

**South West Federation of Croquet Clubs
Minutes of AGM: 15.11.20**

- 1) **Present**
 - a) Full list on p5
- 2) **Apologies**
 - a) Full list on p5
- 3) **Welcome**
 - a) Brian Wilson, Chair, welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced the committee
- 4) **Meeting protocols**
 - a) Protocols for this, our first AGM were established and attendees were asked to be patient if technical difficulties arose
- 5) **Minutes of last meeting**
 - a) There were no questions or amendments

Proposal	That the minutes are accepted as full and accurate		
Proposed	SWF Committee		
Seconded	Ian Blaby	Worcester Norton CC	
For: 45	Against: 0	Abstentions: 5	

Matters arising

- b) Action points have been addressed by the committee and any outstanding issues are addressed in the agenda
 - c) There were no comments or questions
- 6) **Chair's report**
 - a) This was circulated previously (see p6) and summarized by Brian
 - b) Noted that Les Jerram (Swindon) and Basil Mann (Taunton Deane) had also sadly passed away
 - c) Noted that David Hunt (Nailsea CC) had also received a CA Award
- 7) **Treasurer's report**
 - a) This was circulated previously (see p9) and a summary presented by Peter Kirby, Treasurer
 - i) There were no questions
 - b) The Committee had considered the year end date and recommend no changes as there is time to present the accounts and have them checked in time for the AGM
 - i) The year-end date will remain 31st October
 - ii) There were no questions or comments
 - c) The reserves are at a rather high level and the Committee recommends re-distributing some of this back to clubs over a few years in the form of lower fees
 - i) There were no questions or comments
 - d) Fees payment deadline for 2021 is 7th March to tie in with dates for League Entries.
 - i) After the vote, subsequent discussion changed the schedule for League Entries to February 21st, and therefore the fees payment deadline for 2021 will also be February 21st
 - ii) There were no questions or comments

Proposal	That the accounts are accepted as full and accurate		
Proposed	SWF Committee		
Seconded	Simon Clay	Worcester Norton CC	
For: 50	Against: 0	Abstentions: 0	

Proposal	That Bob Whiffen (Treasurer Bristol CC) examines the accounts for 2021		
Proposed	SWF Committee		
Seconded	Lynne Passfield	Bath CC	
For: 49	Against: 0	Abstentions: 1	

Proposal	That the proposed fee structure is agreed		
Proposed	SWF Committee		
Seconded	Chris Williams	Glamorgan CC	
For: 49	Against: 1	Abstentions: 0	

8) League Secretary's Report

- a) This was circulated previously (see p12) and summarized by Stephen Custance-Baker, League Secretary
- b) The proposal to bring forward the deadline for submission of fixture dates was discussed
 - i) Peter Dyke (Nailsea CC) was doubtful Nailsea would be able to arrange matches within the proposed timeframe and suggested the following deadline date changes:
 - (1) 7th March becomes 21st February
 - (2) 14th March becomes 28th February
 - ii) There was no dissension from this and the proposal was made while noting that Covid-19 continuing restrictions may affect this which may also impact on the payment of fees deadline

9) League Rules changes

- a) Updated versions of the rules will be circulated to clubs and posted on the SWF website

Proposal	To bring forward the amended deadline for submission of fixture dates for both AC and GC leagues.		
Proposed	SWF Committee		
Seconded	Jill Shaw	Camerton & Peasedown CC	
For: 48	Against: 0	Abstentions: 0	

Proposal	To delete references to SWAN in both AC and GC rules.		
Proposed	SWF Committee		
Seconded	Paul Pristavec	Glamorgan CC	
For: 48	Against: 0	Abstentions: 2	

Proposal	For the 2021 season only, to delay the dates for submission of AC and GC league team entries		
Proposed	SWF Committee		
Seconded	Chris Donovan	Sidmouth	
For: 48	Against: 0	Abstentions: 2	

10) Development Officer's report

- a) This was circulated previously (see p13) and summarized by Paul Francis, Development Officer
- b) Simon Clay Worcester Norton CC asked about criteria for grants
 - i) Paul summarized these, stressing the importance of self-help, and the information will be circulated to clubs
- c) Ian Blaby. Winterbourne Valley CC queried the criteria for Apps Heley and Townsend grants

