

SWF Committee Meeting 10.00 am 19th October 2022: Minutes

Present

Tony Mayer, Stephen Custance-Baker, Paul Francis, Andru Blewett, Brian Wilson, Linda Shaw

Apologies

Peter Kirby

Congratulations

- To Dowlish Wake for winning the GC Federations Shield – particularly as they stood in for Plymouth
- To Stephen for leading his team to success in Div 2 of the GC Inter-Counties
- To Linda Shaw for being awarded a CA Diploma

1. Minutes of last meeting

- a. Agreed as correct

2. Matters arising

- a. Update on uncompleted action points not covered elsewhere in the agenda
 - i. Paul to contact 4 / 3 lawn clubs re hosting regional Charity One Ball final – ongoing
 - ii. Hopeful that Elizabeth College, Guernsey CC will join the SWF in 2023
 - iii. Dave K considering running referee's course

3. Treasurer's Report

- a. The following issues identified by Peter were discussed and agreed as a prelude to the meeting scheduled for 9th November
 - i. Fee Structure for 2023 - I am proposing no changes to the club / league fees for next year, and I expect this will lead to a projected loss for 2023 of c. £500 which is consistent with the agreed strategy of returning excess reserves to clubs over a number of years. The General Fund reserves would then fall from c. £4,900 to £4,400 at the end of 2023. Not including Bears – be careful not to be seen to be propping up losses – Agreed
 - ii. Judith Moore Bursary - I discussed with Paul his outline plans for Coaching and he suggested a contribution from this fund of c. £1,000 per annum for the next 3 years to support Coaching. The plans are still at an early stage and we don't if they will go ahead, but if we are to allocate this amount of money then the committee should approve in principle, and it will form part of the Treasurer's report for the AGM for member clubs to discuss if necessary. To me this feels like the appropriate level of governance.
- b. Noted on-going dialogue with the Bears re their residual funds
- c. One club has asked if the SWF could pay expenses for teams representing the Fed at national level
 - i. This has not arisen before but noted that costs can impact on a club's decision whether or not to represent the Fed in national knockout competitions.
 - ii. Agreed this is complex and potentially very costly, so will be raised at the next Federation Forum to establish what other federations do. **Action: Paul / Tony**

- d. Noted that Peter will be recording the financial presentation for the AGM and will be asking Bob Whiffen to be present to answer any financial questions **Action: Peter**

4. League Secretary

- a. See report below
- b. Confirmed Stephen's decisions on barring 2 clubs entering particular Leagues next year as no extenuating circumstances were identified
 - i. Linda declared an interest in Bristol and abstained from discussion and voting
- c. Discussed feedback from some clubs about play-offs being held at participant's home club when lawns are not in good condition
 - i. Agreed that we should be encouraging play and not putting up further barriers
 - ii. If clubs wish to make alternative arrangements they may do so
- d. Discussed issues concerning next year's Leagues which will be clarified at and after AGM

5. Development Officer

- a. See report below

6. Coaching

- a. Coaching committee meets in November when it is hoped there will be a decision on presenting 'hybrid' courses
- b. Survey of SWF clubs to establish level of interest for coaching / refereeing training courses **Action: Paul**

7. Handicapping

- a. Noted apparent inconsistencies between clubs and witnessed examples of handicapping guidance not being followed
- b. Noted confusion in guidance about the inter-relationship between AC and SC handicaps and that this needs to be resolved
 - i. Reference to AC handicaps only happens when the first SC game is played and when AC handicap is reduced
- c. Noted automatic award of AC handicap 24 to erstwhile GC-only players is very unfair to very low handicap GC players
 - i. Suggestion that e.g. those with GC handicap of <3 shouldn't come in higher than AC 18
- d. Noted no one on the Exec has a direct link to the handicapping committee
- e. **Action:** these issues to be raised at next Feds Forum meeting **Tony/Paul**

8. Safeguarding

- a. Outline update on unsatisfactory responses to our queries on this
 - i. Further response to be drafted **Action: Andru / Linda**
- b. Andru received queries from Mumbles which seems to have revealed a missing Appendix to the policy which he is following up with Ron Carter. Action: Andru

9. Update from Rep to CA Council

- a. See report below

10. SW Constituency Rep vacancy

- a. As no one stood for election as SW Rep to CA Council, the position to replace Dave Kibble is vacant. The CA constitution makes reference to by-elections and John Reddish was asked under what conditions this may be called.

