

## **SWF Committee Meeting 7.12.21: Minutes**

### **Present**

Tony Mayer, Peter Kirby, Stephen Custance-Baker, Andru Blewett, Brian Wilson, Linda Shaw

### **Apologies**

Paul Francis

#### **1. Minutes of last meeting**

- a. Agreed as correct

#### **2. Matters Arising**

- a. Any outstanding Actions are included in the agenda

#### **3. Allocate committee roles**

- a. Following the AGM we have only the Chair, Treasurer, Secretary, League Secretary, Development Officer and two ordinary members elected
- b. Paul will continue to support Roger with Coaching, Brian will support Paul with Development and Linda will continue with Cygnet
- c. Further efforts to recruit will be made in Cygnet and throughout the year – we are particularly looking for people to undertake Coaching, Handicapping and Website/Social Media roles
- d. Noted that we will be aiming to improve diversity throughout this
- e. **Action: All**

#### **4. Treasurer's report**

- a. Update previously circulated: see appendix 1
- b. Of the two clubs who have not yet paid their fees:
  - i. **Action: Andru** will follow up St Agnes
  - ii. **Action: Peter** will pursue Llandaff and get back to the Committee if necessary
- c. At the AGM the Committee was asked to consider alternative ways of reducing our excess of reserves (in proportion to our turnover)
  - i. We have already agreed to reduce this over a few years by reducing membership and league fees
  - ii. Any alternative plans would need someone to manage them as we do not have the capacity to take on further work
  - iii. Agreed no further action and this information will be relayed in Cygnet
  - iv. **Action: Linda**
- d. Our claim for coaching subsidy from the CA has been rejected as set out in an email from Sarah Hayes
  - i. Dave Kibble provided by email a rationale for how this might be justified
  - ii. It was agreed the whole process is illogical
  - iii. **Action: Committee** to decide on possible next steps

#### **5. League Secretary's report**

- a. Previously circulated – see appendix 2
- b. Noted particularly
  - i. the increase of 50% in the number of League matches for 2022
  - ii. Bude is disappointed not to be able to enter any teams
  - iii. East Dorset is entering a greatly reduced number of teams including for the Parkstone Trophy
- c. Agreed it would be helpful to separate the SC League Rules from the AC League rules

- i. **Action: Stephen** to prepare for next year's AGM
  - d. Confirmed national competition entries:
    - i. GC Handicap: Plymouth eligible but not able to go for geographic reasons so Dowlish Wake have taken their place
    - ii. Secretary's Shield: Winterborne Valley
    - iii. Short Croquet: because of the national team composition regulations, none of our teams would be able to play
      - 1. This has been taken up with CA but to no avail so far

## 6. Development Officer's report

- a. Previously circulated: see appendix 3
  - i. Agreed we would like to host one of the four Dennis Mowers' roadshows
- b. Noted Paul's visit to Newton Abbot – see appendix 4
  - i. Also noted Newton Abbot have not joined SWF
  - ii. **Action: Linda** to discuss with Paul

## 7. Coaching

- a. Discussed plans for 2022 – need to establish
  - i. How many clubs have no Club Level Coaches to see if further course is necessary
    - 1. **Action: Paul** / Roger
  - ii. How many people would like to achieve a Graded Coach qualification
    - 1. **Action: Paul** / Roger
  - iii. GC Rules – Stephen could run his again in April but they are available on-line
    - 1. **Action: Linda** To be noted in Cygnet
  - iv. Noted that WCF consultation on GC rules is accessible through CA website
  - v. AC Rules – to be considered
  - vi. Referees – noted that according to CA tournament regs – apart from championships, in the absence of qualified refs, the manager can appoint anyone with suitable knowledge and experience as a ref
    - 1. There is useful video by Tim King on the CA website
    - 2. Stephen's videos are also available and on the Taunton CC website are new slo-mo videos of what happens in certain shots
    - 3. Members should be encouraged to be familiar with these so refereeing can be undertaken satisfactorily at League Matches
    - 4. **Action: Linda** article in Cygnet

## 8. Handicapping Officer's report

- a. We will run a handicapping seminar by Zoom late Feb / early March
  - i. **Action: Tony**
- b. Noted video purportedly based on SWF workshops a few years ago is on CA website
  - i. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3pXni-78HKA>
- c. Handicapping was discussed at yesterday's Feds Forum meeting and some Feds do not allow clubs without a club handicapper to enter Leagues
  - i. Discussed if we wanted to take this route and we agreed we wanted to continue with our encouragement / support way of doing it

## 9. Safeguarding Officer's report

- a. Paul not present but Linda is Nailsea LSO and is aware that there has not been much action or input from the CA LSO

## 10. Matters arising from AGM

- a. 22 clubs were represented which is the same as the previous 2 years and not showing any difference between virtual and face-to-face meetings
- b. Paul expressed his views – see appendix 5
- c. Agreed that in future we hold either a face-to-face or a Zoom AGM but we do not have the resources to run a hybrid meeting
- d. Catering at League Matches – agreed we do not want this to form part of the Rules – it never has been and is unnecessary
  - i. **Action: Linda** – article in Cygnet stating our position and encouraging clubs to be considerate

