

## **SWF Committee Meeting Agenda**

### **4<sup>th</sup> December 2023 7.00pm**

#### **Present**

Tony Mayer, Peter Kirby, Stephen Custance-Baker, Paul Francis, Brian Wilson, Mike Rice

#### **Apologies**

Andru

### **1) AGM**

- a) Draft minutes agreed and to be put on the website as such **Action: Linda**
- b) League Rules agreed as amended in line with AGM and to be put on the website Action: Stephen**
- c) Constitution agreed as amended correctly and to go on website **Action: Linda**
- d) The only policy that needs amending to change reference to CA us Development Grants – amended version to go on website **Action: Linda**
- e) Stats
  - i) 21 clubs attended
  - ii) 21 in 2017
  - iii) 22 in 2021
  - iv) 25 in 2022
  - v) 11 apologies
  - vi) 7 no responses
- f) What went well / lessons learned
  - i) See appendix 1 for feedback which was discussed
  - ii) Agreed important to keep focus on relevant matters e.g. not the technicalities of CqE membership
  - iii) Agreed to present reports more succinctly
- g) Although most of the delegates to the 2023 AGM were content to continue Zoom meetings, Member clubs should be asked to state their preference for a Zoom or face-to-face 2024 AGM in a question in Cygnet. **Action: Linda**

### **2) Treasurer**

- a) Report (see Appendix 2) previously circulated
  - i) Establishing an Early Bird Discount has been worthwhile
  - ii) Fewer cheques being set – paying from personal account
  - iii) Non-payers and late invoice to be followed up as described **Action: Peter**

### **3) Leagues**

- a) Report (see Appendix 3) previously circulated
- b) Maps of clubs in the area and of the divisional areas for each league were also circulated
  - i) Noted difficulties in arranging Advanced Div 2 sensibly – options were discussed and Stephen will work out a resolution **Action: Stephen**
- c) The following have agreed to take on the role of League Secretary as follows:
  - i) David Warhurst: Advanced
  - ii) Dom Aarvold: GC Level Play
  - iii) Gill Wheeler: AC Handicap and SC
  - iv) This is very much appreciated and agreed they be given editing access to the SWF website for League Results

- d) Stephen will be supporting them throughout the year and has also offered to take on the main co-ordination role for the Nov – Dec only tasks for 2025 leagues as well
  - i) This is because it involves less work if one person does it
  - ii) This offer is really appreciated
- e) Parkstone Trophy has been located by Cheltenham but one plate listing winners is missing. The search is on but if all else fails a replacement will be purchased
  - i) Nailsea appear to have been responsible at the time and have offered to make good the loss. Agreed SWF could help with this. Action: Stephen to continue monitoring
- f) Finals scheduled for the last 2 weekends in Sept – bit later than usual because of leap year
- g) Further discussion re definition of 'new' entrant to a League. The issue has been sorted for this year and discretion will remain with the Committee.
- h) Submission of results – discussion as to the scope of our support to clubs who might be struggling with electronic returns. Agreed
  - i) Next week's Zoom is to describe what the correctly completed form looks like and to identify clubs that might have problems with the technology so they might be pointed in the right direction for IT support – it is not our role to provide this
  - ii) Invitation to be sent to Match Secretaries as well as club secretaries: **Action: Stephen, Paul, Linda**
- i) Lawn fees / catering – noted some confusion for some clubs about this when hosting finals
  - i) Lawn fees are those set by CA
  - ii) Catering costs are not included and it is up to the clubs involved to make arrangements about provision of these and any costs involved
  - iii) Reply will be sent to Bristol **Action: Linda**

#### 4) Development

- a) Confidential report circulated and noted
- b) We currently have no Development Officer and therefore no representative on CqE Development Committee
  - i) Mike expressed an interest in this and will establish contact **Action: Mike**
- c) Requests for development support should be sent to Brian

#### 5) Coaching

- a) Report previously circulated – See Appendix 4
- b) Referees' course now full but still some spaces on the refresher – to be re-advertised  
**Action: Paul / Linda**
- c) Negotiating with Dave K re AC Refs' course for early next year **Action: Paul**
- d) Plans for a coaches' course in the spring are in hand. **Action: Paul**
- e) A couple of people are working on Zero GC – apparently a simplified version of Advantage GC – await any developments