- b. He seems open to the idea but the length of the term of office is unclear given the transition to a CIO
- c. The person who expressed interest previously will be contacted to establish if he is still interested. **Action: Linda**

11.AGM

- a. Agenda and proposals agreed as per AGM papers
- b. Discussed the continuation of the B League – noted significant drop in entries but agreed to review next year – Short Croquet may be a better format for engaging people in AC
- c. Peter Miles to be asked to present their proposal at AGM **Action: Linda**

12.AOB

- a. None

13.Dates of next meetings

- a. Financial briefing session Wed 9th Nov 7.00pm
- b. AGM – 20th November
- c. Follow up meeting – Thurs 24th Nov 7.00pm
- d. 2023 schedule – all scheduled for Thursdays 7.00pm by Zoom
 - i. 19th January – Brian away
 - ii. 23rd March
 - iii. 18th May
 - iv. 20th July – Brian Council
 - v. 21st September
 - vi. Oct tba – Stephen will be away a lot
 - vii. AGM tba
 - viii. Follow up to AGM tba

League Secretary Report

The leagues seem to have returned to normality after Covid with 130 teams from 28 clubs, which is more than any previous year except 2018. There were 343 matches, which is close to the total for 2018 and 2019.

All of the play-offs and finals were completed on schedule, except for one final that was awarded by walkover. One of the finalists was unable to raise a team for that date and their replacement was also unable to do so at short notice.

The main increase in numbers from last year came from the B League and the Short Croquet (Open) League. The B League was not run in 2021 as the entries were so low but 5 teams competed in 2022. Whether it will run in 2023 is dependent on the entries. The new Short Croquet (Open) league had 8 entries and this seems likely to increase.

2022 League Results

Congratulations to all of the winners:

Advanced League Division 1: Nailsea	Short Croquet (Open): Exeter
Advanced League Division 2: Glamorgan	Short Croquet (Restricted): Bath
Advanced League Division 3: Nailsea	GC Level Play: Winterborne Valley
Federation : Winterborne Valley	GC Handicap: Swanage
Intermediate : Kington Langley	GC High Handicap: Cheltenham

There was a problem with the Short Croquet (Restricted) final. Cheltenham were unable to field a team as it coincided with their internal competition finals. The team that was second in their block was Nailsea, but they were also unable to make up a team at short notice. The trophy was therefore awarded to Bath by a walkover. This issue is addressed below.

One of the semi-finals needed a replacement team. Cornwall were unable to make up a team for the Intermediate (South West block) and were replaced by Sidmouth.

All of the trophies and award plaques were presented at the finals and have been left with the winners to be engraved.

A total of 325 block matches were scheduled, plus 18 play-offs and finals, giving a grand total of 343. Of these, 321 were actually played, 19 were conceded, 3 were awarded by walk-over and 1 was cancelled. As a result of the conceded matches, 2 teams have been barred from entering the league in 2023.

The winners of the Federation League, Winterborne Valley CC, will be invited to represent the SWF in the national Secretary's Shield.

The winners of the GC Handicap League, Swanage CC, will be invited to represent the SWF in the national GC Federation Shield.

Leagues in 2023

There are several issues to be decided for 2023, but I propose to keep the block sizes to the same as 2022, i.e. 4, 5 or 6 games per team. Some of the issues to be discussed are the subjects of proposals; others are simply matters or complaints that have been raised for discussion.

Specific proposals to be considered:

1. New GC Level Play league for 5+ Handicappers

2. GC matches at single-lawn clubs
3. New structure for GC Level Play league – two alternatives
4. Timed games in GC – re-wording of the relevant rule.
5. Change to AC Federation handicap limits – proposal from Bath CC

It is not proposed to change the GC Handicap leagues to Advantage GC in 2023. We will review the situation next year.

