

**Minutes of the South West Federation Zoom Meeting
19.00 hrs Thursday 23 July 2026**

Present

Linda Shaw (LS), Gill Wheeler (GW), Chris Ham (CH), Andru Blewett (AB), David Green (DG) and Chen Woodward (CW)

Apologies

Pauline McAllister, Stephen Custance-Baker

1. Confirmation of the co-option of Secretary

- a. The meeting confirmed the unanimous decision by email, to the co-option of Chen Woodward to the post of Secretary

2. Minutes of the last meeting

- a. The minutes of the last meeting were agreed as an accurate account.

3. Matters Arising

- a. Linda confirmed that the bank details have now been put on the website by Alison as well as updating the information regarding the members of the committee
- b. The feedback document from the clubs will be discussed later in the meeting under Leagues
- c. Discussions re proposal from Croquet Academy (Southwick) are on hold. **Action: LS to ask Paul for update**
- d. Update regarding coaching at local clubs is ongoing **Action: LS**
- e. Methods used by clubs for handicapping to be covered by DG later in the meeting
- f. Safeguarding – see below

4. Finance

- a. There was nothing to report to the meeting from the Treasurer

5. Leagues

- a. Update from Gill
 - i. GW stated that in general the leagues were working well and the results co-ordinators are to be thanked for the sterling work they have done.
 - ii. The advice circulated regarding how to treat matches that were subject to cancellation/postponement following the Government Health Warning relating to Heat was useful.
 - iii. The Federation will have to be flexible to allow matches that have been postponed because of this, to be played and they may not be completed before the official deadline.
 - iv. Concerns that some teams were entering beginners into SC matches and playing slowly, were noted but agreed no direct action necessary
 - 1. Agreed it would be helpful to dedicate one of the winter Zoom sessions to issues of etiquette and conventions **Action: LS / GW**
 - v. The meeting recognised the importance in GC of captains establishing in advance whether to play 16 or 20 games ahead of match day. This good will and cooperation would negate a number of contentious issues but

- highlights the importance of the captain being well versed in the rules and being pro-active in seeking to clarify expectations in advance.
 - vi. Sue Speller has done an amazing job making arrangements for the finals, tracking who is playing who and where, ensuring everyone has a club host, a referee and SW Fed rep.
 - 1. She has also arranged a new cup for the level play.
 - vii. The meeting thanked GW for her efforts in getting a team of results co-ordinators, who are themselves doing a sterling job.
- b. Discussion re playability of lawns under current weather / heat conditions.
- i. Agreed that clubs would not be penalised next year if having entered a team in good faith and unable to complete their matches for a variety of legitimate reasons.
 - ii. Two clubs who might be affected in forthcoming match to be contacted
Action: GW
- c. Rules Review
- i. Changes appear generally to have been successfully implemented
 - ii. Some clubs encountering difficulties raising Fed teams due to changes in handicap restrictions (need to check this with Gill) but noted Intermediate entries very low this year
 - iii. AB was thanked for his previously circulated feedback on GC rules consultation to which around 15 clubs responded.
 - iv. LS has reviewed the situation with AC and all Leagues Rules – noted still some work to do on the rules concerning abandonment etc particularly in relation to extreme weather.
 - 1. Noted John Guy's invaluable support on this
 - v. Agreed summary of current situation be circulated to clubs together with the call for nominations and proposals by the end of July Action: LS, AB, CW

6. GDPR

- a. Noted further work needed on circulating captain's contact details **Action: GW, LS**
- b. No further developments

7. Development

- a. Brian's Report (Appendix 1) discussed and suggested actions agreed
- b. Pythouse details to be removed from SWF contacts as they have not joined **Action: CW**
- c. Noted Stroud recently held a successful open day
- d. Abbey might appreciate support if they do decide to close – to be discussed with BW **Action: LS**
- e. Noted new Club being developed in Monmouthshire – BW has made contact
- f. CqE has stated that newly-registering clubs do not have to meet any membership criteria – only to fill in an application form
 - i. LS is concerned about this e.g. insurance issues and will raise the topic at forthcoming Feds Forum meeting and raise with Roger Baddeley as Trustee rep for SW **Action: LS**

