

## South West Federation

### Minutes of committee meeting 18<sup>th</sup> September 2025

#### 1. Present

- a. Pauline McAllister, Peter Kirby. Tony Mayer, Gill Wheeler, Andru Blewett, Stephen Custance-Baker, Linda Shaw

#### 2. Apologies

- a. Brian Wilson, Paul Francis

#### 3. Minutes of last meeting

- a. Agreed as correct
- b. Any matters arising are covered in the agenda

#### 4. Finances

- a. Pauline was welcomed to the committee – she was co-opted by unanimous email vote 7.8.25 and took over the role of Treasurer on 1.9.25
- b. Peter reports:
  - i. The handover of Treasurer's role to Pauline is now nearly complete, and we are just awaiting final permissions from NatWest to be authorised so Pauline has full bank access.
    - 1. Pauline noted this had been a slow, frustrating process
  - ii. I have completed the attached Treasurer's report (*attached for committee members, available on request to members*) for the period up to September 14th as my previous report was in March, and I was formally Treasurer for the majority of this period. I don't believe there is anything that requires discussion at the committee meeting, but happy to answer any questions.
- c. Corporation tax – Pauline has been briefed by Peter and Neil Kingston (Bristol CC Treasurer) and has been in touch with HMRC - these discussions have informed the draft letter previously circulated
  - i. Agreed this be sent to HMRC **Action: Pauline**

#### 5. Leagues

- a. See Gill's update below
- b. Gill thanked Stephen and all the Results Secretaries for their support over what has been a pretty good season – the scores in many games have been very close
- c. **Action: Gill** to review Stephen's task list for a Leagues sub group and establish if current team are able to continue in their roles

#### 6. AGC Feedback

- a. See summary below
- b. Discussion indicated the continuing confusing picture of players' views
  - i. Noted several objections could be resolved by use of target scores
  - ii. General feeling of the Committee is that AGC should continue next year, but noted there will be strong counter-proposals to this
    - 1. This has implications for how debate will be managed at the AGM
  - iii. Need to consider if we recommend some changes to the Rules or continue as they stand if AGC continues
- c. **Action: All** – ongoing cogitation

## **7. Development**

- a. Discussion re potential new club in Paignton has faded away – no further action unless we are approached again
- b. Noted Llandaff are open to the idea of coaching
- c. **Action: Brian**
- d. No one has yet been nominated for election to this role but Brian has indicated he would like to continue working with his groups in a non-committee role
- e. If no one is elected, we need to review the amount of work we can undertake in this area

## **8. Volunteer of the Year**

- a. Nominations circulated – not everyone has been able to compete scoring
  - i. **Action: Linda** to re-send to those who have not completed this – to be returned by 30<sup>th</sup> September
- b. Noted nominations down on last year and in view of the lack of interest, agreed this initiative be discontinued

## **9. Coaching**

- a. Paul has indicated that if no one else stands for election, he might be prepared to continue with the tasks of this role but possibly not as a committee member
- b. Brian has an interest in developing referee skills in the region and would be happy to do this in a non-committee role
  - i. He has been in touch with Ian Shore and arranged a new Ref's course for 26.2.26 at Bath
- c. Thanks to both for this
- d. Noted that Jason Carley, the new Performance Director for Coaching, has resigned from the post due to ill health – we await developments

## **10. Handicapping**

- a. Noted that Mike Rice resigned from the committee with effect from 21.8.25
- b. This is regrettable but a possible replacement has come forward
  - i. **Action: Linda** to follow up
- c. Noted that discussions with CqE Handicapping committee have stalled due to personal circumstances of the Chair

## **11. Welfare**

- a. No feedback received from Chris

## **12. Feds Forum Update**

- a. Meeting last night with Ian Draper, CqE Director of Sports Dev – agreement that communication processes not working well up down or across but difficult to know how to address this.
- b. Positive approach on both sides and really need to raise with new CEO when appointed – which will hopefully be imminent

## **13. CqE Update**

- a. No regional Trustee stood from SW – wait and see what difference this makes!

