

Nailsea and District Croquet Club
Minutes of Committee meeting held on Thursday 25th November 2021

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

Apologies: B. Roynon

Minutes of the last meeting: Agreed and signed by Graham.

Matters Arising: None

Treasurer's Report: David presented us with a balance sheet, budget and the following notes on the budget for 2022

1 Like all budgets there is a degree of crystal ball gazing. I have assumed 75 full members paying £165 pa

2 There is no contingency for unknown events or purchases

3 I have allowed for one hedge trimming- is this enough?

4 We are taking forward a Bank Balance of @£26,000

5 We are going to instal an irrigation system at an unknown cost. We need to have a firm price before we can commit to funding Lawn maintenance.

6 John Wallace is stepping down from the physical work of lawn maintenance next year (2023). From within or outside the club labour is required to perform weekly spraying of chemicals or granular fertilizer.- April thro September =25 weeks @ 3hours a week=75 hours @ £30 per hours =£2250 . Possibly monthly application through the Winter

I am quite willing to be challenged on these figures which are little more than a guess Even at these rates of pay we wont get anyone with a particular expertise. Supervision by John(or someone) will still be required

7 The hiring in of a consultant envisaged by John at some time in the (near) future , I think, should be left till another day

8 Can the club even afford to hire in labour. We are already talking about paying for a cleaner. Social events and Bridge may start up again and bring in some extra funding. But the only way to bring in real money is by hosting Tournaments- The Treasurers Tankard brought in £1000 but was a huge amount of work and tied up the lawns for 6 days-Or increasing subscriptions to the level of Bristol or Bath- £200/250 pa

Membership: Andrew has updated the new membership form as requested by the LSO (Linda Shaw). He also feels it is unclear how many members we will have next year.

Property Report: noted and discussed.

- Cuttings disposal: It was agreed that grass should not be dumped on the far edge of lawn 5 until the necessary work on installing the irrigation system has begun.
- Leaves disposal: The possibility of having a purpose built compost area just for leaves was discussed.

Tournaments: CA Tournament bids:

It was agreed that in 2023 we would only host Spencer Ell, (which has already been agreed) and that for 2024 we would like to bid for the GC Womens 8 on 18th-19th May and one of the other GC Eights held on 24 -26th August, hoping to have just one CA Tournament. Kathy to be notified.

Coaching: Martin's Survey of this year's beginners. The committee felt that the excellent survey has provided very useful information which can be built on next year. The issue of

beginners being able to book lawns needed to be clarified for next year and is an ongoing discussion. Perhaps they could be encouraged to make use of lawn 5.

League Secretary's Report: Noted and discussed. The committee agreed with all Peter's recommendations. David will send our league entry fees and subscription to SWF.

- Spring Short Croquet Tournament in Nailsea: 15 members are interested in playing in April and 10 players in the Autumn SC Tournament in Budleigh.
- Handover to Marcus: Peter will hand over the role of League Secretary once Peter has sent off the league entries for 2022. Marcus will then continue to send a monthly report, if applicable, to the committee.

SWF zoom AGM: Peter and Graham attended the AGM. All proposals were passed except no. 9. This concerned whether or not players in the Short Croquet Teams whose handicap came down during the season would still be eligible play to the end of the season.. All the details of the SWF AGM can be found at www.swfcroquet.org.uk.

Lawn Maintenance: Conclusions from LAG meeting notes 15/9/21

The committee wishes John Wallace to proceed with his three projects as outlined in his report September 2021.

It is not the intention of the committee to allow the lawns to degrade.

The committee appointed Graham as the overall lawn coordinator. Graham to respond to John

The 'all the year round' list of jobs was noted.

Rather than rely on the annual membership form to ask for volunteers it was decided that at the beginning of the season a more personal request should be made.

Seventh Member of the Committee: This was discussed and it was decided that there were three possible members who might want to join the committee. They will will be contacted.

A.O.B. None

D.O.N.M 6 th January, 2022. 10.00am

The meeting closed at 12.10

Signed as a true and accurate account

Name.....

Signature.....

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**The Property Report
for Committee Meeting
25th November 2021**

End of Season

Following the end of the season Geoff removed the nets and Tony Willoughby assisted by Derek Dowman removed the stopboards.

A big thank you to all those members who have come to give their time and support this year.