#### 6) Handicapping

- a) Report previously circulated – see Appendix 5
  - i) Noted a disappointing response from the handicapping committee
- b) Noted that Tournament Managers are under a lot of pressure and it is often not easy to check handicaps
  - i) Asking for them is a positive step and it should be possible to check a sample
- c) Noted that people with unexpectedly high handicaps often play doubles predominantly
- d) Stressed the role of club handicappers in ensuring handicaps are properly updated and recalled series of SWF workshops on the topic a few years ago
- e) Agreed Mike have a slot at next week's Zoom to stress this **Action: Mike / Paul**
- f) The Coaching Committee to be approached to see if there is a vacancy as Mike could be interested in this **Action: Mike**

**7) Safeguarding**

- a) Noted that new guidance on Welfare role has been circulated but no detail is currently known

**8) CA / CqE**

- a) Nothing to report

**9) Dates of next meetings**

- a) Schedule agreed as below. Unless otherwise stated, meetings are Monday evenings 7.00pm by Zoom
- b) 15<sup>th</sup> Jan apols Mike, Brian
- c) 18<sup>th</sup> March – apols Peter
- d) 13<sup>th</sup> May
- e) 8<sup>th</sup> July
- f) 9<sup>th</sup> September
- g) 14<sup>th</sup> October
- h) 24<sup>th</sup> November – Sunday AGM
- i) 5<sup>th</sup> Dec – provisional

## Appendix 1

### AGM feedback

My first AGM and I would come back, well done to the Committee.  
My only comment would be to speed up the first bit if possible. We all had the reports which were nice and concise so no need to talk through really, just comment on them perhaps.  
Just a final well done and thanks for all the work the team do.

Thank you to the committee for their considerable efforts across the year. I felt the meeting was extremely informative and showed that the SWF is a dynamic group.  
The only suggestion I have is that having received the various reports from committee members in advance it should be presumed they have been read by delegates and the verbal reports, during the meeting, could then be significantly curtailed.

We both thought the AGM went very well. A few minor technical glitches but I am sure Paul F will avoid them next time.

Please send my thanks to everyone involved in organising the AGM held earlier today. It was as enjoyable as an AGM can be - not in the least dull - and was extremely well planned and delivered.

What better to fill time on a wet November Sunday morning?

I thought it went well this morning. My only comment is that the meeting took 3 hours. In view of the fact that you sent out all the committee reports well in advance we had the opportunity to read them before the meeting. There is therefore no need for the reports to be read out at the meeting so long as the author's are on hand to answer any questions. This will save a considerable amount of time.

It worked! Wow - so unusual for a Zoom meeting of this sort. It must have taken a lot of planning for all the tech to work - well done. Because of that I have no criticism of the meeting - except the general dislike of peering at a screen for so long. We were going out to lunch after the meeting and I felt quite unwell for about 30 mins because of the screen time - luckily it passed and I had a lovely meal looking out at the Teign river! Personally I hate Zoom, and would much rather have in person meetings, but I do appreciate that I am in a minority, and it certainly saves a lot of miles of driving (good for planet!)

One thought - is it necessary to read a report when the writer is not present (eg Stephen S-B reading John Grimshaw's report) when we have all had a chance to read it ourselves?

I thought it was well run, with the very small hiccup over voting. That was easily and quickly solved.

Personally, I don't think it needs improvement. I also like the idea of a zoom AGM. I think it helps attendance greatly.

Thanks to you and the other members of the Committee for all the hard work you put into running the SWF. We at Lym Valley really appreciate all that you do to make our overall croquet experience better.

I like Zoom meetings, particularly as they allow for better control by the Chair whilst making it easy to indicate that one wishes to contribute. I did feel that it went on a little too long but some

of that was grappling with the technology, with which Paul is becoming more familiar. I felt we all had a decent enough time to make our case in the proposals and these were fairly discussed. I did feel, however, that the arguments on changing the bisque allocation structure could have been better presented and argued.

In future AGM's, in particular if they are on Zoom, I would suggest the Officers' Reports are presented in a shorter time. Whilst they are important as a record we all have them in front of us and should have read them, so I would urge the Officers to go through them much more quickly and we can get on to the meat of the AGM which is the Proposals.

I thought today's meeting was extremely good. It started promptly and then the way the chairman ran it was excellent. He was well prepared and controlled the delegates properly and kept them to the point. The voting system is now, I think first class, with the results known within seconds.

I also like the approach of sending out the various reports and propositions before hand, obviating the need for the reports to be read at the meeting.

