

## SOUTH WEST FEDERATION OF CROQUET CLUBS

### Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on Sunday 16 November 2014

The Chairman, Roger Hayes opened the meeting by welcoming everyone.

1. **Apologies:** Caldicot and Palace(Wells) CC's.

2. **Minutes** of the AGM held on 24th November 2013 were agreed and signed.

3. **Matters arising** There were no matters arising.

#### 4. **Chairman's Report**

The Chairman, Roger Hayes, reported that, as we have a very full agenda today, his report would be restricted to just a few of the more significant happenings in the SW Federation.

Earlier this year a GC Handicap Conference was held, which was well attended.

The CA proposals emanating from the Federation Working Party report have given rise to much discussion within the Committee, a topic we will deal with later to-day. Your Secretary, Julie Horsley, diligently applied herself to collating the views of many of the clubs for forwarding to the CA, a task which added to her more usual secretarial duties. It is, therefore, with regret that I confirm that she is stepping down today after 8 years of excellent and conscientious service to the SW Federation. and as yet we have no replacement.

Whilst on the subject of departure, he was also sad to report that Sue Mackay has indicated that she wishes to stand down from the next AGM as Publicity Officer and Editor of SWAN - it is perhaps true to say that the forthcoming issue of our newsletter will be her SWANsong.

We learned of the deaths this year of the following:

Michael Poole, for many years Treasurer of the SW Federation, who tragically drowned while on holiday in New Zealand. Cliff Cardis and Dennis Capel both from Swindon CC, Roger Wheeler from Cheltenham CC, Elaine Woodward and Graham Harford both from Sidmouth CC, Brian Thatcher from Nailsea CC and Frances Ann Musson and the Rev Sheila Scarr both from Exeter CC.

Congratulations are due to the following:

Harry Dodge (Budleigh Salterton CC) on being awarded the CA Spiers Trophy for the most improved GC player in the country for the second year running.

Caroline Denny (The Bears CC) on being awarded the Steel Memorial Bowl for the most improved AC lady player.

Cliff Jones who won the CA Veterans' Championship and Don Gaunt who won the Over 75's in the same tournament. William Ormerod on winning the Kate Jones Memorial Trophy (GC Selection Second Six) and to quote him "the first GC trophy I have won for 60 years"

CA Diplomas have been awarded to:

Roger Hayes (Bath CC), Brian Roynon (Nailsea CC), Jeremy Marshall (Kingston Maurward CC), Julie Horsley (Sidmouth CC) and Graham and Wendy Rosser (Wellington CC).

#### 5. **Treasurer's Report**

The Treasurer, Norman Connor, presented the accounts for the year, which had been circulated at the meeting. The accounts were unanimously approved.

#### 6. **League Secretary's Report**

The League Secretary, John Grimshaw, had circulated his report at the meeting.

This season saw league entries from 120 teams, an increase of 7 teams, representing 27 clubs.

Of the 334 fixtures scheduled, 22 matches were conceded, with a third of these in the Intermediate League which maybe reflects the lower number of players taking up AC, which is a major concern of the CA.

The main issue of contention this year was the effective handicap system introduced by the CA for low handicap GC players. There has been a considerable debate about the perceived unfairness of this system, so an analysis of games where effective handicaps were used was done - in the 182 games where a player used an effective handicap and his opponent did not, 59% were won by the lower handicapped player and 5 were drawn, which does not seem to bear out the argument that low handicap players were unfairly penalised by this system.

The following trophies were presented:

- Parkstone Trophy Division 1 to Bristol
- Parkstone Trophy Division 2 to Cheltenham
- Parkstone Trophy Division 3 to Taunton
- Federation League Trophy to Abbey
- Intermediate League Trophy to Broadwas
- B League Trophy to East Dorset
- Golf Croquet Level Play League to East Dorset
- Golf Croquet League Trophy to Abbey

Congratulations to everyone.

The Short Croquet Team Event was won by Nailsea Trendlewood again.

The dates for the Short Croquet at Nailsea for 2015 are Saturday 11 and Sunday 12 April.

Budleigh Salterton, playing for the first time, enjoyed the experience so much that they have decided to host an autumn Short Croquet Event on 17 October 2015. This will be played under the auspices of the SWF and will follow the same format as at Nailsea, but will be played as a separate competition.

The League Secretary said that he would like to thank all the clubs who made their facilities available for tournaments and finals and to the people who gave up their time to prepare the lawns, provide teas, referee and report on these matches.