The temporary repair to the car park

Robin and myself have started carrying out the work but we need to buy some more gravel as the depressions have become worse. I will purchase 5 more bags of chippings as the car park has and then we will complete the job.

Hedge cutting

The hedges will be cut on the 20th December at a cost of £750 + Vat which gives a total of £900.

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Social (Christmas meal)

We have a current total of 34 members attending.

We will hold a raffle but we will only have 5 prizes, 4 of which we will buy and 1 tub of spring bulbs prepared by Erica.

This is preferable to, in the words of Ron Harridge, “the never ending raffle”

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League Secretary's Report for the committee meeting on 25 November 2021

League Entries 2022

I have been looking at the responses to which teams members wish to play in next year.

- **Advanced League** – 15 players. Marcus will choose 3 or 4 players for the first team, leaving 11 or 12 others – enough for two teams in division 3.
- **Federation League** – 9 players plus one other depending on medical fitness plus a reserve if needed.
- **Intermediate League** – 5 players, one of whom is wary of car sharing.
- **B League** – none.
- **Short Croquet (SC)** (didn't specify which league) – 14 players – 5 are this year's beginners, so I have assumed they wish to play in the Restricted League. I have asked the others which league they wish to play in and most don't mind.
- **Open SC** – 4 players plus one depending on medical fitness.
- **Level GC** – 7 players
- **Handicap GC** – 13 players.
- **High Handicap GC** – 11 players including five of this year's beginners.

Based on the above figures I suggest we enter the following in 2022 subject to the committee's approval:

- **Advanced League Division 1** – one team
- **Advanced League Division 3** – two teams
- **Federation League** – one team
- **Intermediate League** – one team (I am concerned about this one as we only just have enough players assuming no-one is away or on holiday, but hopefully we can find one or two more players who would be prepared to be reserves if needed).
- **Restricted Short Croquet** – two teams (we should have enough High Handicap players for two teams next year)
- **Open Short Croquet** – one team (we can use one or two players who don't mind which league they play in as well as the five who specified Open SC).
- **Level GC** –one team
- **Handicap GC** – two teams
- **High Handicap GC** – one team

Captains of League Teams 2022

Most of this year's captains are willing to continue next year. I am waiting for confirmation from Pete Longden and Meriel. Kathy has agreed to captain our third Advanced team.

We need to find captains for the three Short Croquet Teams – Tony Griggs was a non-playing captain last year and is willing to continue next year if needed, but as he doesn't play Short Croquet and we have so many players who want to play it seems unfair to expect him to take on this role. I don't mind taking on one team and I have a few people in mind that I will approach to captain the other teams.

I will let you have a full list of captains when they are all confirmed.

Peter Dyke (24/11/2021)

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Nailsea and District Croquet Club

Survey to Review Coaching in 2021

20 questionnaires were sent out to all those who registered and attended Beginners' sessions during the year.

16 completed responses were received and 2 emails with apologies for not being able to complete it.

1 Course of 6 sessions for Beginners

If you attended a course of 6 sessions for beginners please comment on the following:

1.1 Length of each session: at 2 / 2.5 hours: were they too long / too short / about right? 100% About right

1.2 What time of day were they held?

afternoons

afternoons

Tuesday afternoons

Late afternoon

Early evening
Saturday am
Afternoon
Friday afternoons
Evenings
Mornings
Tuesday afternoons
Tuesday afternoons

1.3 Did this suit you? 100% yes

1.4 Structure of sessions: how did you find the balance between instruction, demonstration, practice?

80% said structure / pace was good

13% too slow

7% too fast so felt overwhelmed

Good

A bit slow at times to support weaker players More break building practice

Very good

Fine

I thought this was pretty good

Good

Very well constructed It would have been useful to concentrate on how to play all the strokes in the first 2 or 3 sessions

Felt overwhelmed at times with tactics and 4 ball breaks

A good balance

The coaching sessions followed a good format with explanations, demo, practice and advice.

About right

Good

Would have liked more doing than watching

1.5 What was the ratio between coaches and beginners? Did this vary and if so what difference did it make to you?

The following ratios were experienced, but with no reported variation in effectiveness

1:1 1:2 1:3 2:4 1:4 2:6

1.6 Usefulness / relevance of any handouts

39% found them useful

39% didn't recall receiving handouts

14% didn't take much notice of them

7% received useful email resume after the sessions

Useful but not referred to them since

OK but didn't look at them much

I only received one

None received

I don't recall there being many

None received

'An area where more could be achieved.' None received apart from 1 from MK in preparation for tournament. I had to rely on the internet. A hand-out summarising each type of shot, its effect, distance, appropriate stance, amount of follow-through, etc. would have been very helpful after the early sessions. Maybe a list of good web-sites.