## 11. Website

- a. Info updated following AGM: constitution, League Rules, minutes 2020, draft 2021 minutes, committee details
- b. Linda discussed a couple of issues with David Harrison-Wood and will ask Alison to make a couple of minor changes **Action: Linda**

## 12. Cygnet

- a. Next issue within a couple of weeks with another in the new year **Action: Linda**

## 13. CA Council Update

- a. Brian updated us on his work
  - i. Council meets shortly to make a decision on recommending a new organizational structure to the members shortly
    1. In response to feedback from members, Council will be giving a rationale for its recommendations
  - ii. A working group is looking at constitutional changes and Brian is particularly focusing on the role of Feds in nominations for Council
  - iii. In its role of scrutiny i.e. monitoring and evaluation, Council is particularly focused on membership and diversity but lacks basic information about diversity
  - iv. Peter Nelson is Vice-Chair of Council

## 14. Meetings schedule 2022

- a. Agreed:
  - i. 27<sup>th</sup> January
  - ii. 24<sup>th</sup> March
  - iii. 26<sup>th</sup> May
  - iv. 21<sup>st</sup> July
  - v. 20<sup>th</sup> October
  - vi. 20<sup>th</sup> November AGM

For point 4 d) iii) although I agree that this is factually correct, it has probably been superseded by subsequent emails and is also confidential. I think it would be better to say something neutral along the lines of

## **Appendix 1: Treasurer's update, Peter Kirby**

As I arrived back late on Sunday evening from holiday, apologies I won't have time to produce the full Treasurer's report for this evening's meeting, but will produce this by the end of the week.

What is missing is the cash reconciliation (and I know this requires work as it won't balance on 1st try), actual vs budget for 2022 and report write up. However I have finished with what I believe to be the important areas:-

1. I have reconciled fees received, completed membership forms and league entries with Stephen and these match for all clubs.
2. I project fees received for next season to be c. £130 lower than the budget of £1,825 this is primarily due to lower-than-expected entries for the SC Nailsea / Budleigh Tournaments (actual 53 vs budget 60). This shortfall is within the normal range and can be adequately covered by reserves.
3. Two clubs haven't paid the full fees by the due date of December 5th. Llandaff have paid the league entry fee, but haven't completed the membership form or paid the membership fee. St Agnes have paid no fee, and I haven't received a membership form. I sent an email to the Treasurer of both clubs yesterday and await a response. We should discuss how to progress with these 2 clubs.

## **Appendix 2: League Secretary's Report, Stephen Custance-Baker**

I have received entry forms from 28 clubs, plus the entry by phone for one other (Llandaff). The only club missing at present is Fowey, who normally enter one SC tournament and no leagues. Moreton in Marsh have entered one team, but Bude are not yet ready to do so and will join us in 2023.

The total number of teams entered is 131, compared with 111 last year. This breaks down into 51 AC (46), 18 SC (10) and 62 GC (55).

I have formed the entries into 29 blocks, varying in size from 3 to 7. In all blocks with 3 or 4 teams, they will play each other home and away, giving 4 or 6 matches. Blocks with 5, 6 or 7 teams will play each other once, giving 4, 5 or 6 matches.

I have reduced the time required for the play-offs and finals by:

- 1 Having no more than 4 blocks in any league, so that no quarter-finals are needed.
- 2 Having just 1 week between the last date for semi-finals and the finals. It is unnecessary to have 2 weeks for this as the date and venue of the final is fixed, so no arrangements are needed.

The finals are scheduled for the following dates, but I have not yet asked for lawns to be offered:

Saturday September 17<sup>th</sup> 2022 Short Croquet (Open), B League  
Sunday September 18<sup>th</sup> 2022, AC Intermediate, GC Level Play  
Saturday September 24<sup>th</sup> 2022 AC Federation, GC High Handicap  
Sunday September 25<sup>th</sup> 2022, Short Croquet (Restricted), GC Handicap

The final date for the semi-finals, where required, will be one week before the final and the last date for block matches will be 2 weeks before the semi-final. Block matches must therefore be completed by:

Sunday August 28<sup>th</sup> 2022, AC Intermediate, GC Level Play  
Sunday September 4<sup>th</sup> 2022, B League, Short Croquet (Open), which have no semi-final  
Sunday September 4<sup>th</sup> 2022, AC Federation, Short Croquet (Restricted), GC Handicap, GC High Handicap  
Sunday September 11<sup>th</sup>, AC Advanced League Divisions, which have no finals

I plan to send the emails out to each club, listing their matches, on Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup>, after the meeting. The blocks are shown on the maps below. The dashed lines represent blocks in which the teams will play home and away.

The Short Croquet tournaments have received 24 (Nailsea) and 29 (Budleigh) entries. I will send the list to John Grimshaw shortly.

