

Minutes of SWF Committee Meeting 11.12.25

AGM: reflections and actions

Present

Pauline McAllister, Gill Wheeler, Andru Blewett, Chris Ham, David Green, Stephen Custance-Baker, Linda Shaw

1. AGM draft minutes

- a. Agreed as correct
- b. **Action:** to be circulated and posted on website **Linda**

2. AGM feedback

- a. Noted volume of proposals and how this might be managed if it occurs again
- b. Hopefully the new method of formatting changes will make this less likely
- c. If not, stronger ways of managing and rationalising proposals may need to be considered
- d. **Action:** Review June / July 2026 **Agenda**

3. Vacancies

- a. Noted Secretary, Development Officer and Coaching Officer posts remain vacant
 1. **Action:** Continue search for these via Cygnet and word of mouth **All**
- b. Development Officer
 1. Agreed queries should be passed to Andru / Brian in the first instance
 2. Noted Taunton Deane might be in need of advice later next view as their lease expires and its renewal is under threat
 3. Paul continuing with winter Zooms and Margaret Murray will take notes
- c. Coaching
 1. Paul continuing with Coach qualification and returning to CqE Coaching Committee
 2. Brian continuing with GC Refs' qualification and refresher
 3. Noted absence of AC Refs training
 - a. **Action:** Establish level of demand then respond accordingly via **Cygnet**

4. Finance

- a. Pauline's report noted – see Appendix 1
- b. Renewals – waiting for responses from two clubs
 1. Noted significant number of treasurers' details had changed but we had not been notified
- c. Noted there are benefits to joining SWF even if clubs not entering any leagues
 1. **Action:** To ensure relevant clubs are aware of this **Pauline**
- d. Corporation Tax
 1. No response within HMRC timescales despite two emails
 2. **Action:** Phone call **Pauline**
- e. Independent Examiner
 1. No offers internally but Pauline knows someone outside the sport who would be an excellent candidate
 2. **Action:** To sound her out **Pauline**

5. Financial Policies Review

- a. Thanks to Pauline for reviewing these – amendments previously circulated and agreed
- b. See Appendix 2 for updated versions
- c. **Action:** Members to be advised and new policies to website **Linda**

6. Leagues

- a. Gill reported 16 more team entries than last year with a strong entry for the new GC 10+ level play league
 1. Noted that the appetite for GC handicap play is also strong
- b. Not enough entries to run SC Restricted again this year – probably remove it next year

- c. Just enough entries to run B league
- d. Noted nominations from the South West Federation of Croquet Clubs (SWF) for national competitions run by Croquet England (CqE).
 - 1. The AC Inter-Club for Federation Teams (Secretary's Shield) – Garway
 - 2. The GC Federations Shield (Advantage GC) – Swanage
 - 3. The Short Croquet Inter-Club Competition - Bradford on Avon A
- e. Support team
 - 1. Results Secretaries
 - a. David Warhurst – Advanced League
 - b. Seek out notes of previous Zoom focussing on this
 - c. Gill Wheeler – AC and SC Leagues
 - d. Vacant – GC Level Play Leagues
 - i. Not difficult and could be shared – help would be available
 - ii. Important to fill this otherwise all the tasks will not be completed viz: reporting results to CqE
 - iii. **Action:** Ask participating clubs **Gill**
 - iv. **Action:** Possible help from Bude **Chris**
 - 2. Finals Co-ordinator – Sue Speller
- f. Noted the AGM had not considered the use of Starting Scores v Target Scores in AGC
 - 1. **Action:** Views of clubs to be sought and discussed at January Zoom **Andru / Gill / Linda**
- g. Thanks to Gill, supported by Stephen, in bringing all this together

7. Development

- a. Lawns quality – David outlined the background to his interest in this and how difficult / frustrating it can be to play under poor conditions, linking this to the powers of referees to stop play.
 - 1. Noted the work we undertook on this a few years ago (including analysis of home advantage), the value of taking a supportive rather than punitive approach to this and discussed measures that might be taken to support clubs to improve this
 - 2. Noted numerous complexities e.g. costs, lease agreements, level of control, support of club members, agreement within lawns care teams, range of issues e.g. irrigation, levelling
 - 3. Agreed it would be helpful to understand how clubs saw this with a view to running the January Zoom
 - a. **Action** Devise questionnaire for clubs **David / Linda**
 - b. **Action** Find notes of previous Zoom **Linda**
- b. Zooms – Paul has kindly offered to run these from January
 - 1. Main topic for January will be lawn care but GC Starting scores / Target scores will also be discussed
 - 2. **Action** **Paul / Linda**