- i) Paul clarified: Apps Heley is for clubs with 3 - 4 lawns and Townsend for clubs with 1 - 2 lawns
- d) Discussion on correct spelling and pedigree of the two grants - full information may be found at: <https://www.croquet.org.uk/?p=games/clubs/info/ClubAwards>
- e) Paul noted the deadline for the next round of applications is 31st December and any club considering applying for one is urged to contact him for support

11) Regional Coaching Officer's report

- a) This was circulated previously (see p15) and summarized by Richard Jackson, Coaching Officer
- b) There were no questions or comments

12) Handicapping Officer's report

- a) This was circulated previously (see p15) and summarized by Richard Jackson, Coaching Officer
- b) He noted that as there had been little competitive play this year, handicappers need to be particularly vigilant next year
- c) There were no questions or comments
- d) Resigning because of ill health, Richard will be staying on until a successor is found and said how much he had enjoyed the past five years

13) Election of Committee

- a) It was agreed that as there were no contested places, the vote would be taken en masse
 - See list p16

Proposal	That the nominations for Committee be approved	
Proposed	SWF Committee	
Seconded	Chris Donovan	Sidmouth
For: 50	Against: 0	Abstentions: 0

14) Constitutional changes

- a) The constitutional review group was thanked for their painstaking work on this
- b) There were no questions or comments on any of the proposals
- c) The amended constitution will be circulated to clubs and posted on the SWF website

Proposal	To accept the changes made for reasons of consistency, grammar and punctuation	
Proposed	SWF Committee	
Seconded	Dave Jones	Taunton CC
For: 50	Against: 0	Abstentions: 0

Proposal	To accept the changes made to Section 7 General Meetings	
Proposed	SWF Committee	
Seconded	Jill Shaw	Bath CC
For: 50	Against: 0	Abstentions: 0

Proposal	To accept the changes made to Section 8 The Committee	
Proposed	SWF Committee	
Seconded	Clive Smith	Swindon CC
For: 50	Against: 0	Abstentions: 0

15) SW Reps to CA Council report

- a) This was circulated previously (see p16) and summarized by Klim Seabright

- b) His other comments are recorded under AOB
- c) Peter Nelson urged people to read Jonathan Isaac's (Chair of CA) annual report for information on strategic developments <https://www.croquet.org.uk/?d=2637>
 - i) He particularly welcomes the re-structured Executive Committee
- d) Dave Kibble had no further comments but welcomes comments or questions

16) AOB

- a) Chris Southworth, Worcester Norton CC asked what percentage of clubs attended this meeting and are face-to-face meetings the most inclusive and democratic
 - i) 23 out of 30 full member clubs are present today - last year's figure was 22
 - ii) The committee hasn't given consideration to future formats but will do so and welcomes views
- b) Klim Seabright noted:
 - i) He invites comments to the CA membership working group which is looking at the criteria defining small and large clubs
 - ii) He asked the SWF Committee to consider including a Rep to CA amongst its number
 - iii) He invites comments on a 'green plaque' for clubs to mark environmental improvements
 - iv) He noted ideas for tracking croquet players going to university and linking them to local clubs

17) Date of next AGM

- a) Noted the provisional date of 14th November 2021 is also Remembrance Sunday so this will be re-arranged

18) Discussion

- a) Following a short break, there was an informal discussion, the notes of which may be found on p18

Evaluation

Following the meeting, all attendees and non-attending member clubs were invited to comment on the event.

A report on these will be circulated in due course.