Good

Handout before tournament was excellent. I was also directed to web-sites

None received but email with resume after each session

Useful as an aide memoire

They were useful

1.7 Balance between Association and Golf Croquet in these 6 sessions?

34% would have preferred more time on GC

(It is evident I had not phrased this question clearly enough, so most described the balance but did not make a judgement on it.)

1 on GC felt right.

OK Emphasis on AC was right

Only covered AC

AC generally

All AC

50:50 would have been better

Only 15 minutes on GC in the six sessions. More would have been better

Entirely AC

Only AC

Probably would have suited us to start with GC

Only a brief half hour on GC in the 6 sessions

Hardly any GC!!!

1.8 At £30 do you think the course of 6 sessions was good value?

100% Yes

1.9 In your view would it have still been good value if we had charged £40?

73% Yes 27% not certain/no

1.10 Three things that worked well for you?

A patient, considerate coach. Length of the session. Time of day.

Stroke technique, flexible timing, ratio

Timings / length of sessions / friendliness of club members

Closeness of coaches / enthusiasm / patience

Different coaches / always positive experience / focus on different elements

Time slot, small classes, number of lessons

Commitment of coaches / friendship of other members / absorbing game

Timing / willingness to go beyond 2 hours

Modular approach, skill development, tutored games

Stroke practice/ 4 ball breaks / guided games

1.11 What could have been made even better for you?

Nothing

Access to a lawn to practise between lessons / more emphasis on use of bisques

If I had started earlier in the season

Nothing

A big picture structure of the game on 1st session with simple walk through / demonstration. A better balance of GC and AC together

Nothing

Suggest better awareness of improvers' sessions to follow and clarity about costs being deducted from membership fee.

An extra session to enable more focus on use of bisques. Use of the magnetic board to explain break building, problem solving. Setting up a mentoring group

A lot more guided games from start to finish
Clearer explanation of 4 ball break and why

2 Did you join Nailsea Croquet Club for the rest of the year after your course of 6 lessons? Yes / No

Yes 87% No 13%

If not, please tell us why not and what we could have done that might have persuaded you to join.

Time constraints. We hope to pursue croquet another year when more time

3 Improvers' sessions – Tuesday afternoons

If you attended any of these please comment on the following:

3.1 The length and timing of sessions

87% satisfied

13% dissatisfied

About right

Length good, timing fine

Yes

Worked well for me when I wasn't otherwise committed

Excellent

Entirely suitable

Good

Work commitments meant we were unable to attend afternoon sessions

3.2 Range of different coaches from week to week – was this a strength or a weakness?

88% strength

12% weakness

Definite strength

Overall a strength once I got to know them a bit

For me personally a weakness

Strength in the main, but some inconsistencies although this may reflect what works for one may not for another

Strength. Erica's explanations to Ashley were a revelation

Strength

'Pluses and minuses – generally good'

These sessions were planned to be a mix of introducing new skills and strokes / revising and practising skills and strokes / developing strategy eg 4 ball break / playing a game .

3.3 Which of these aspects did you find the most / least helpful?

Most helpful – new skills / stroke technique / practising 4 Ball break I found hard

I wanted to practise on my own rather than play a game at first but later welcomed the mix

As a real novice any help was appreciated

4 ball break most helpful, but consider more when balls are not favourably distributed

All sections. I found playing a game particularly helpful when discussing tactics, analysing mistakes

All of them were helpful

Helpful: basic mallet & ball skills Less helpful: need more time on strategy and game play

Seemed too long from 1st beginners' session before we played an actual game

Any other comments?

More focus on use of bisques / reading the lawns and deciding what to do / leaving the lawns

4 Improvers' sessions – Thursday evenings

4.1 Did you attend any of these?

9 replied yes

If so please comment on the following:

4.2 The timing of sessions

77% good 22% clashed with other commitment

Good

Fine

Overall clashed with other commitment

Worked very well for me

Convenient for us despite rush to use available light

Entirely suitable

Good but light levels became an issue towards the end

4.3 Range of different coaches from week to week – was this a strength or a weakness?

100% strength

Definite strength

Good

A strength in the main

Very helpful. Good to have consistency along with different approaches

All I attended were led by Martin

Generally a strength

These relatively unstructured sessions were intended to provide opportunities to have a game with other improvers in a relaxed atmosphere with the option to involve an experienced coach in helping with things such as tactics / skills / use of bisques etc.