I have sent the list of clubs and their entries to Peter Kirby to be checked against the fees received.

### **Appendix 3: Development Report, Paul Francis**

#### November Visits

- I have visited Tisbury, a new club to discuss their plans for 2022. It is currently a bowls club. They will be able to provide one lawn (just under full dimensions). (The CA will pay my expenses)
- My second visit was to Newton Abbot to advise them on developing their club and the plan to re-locate in the future. A full report on this visit was emailed to Linda. (this is a SWF expense)
- Finally, my third visit was to Cheltenham where I ran a day's coaching/introduction to Short Croquet. There were 20 participants and I believe they are entering one SC team this year in the restricted league. (Cheltenham paid my travel expenses).

#### Grants

- Two in the pipeline.
  - Bude, for their new clubhouse. They will be applying for the maximum £5,000
  - Bath, for levelling of two lawns. Again, they will be applying for the maximum amount.

#### Dennis Mowers

I am negotiating with Dennis Mowers to offer four roadshows in 2022. This is a whole CA initiative but hopefully we can take one of these four roadshows.

#### CA Next Generation Project

Early days but we will be asking for three clubs to run pilot programmes from one of the following.

1. Primary school
2. DofE award activity
3. University fresher programme

### **Appendix 4: Visit to Newton Abbot November 2021, Paul Francis**

The club is situated in Forde Park, a very pleasant park close to the centre of the town. The surrounding houses reflect a good degree of wealth

The club has one lawn which is located next to the Forde Park Community Cafe. Until the cafe was opened, the croquet club had sole use of this building. The club now uses the ex-ladies toilet to store lawn machinery, hoops, balls etc. It is very cramped and the club needs more space.

There are 18 members (all GC), the majority play on a regular basis. The subscriptions are £25 for the summer season. At present the club does not play in the winter due to the condition of the lawn.

The lawn is uneven in places with significant moss and weeds. The town's 'Green Space' team does to some work to eradicate the weeds and feed the lawn but more needs to be done.

Clive does a great job in mowing and maintaining the lawns but his efforts alone are not enough to improve the quality of the playing surface. A programme of Spring and Autumn work (scarification, tining, feed, seeding and top dressing) would be the best way forward. Of course, the problem here is the cost unless the Green Space manager (Mark) was persuaded to do the work?

Parking is limited, the local residents tend to take most of the available parking spaces around the park's perimeter.

### **Forde Park Arrangements**

At present the club plays there for free. Whilst this is a major advantage in terms of the financial health of the club, I fear for the club's future if the town council was to change this arrangement.

The other issue is that without a formal lease arrangement, the club would not qualify for grant funding from the CA or Sport England.

Clive is keen to add a second lawn but the area identified would need considerable work and would cost in the region of £10,000 and with no prospect of grant funding, this amount is likely to be difficult to raise.

### **Forde House**

The Green Space Manager has indicated that he would support a move for the club to Forde House. This is a well-known location (a mile or so from Forde Park) in the town where the Town Council is located in an adjacent building whilst Forde House is use for registrations and wedding ceremonies.

The parkland in front of the house certainly has potential. It is level and would accommodate two full size lawns. There is also room for a club house. However, negotiations and permission for this proposal is likely to be protracted and success is not guaranteed.

### **Recommendations**

- In the short to medium term the club should focus on recruitment and development at its current location. Concurrently, a feasibility study for Forde House should be carried out.
- Networking with the Forde Park Community group should be developed as they appear to be a very active organisation.
- The club should have a recruitment plan for 2022 which should include liaison with the above group.
- An Open Day in aid of a local hospice might be a good way forward. Leafleting the many houses around the park might be a good starting point.
- Engaging existing members in the Open Day is essential and asking them to publicise to their family, friends and neighbours is strongly recommended.
- To increase capacity, the club should consider the use of two half lawns.
- To manage members' demands for play, introduce the well tested booking system used by many croquet clubs.
- Decide on whether to hold a "Croquet Matters" session for committee and members.

## **Appendix 5: AGM Feedback, Paul Francis**

### Polling

- Although it's a longer process, I will create separate polls for every proposal. This will allow us to access voting details for each proposal as we proceed through the meeting and so 'double' votes can be identified.

### Who has a vote

- The major issue with regards to affiliate clubs voting has been removed!
- At the beginning of each poll, we must verbally state that 'guests' should not vote.

### Hands raised

- Overall, this worked out ok and will only get better as people come to terms with the Zoom technology

### Hybrid meeting

- A resounding 'no' from me. It's another layer of complications.

### Return to a Face-to-Face meeting

- I think Linda's data on attendees shows that we have the same number of clubs in attendance irrespective of the type of meeting. It's interesting that several of our far flung clubs attend face-to-face but not the Zoom option.
- My view is that we return to face-to-face meetings and extend into the afternoon to create an opportunity for workshops and demos of mallets etc.

### Future meetings

- Later in the month, the early days of the month are crowded with club committee, club quiz nights, Fed Forum, SWF Zoom etc.