Present

Club	Name	Club	Name
Voting delegates		Sidmouth	Ed Dolphin
Abbey	Pam Branley	St Agnes	Ivan Corbett
Barnstaple	Irene Fane	St Agnes	Andru Blewett
Bath	Lynne Passfield	Swanage	Keith Southern
Beckford	Robert Honey	Swindon	Tony Mayer
Bristol	Dave Kibble	Swindon	Clive Smith
Broadwas	Stuart Smith	Taunton Deane	Beverley Tapper
Camerton and Peasedown	Mo Boys	Taunton Deane	Dave Jones
Camerton and Peasedown	Jill Shaw	Winterbourne Valley	Iain Harborrow
Cheltenham	Sarah Hayes	Winterbourne Valley	Ian Blaby
East Dorset	David Steadman	Worcester Norton	Chris Southworth
Glamorgan	Paul Pristavec	Worcester Norton	Simon Clay
Glamorgan	Chris Williams	Non-voting attendees	
Kington Langley	Ian Wills	Bristol	Frances Ransom
Lym Valley	Kenneth Wilcox	Bristol	Ray Ransom
Lym Valley	John Marjoribanks	Bristol	Pat Jackson
Mumbles	Richard Wood	Kington Langley	Jane Hull
Mumbles	Kath Wright	Kington Langley	Margaret Murray
Nailsea	Erica Malaiperuman	Moreton in Marsh	Christine McCormick
Nailsea	Peter Dyke	Moreton in Marsh	Gill Hindshaw
Plymouth	George & Linda Lang	Moreton in Marsh	Gordon MacRae
Sidmouth	Chris Donovan	Plymouth	Brian Martin
		Sidmouth	Roger Mills
Reps to CA Council - non voting	Dave Kibble	Peter Nelson	Klim Seabright
SWF Committee - voting	Brian Wilson	Richard Jackson	Peter Kirby
	Paul Francis	Tony Mayer	Linda Shaw
	Stephen Custance-Baker	David Enticknap	

Apologies

Budleigh Salterton	Llanderovy	Robert Moss: SWF
Cornwall	Palace Wells	Andrew Willis: Bath
Exeter	Wellington	Kath Wright: Mumbles
Llandaff	Weston super Mare	

Chair's Report to SWF AGM

2020 has been one hell of a year.

- Clubs were finishing off their lawn preparations - league matches had been arranged - many clubs were starting coaching sessions to welcome in 'the season' - some clubs had even started their first tranche of beginners' courses - and then Covid arrived!!
- Yet there was light at the end of the tunnel - Croquet was one of the few sports that were allowed to restart - so we went from 'stir crazy' to 'croquet crazy'

A moment to remember

We have lost a number of treasured friends including: -

- William Ormerod (Swanage and other clubs - plus National and International)
- William 'Bill' McAllister, Edmund 'Ed' Coia and Roger Buckley (Weston SM)
- Derek Beard (Taunton)
- Charles Townshend (Budleigh)
- Please excuse if I have not included one of your members
- We will remember them all

A year of Challenges

- After establishing the status of League matches - we had to, reluctantly, postpone the 2020 schedule (but here's to 2021)
- Both the Federation and Clubs rose to the challenge, many clubs experienced a marked number of people wanting to try croquet and their membership has increased - long may it reign
- Clubs created their own internal competitions and there were some interclub tournaments.
- It was pleasing to note how many clubs worked tirelessly to support their members who were (and many still are) self-isolating - we really are a fantastic community
- Thanks to everyone who put in so much time to ensure that Croquet continued in spite of Covid

Your Federation's responses to these challenges

- We identified how clubs were being affected, advising on sources of grants etc
- Paul Francis has a more detailed Development Report, but as a 'trailer' may I welcome our New member club in Moreton in Marsh, not forgetting Winterbourne Valley (Ex Kingston Maurward)
- Your Federation produced extra issues of Cygnet to keep everyone up to date in these rapidly changing circumstances
- Thank you for all the contributions from clubs - news, photos, quizzes, reports - more please!
- Everything went 'Zoom' - led by Paul Francis, clubs have benefitted from an excellent series of seminars on topics raised by clubs and there will be more to come
- Let's not forget the excellent series of 'Playing to the Rules' presented by Stephen Custance Baker - no more excuses 'I did not know'!!
- After discussion with clubs it was agreed that SWAN would not be available as a hard copy - but could be accessed on line
- A dedicated Constitutional Review team has worked hard, since the last AGM, to bring our Constitution up to date, including clarifications, grammatical and consistency improvements. Thanks to the Committee, Dave Kibble, David Harrison Wood and Keith Southern for their painstaking scrutiny and constructive input

Your Committee

- Once Covid arrived we met by zoom

- We co-opted David Enticknap and Tony Mayer
- Peter Kirby took over as Treasurer from Neil Morrison in January
- Tony and Peter are standing for election
- Robert Moss is standing down
- On behalf of the whole Federation I wish to thank everyone on the Committee for all their hard work over the year

CA Council representatives

- Our 3 Representatives have received copies of relevant papers and have added their own specialist knowledge and experience
- We value their involvement and support for the Federation