## **14. AGM**

- a. A reminder to those committee members who are standing for re-election to return completed nomination forms to Linda by 12<sup>th</sup> Oct

**i. Action: Andru, Chris, Pauline**

- b. Agreed we seek to maintain / develop the idea of teams supporting areas of work e.g. Results Secretaries
  - i. **Action: Gill** to work on task lists for Leagues team
- c. Reminder Call for Nominations and Proposals to be sent to members, particularly referencing key posts that need filling
  - i. Action: Linda
- d. Noted Paul's suggestion he might continue as Coaching Officer, possibly not as a committee post and that Brian is interested in developing referee numbers, skills and presence at League matches. Again – not as a committee post. Thanks to them both.
- e. Noted possible candidate for the Handicap role
- f. Three proposals from clubs have been received and were briefly discussed
  - i. **Action Linda**: Feedback to be given
- g. Gill outlined proposals she is working on which will be further developed and discussed asap
  - i. **Action: Gill and committee**
- h. Information about possible constitutional changes were included in the agenda but not discussed

**i. Action: Linda and committee to review**

**15.AOB**

- a. There was none

**16.Schedule of meetings**

- a. Oct 16<sup>th</sup> - must be between 14<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> – AGM preparation – apols: Andru
- b. AGM 23<sup>rd</sup> November – apols: Paul, Gill
- c. December 11<sup>th</sup> – after deadline for league entries

## Leagues Report

### **SWF League Secretary report 17 September 2025 for meeting 18 September 2025**

#### **League Summary**

- All the leagues have finished the block stage and the Finals are arranged for the remainder of September.
- The results in several blocks were very close or resulted in a tie for first place.
- The 'Finals' fixture page of the SWF website has been updated
- A big thank you to the Results committee (David Warhurst, Nigel Wolco, Wendy White and me) for keeping the SWF website up to date, and to Tony Mayer for arranging the finals.

#### **High Handicap Association and Short Croquet leagues - no comments received to the Cygnet article**

- This year there are only 3 teams in the Association B League (handicaps 16-24, full bisque from a base of 11.5). As these teams were geographically close, this league has gone ahead.
- The Short Croquet Restricted League where 'at least half of the games played by each team must be played by players with Short Croquet handicaps of 6 or above', only had 5 entries widely spaced across the Federation region, so the league was cancelled for this year.
- I am interested as to why there are so few entries in these two leagues. Possible causes that I can think of are:
  - Not enough players in the handicap range
  - Players from previous years have improved and so are now ineligible
  - Players are unwilling to play outside of their club, even for home matches
  - New players don't want or are not shown Association or Short croquet
- What actions are clubs taking to encourage the playing of Short Croquet and Association Croquet for new members and other 'High Handicap' players?

#### **Block allocation for the 2026 season- no comments received to the Cygnet article**

- The block allocation for the 2025 season aimed to minimise the travelling distance for clubs, as had been requested by many clubs in preceding years.
- There are several clubs with 2 teams in the same block. Some teams are happy with this arrangement, but not all. Depending on the number of entries and the geography, it may be possible to move teams to other blocks. If having teams in separate blocks is particularly desired next year, please let me know when you send in your entries. I am not promising to be able to please everyone, but I will try.
- Please let me know what you think of this year's block allocations eg distance travelled, number of matches, more than 1 team in the same / different block, etc.

#### **Proposals for 2026 season**

- Encourage teams to rearrange matches in the first half of the season - see [proposal](#)
- Rationalise the Bisque Base between B-League and Intermediate - for discussion at the Committee meeting
  - The basis is different such that a player with handicap 16 gets many more bisques in the Intermediate league than the B league, even allowing for the different formats. I think there should be a common base. This would mean that there was a 'pathway' for new and high handicap players.

- Short croquet - 75 minutes, half lawn, full bisques (handicaps linked initially to AC handicap) - AC Handicap 16 = 6 in Short Croquet
- B-League, Handicap within a range of 16 to 24, All games shall be either: 26-point games played on half-size courts (handicap 16 has 3 bisques); or 14-point games played on full- or near to full-size courts (handicap 16 has 2 1/2 bisques). Bisques are adjusted for number of points and court size - see Appendix 3.
- Intermediate, Handicap within a range of 9 to 18. In addition, a team may field one player whose handicap is 20 or 22. Handicap 16 gets 10 bisques
- I would appreciate the committee's recommendation as to what the common Base should be - 6 or 8 1/2 have been suggested. I realise that the B league is not well supported, but without encouraging more AC players, we are likely to see a reduction in Intermediate league teams. There is a big jump between short croquet and the Intermediate league.
- Joint teams - for discussion at the Committee meeting
  - 2 clubs may enter a joint team in the league with the following conditions:
  - There must always be equal numbers of players from both clubs (what happens if the opposing team has 3 players???)
  - Rationale: This will permit clubs to enter leagues that they currently do not have sufficient players of the relevant handicap.

