, there is insufficient thought given to mowing times and intervals. It quite often impacts on day-time lawn availability by booking the lawns in the middle of a morning or afternoon session. Nor do the mowers generally think about forthcoming events. For example, for semi-finals, a request by the Competition secretary for a Saturday morning double cut as a priority was not implemented and I had to step in to do it. (Another 3 hours). The current rota system is not as responsive as it could be to playing needs. Unfortunately LAG members turned down my suggestion for improving the situation on the grounds that it would be too big a commitment for the individuals concerned.

I asked the LAG members why I should commit so much time to the club when others were not prepared to do so. There was no answer to this specific question but the response provided essentially consisted of the following:

- a. Members were not required to execute tasks properly because they were volunteers. They were also entitled to fit the timing of activities around their personal circumstances without regard to the needs of the club.
- b. The club could cope without my involvement in lawn maintenance and, if necessary, the lawns would be allowed to degrade in future years. Thus, the Club would no longer participate in CA events (eights week etc) or run its own tournaments.

I am also a volunteer and my response to the above is therefore to progressively reduce my involvement as set out in Appendix 1. My proposal is designed to minimise disruption and continue with the post-levelling lawn improvement. It will require additional effort from other members of the club or outsourcing of some activities. The thinking/planning of the work is not something that club members are likely to be interested in so in the long term I envisage an external consultant being engaged to replace me.

My intention is to complete the three projects outlined above as they will put the club in a much better position to maintain good lawns well into the future. However, I would appreciate a written commitment from the committee that:

- a. The committee wishes me to proceed (subject to the usual financial constraints) with the three projects.
- b. The committee commits to maintain good lawns in the longer term rather than let them degrade. If there is no such commitment, I see little point in proceeding with the projects.

In line with my general policy of reducing my time commitment this will be my last report. On average it takes about three hours to draft my reports. This is a lot longer than it takes to mow the grass or white line properly with string. I therefore see no reason to continue with them, given the sentiments expressed at the LAG.

JNW 17/9/21

### **APPENDIX 1 - LAG MEETING NOTES 15/9/21**

The LAG met on 15/9/21. These are the conclusions:

#### **L. JNW Role**

- a. JNW will no longer be involved in Tournament preparation (except for training mowers for morning and evening double cuts during tournaments).
- b. The committee will need to appoint a lawn coordinator for all tournament lawn preparation work. This person will need to liaise with the Tournament Secretary and Competition Secretary (both KMW at present).
- c. For the 2022 summer season the committee will identify someone to take on the ongoing minor repairs and spot weeding that JNW/KMW currently undertake. This will include:
  - Repair of lawn damage from mallets
  - Repair of lawn damage from Birds and Squirrels
  - Closing over of hoop holes during hoop moving operations
  - Small core turf transplanting into bare spots where necessary
  - Large hexagonal core turf transplanting of larger bare spots where necessary.
  - Evening flooding of the North Boundary using the irrigation system pipework to prevent it drying out in dry weather.
  - Regular clearance of the lawn corner tubes to keep them visible and clear of mud.
  - Overseeding of bare patches during the winter months using green waste.
  - Procurement of green-waste for overseeding and hoop setting purposes.
  - Procurement of Weedol concentrate and preparation of dilute solution for spot spraying.
  - Weekly surveys of lawns for presence of weeds.
  - Regular Spot spraying of lawn weeds

This is an all-year-round role, not a just summer activity. It is not a role that can be outsourced.

