**SWF Zoom Meeting 8.6.21: Catch up**

10 clubs were represented at this meeting

**Grounds Maintenance Association**

Paul explained the developing relationship between the CA and this organisation who are keen to encompass support to croquet clubs.

GMA identify a link between the quality of lawns and player retention and are developing a lawns grading framework. This will help clubs identify their position which will be useful in terms of

* Applying for grants
* Planning lawns improvement and maintenance

The higher the quality of the lawns, the greater are the skills and knowledge needed and the GMA is developing training modules to support progression. Regional specialists can provide support at more local levels.

Paul is hopeful this will be piloted in the SW and is confident that Sport England funding can be secured to support this.

In the longer term it is hoped the CA will meet costs of basic membership of the GMA – but all that remains to be seen. There will be a cost to training and advice services.

Contact Paul if your club wants to find out more. [paulwfrancis@icloud.com](mailto:paulwfrancis@icloud.com)

**League Play**

Stephen reported that 2 league matches had been played so far - one of these was Short Croquet which demonstrated that the format works.

Stephen noted that someone had entered results for one match on Croquet Scores but had not filled it in correctly. This causes real problems for those who use the results to analyse play, so if you know who it was – **please ask them to stop!**

Noted that East Dorset are unable to create a team for away matches due to the travel distances involved and the difficulty in finding overnight accommodation. These are clearly Covid-related problems and no penalties for play next year will be applied.

**Survey Monkey**

Paul presented the results of the survey on player recruitment which showed 67% of clubs reported higher than usual levels which is excellent news and could well reflect increased media interest over the past year.

Bristol records show that around 50% of new players fail to renew after their second year. This might suggest a failure to provide sufficient coaching to inspire them, or failure to feel part of the club, or a realisation it’s just not the game for them.

The importance of quality beginner coaching was noted, alongside opportunities for coached and competitive play with club members and a welcoming social environment.

Clubs are encouraged to share their good and bad experiences of coaching via Cygnet.

**Social media**

Recruitment for this year suggests an interesting shift to finding out about clubs via social media and websites. Previously word-of-mouth has been the key to this.

The value of Facebook and websites was noted, and the use that some clubs have put WhatsApp to – though this runs the risk of excluding some members who do not engage in this way.

Noted that the CA model website is really good for clubs who do not yet have their own. The SWF will give consideration to using this as well.

It was agreed that further support and advice would be helpful for clubs and in the absence so far of anyone in the region being in a position to help with this (hint, hint) the committee will research alternatives.

**Round up**

* One club has a man with autism who comes along with his carer and asked for suggestions on welcoming and supporting him
  + Ken at Lym Valley offered to discuss in the light of his experience
  + The man and his carer would also have useful insights

**Next meeting**

This will be on Tuesday 13th July and the topic will be announced in due course.