4.4 Did you find the balance about right? How could they have been made better for you?

I preferred when on lawn with another player discussing strategy, not competing

Sometimes the coaches were stretched with quite large varied group

'We liked the relaxed nature but would have appreciated some of the more structured coaching which appears to be referred to for Tuesdays (above) as we were unable to attend then.'

Good balance

It seemed a quantum leap. I needed and appreciated the 1:1 times with John

4.5 These sessions were on small lawns. Did this feel right for you or would you have preferred to use a full size lawn?

Small lawns

Large lawns but recognise advantage of learning on small lawns

I prefer large lawns but think we need to practise on both for short croquet etc

Happy on small lawns first year. Graduate to large lawns early next year
1 or 2 sessions on large lawns would have been helpful
Large lawns would have been helpful as my first experience of one was in a competition
Small lawns

Any other comments?

Appreciated patience and dedication
Very appreciative to those who coached so patiently

5 Ad hoc sessions arranged with a coach

Did you arrange any additional 1:1 'ad hoc' coaching sessions? If so,

5.1 How did these come about?

Yes – experienced members offered and I said 'Yes' Lots of helpful willing people
Nothing formally but I had a few games with John. which introduced the importance of
take offs and rushes and less reliance on rolls, split shots, etc.
They were offered but our own time was constrained.

5.2 In what ways did they help you develop your game?

Thinking ahead developing a break
Several sessions with Steve Durston with up to 4 of us.

6 What are your hopes for croquet in 2022?

6.1 Do you anticipate rejoining Nailsea for the 2022 season?

80% Yes
6% No
12% Unsure

If not, please tell us why.

Due to further post surgery complications
We hope to return in the future when we have more time

6.2 Do you anticipate playing AC / GC / both forms of the game

Mainly AC 44% **Mainly GC 46%** **Some of each 50%**

Mainly GC but still work on AC
Mainly AC
Need to get AC sorted first
Both AC and GC
Mainly AC but get to understand GC as well
AC
AC and GC
GC
Focus on GC but will try AC again
GC

7 Refresher sessions in 2022

7.1 Would you like to attend a set of 'refresher sessions' at the beginning of the 2022 season (say 3 sessions)? These would be free to members

10 replied Yes
1 replied No

7.2 If so, would you like to focus on AC or GC?

AC 50% **GC 40%** **Both 10%**

7.3 What time of day / evening / week-end would suit you best / (least) / Focus

Afternoon or evening GC

Tuesday afternoons or week-ends	AC
I have the luxury of being flexible to take advantage of what is on offer	AC
Evenings, Friday and Sunday afternoons, all day Saturday	AC X 2
Anytime other than Monday evenings or weekends.	AC
Weekday mornings	GC
Day time am or pm but preferably pm	GC
Weekday pm	GC

8 Would you like to attend a course of improvers sessions (say 6 sessions) early in the season? These would be free to members

8.1 If so, AC or GC?

14 replied Yes

AC 57% GC 43% Both 7%

8.2 What time of day / evening / week-end would suit you best / least?

Afternoon or evening	GC
Tues/ Wed / Thurs any time	AC
Tuesday afternoons or week-ends	AC
Flexible	AC
Flexible but NOT Friday mornings	AC X 2
Evenings, Friday and Sunday afternoons, all day Saturday	AC X 2
Anytime other than Monday evenings or weekends.	AC
Weekday mornings	GC X 2
Day time am or pm but preferably pm	GC X 2
Weekday pm	GC

8.3 What particular aspects of the game would you like to cover?

Practising shots / rules
 Use of bisques / leaving lawn / end of game
 Shot techniques – I will have forgotten them all
 Tactics, shot selection and execution
 Shot accuracy and strategy / tactics
 Break building. Analyzing the lawn and deciding best approach
 Tactics and shot skills
 GC rules, strategies and hoop running skills

8.4 Would you prefer these were on full or half size lawns?

Half lawns for first 3 sessions
 Either
 Half lawns
 A mix of both
 Large
 Half
 Full size
 Full size
 Full size
 Don't mind

9 If a programme of individual sessions was scheduled, also free to members, covering different specific aspects of the game would you welcome the opportunity to select individual sessions or would you prefer to join a set group for say 6 weeks?