- d. For the 2023 season onwards JNW will cease lawn treatment activities. (Mostly spraying, granular fertiliser application, bulk overseeding activities, winter mowing and some spraying equipment maintenance and modification). Spraying of different products takes place about every two weeks in the summer and monthly in winter. However, bi-weekly Compost Tea spraying has to take place on a different day to other products so spraying frequency could be nearer to weekly during the summer months. Spraying is usually conducted in the evenings with the exception of occasional licenced spraying. There are technical reasons for this but also minimises the impact on lawn availability. The committee will therefore need to appoint somebody to take over this activity or outsource it to a contractor during 2023. Ongoing liaison with JNW will be required as the programme is adjusted to take account of weather conditions and grass response to treatments. The assumption is that by 2023 the irrigation system will be in place. This will regularise the timing of spraying and make the activity timing more predictable and hence amenable to outsourcing.
- e. JNW will continue to monitor the lawns, plan maintenance programmes and procure chemicals/fertilisers until such time as an external consultant can be identified to take over this management/planning role.

## **2. White lining**

The JNW view is that white lining is probably only required once every two weeks but does require the use of string to achieve consistency and correct alignment with respect to the lawn corner tubes/flags as required by the AC laws. Incorrectly aligned or blurred lines can cause significant refereeing issues, particularly at tournaments. Incorrectly located lines cannot be rubbed out and only fade slowly, thus making it imperative that string is employed on each occasion. Some white liners object to using string because it takes 3 hours rather than 2 hours to complete the task. Other committee members of the LAG do not agree with JNW about the use of string lines and are content to have blurred, incorrectly located lines at tournaments.

## **3. Mowing**

Normal mowing takes place twice per week but mowers generally take no notice of weekend or occasional weekday league matches when choosing when to mow. The same applies to tournaments. JNW suggested that the rota should be modified such that each mower was responsible for mowing during a particular week and could therefore adjust when they mow to take account of league matches, competitions, tournaments and club afternoons. There are also some weeks when the grass is growing vigorously where three rather than two cuts are desirable. However, such additional cuts cannot be placed on a rota. Although it would not generally change the individual's overall workload it would make the mowing more responsive to playing needs. Unfortunately, other members of the LAG did not support the proposed change because it was considered too big a commitment for the individual.

## **4. Leaf Clearance.**

AW confirmed that a leaf clearance teams rota would be produced in the near future.

## **5. Re-Wilding**

AW confirmed the committee decision to continue to trim the boundaries rather than let them grow wild. JNW's view is that this is the preferable option from a "lawns" point but doubted that spreading a few wildflower seeds will be effective in making the borders any more attractive.

## **6. Top Dressing**

Geoff Hughes request to top dress the lawns was discussed. The proposal was rejected for three reasons:

- a. Although there are very shallow (a few millimetres) dips in the lawns they do not impact on play. Feedback from players and managers at the GC Home International and the Selectors Weekend has been very positive about both the lawns and hoops.

- b. The sward still has numerous small gaps, mostly due to dead meadow-grass. Top dressing would fill these gaps with sand and eventually result in an uneven surface as grass grows in the filled gaps.
- c. Cost. The task would require a contractor (and sand) which would be expensive at a time when available funds are committed to other, more important, projects.

JNW 16/9/21

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- d. The club could cope without my involvement in lawn maintenance and, if necessary, the lawns would be allowed to degrade in future years. Thus, the Club would no longer participate in CA events (eights week etc) or run its own tournaments.

I am also a volunteer and my response to the above is therefore to progressively reduce my involvement as set out in Appendix 1. My proposal is designed to minimise disruption and continue with the post-levelling lawn improvement. It will require additional effort from other members of the club or outsourcing of some activities. The thinking/planning of the work is not something that club members are likely to be interested in so in the long term I envisage an external consultant being engaged to replace me.

My intention is to complete the three projects outlined above as they will put the club in a much better position to maintain good lawns well into the future. However, I would appreciate a written commitment from the committee that:

- c. The committee wishes me to proceed (subject to the usual financial constraints) with the three projects.
- d. The committee commits to maintain good lawns in the longer term rather than let them degrade. If there is no such commitment, I see little point in proceeding with the projects.

In line with my general policy of reducing my time commitment this will be my last report. On average it takes about three hours to draft my reports. This is a lot longer than it takes to mow the grass or white line properly with string. I therefore see no reason to continue with them, given the sentiments expressed at the LAG.

