

## Minutes of SWF Committee Meeting 22.1.26 by Zoom

### Present

Pauline McAllister, Chris Ham, Stephen Custance-Baker, Andru Blewett, Linda Shaw

### Apologies

David Green, Gill Wheeler

#### 1. Minutes of last meeting

- a. Previously circulated and agreed as correct

#### 2. Matters arising

- a. Any uncompleted actions or matters are covered in this agenda

#### 3. Finance

- a. Update from Pauline
  - i. Joining fees –
    - 1. list of paid-up members circulated –
      - a. Bristol fees unpaid but will be
      - b. Llanderovy will not be re-joining as they only play internally
      - c. No news from Palace Wells though they have been followed up
  - b. Entry fees –
    - i. We have received £1923.35 for fees since the last meeting: Membership - £482.95, League entries - 600.40, Short Croquet Tournaments - £840.00.
  - c. Independent Examiner –
    - i. I have found an Independent Examiner. She is Eileen Roberts and was Treasurer for many years for Weston Bowling Club. She has agreed to examine our accounts having viewed the spreadsheets on-line but we have yet to meet up to firm up.
    - ii. **Agreed Pauline** authorised to confirm the appointment if both parties satisfied
  - d. Corporation Tax –
    - i. Since the last meeting I have had two more conversations with HMRC. The first on December 15th when I was promised an email back - didn't happen. The second spoke to a more senior person who said that it was very unlikely that we would have to file accounts.
    - ii. However, she advised me to write by mail to a different department - the "Charities Savings and International 2". I sent a recorded delivery letter on the 12<sup>th</sup> January 2026.
  - e. Paul has requested we consider opening a Zoom account in his name (£120) – at this stage for the Coaches' Course – though there may be other events later
    - i. Noted that this coaching course can be set up from Linda's account
    - ii. **Agreed** not to fund this at this stage but happy to reconsider if circumstances change **Linda** to inform Paul
  - f. Considered request from Cheltenham re possible sources of funding for coaching visit from Rich Waterman

- i. Agreed this did not fit within our remit and we were not aware of other potential sources
- ii. **Action: Linda** to reply to Cheltenham suggesting they charge for the event and offering a free advert in Cygnet

#### 4. Leagues

- a. Gill has sent this update:

- i. *A lot of clubs have submitted their fixtures and the captains' details (SWF form 3) already, so it is likely that the end of January date for fixtures will be met. Processing the data and uploading the information to the website are my main priorities. A big 'thank you' to Andru and you / Dave K for getting on with the rules updating.*
- ii. *An update on joint teams:*
  1. *2 joint teams - B league KLCC / BoA, Federation Swindon / KLCC*
  2. *The first named club paid the entry fee and was the point of contact for fixtures*
  3. *All fixtures are arranged*
  4. *One home match is at each of the clubs*
  5. *The Captain is likely to be from the first named club*

- b. No news on any more results Secretaries as far as we know

- i. **Action: Chris** is asking around

- c. Leagues Finals

- i. Sue has arranged all venues as below but Cheltenham cannot provide a Referee
  - 1. No suggestions from the committee Action: **Gill / Sue** to pursue
- ii. SWF Reps need to be identified to fill in gaps below
  - 1. **Action: Committee** members to volunteer

League	Date	Venue	Ref	SWF Rep
GC Level play 10+	Sat 12th September	<b>Taunton</b>	Stephen	Stephen
AC Intermediate	Sun 13th September	<b>Nailsea</b>		Linda
GC Handicap	Sat 19th September	<b>Budleigh</b>		
Short croquet Open	Sun 20th September	<b>Kington Langley</b>	Tony Mayer	
AC Federation	Sat 26th September	<b>Cheltenham</b> <b>TBC</b>		
GC High Handicap	Sat 26th September	<b>Camerton and Peasedown</b>		
GC Level play 5+	Sun 27th September	<b>Bath</b>		

#### 5. Working parties

- a. GC – **Andru** is leading and has process in hand

- i. Target scores – Linda’s apologies for not mentioning this at Jan Zoom – will be highlighted at Feb meeting and in Cygnet **Action: Linda**
- ii. **Andru** working on calculation tables
- b. AC – **Linda** will lead for now and will start process in the next few days
- c. Refreshments – **Pauline** leading and meeting arranged for next week
- d. Constitution – **Linda** leading – see below
- e. Handicapping – **David** leading – will discuss later in agenda

## 6. Development

- a. FDO
  - i. We still have not appointed to this post. Brian has offered to be the ‘first responder’ but not the DO – **all** – keep eyes open for potential candidates
  - ii. We have several funding applications coming up:
    - 1. Charlebury (near MinM) – new club
    - 2. St Agnes – work on car park – not being pursued
    - 3. Bristol – irrigation
    - 4. Wellington – club house – quite a small project
    - 5. Bradford on Avon – insulation
  - iii. I asked Funding Committee and they say that any member of the Committee can support the supplication. We might need to work in pairs on this.
  - iv. **Action: Linda** to contact the above clubs to inform them of situation and to contact us if necessary

## 7. Club Zooms

- a. January meeting went well – lots to do to bring the info together – call for help with this went out in Cygnet – any more ideas?
  - i. **Chris** has a contact he will approach
- b. Future topics
  - i. Feb – **David**: handicapping?
  - ii. March – **Stephen**: tactics against peelers in Short Croquet
  - iii. April – **Chris**: adult welfare
  - iv. Extra? Revised league rules