## **7. Coaching Liaison Officer's Report**

The Coaching Liaison Officer, Roger Buckley, reported that his job was mainly an administrative one.

He had divided the SW Federation into 4 areas and had identified a list of coaches within each of those areas.

He was disappointed that last year he had only received two requests for coaching.

A Coaches Qualification Course for AC has been arranged at Cheltenham on 7/8 March 2015 led by Dave Kibble.

A Referees/Laws Course will be held in November 2015 at Budleigh Salterton CC led by Marcus Evans.

If anyone wishes to attend either of the above courses or would like coaching at their club please contact him.

## **8. Publicity Officer's Report**

The Publicity Officer, Sue Mackay reported that SWAN and the website continued much as last year. She said that a problem had arisen this year when a team captain had used a club domain e-mail to cancel a match at short notice. Club domain e-mails do not go directly to the clubs and should not be used for urgent matters. She said that she proposed to change the format for publishing match contacts in SWAN and would like to add a mobile number for match contacts; these numbers will not go to the website.

She said that she was giving notice that she would not be seeking re-election at the 2015 AGM, by which time she will have served 17 years on the Committee and edited 16 SWANs. She said that it was possible for one person to maintain the website and another to produce SWAN, if anyone was interested in either task, would they contact a member of the Committee.

Finally she would like to make her annual plea for clubs to keep her up-to-date with any changes as this is the only way the website can be kept up-to date.

## **9. Youth Officer's Report**

The Youth Officer said that for the first time in many years the National Schools' and Juniors' Championship took place at Nailsea this year. It was hoped that next September there would be a larger entry to the championship.

## **10. Development Officers Report**

The Development Officer North, Robert Moss, said it was sad to see the closure of South Bristol CC this year but several other clubs face an uncertain future many of whom play on council owned land.

Many clubs in the area have been busy improving their lawns and facilities mostly using their own resources but financial support has been given by the CA where needed. Whereas there have been few requests in 2014, early indications are that there are up to 8 clubs from the SW who may be submitting bids for 2015. He said it would like to re-iterate a point that has been made before, that the CA when assessing which clubs to support, will give more favourable consideration to those clubs who have done all they can to help themselves. Clubs that have budgeted for expansion or improvement and have built up reserves are more likely to be looked upon favourably - the message from the CA is clear that clubs should be able to demonstrate that they have been doing everything possible to help themselves.

In alternate years the CA gives awards to clubs who have made the most significant development. Nominations are now invited for the 2015 awards and nominations must be in by the end of January 2015. If you think your club should be considered please talk to either Adam or myself.

The Townshend Award is given to a club with one or two lawns, that has in the opinion of the Development Committee made exceptional progress improving a good playing environment over the previous 2 years. The Apps Heley Award is given to a club with three or four lawns that has made most progress at national or local level.

The Millennium Club Award is given to the club with five or more lawns that has made most progress at national or local level.

In addition they give annual awards to the most improved players:

The Apps Memorial for the most improved AC player, the Steel Memorial Bowl for the most improved female AC player and the Spiers Trophy for the most improved GC player.

He said that he had been asked to mention the All England Handicap Tournament. Peter Wilson, who has taken over its management, is keen to promote this tournament especially in the south west. Rising stars will not know about this unless they are told. For smaller clubs it is possible to enter as individuals or for two local clubs to get together to hold a local heat, though it is more usual to have a heat at your own club with the winner going on to the regional final.

He said that he had been given 15 copies of Roger Wheeler and Don Gaunt's book "Croquet Management", if anyone would like a copy to see him after the meeting.

The Development Officer South, Adam Wimshurst, reported that Lym Valley CC have received a grant from the CA towards the enlargement and levelling of a lawn.

St. Agnes CC started up in July and have received a start up kit from the CA they already have a membership of 40+ and are funded by subscription only, when they can find the funds they would like to upgrade their lawns.

Budleigh CC are continuing to renovate their lawns without recourse to the CA.

Plymouth CC is now going from strength to strength and is hoping to be able to play in SW Federation leagues again.

#### **11. Golf Croquet Adviser's Report**

The Golf Croquet Adviser said that two GC Coaching courses were held at Camerton and Peasedown CC in April both were well attended. She was pleased to say that there were now only 5 clubs within the Federation without a GC handicapper.

A Coaches Qualification Course that had been arranged for April, had to be cancelled due to lack of support, it needs a minimum of 6 to be viable. Another one has been arranged for 11/12 April 2015 at Camerton and Peasedown CC.