JNW 17/9/21

### **APPENDIX 1 - LAG MEETING NOTES 15/9/21**

The LAG met on 15/9/21. These are the conclusions:

L. JNW Role

- a. JNW will no longer be involved in Tournament preparation (except for training mowers for morning and evening double cuts during tournaments).
- f. The committee will need to appoint a lawn coordinator for all tournament lawn preparation work. This person will need to liaise with the Tournament Secretary and Competition Secretary (both KMW at present).
- g. For the 2022 summer season the committee will identify someone to take on the ongoing minor repairs and spot weeding that JNW/KMW currently undertake. This will include:

-

This is an all-year-round role, not a just summer activity. It is not a role that can be outsourced.

- h. For the 2023 season onwards JNW will cease lawn treatment activities. (Mostly spraying, granular fertiliser application, bulk overseeding activities, winter mowing and some spraying equipment maintenance and modification). Spraying of different products takes place about every two weeks in the summer and monthly in winter. However, bi-weekly Compost Tea spraying has to take place on a different day to other products so spraying frequency could be nearer to weekly during the summer months. Spraying is usually conducted in the evenings with the exception of occasional licenced spraying. There are technical reasons for this but also minimises the impact on lawn availability. The committee will therefore need to appoint somebody to take over this activity or outsource it to a contractor during 2023. Ongoing liaison with JNW will be required as the programme is adjusted to take account of weather conditions and grass response to treatments. The assumption is that by 2023 the irrigation system will be in place. This will regularise the timing of spraying and make the activity timing more predictable and hence amenable to outsourcing.
- i. JNW will continue to monitor the lawns, plan maintenance programmes and procure chemicals/fertilisers until such time as an external consultant can be identified to take over this management/planning role.

## **2. White lining**

The JNW view is that white lining is probably only required once every two weeks but does require the use of string to achieve consistency and correct alignment with respect to the lawn corner tubes/flags as required by the AC laws. Incorrectly aligned or blurred lines can cause significant refereeing issues, particularly at tournaments. Incorrectly located lines cannot be rubbed out and only fade slowly, thus making it imperative that string is employed on each occasion. Some white liners object to using string because it takes 3 hours rather than 2 hours to complete the task. Other committee members of the LAG do not agree with JNW about the use of string lines and are content to have blurred, incorrectly located lines at tournaments.

## **3. Mowing**

Normal mowing takes place twice per week but mowers generally take no notice of weekend or occasional weekday league matches when choosing when to mow. The same applies to tournaments. JNW suggested that the rota should be modified such that each mower was responsible for mowing during a particular week and could therefore adjust when they mow to take account of league matches, competitions, tournaments and club afternoons. There are also some weeks when the grass is growing vigorously where three rather than two cuts are desirable. However, such additional cuts cannot be placed on a rota. Although it would not generally change the individual's overall workload it would make the mowing more responsive to playing needs. Unfortunately, other members of the LAG did not support the proposed change because it was considered too big a commitment for the individual.

## **4. Leaf Clearance.**

AW confirmed that a leaf clearance teams rota would be produced in the near future.

## **5. Re-Wilding**

AW confirmed the committee decision to continue to trim the boundaries rather than let them grow wild. JNW's view is that this is the preferable option from a "lawns" point but doubted that spreading a few wildflower seeds will be effective in making the borders any more attractive.

## **6. Top Dressing**

Geoff Hughes request to top dress the lawns was discussed. The proposal was rejected for three reasons:



- d. Although there are very shallow (a few millimetres) dips in the lawns they do not impact on play. Feedback from players and managers at the GC Home International and the Selectors Weekend has been very positive about both the lawns and hoops.
- e. The sward still has numerous small gaps, mostly due to dead meadow-grass. Top dressing would fill these gaps with sand and eventually result in an uneven surface as grass grows in the filled gaps.
- f. Cost. The task would require a contractor (and sand) which would be expensive at a time when available funds are committed to other, more important, projects.

JNW 16/9/21