The CA's response to the challenges

- As soon as Covid arrived, a dedicated CA team worked hard to navigate through the everchanging rules.
- Croquet one of the few sports that were allowed to restart - and the CA kept us up to date with guidance (how many people can play on one lawn?)
- Many CA competitions and tournaments continued in one form or another and many South West Clubs took part - East Dorset won the Inter Club Shield (again!!)
- The CA instigated a series of zoom meetings both for Clubs and Federations.
- Clubs found these to be very informative and enable us to keep in touch with other clubs - you can always learn from each other
- The CA/Federation Focus group enabled Chairs to keep up to date with what was happening in other regions and for us to consider the current and future roles of the CA and Federations

Celebrating Achievements

Congratulations - Many South West people have been recognised by the CA

- Steve Leonard of Winterbourne Valley and East Dorset was presented with the Spiers Trophy for the most improved GC player
- 11 out of the 17 CA Diplomas were awarded to people from the South West - Jane Hull (Kingston Langley), Christopher Hague (Beckford), Dr Adam Moliver (Cheltenham), John Evans (Glamorgan), David and Nancy Temple (Sidmouth), Ian Stratford (Budleigh), Des Honey and Howard Rosevear (Cornwall), and John Guy (Broadwas)
- Your Federation worked with Kington Langley to support John Grimshaw being one of the first recipients of the Bernard Neal Award for his services to Croquet, not forgetting everything he has done and is still doing, for the South West (e.g. 14 years as our League Secretary)

Judith Moore Bursary

- Judith Moore died in June 2019. Peter Moore has generously established this bursary scheme to carry on her ambitions.
- Peter has also donated a wheelchair suitable for Croquet - again, many thanks
- It focuses on new players looking to engage in serious tournament play.
- This bursary is administered by The South West Federation and will be awarded to cover the Tournament Entry Fee only
- I hope that all clubs will encourage their new players to take part in CA Competitions and seek support from this most generous bursary

Your Federation's plans for 2021 include:

- More Development work to support clubs
- More zoom seminars - you never know, we might be able to meet face to face!!

- More Coaching and Refereeing support
- League tournaments will begin again - AC/GC and Short Croquet!!

Can you help?

- There is even more to do and we are looking for people to lead on a number of key activities - for example John Grimshaw is leading on Short Croquet and Rhona Foster with Swan
- Other roles include refurbishing and enhancing our web site, plus leading us into the world of Social Media
- We will be writing to clubs in more details, so please encourage your members (especially the new ones) to consider helping us the help you

And finally

- So, here's to the rest of the year and I'll raise a glass to croquet's continuing health in 2021 and beyond

Brian Wilson
November 2020

Treasurer's report to SWF AGM



South West Federation of Croquet Clubs



Treasurers AGM Report 15th November 2020

Financial Year-End Accounts (see page 3)

As expected, the impact of coronavirus on the Federation's finances has been substantial leading to a loss of just over £400. Fixed Costs incurred have largely been offset by donations received from member clubs. The losses are more than adequately covered by available reserves of over £5,200.

Refund of Fees

A Refund of full membership, League and Short Croquet fees was offered to member clubs. The Treasurer would like to give thanks to the following clubs who in total have made donations of £695 to SWF Funds: Camerton & Peasedown

Cheltenham
Winterborne Valley
Kington Langley
Nailsea
Sidmouth
St Agnes
Worcester Norton

Financial Year-End

The date for the financial year end should be such that it is as close as possible to the AGM, and therefore provides the most up to date information but also gives sufficient time to the Treasurer & Examiner to complete their responsibilities.

There was discussion at the 2019 AGM of moving the October 31st financial year-end to an earlier date to give the Treasurer more time. However, I can confirm that transactions that are notified but not yet paid / received by October 31st can be fully reflected in the accounts and this follows normal accounting practice. As such I expect the accounts to be prepared by the Treasurer on November 1st and an agreed version of the accounts following feedback from the Examiner a few days later.

Therefore, I propose that the financial year-end remains October 31st and is only changed due to exceptional circumstances.

Judith Moore Bursary

During the year there was a donation of £5,000 to the Judith Moore bursary this has been identified in the accounts as Tournament Development Fund. As yet there have been no grants provided under the bursary, but it is anticipated that there will be further promotion of this scheme and grants to be given during 2021.

Fee Proposals for 2021 & Level of Reserves

At the year-end reserves are just over £5,200 which at 210% of 2019 turnover of c£2,500 (excluding costs of printing SWAN) which in the Treasurer's opinion appears to be rather high. There are further reasons to believe these reserves are high:

1. Income & Expenditure are comparatively stable.
2. Fixed costs are low
3. Around 50% of expenses are "internal" to member clubs (Lawn Fees), and represent transferring of funds from one group of member clubs to another.