Complaints in 2022

1. Complaints about finals dates coinciding with major tournaments and with clubs' internal competition finals.
The season is very crowded in September, both locally and nationally. The only way to avoid clashes with club finals would be to have the SWF finals in early September or in October. Having them earlier would not avoid clashes with tournaments. Having them later would cause issues with weather and lawn maintenance schedules.
Note that these dates and venues are published in January.
2. Complaint about play-offs on poor home lawns.
Demands for clubs to be able to refuse to play away at clubs with poor lawns. They would need to arrange and fund a neutral (and mutually acceptable) venue. I have said that I will not be involved with any such arrangements because of the potential disruption of the whole finals schedule.
If two clubs agree to organise, pay for and play at a neutral venue then they may do so, subject to the time limits for the play-offs.
3. Complaint about having 2 teams from same club in same block.
I do my best to split teams between blocks, but it is not always possible. I cannot guarantee that a particular club's teams will be in different blocks because I can't promise the same to all clubs.
The allocations depend on the entries I receive and their geographical distribution.
4. Complaints about uncivil behaviour at matches.
There have been several complaints this year – and several different clubs involved. The complaints that I have become aware of relate to individuals, rather than clubs, but illustrate an unfortunate attitude, often based on ignorance of the AC Laws, the GC Rules or the SWF League rules.
Team captains should be familiar with the SWF League rules and players whose knowledge of the laws and rules of the game is sketchy or out-of-date should not act as referees.

I am very grateful to all of the clubs who made their facilities available for the league finals. This involves several members at each host club giving up their time to prepare the lawns and set them out. Many also provided a referee and a report on these matches.

Development Report

FDO changes

As you will be aware, I have recruited Brian and Klim to assist me in the role of FDO. We will be meeting soon to discuss our plans for 2023 and beyond.

Zoom meetings

For discussion, the topics you wish me to schedule this 'off season'.

GC faults – 10 min reg slot

Expenses playing for Fed away

Reg slots e.g. coaching SCB – recognizing potential faults

D Grade

New clubs

I will shortly be asking Tisbury and Bradford on Avon (BOA) on their first year progress.

Ask them to write for Cygnet

Guernsey – probably join next year

Prospective clubs

I have had meetings with people looking to set up new clubs in Ross on Wye and Marlborough. Gill Hindshaw from Moreton has given advice to Ross on Wye but they are at a very early stage. Marlborough is unlikely to proceed unless Marlborough College become involved.

Paignton – waiting on Council

Next Generation

Several of our clubs are indicating an interest.

BOA already working with the local secondary school on Year 11 P.E curriculum for April 2023 launch.

Bridgwater College also expressed an interest.

Bath Recreation Trust is introducing a croquet programme for 2023. Hope that Bath and Camerton become involved.

Meetings planned with Nailsea and Worcester Norton.

Marlborough College meeting to be scheduled.

Report from SW Constituency Rep

Becoming a Charity

What has happened so far?

At an SGM the vote that the CA becomes a Charity was substantially in favour of becoming a CIO and being renamed 'Croquet England'

CA Council having completed the necessary forms and paperwork have made the application to the Charity Commission to become a CIO

We are awaiting the outcome and expect that the CA will become a CIO in 2022/23

What is happening now?

Council have been working hard to review and revise all the current CA administrative documents to match the requirements of becoming a CIO and changing our name to 'Croquet England' (CqA)

Sport England (SE)

The CA wish to develop a close link with SE – that will include accessing funding to secure the future of our sport

We are reviewing our policies, schemes and procedures to reflect the approach of SE - making revisions as necessary

We are looking to make a formal approach to SE in the near future

Policies and scrutiny

Council is liaising with the Executive Board to collate all Policies etc into one 'library' to aid the sourcing of all documents

Council is also working with the Executive Board to identify those policies and schemes whose outcomes can be defined so that an effective monitoring and evaluation process can be operated

SW Rep to CA Council

The position to replace Dave Kibble is vacant and I strongly advise that all CA Members across the SW, including the SW Fed, encourage people to consider becoming a CA Council Member as there will be many important decisions to be made as well as a lot to 'get your teeth into'.

Feel free to talk to myself, or Dave or Peter