(It is evident I did not get the wording of this section clear enough as few completed it)

9.1 I would / would not welcome the idea of signing up for one-off sessions

3 would welcome

Welcome one off sessions

Would welcome individual assessment with a coach to decide which aspects of my game to focus upon

9.2 I would prefer to join a group for say six sessions covering a range of aspects

Happy in a group but could it be 'streamed' to avoid frustration?

3 would welcome

9.3 I may well be pleased to do both if available

2 would welcome

10 It is possible that we will set up a mentoring system next year.

The aim would be for a pool of experienced club members to offer a link with each new member / improver. Your mentor would arrange friendly games to help you gain experience of playing matches in a supportive framework and maybe introduce you to playing doubles, thereby getting to know more club members in a relaxed yet purposeful environment.

Such a scheme could be open to you, as improvers from this year, and those yet to arrive in 2022.

10.1 Please say if you would have welcomed such a scheme this year and / or would like to have a mentor next year / or feel you have moved beyond that stage

89% welcome the idea of a mentor

Great idea. Yes please for next year – confidence in playing a game

Would have welcomed towards end of season. Maybe next year if time allows

Definitely YES

A great idea. I would have welcomed it in my first year and I would like one next year. I think some may have found it daunting in their first year.

Would welcome a mentor

Yes. Would have loved it this year and would certainly take up the offer next year

I would like a mentor next year

We feel we have moved beyond that

If possible I would like a mentor for GC and for AC

I would have welcomed such a scheme this year

Other comments received

As we are still working, we feel that making some of the club 'afternoon' activities/friendlies etc available during evenings and/or weekends will serve to welcome younger people to join.

It would be really helpful to have had a list early on of experienced players willing to play against a beginner. Even better, for them to have our details to suggest doing so.

We are tremendously grateful for the huge amount of effort and time put into bringing us on this far by the coaches. You're a great bunch.

I would like to extend my grateful thanks to all the coaches – their patience and the time they have given have been brilliant

Perhaps a little more time could be given to GC – I have benefited greatly from playing on a Monday Club afternoon

Thank you very much Martin, John, Linda, Kathy, Erica and others for all your time, encouragement and patience.'

Main findings and issues to resolve next season

Main findings

- 1 There is universal recognition and appreciation for the work of all the coaches. Particular points made relate to the coaches' commitment, patience, encouragement and enthusiasm.
- 2 Widespread recognition that there is a lot to cover / learn in six sessions of some two hours. Almost all feel the pace and structure of these sessions was good. 100% feel they were good value at £30 with 73% endorsing an increase to £40.
- 3 Beginners are keen to get into game situations early, although accepting the need for stroke / skills / strategy and practice. They particularly like playing games with a coach available for discussion & advice. Main worries: 4 ball breaks and bisques.
- 4 Having the experience of different coaches is overall seen as a strength outweighing any minor inconsistencies. However, there is wide variation in provision of handouts between coaches.
- 5 There are mixed views about the balance between AC and GC during both the Beginners' and Improvers' courses. Substantial minority would have liked more GC.
- 6 100% found the range of timings of Beginners' sessions convenient, but less so the Improvers' sessions.
- 7 80% intend rejoining NDCC in 2022 with a fairly even split between AC and GC.
- 8 Strong support for Refresher course of say 3 sessions, with balanced GC / AC.
- 9 Even stronger support for course of six Improvers' sessions, with emphasis on AC. Analyzing the lawn and break building are seen as their priorities.
- 10 Great enthusiasm for a mentoring scheme with 12 requesting one for 2022.

Issues to resolve next season

- A The impact of increased fee of £60 for Beginners Course. Currently new recruits are denied access to lawns for practice sessions during Beginners 6 week course – can we sort this, especially if fee is to be increased to £60?
- B Balance between AC and GC coaching during Beginners' and Improvers' courses.
- C Notion of some limited setting according to ability, especially for Improvers'.

- D Scheduling of Beginners' and Improvers courses to ensure daytime, evening and week-end options are available to accommodate those working during the daytime.
- E Greater consistency in offering printed guidance - course notes, emails, web-sites.
- F Range and scope of a mentoring scheme for players in their first and second season using experienced club members. MK/11/21