### **Actions**

- Actions from previous meetings
  - High handicap Association and Short croquet leagues entries - possible causes and thoughts for improvement - proposal for Cygnet in mid-season: Completed - no comments received
  - Request in Cygnet for Club comments on Block allocation - distances travelled, options for clubs entering more than 1 team in a League etc: Completed - no comments received
  - Propose a mechanism for Joint Teams for the AGM - for discussion on 18 September

## AGC Survey

Please see attached document prepared by extracting salient points from the total of 36 responses I have received. Many of these are from team captains or those with other club roles that have consulted with team players and other club members.

Quite a bewildering array of views as one may have expected, however I have tried to exclude comments and opinions that do not add to our effort to understand the wider view of how this first season of using AGC in our leagues has gone.

In the document I have shaded the rows to indicated seperate respondents, and also applied highlighting to comments that overlap or express much the same view. I have then counted each of these up and in the Synopsis given the number of similar comments and a precis of the comment/view expressed.

I would ask that you scan through the whole document, particularly to read the un-highlighted bits which still add something in their own way.

The standouts for me are:

1. The support for **moving away from negative starting scores** - which by default would be to move to target scores. I have emailed Roy Tillcock to ask the outcome of the Southern Fed trial on this.
2. The feeling that the **starting score/Target score tables should be reviewed**. Particularly in relation to matches with a wider handicap range. ( but still within the main table, not even into the grey zone)
3. That the SWF consider the possibility of moving to smaller handicap **range level play leagues**. There is potential for such a change, if it comprised a smaller team size to resolve the timed or un-timed games issue, particularly for 2 lawn clubs. I have attached to info sheet I produced on other Fed league formats to aid this consideration.

My view is that we should keep AGC for 2026 and move to Target Scores whether on not CE approve them (although I strongly suspect they will-eventually). Continue to promote un-timed games as the default, maintaining the allowance for timed games on a case by case basis. Share any improvements that come to light such as the Starting score display boards developed by Moreton CC see attached pic.

Further, we should carry out some significant research into the possibilities of smaller handicap range level play leagues, to enable us to determine whether such a move could work for our clubs.

GC Handicap league format across the Federations.

Fed	No games/match	Singles	Doubles	Timed/untimed	No players in team	GC format
Southern	16	16	-	U	4	AGC
SouthEast	9	6	3	U	4	AGC
EAnglia	18	16	2	T	4	AGC
E Midlands	12	9	3	T (60)	3	AGC
W Midlands						
Yorkshire	12	9	3	T (45)	4	ES
N West	18	16	2 (optional)	U	4	AGC
Northern	18	12	6	T (45)	4	L

Northern has 3 divisions segregated by handicap range, [Div 3 sum of team handicap total >27, none <6 or >12.] I assume Divs 2 & 1 have no h'cap limits. Games in the matches are set according to ranking, I.e. lowest h'cap plays lowest h'cap of other team, and so on.

W Midlands has no info on its website re h'cap GC leagues that I could find.

I also have not found the format for any of the CE team h'cap competitions.

The most significant difference that would impact our leagues is if we were to change team size.

Should we need to amend the league rules I think this could be done under item 11 of the constitution, see below, and then ratified at the next AGM. My reasons for this view is that this AGM directed the change to AGC in the full knowledge that this would impact on the league rules, and therefore has inferred acceptance of any such necessary change.

### **11. Matters Not Provided For**

Any matters not provided for by this Constitution shall be decided by The Committee, whose decision shall remain in force until set aside by an adverse vote at a General Meeting.

*For info: Linda*

*I don't think anyone can stop you if your federation wishes to do so. I certainly expect to run my own SCF Leagues this way and hope we get WCF agreement to make it official. If not I guess we can just say the trial is continuing.*

*I will keep people up to date as trial results become clear.*

*Roy*