The amount of work you have done and all the other members of the committee have done made the meeting a pleasure to be part of it.

A good, well-orchestrated meeting!! Whilst it is enjoyable to have the old face to face AGM's, Zoom is an excellent alternative, as otherwise delegates may have long journeys, and the meeting would take up a whole day for most, rather than just a morning. Most people have now since covid got to grips with the mechanics of Zoom, so apart from one or two, the meeting ran fairly smoothly for me.

There was plenty of opportunity for anyone to speak on the proposals, so I was very happy with the meeting. Well done to all the committee for their work on our behalf during 2023.

Overall it went ok

The Voting has improved, and I'm sure the final glitches will be sorted.

Thankful for the timeout, we needed that!

If it could be shortened it would be helpful; the only way that can reasonably be achieved, in my opinion, is by asking delegates to read the reports and then taking them as read and asking for questions.

The only other issue is the audience! So frustrating that some seem incapable of listening to instructions! There are still a few that cannot mute themselves and some just don't seem to listen.

I felt the meeting was really well organized

Easy to join in (as a basic tecky!!)

I printed off the agenda and it was easy to follow and all the reports were clear.

Only comment, as St Agnes only plays GA I would have liked to have signed out before AC was discussed. Probably could have done but as our club representative I felt I should stay

The AGM was an AGM, my memory is already fading but the over-riding one is that it was very long. Sorry I had to leave before voting was finished but I had to be somewhere else.

The balance is tricky. I manage two AGMs and in both we issue reports beforehand and assume they have been read and a simple vote is taken at the meeting. The trouble with doing that for an organisation as widespread as the SWF is that it reinforces the dislocation. People at the two meetings know each other generally. I go to tournaments and so have met some of the

committee but I am sure there are committee members from some clubs who have never met anyone from the SWF committee. I have no answer to the problem.

My immediate reaction was that this meeting (and those of previous years) was too long. By comparison I attended the AGM of the Southern Federation last Thursday. It completed in 90 minutes including the presentation of 13 trophies and discussion on a couple of league rule issues. Admittedly SCF is smaller than SWF; it has just 24 clubs but there were a little over 30 people at the meeting, similar to the number of attendees on the SWF Zoom call.

So why did SWF take so long? 90 minutes just for the presentation of reports, and another 70 minutes after a 10 minute break (welcome) for the consideration of resolutions. I think there are a couple of reasons:

- SWF is very good at sending out the Officers' reports beforehand. So why is it necessary to repeat so much of them in the meeting itself, some were even read verbatim. Timings could be much shortened by just hitting the points that might be controversial or indicate a change of direction.
- When it comes to considering resolutions, the electronic voting process is time consuming waiting for the votes to be tallied. It may be difficult to speed this up on Zoom, which tends to push me towards thinking an in-person meeting is preferable (voting then is quicker). One other thought occurs to me: having some people with single votes and others with double votes adds complexity - why is it necessary for each club to have two votes (in SCF it is just one) or is that designed to give a club more weight than one of the Officers?

It was a very good and useful experience to participate in your (our) Federation AGM this morning, and I am very sorry that I failed to achieve your very simple directive to have it all organised by your dead-line of two days ago!

We may not have participated much in proceedings today, but we were soaking it all in, and hope to have more to say by next November!

## Appendix 2



# South West Federation of Croquet Clubs



## Treasurers Report 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2023

### Member Club Returns

The League and SC Tournament entries have been reconciled to the associated fees paid and has matched for all clubs. One club in error has paid the entry fees above but not the associated membership fee, and this is being pursued.

Comparing the membership lists for 2023, one new club has joined and five clubs that were members in 2023 have not joined as yet, a reminder will be sent at the end of December. An analysis of the impact of league / SC Tournament entries income actual vs budget for 2024 will be completed for the next committee meeting, but initial indications are that the income is almost exactly in line with the budget.

I note that the club membership forms / payments contained errors in returns from c. 40% of clubs, and consideration will be given to what if any changes to the process that can reduce this error rate for 2025.

### Judith Moore Bursary

Subsequent to the production of year-end accounts, I have been made aware of invoices / payments totalling £439 that have been paid after 31/10/23 but related to activities in the previous financial year. This should have appeared in the previous financial year's accounts as expenditure and on the Balance Sheet as a Creditor.

The account for 2023 showed a deficit of £250 which is now corrected as £689, which is still well below the agreed budget for development of up to £1,000 for that year.