8. Coaching

- a. Despite absence of Coaching Officer Paul will arrange Club Coach training for 2026
 - 1. Noted he is also a member of CqE Coaching Committee and plans to argue for making regular refresher sessions a requirement in order to retain Referee status Brian is organising GC Refs training
 - 2. Noted absence of AC Refs training in the region
 - 3. **Action** Establish potential demand and take appropriate action **Linda**
- b. Enrolments for Brian's GC Refs course are going well
 - 1. **Action** Publicity for the refresher session to be sent out January **Brian / Linda**

9. Handicapping

- a. David has been reviewing all the guidance and information available – there's masses but this is inconsistently known or followed
- b. He is developing a handicappers' manual and plans to run a series of workshops across the region next year to test this out

- c. It was noted it would be helpful to involve CqE Handicapping Committee in this as there is scope for improving the national structure

d. Action David

10. Welfare

- a. Chris is struggling to get the info he needs to compile the data base and has not received any guidance nationally that might help
- b. **Action** Article in Cygnet – deadline 10th Jan **Chris**

11. Website

- a. Dave Kibble has offered to review this and suggest improvements – this was gratefully accepted
- b. **Action** Discussion and briefing **Linda**

12. Feds Forum

- a. Still a positive vibe and met with Andy Dalby-Welsh – not expecting miracles just yet
- b. Andy is conducting a series of strategy consultation meetings and hopes to have further discussion with the Feds as part of this

13. Working Parties

- a. Draft remit and structure agreed
- b. **Action** Contact potential members **Linda**
- c. Summary (full details will be circulated separately)

Working party	Chair	Members	Deadline
Constitution	Linda	DHW, Jonathan Powe, Keith Southern, Andru, Ed Dolphin	Simple revamp: end Feb 26 Proposals: end July 26
Refreshments	Pauline	Dave Kibble	End Feb 26
All League Rules & AC	Gill	Dave Kibble To DHW for standardising	End Feb 26
Handicapping	David	Martin French Budleigh	End Feb 26
GC Rules review	Gill	Andru, Tony Mayer, Dave Kibble, Martin French	End July 26

14. AOB

- a. Items of expenditure agreed
- b. Noted CqE undertaking trans-gender survey
- c. Welcomed Ian Draper's plans to hold a meeting for clubs interested in working with under-18s in the SW next year
 - 1. Bath a possible venue
 - 2. Would be helpful for **Chris** to attend

15. Schedule of meetings

- a. Proposed – all Thursdays 7.00pm by Zoom – note **changes** to original schedule
 - 1. Jan 22nd
 - 2. **March 19th**
 - 3. **May 14th**
 - 4. July 23
 - 5. **Sept 17th** agree our proposals and those of working parties
 - 6. Oct 15 – look at any other proposals submitted and agree AGM arrangements
 - 7. Dec 10 – review and planning for 2027
- b. AGM 22.11.26

Appendix 1

Treasurer's Report to Committee 11/12/25

Income for November and December total £1834. This comprises £1444 league entry fees and £390 membership. Current account stands at £3166- and 95-day deposit account £6941.

I have checked all available Nat West business savings accounts and at 3.70% the 95 day notice deposit account is the best we can get.

Expenses are £159 for the web site and £144 for Zoom.

I see that the financial policies are overdue for review.

I have the following comments:

SWF Expenses statement – all expense claim submitted to the Treasurer should have been signed off by a Committee member with justification. All claims and receipts are kept electronically with no paper records. Next review 2027

SWF Support for New Clubs policy – I have nothing to add to this. Next review 2027

SWF Qualification Travel Grant – New version - see below suggested format

SWF Qualifications Bursary – covered by Travel Grant?

Appendix 2

Amended financial policies

SWF Qualifications Fund

Originally the Judith Moore Fund, this was donated to support the development of competitive play in the South West.

The take-up was low and the donor agreed it be used to increase the number of qualified coaches, referees etc in the region.

It now funds the running of such qualification courses in the region and participants can claim travel expenses in line with the SWF Qualifications Travel Grant.

Policy reviewed: December 2025

Next review: May 2028

Expenses Statement

Expenses may be claimed in approved circumstances by those undertaking activities on behalf of the SWF.

When assessing a claim, the following principles are followed:

1. Members on SWF duties shouldn't be out of pocket financially.
2. Expenditure should be authorised by committee prior to the expenditure taking place.
3. The activities should be organised in such a way as to represent an efficient use of SWF Funds

Travel expenses may be claimed automatically for Committee members attending Committee meetings including AGMs and SGMs.

To gain prior approval you should contact the SWF Treasurer treasurer@swfcroquet.org.uk well in advance of the event, outlining the reason for the claim and anticipated costs. Mileage may be claimed at 40p per mile.