It was hoped that existing club coaches would consider training as an area coach to help the smaller newer clubs in the area - we need more coaches willing to travel a little.

Despite the decisions reached at the SWF Handicap Conference, there still seems to be a great resistance to conforming to the recommendation that all matches are recorded immediately on the handicap cards and counter signed by the opponent. If a handicap issue arises it is essential that the results on every card are agreed by the opposition so that the evidence is clear and unarguable.

There is work in progress to develop a transfer course from GC to AC.

There had been issues over effective handicaps - Brian Shorney said that he would like to add that it is on the agenda for the CA council and a decision will be taken as to whether it will continue.

Klim Seabright( Cheltenham CC ) said that there had been a change in Tournament Regulations that it is mandatory to keep a handicap card and to take it to all competitive play venues.

#### **12. Election of Officers**

No nominations have been received for Secretary.

All other Officers were willing to stand for another year. There were no other nominations.

All Officers were re-elected.

#### **13. Proposals**

Before any Proposals were taken the Chairman said that the Committee had decided that as from this AGM, any proposals defeated at an AGM will not be considered for inclusion for a period of 3 years. The reason for this decision is that some proposals, that have been defeated at one AGM, are re-appearing again.

PROPOSAL A (circulated with the Agenda)

The proposal was seconded by Marcus Evans and carried.

PROPOSAL B (circulated with the Agenda)

The proposal was seconded by Peter Dyke and carried.

PROPOSAL C (circulated with the Agenda)

The proposal was seconded by Richard Mills and carried.

PROPOSAL D (circulated with the Agenda)

The proposal was seconded by Richard Mills and carried.

PROPOSAL E (circulated with the Agenda)

An amendment to this proposal had been received from Sidmouth CC and circulated to members before the AGM.

There followed a discussion on the amendment, in which the following points were made:

It was felt to be too inflexible. Some players only wish to play one or two games or for part of the day - the present format allows for this.

What would happen if someone was taken ill and could not play all day?

The amendment seconded by Richard Mills was defeated.

Returning to the proposal, the following points were made:

A team captain should not gain an advantage.

It was difficult to predict who would be playing in the last round as someone may be taken ill and unable to play.

What would happen if there were only 5 rounds instead of 6 as some opposition team captains have insisted upon.

Bath CC said that they would be willing to delete the last sentence.

Camerton and Peasedown CC said they would like to propose an amendment - that the team captains alternate the exchange of names for each round, thus the home team captain exchanges the names of his players first for round one, and that the visiting team captain exchanges the names of his players for the second round and so on.

The amendment seconded by Klim Seabright was carried.

The amended proposal (with the last sentence of the original proposal deleted) was seconded by Klim Seabright and carried. Rule 9a not Rule 6a as per the proposal.

PROPOSAL F (circulated with the Agenda)

This proposal was seconded by Helen Prior and carried. New Rule 6c not 7c.

PROPOSAL G (circulated with the Agenda)

There was discussion as to how long a match would take if there were no time limits.

There was also concern that untimed games for the whole match could prove to be too much for some players, especially if they had to play 5 or 6 rounds.

East Dorset proposed an amendment that " .....shall be agreed by the two captains before each game starts ....."

This was seconded by Marcus Evans and carried.

The proposal with the amendment was seconded by David Harrison-Wood and carried.

PROPOSAL H (circulated with the Agenda)

Broadwas CC proposed an amendment to be added to the proposal "double banking avoided, if possible"

The amendment was seconded by Marcus Evans and carried.

East Dorset CC proposed a further amendment "that the visiting team captain chooses the lawns for all sessions"

The amendment was seconded by John Grimshaw and carried.

The proposal with both amendments was seconded by Pam Bowra and carried. New Rule 6d not 10

PROPOSAL J (circulated with the Agenda)

Broadwas CC proposed an amendment to be added to the proposal "double banking avoided, if possible"

The amendment was seconded by Marcus Evans and carried.

Taunton CC proposed a further amendment "that the visiting team captain chooses the lawns for all sessions"

The was seconded by Marcus Evans and defeated.

The proposal with the Broadwas amendment was seconded by Roger Mills was carried. New Rule 6d not 10

PROPOSAL K (circulated with the Agenda)

The following comments were made:

AC is suffering a crisis and GC is on an ascendant.