Therefore I propose that the £439 is clearly allocated to 2023, and that the budget for 2024 remains at the previously agreed amount of up to £1,000 deficit.

## Appendix 3

### League Secretary's Report

We have a total of 136 teams entered by 30 clubs, the highest total since 2018.

The main changes are +3 for Federation -3 for B League and +5 for GC Level Play 5+. The B League is down to 4 but can be run as a single block.

Abbey has not entered but Bude and Garway have each entered 2 teams and Bristol has entered a record 16 teams.

Division 2 of the Advanced league is a problem as we have never had a block so geographically spread.

- We could leave it as it is and ask the teams whether they want to play 3 matches or 6.
- We could split it into 2 blocks of 2 teams with just 2 games in each block, followed by a final.

I have started to involve three other people in the decision-making process, each taking responsibility for different leagues, but three more are needed. The roles in the summer are straightforward but it is harder to allocate tasks in the winter. It would be most efficient if collating the entries and allocating them to blocks was left to a single person, but no-one has volunteered for this role. Although this involves quite a lot of effort, it is limited to a fairly brief period, i.e. from the AGM to mid-December.

The SC Tournament entries are 28 (unchanged) for the Spring and 25 (down 2) for the Autumn. I have sent the list to John Grimshaw.

The problem case is the AC Advanced Division 2. This has only 4 clubs and normally I would normally put them to play home and away but in this case the clubs are spread very widely (Glamorgan, Cheltenham, East Dorset, Sidmouth) and the travel involved may simply be too much. I have asked David to think about this issue and I hope to have a suggestion before our meeting on Monday.

The other ones to note are:

B League, which has only 4 entries but they are sufficiently close together to form a single block. GC Handicap and GC High Handicap. I have divided these into smaller blocks (5 and 6 respectively) to try to minimise travel distances. This means that we will need quarter-finals as well as semi-finals for these leagues.

I have assumed that the finals weekends will be September 21/22 and 28/29 and I have allocated both GC Handicap and GC High Handicap to the second weekend to allow for maximum time for the extra round.

## Appendix 4

### SWF Coaching

#### Coaching and Referee Courses

- GC Refresher Course
  - Friday Feb 23
  - Space for 8 plus participants.
  - 2 taken as at 1 December
- GC Referees Course
  - Saturday/Sunday Feb 24/25 – now full
  - Space for 8

5 taken as at 1 December



## Appendix 5

### Handicapping Report

There were 2 areas that I contacted Chris Roberts, Chair of CgE Handicapping Committee, on

Firstly, adherence to the following at CA Tournaments, especially 1b

#### The Tournament Handicapper

- a. **APPOINTMENT.** If possible, a [CA Handicapper](#) shall be appointed as Tournament Handicapper. Where a CA Handicapper is not available, a [Club Handicapper](#) should be appointed as Tournament Handicapper. Where neither a CA Handicapper nor a Club Handicapper is available, the Tournament Manager or another suitable person shall be appointed by the Organising Body.
- b. **POWERS AND DUTIES.** The powers and duties of a Tournament Handicapper are as follows.
  1. **CONFIRMING.** To ensure that players' handicaps are checked as soon as possible at the start of a handicap event, and by the end of the first day at the latest.
  2. **ADVISING.** To advise players about the correct operation of the handicapping system.
  3. **ALTERING.** To alter official handicaps before or after an event, when necessary.

His reply was:

We did try this six or seven years ago and it was unpopular with some managers who saw it as an extra chore, and it proved very difficult to get a uniform take-up. Additionally, there were also a number of players who were personally affronted (or pretended to be) about being asked to show their cards.

One even wrote a letter to the Gazette that I remember well from my time as editor. It went along the lines of '*croquet being a game based on honesty*' and to ask for cards to be presented drew comment similar to '*What, don't you believe me?*' and '*my word should be good enough*'.

Quite frankly, I'd be all the more wanting to see any player's card if they ever said that to me as Tournament Handicapper!

I certainly make a point of requiring to see cards before all handicap tournaments (and handicap team matches) where I have authority - putting that in the joining instructions - to the extent that Frances and I operate with 'in' and 'out' boxes for this exact purpose.

Secondly, large differences in an individual players GC and AC handicap. I believe that he was taking it to the handicapping committee, which met around 11th November but I have not heard anything back. Does anyone know if minutes are produced and viewable? - Not yet on website