I therefore propose that these surplus reserves are distributed to member clubs over a number of years by setting fees to give a small projected budget loss (a loss of £200 for 2021) and keeping fees suppressed.

I look forward to receiving feedback from clubs on this proposed approach, and on whether quicker / slower distribution of reserves is appropriate.

SWAN printing costs for 2020 were substantial at £710, as it has been agreed that this is the last year for which SWAN will be printed then my proposed fees for 2021 pass this reduction in costs on to member clubs in the form of lower fees.

The combined impact of projecting a small loss for next year and the saving of SWAN printing costs gives the following proposed fees for 2021.

For 2021 the structure of fees shall be as follows - a discount for early payment is proposed to ensure that payment is made in a timely manner consistent with the timetable for the organisation and start of League play. This will be applied if payment is received on or before March 7th 2021.

Item	Cost	Comment	Discounted amount
League entry per team	£6.70	Currently £8.00	£6.00
Short Croquet team events - per team	£17	Currently £20	£15.00
Full-Membership fee - per playing member <i>Subject to maximum fee of £29</i>	£0.45	Currently 60p <i>Current max: £36</i>	£0.40 <i>Max: £26</i>
Affiliate Membership fee	£3.00	No change	N/A

Peter Kirby
Treasurer - SWF Croquet
November 15th 2020



South West Federation of Croquet Clubs



Accounts Year-End 31st October 2020

GENERAL ACCOUNT					
INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT					
INCOME	2020		2019		
Subscriptions	811			836	
Association league fees	504			520	
Short league fees	104			0	
Golf league fees	544			504	
Short croquet fees	1200			1140	
Subscriptions and League Fees (Total)	3163			3000	
Subscriptions and League Fees Refund	-2468			0	
Subscriptions and League Fees (Net)	695			3000	
Adverts	60			180	
CTC Coaching Course	0			0	
CA refund of travel expenses	0			0	
Donations	0			0	
Sundries	0			6	
	755			3186	
EXPENDITURE					
SWAN production	710		710		
Trophies	0		128		
League finals	0		396		
Short croquet	0		920		
Coaching expenses	0		21		
Travel expenses	133		518		
Bursary travel expenses	0		235		
AGM Workshops Costs	115		0		
SWF Website	135		135		
AGM (net costs)	15		0		
Administration	0		0		
Sundries	66		158		
	1173		3221		
SURPLUS / - DEFICIT FOR THE YEAR		-419			-34
ADD OPENING BALANCE		5653			5687
CLOSING BALANCE		5234			5653
BALANCE SHEET					
REPRESENTED BY					
CASH AT BANK		5234			5653
DEBTORS		0			0
CREDITORS		0			0
TOTAL NET ASSETS		5234			5653
TOURNAMENT DEVELOPMENT FUND					
INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT					
INCOME					
Bursary Received	5000			0	
EXPENDITURE					
Grants provided	0			0	
SURPLUS / - DEFICIT FOR THE YEAR		5000			0
ADD OPENING BALANCE		0			0
CLOSING BALANCE		5000			0
BALANCE SHEET					
REPRESENTED BY					
CASH AT BANK		5000			0
DEBTORS		0			0
CREDITORS		0			0
TOTAL NET ASSETS		5000			0
CONSOLIDATED FUNDS					
BALANCE SHEET					
REPRESENTED BY					
CASH AT BANK		10234			5653
DEBTORS		0			0
CREDITORS		0			0
TOTAL NET ASSETS		10234			5653
Peter Kirby	Bob Whiffen				
Treasurer	Examiner				
I have examined the financial records of the South West Federation of Croquet Clubs, for the year ending 31 October 2020 and report that the above statement gives a true and fair view					

SWF League Secretary Report

I have no activities to report as there have been no matches. The only friendly match I was to be involved in (Sidmouth v Taunton Deane) was cancelled when new restrictions were announced.

We have a proposal for a rule change that brings the deadline for submitting match dates forward by 1 week (to Jan 24th) and I see no reason to change that.

I have now heard back from the majority of the clubs' Match Secretaries and no-one is opposed to the rescheduling of the 2021 deadlines.