Once expenses have been approved and justified by an independent member of the committee and the event has taken place, expenses may be claimed and submitted to the Treasurer. Payment will normally be paid by BACS.

Claims will be accepted by email only and should contain the following information:

- Name of claimant
- Bank account details
- Itemised invoice with supporting evidence e.g. scanned receipts

All claims and receipts are kept electronically with no paper records.

Policy reviewed: December 2025

Next review: May 2028

SWF Support for New Clubs Policy and Guidance: Development Grant

Primary purpose

The SWF will, subject to sufficient funds being available, set aside an amount to encourage and support the establishment of new clubs or clubs which have been in existence for under 24 months.

Within this, priority will be given to new clubs more than 20 miles away from the nearest established croquet club.

If there are sufficient funds, consideration will be given to applications from more established clubs undertaking developmental work.

Amount to be made available

After an initial amount of money allocated for this purpose, further additions of up to £500 per annum to keep the total available to the region of £2000. These figures will be reviewed annually.

Applications would normally be for between £100 - £500 but the committee is authorised to consider all applications on their merits.

If requests exceed the monies available, priority will normally be given to those clubs who have already done the most to help themselves.

What constitutes a new or potential club?

A group of people who have formed, or want to start a croquet club.

Advice.

The Federation Development Officer (FDO) will suggest they

- form a committee of at least a Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer
- open a bank account in the new club's name
- should have identified a suitable piece of land

The FDO should visit and be satisfied that

- the plans for the new club are workable
- the emergent club can demonstrate that there is a need for a new club which will not adversely affect any existing club/s in the area
- there is a sufficiently large population to sustain potential membership

Possible areas for help

The club or FDO may identify a need and could be for such things as enabling expenses - such as professional fees (e.g. Planning Permission), help with start-up costs (e.g. advertising, fliers)

Applications

Initial contact should be to the FDO who will give advice and assist with the written application which will then be forwarded by the FDO to the South West Federation Committee.

Before submitting the application, the club must be a member of Croquet England and of the SWF. Advice on achieving this is available from the SWF.

By contacting the FDO, the club will also have been made aware of other bodies from whom grants should be sought e.g.

- by joining Croquet England, a start-up set of equipment can be requested
- further support available from Croquet England e.g. coaching, handicapping

Further information

- Those wanting to start a new club should be put in touch with other clubs nearby.
- If they are part of a multi-sport club, there should be some security of tenure.
- Clubs are expected to accept responsibility for raising most of the funds themselves.
- However, a grant from the local federation and from Croquet England will often trigger other grants from, e.g. Sport England.

Payment of grants

When the committee has agreed the award of a grant, the club will be informed in writing of

- the amount offered
- the time this offer remains valid
- that it will be paid on production of the invoice for the work or items purchased.

Policy reviewed: December 2025

Next review: May 2028

SWF Qualifications Travel Grant

What is the grant for?

This grant is to encourage people to become qualified as Coaches or Referees by defraying travel costs. It may also be used to support Club Handicappers and Tournament Managers to develop their skills.

Courses run by the SWF

- Participants will be automatically informed for their eligibility to claim the grant
- Participants should apply at the end of the course / when they have achieved the qualification
- Applicants will be re-imbursed at the rate of 40p per mile.
- Applicants will be expected to car-share where reasonable to do so.

Courses run by other bodies

- Applicants must make a claim before attending such a course in order that the SWF can verify the course meets our criteria and inform the applicant of the likely level of grant that will be paid.
- SWF member Clubs must apply on behalf of a member of their club, an amount equivalent to the average internal grant will be paid
- Applications for courses run by other bodies should be sent to the SWF Treasurer on the form below. The applicant will be informed of the decision promptly – usually within 7 days payment will normally be made on successful attainment of the qualification – this may not be the same as the date of the course.
- Where there is no qualification e.g. handicapping, payment will be made on receipt of a statement from the club that the course / event has been attended and that the member is using their skills within the club

Policy reviewed: December 2025

Next review: May 2028

SWF Qualifications Travel Grant: Application Form

Please read the conditions of the Grant before completing this form

Course attended	
Club name	
Club email	
Delegate/s name	
Delegate/s email	
Payment will be made by direct payment online to the participant's bank account – the Treasurer will contact them direct for the necessary details.	
Total mileage incurred: Successful applications will be re-imbursed at the rate of 40p per mile providing every effort has been made to car-share when possible.	
Please send the completed application form to the Treasurer: treasurer@swfcroquet.org.uk	
SWF Treasurer Claim approved Amount paid Date	