## 8. Coaching

- a. Club Coaches – Paul reported
  - i. Enquiries suggested it was full but only 3 attended briefing session – some had given apologies
  - ii. First Zoom happened last week with four more planned before the practical day on April 23<sup>rd</sup> at Bradford on Avon.
  - iii. Initial interest from 13 but several withdrawals for a range of reasons e.g. on holiday, don’t wish to have any involvement with AC, course is too bureaucratic (corporate).
  - iv. So we are down to nine which is ok as I believe I can then deliver the practical on just one day.
- b. GC Refs Brian reported:

- i. New GC Refs - We have 8 attendees (plus 2 people who are revisiting the 'knowledge section') for the new refs' course hence here is still one place left on the new refs course on 26th Feb
- ii. Current refs updating - We have 5 people for the refs' updating on the 25th - but we would like more
- iii. Plymouth have asked me to provide sessions on GC rules and coaching for their club only - they will cover my expenses - hence no cost to SWF

c. AC Refs

- i. Call for expressions of interest went out in Cygnet – no take-up as yet

d. Croquet playing skills

- i. In the light of Budleigh Academy not providing any coaching at the moment, Paul submitted this rationale for the SWF to step into this role:
  - 1. Driving Forces
    - a. Clear demand for 'improver courses especially GC. Budleigh regularly ran three GC courses per year with 16 x 3 in attendance.
    - b. If we don't offer courses, we are the only major federation with no provision.
    - c. The closest option for SWF players would be the Chiltern Academy in High Wycombe or The Academy at Sussex County.
  - 2. Resistors
    - a. Organisation e.g. finding coaches, venues, booking and payment systems.
    - b. Clubs with suitable facilities and qualified coaches.
    - c. Many Budleigh courses ran as 'loss leaders'. Could we afford to do this?
    - d. Breaking even!!
  - 3. Solutions to the resistors?
    - a. Run county-based courses e.g. Cornwall, Devon, Dorset, Somerset, Wiltshire, BANES, Gloucestershire
    - b. Allocate local coaches to the above to reduce travel expenses.
    - c. Advertise courses to adjoining federations e.g. West Midlands and Southern
    - d. In 2026, run a reduced programme focusing on the most popular courses e.g. GC and AC improvers.
- ii. Committee supports the proposal in general terms and will discuss further with Paul to explore aspects of this e.g.
  - 1. What is the demand for this – perhaps a survey to get an idea what this might be
  - 2. Providing information to enable clubs to arrange it themselves e.g. using website to display info about regional coaches
  - 3. Further discussion of funding
  - 4. Bear in mind we provide support to clubs rather than individuals so how can we set up a scheme that reflects that?
- iii. **Action: Linda**

## 9. Handicapping

- a. David reports:
  - i. Handicap Review ongoing

- ii. Looking for first workshop end of February at Budleigh Salterton
- iii. Looking for second workshop mid-March at Bristol
- iv. GC initial assessment too
- v. The process is set out but is it understood and applied!
- b. Linda will be discussing further with David e.g.
  - i. Ratio of handicappers to players
  - ii. Any way we can make use of the national handicappers in our region?
    - 1. <https://www.croquet.org.uk/?p=members/directory&Action=LabelHolders&DbEntityID=79,80>
  - iii. How to manage rapid improvers
  - iv. Would awarding Most Improved Players awards regionally help at all?

## 10. Safeguarding and Welfare

- a. Agreed Chris's role title be amended to Federation Safeguarding and Welfare Officer to reflect the duality of the role **Action: Chris / Linda**
- b. Discussion re issues that may arise, to some extent as a result of an aging croquet population
  - i. Slower movement – implications for time limited competitive play
  - ii. Forgetfulness – how to manage this in a competitive situation as well as on a day-to-day basis
  - iii. Managing handicap changes – these can evoke emotional responses
  - iv. Bullying in more general ways
  - v. Noted that beginners too might feel under pressure in these ways
- c. **Agreed Chris** present this for further discussion at the April 14<sup>th</sup> Clubs' Zoom

## 11. Policies

- a. Last year Linda started work on looking at our policies – what we need to create as our own and what we just follow as CQE policies. This needs to be resumed – probably in April / May when Working Parties have completed the urgent parts of their work. **Action: Linda** – including Complaints and GDPR

## 12. Constitution

- a. Working party – Linda leading and DHW has produced draft which **Linda** will be circulating for comment

## 13. Website

- a. Unlikely anyone will be able to do anything soon so agreed continue with ad hoc changes as now
- b. Noted it would be lovely to use this in a more creative and interactive way but until a suitable volunteer emerges, this stays on the wish-list
- c. However it was agreed that we would explore setting up a Facebook page as a step towards this **Action: Linda / others?**

## 14. Feds' Forum

- a. Apologies – this was omitted from the agenda so this is a post-meeting update

- b. Andy Dalby-Welsh and Alison Maughan facilitated our January meeting so we participated in the Strategic Review they are undertaking
  - i. It was a constructive meeting and highlighted what are the usual themes for us – communications systems within CqE and its constituent parts, the actual issues clubs need support with
- c. If anyone wants to see the write-up, please ask Linda

## **15.AOB**

- a. Ongoing: search for new committee members

## **16.Schedule of meetings**

- a. All Thursdays 7.00pm by Zoom
  - i. March 19<sup>th</sup>
  - ii. May 14<sup>th</sup>
  - iii. July 23 – Stephen apologies
  - iv. Sept 17<sup>th</sup> agree our proposals and those of working parties
  - v. Oct 15 – look at any other proposals submitted and agree AGM arrangements
  - vi. Dec 10 – review and planning for 2027
- b. AGM 22.11.26