My additional proposal is therefore that, for this year only, we plan to delay starting match organisation by about 3 months. The actual proposal, is:

“For the 2021 season only, the dates for submission of league team entries and the circulation of dates to the clubs shall be:

Mid-February 2021	League entry forms will be sent to club Match Secretaries.
Sunday March 7 th 2021	Deadline for all team entries to be submitted by the clubs to the League Secretary.
Sunday March 14 th 2021	League Secretary to send out Blocks and Match venues to all club Match Secretaries.
Sunday April 11 th 2021	Deadline for agreed match dates to be sent to League Secretary, together with team captains and their contact details.
Sunday April 18 th 2021	League Secretary to send out all fixture lists and contact lists to club Match Secretaries, and to update the website tables.

The dates for payment of membership and match fees will also be delayed to be consistent with these revised dates.”

Stephen Custance-Baker
November 2020

SWF Development Officer Report 2020

CA Grants and Loans 2019/2020

I am pleased to report the following grants and loans were awarded to the following SWF clubs.

- November 2019 Camerton and Peasedown
- November 2019 Winterbourne Valley (formerly Kingston Maurward)
- February 2020 Plymouth
- July 2020 Moreton in Marsh

CA Grants and Loans 2021

There is commitment from the CA Development committee to maintain the existing level of annual funding available for club grants. This committee now meets on a far more regular basis and so clubs can make grant applications at any stage of the year. In addition to grants, the CA is looking to offer more interest free loans (more information to follow).

As the 2019/20 list of grants and loans testify, clubs in the SWF have been successful with obtaining funding for their development plans and I would urge clubs to consider how they might benefit from grants and/or loans in 2021.

Welcome to Moreton in Marsh

We have regularly kept SWF clubs up to date via Cygnet and SWAN with news from Moreton in Marsh. It is pleasing to report that the new club is on course to begin playing on its two newly laid lawns in the Spring.

The new committee at Moreton in Marsh are to be congratulated on their resilience when surmounting a wide range of obstacles. Alongside their own impressive fundraising activities, the club has benefited from a £5,000 CA grant. The signs are positive for further CA financial support in 2021 in order for the club to complete stage two of its plans which include a clubhouse storage and lawn equipment.

We are confident that Moreton in Marsh will become a very successful croquet club and valuable member of the SWF. We are sure it will not be long before Moreton in Marsh will be hosting SWF league matches and providing a warm Cotswold welcome to visitors.

CA Club Awards

These bi-annual awards have already been promoted in Cygnet and Zoom meetings but here is a quick summary of the three categories.

- Apps Healey is for clubs with one or two lawns
- Townsend is for clubs with three or four lawns
- Millennium for clubs with five or more lawns.

Each award is worth £250 and SWF clubs have fared well since the awards were introduced. In the last round of awards, The Apps Heley was awarded to St Agnes. Other recent winners include Camerton and Peasedown, and Bath. If you feel your club would like to consider applying, I am happy to help and support club applications.

Future Zoom meetings

The first lockdown encouraged the committee to re-think how we communicated with SWF clubs. There is no doubt that the introduction of the monthly Zoom meetings has given our clubs the opportunity to communicate on a regular basis. Our CA representatives have also attended these meetings and have briefed us on CA news.

Overall, we have been pleased with the quality of our SWF Zoom meetings. Attendance has been good but we would warmly invite all our clubs to attend these monthly one hour 'get togethers' where we share latest news and ideas.

In addition, we are trying to bring the CA 'closer' to our federation and hope in the future to invite Executive Board members to attend to explain their roles and for them to hear directly from SWF clubs in regular Q & A sessions.

In past meetings we have had presentations from Chris Roberts (CA Gazette Editor) and Paul Hetherington (Marketing and Communications). Other CA officers have indicated their interest in meeting with us in 2021.

However, the agenda for the Zoom meetings should be driven by the clubs and so please let me know of issues and content you would like to be included.

Paul Francis November 2020

SWF Coaching and Handicapping Report for AGM 2020

The Covid pandemic has almost entirely stopped croquet coaching at the national and regional level in 2020, but at the club level in the SWF there has been a patchwork of activity.

Some clubs have had little activity, with coaches shielding. Several others have reported increased activity in recruitment (and coaching). The early resumption of croquet as a good socially-distanced sport gained us publicity and aroused interest in the general public, which resulted in a number of clubs reporting increased recruitment, without a great deal of marketing activity at the club level. The need for individual or small group coaching instead of the customary larger groups has strained coaching resources, but in some cases resulted in very rapid improvement of promising beginners.