Clubs, themselves, should be making an effort to encourage AC. Often players who have started with GC and wish to play AC as well have no-one within the club to help, especially if the club only plays GC.

It was stated that this is not a coaching issue, but a motivational issue.

It was stated that, if adopted, more than one person could be recruited, as there are different markets to be targeted, the young and those wishing to convert from GC.

The proposal seconded by Ros Key-Pugh was carried.

PROPOSAL L (circulated with the Agenda)

It was stated that this would cause problems with clubs that do not have full sized lawns.

Sidmouth CC said that there had been no agreement that the Level Play League games would be the best of 3.

The Chairman asked for a show of hands for those wishing to play the best of 3 in the Level Play League.

There was little support for this, showing that most clubs did not wish to change the format.

Ros Key-Pugh said that it may be idea if those clubs that wish to play the best of 3 look at the format and, if necessary try it out, to see any pitfalls. She felt that this would need to be a separate league to the existing one.

It was agreed to look at the suggestion.

East Dorset withdrew the proposal.

PROPOSAL M (circulated with Agenda)

In the discussion that followed the following points were made:

The present format gave as many players as possible the opportunity to play.

It enables clubs to introduce beginners to playing competitively.

If the number of players was reduced this would defeat the object of getting more players playing.

Nailsea CC tabled an amendment "team captains may agree to a 16 game match a week before the scheduled match". This was seconded by Marcus Evans and defeated.

Bath CC tabled an amendment "that the matches shall comprise sixteen games - 2 doubles and fourteen singles. The League Secretary said that this was not feasible as it needed to be in a multiple of 4. The amendment seconded by Marcus Evans was defeated.

The proposal seconded by Alwin Greder was defeated.

PROPOSAL N (circulated with the Agenda)

The proposal seconded by Helen Pryor was carried.

PROPOSAL P (circulated with the Agenda)

It was stated that the winner of the Federation League became eligible to play in the CA Secretary's Shield in which the upper handicap limit was 20.

If the upper handicap limit was reduced to 10, it would mean that a number of smaller clubs would not be able to enter as they would not be able to raise a team.

The proposal seconded by Adam Wimshurst was defeated.

PROPOSAL R (circulated with the Agenda)

The proposal was seconded by John Grimshaw and carried.

#### **14.CA proposed changes**

The Chairman said that as time was going on, this item would be taken after lunch

#### **15. Any Other Business**

Peter Dyke (Nailsea CC) said that he reluctantly felt that he needed to bring the following to at the attention of the meeting. In the 30+ years that he had been playing croquet matches were always played in a good spirit, but this year there was an incident where a GC player lost a number of games resulting in the handicap going up. In an ensuing match that player was subjected to personal criticism that their handicap should never have been allowed to go up - he said that he would like to add here that the handicap card had been scrutinised and was correct - it became very personal. This sort of behaviour is unacceptable and he would ask that if this occurs again that clubs stamp on it immediately. The Chairman said that the Committee deplored this and felt it was reprehensible.

Brian Wilson (Camerton and Peasedown CC ) said that he was now the Chair of the CA Marketing Committee. He would like to work with Clubs and Federation to see that they wanted from the CA. If anyone had any suggestions would they contact him - leaflets had been distributed to clubs at the meeting.

The League Secretary said that there were a few League entry forms that had not been received to date.

The meeting adjourned for lunch at 13.45p.m. with Item 14 on the Agenda being taken after lunch

#### **14. CA proposed changes**

Marcus Evans outlined the proposed changes.

He said that it was felt that the proposed changes had not been clearly explained. The key to the changes is the fall in income. This was mainly due to a fall in the number of players participating in Tournaments. The fall in income would in turn affect the number of grants that the CA would be able to give clubs. To replenish this drop in income the CA are proposing to increase the CA levy on clubs by a £1 a year for the next 5 years. This would mean that all croquet players would be members of the CA. It was felt that all players should be members of the governing body. At the recent CA AGM legislation was passed to enable Federations to apply to be a member of the CA. This in no way affects their independent status.

The meeting was now opened for questions.

Brian Shorney thanked Marcus for his presentation and said that he would like to add that changes were needed because of the aging profile of croquet players. The CA would be in danger in 10 years time if something was not done now to address the problem of declining income. He felt that the CA should be congratulated on grasping the problem now before it became too late.

It was stressed that the CA is keen to consult with all croquet players.

The proposed increases in levy were intended that it would be fiscally neutral.

On a show of hands most members present were in favour of the Federations becoming members of the CA.