There have been experiments in online coaching. I have run two AC courses on break-building without bisques. The method is no substitute for on-court coaching, but allows a more rapid discussion of tactical positions than is possible on court, and has allowed us to reach players from clubs with no qualified coach. A programme of Zoom sessions on the rules of GC has received enthusiastic support. These initiatives should continue after the pandemic.

A Coaches Refresher Course was planned to be held in Bristol last spring, to be run by three of the Federation's most experienced coaches. There was a very good projected attendance. Unfortunately, this had to be postponed because of the pandemic. We hope to be able to run it in 2021, with priority given to those who signed up this year.

Ill health forces me to relinquish the position of Federation Coach after a five-year stint, but I will remain in place for a short time until a successor can be found. I have greatly enjoyed my time in this position, and the opportunity to serve on the SWF Committee and the CA Coaching Committee.

Handicapping

For the past two years, I have also acted as Federation Handicapper. The SWF has taken a number of initiatives recently, with a series of handicapping workshops working towards a club handicapper for each club for the relevant code or codes. We have followed this up with an analysis of the league results for the SWF handicap leagues at the end of each season. Statistical analysis provides indications if a club's handicaps for a particular code have drifted away from the national norms and corrective action can be taken if necessary. These initiatives are being considered by the CA Handicapping Committee and may be rolled out nationally.

The almost complete lack of competitive play this year will mean that many players who have recently started will have improved their play much faster than their handicaps have changed under the Automatic Handicap System. Club Handicappers need to be alert to the need to make non-automatic changes where necessary. All players have a role to play in this. My suggested Mantra is

“Five wins in a row - Let your Club Handicapper know!”

If there is a problem, please contact the Federation Handicapper, who will try to find a CA Handicapper close to the club to resolve the problem. Croquet is much more enjoyable when all players have the right handicap!

Richard Jackson November 2020

Elected Committee

Post	Name / Club
Chair	Brian Wilson: <i>Camerton & Peasedown</i>
League Secretary	Stephen Custance-Baker: <i>Taunton Deane</i>
Secretary	Linda Shaw: <i>Bristol, Nailsea</i>
Treasurer	Peter Kirby: <i>Bristol</i>
Development Officer	Paul Francis: <i>Bath</i>
Coaching Officer	Richard Jackson: <i>Bristol</i>
Handicapping Officer	Richard Jackson: <i>Bristol</i>
Committee member	Tony Mayer: <i>Swindon</i>

SW Representatives to CA Council Report

The main items covered in Council can be summarised in Jonathan Isaacs report to the CA AGM. all three of us contribute to Council meetings in which we are able to influence the Strategy of your Governing Body.

Each Representative also undertakes other specific tasks which usually happen in a committee or working group.

Klim Seabright:

The Handicap Committee handles regular enquiries about the application of handicaps. It has also issued updated guidance for Club and CA Handicappers. There is a need for more Handicappers and it is probably best, in the first instance, to make contact with your Federation Handicapper.

The Marketing Committee made strong use of the COVID situation to emphasise the advantage provided in croquet for social distancing. This led to some good national publicity. It was noted that some clubs also ran their own campaigns and the impression is that recruitment levels have been good.

The Marketing Committee also initiated additional merchandise through the CA shop. If you are about to do your Christmas Shopping then do take a look at the new jewellery range. The virus mask was described by one customer as “the most comfortable mask I have worn and at a reasonable price”.

Communication with members and Federations have been improved via Zoom and Webinars both by the initiative of Eugene Change (Chair of Marketing), supported by committee members, and also by initiatives taken by the Federation. The monthly Newsletter has also been very positively received with around 65% of despatched emails being opened.

Diversity will be one of the central themes in the next year and SW will be represented on the Working Party.

I continue to attempt to have croquet included as a side event (not allowed to call it “demonstration”) in the Commonwealth Games in 2022. It is a bit heavy going though.

I have only received one question from a constituent which was easily resolved.

Peter Nelson:

CA Council Working Group on Membership - progress report

A working group comprising five members of Council has been established to review the membership structure and benefits for both clubs and individual members. The work is ongoing but a number of changes have been, or are in the process, of being implemented.

Prior to 2009 established clubs having the use of dedicated facilities were only eligible for full membership with affiliate membership available only for clubs or “societies” which did not have their own courts and equipment. The redrafting of the Constitution inadvertently left a loophole enabling established clubs to apply for affiliate membership. Whilst only a small number of clubs have taken advantage of this, it is an un-intentional consequence which Council considered unfair to the majority.

This loophole has been rectified by amending the constitution; these changes being approved by the AGM on 17th October.

When CA membership became available to members of CA member clubs the former Tournament Member category was renamed Premium Member and the grade of Standard Member established. A principal benefit of Premium Membership is a reduction in tournament entry fees. Some tournaments give priority to Premium Members in the event that they are over-subscribed and furthermore certain events are restricted to Premium members. It is recommended that these restrictions are removed.

No changes to Supporter, Overseas or Young Persons membership are proposed.

Dave Kibble:

A working group was established to review the CA website and members will already have seen some improvements to this, but a major re-vamp is in the wings. Work continues.

The Fixtures Calendar and online entry system has been overhauled, largely a behind the scenes piece of work but now allowing clubs to directly maintain their entries.

I also support all the CA committees to maintain and improve the information they publish on the website.

In return for a modest fee, I have continued to develop the CA Membership Database and to support clubs and the CA office in its implementation and refinement. We are working with a few selected clubs to make it fit-for-purpose as a club tool.

Conclusion

We would like to thank the SWF Federation for their continuing work, and in particular Paul Francis and Stephen Custance-Baker for their Zoom sessions - a very helpful innovation.

As Representatives (not delegates) we always have in the forefront of our minds the interests of the South West.

As members of Council we are also aware that there are occasions when we are required to take the broadest view in the interests of our sport.

Klim Seabright, Peter Nelson, Dave Kibble
November 2020

Looking ahead to 2021: Discussion summary

The original aims of the session were:

- To identify clubs' needs and priorities in the context of CA and SWF themes
- To consider ways of addressing these
- To find volunteers to help do this

The discussion took on a less structured form - people were rather 'Zoomed-out' - so the topic will be re-visited at our next Zoom meeting.

The following points were raised by clubs:

- Coaching
 - There was an apparent lack of clarity concerning the whereabouts and availability of coaches in the region
 - Richard Jackson said he contacts coaches each year and has details of this
 - Noted the potential for further refinement of such a system
 - It is anticipated that coaching will continue next year, with hopefully greater opportunities for face-to-face sessions
 - Coaching can be arranged if there is a demand - noted scope for better communication between supply and demand
 - Often a simple phrase is enough to set people off in the right direction
 - Coaching is most effective when it is backed up with practice!
 - Conversion from GC to AC would be helpful
 - There is scope for balancing on-line coaching with face-to-face
 - Discussed the value of Coach Training Courses and how these might correlate with coaching skills
 - Recognized there may be other ways of training coaches and the potential of regular refresher courses
 - Richard noted the CA Coaching Committee is reviewing various aspects of this area
 - See Croquet Gazette issue 387 p24-5 to read a recent article by Sarah Hayes on this - and she has an excellent column in each issue.
- Covid
 - Discussed the guidelines issued by CA
 - Some clubs have problems getting their members to comply
- Lawn booking systems
 - Ffi see CA Club Webinar:
Court Booking Systems: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iBDAFjmfSLI>
- Catering
 - Concern expressed about the etiquette surrounding catering at League matches and wondered if SWF guidance would be helpful:
"Some host clubs provide lunch and tea, some lunch only, some tea only and some tell the visiting team to bring their own."
 - There was a lack of conviction that this would prove helpful but would be considered
 - Noted that with Covid restrictions in place, self-catering is the order of the day
- CA club size criteria and fees
 - Views were expressed and people were advised to let Peter Nelson have these to feed into the review group
 - That large/small lawn distinction not v helpful - may not relate to membership numbers
 - Levy system is unfair
- Abbey noted they will probably need to play all their League matches away next year due to the state of the lawns

- There are precedents for this

The call for more people to become involved in the work of the committee and its various areas of work was made.

Further information will be forthcoming but initial suggestions are:

- by being co-opted to the committee
- by offering to work with the committee, perhaps as part of a small team, on a particular topic - e.g.
 - Coaching officer
 - Handicapping officer
 - Website Liaison officer
 - Social media / communications
 - Safeguarding officer