8. Coaching

- a. Noted Paul Francis report Appendix B

- b. One participant on Spring course is not clear about the rest of the process – she will be advised to contact her 'coaching buddy' in the first instance Action: GW
- c. CH raised possibility of Club Coaches course running in the Devon area – to be discussed with PF Action: CH, LS
- d. Discussion on restrictions on who and where Club Coaches may coach and some of the anomalies in these
- e. Noted that CqE undertaking coaching review and it would be helpful to know the scope of this and the consultation process. To be discussed with PF / RB Action: LS

9. Handicapping

- a. DG reported on his well-received visit to Tisbury which will be reviewed in the autumn Action: DG
- b. Noted quality of lawns can have significant impact on assessing handicaps
- c. Some recollection of an earlier initiative to establish a supportive network of handicappers in the region but no recollection of the detail – continue to bear in mind Action: DG
- d. DG noted problems with D Grades v handicaps especially for newer players and will be following this up with Richard Bilton Action: DG

10.Safeguarding and Welfare

- a. CH noted that Safeguarding is governed by legislation and is clear cut. Welfare on the other hand is not, and welfare issues tend to be less tangible and can involve behaviour such as bullying or over bearing behaviour which is more difficult to address and as such, often goes unchallenged.
- b. Clear guidance on this from CqE would be very welcome and an indication as to some suitable consequences for 'offenders'. Action: CH

11.Website

- a. GW's work on this is on hold while we consider the implications of asking students to do any work on it.

12.Fed's Forum

- a. Meeting scheduled for Monday 27th July

13.SW Fed AGM 22 November 2026

- a. Key dates
 - i. By end July – call for nominations and proposals
 - ii. 11 Oct – deadline for receiving these
 - iii. Between 11th & 23rd Oct – committee meeting to finalise papers
 - iv. By Oct 25th – agenda and papers to be sent out
 - v. 22 Nov – AGM
- b. Action: LS, CW to liaise over paperwork etc
- c. LS confirmed that she had 1 more year as Chair, and reminded everyone to ensure that their nomination forms that will be sent out shortly should be ratified by someone other than a member of the committee. Action: All

14.AOB

- a. Noted RB, following his co-option to the post, will be standing for election as CqE Trustee representing the SW. LS has agreed to nominate him.
- b. Date of next meeting
- c. Thursday 17 September 2026 7.00pm by Zoom

Schedule of future 2026 meetings

Thursdays 19.00 hrs by Zoom

- 15 October
- 10 December
- AGM to take place on 22 November

Appendix A

Development: Report from Brian Wilson to SW Fed Committee – 7/7/26

Teffont House (TH)

- BW understands that TH had their opening day in June
- This is a hotel with grounds and, we are told by TH, that they have a croquet lawn and wish to develop it for guests and the local community
- The hotel is just a few miles from Tisbury
- TH have joined CqE but not the SW Fed
- CqE have agreed to fund BW's travel to TH – this was told to TH
- BW talked with TH before their opening day and has sent emails asking about their opening day and when can we meet etc
- To date, there has been no reply
- In the meantime, Tisbury are aware of TH and would be able to provide support for guests' croquet
- However, as there has been no response from TH, BW advises that there is nothing more that can be done at the moment

Pythouse

- Pythouse has joined CqE but, as yet, has not joined the SW Fed
- We understand from Pythouse that CqE have donated a starter kit□ BW, who was passing by, has visited the club – essentially a private club with a series of tennis courts and an area in front of the club house for 2 croquet lawns. These marked out croquet lawns are essentially 'agricultural grass' with the evidence of some drainage piping
- Essentially a lot of work is needed to bring these courts into any standard for competitive play (even between clubs)
- All this has been told to Pythouse, with advice on how to find lawn experts – Pythouse have advised that they will be following this up
- However, although Pythouse (Julian Berry) have had a zoom meeting with Linda and BW, they have not yet joined SW Fed
- Therefore, BW advises that there is nothing more that can be done at the moment until Pythouse join SW Fed

- If they did not join SW Fed but contacted BW or SW Fed, then, if the committee agree, BW would contact CqE to seek travel expenses. Report from Brian Wilson to SW Fed Committee

Stroud

- This is a developing club led by Caroline Denny (CD)
- The club has joined CqE, but as yet has not joined SW Fed
- Currently it only has a few members
- It is sited on a now defunct bowls club and is owned by Stroud Council
- BW has contacted CD (in fact, spoke with her at Nailsea) who outlined the situation
- The main problem at the moment is that the local council officials cannot agree who is in charge of the site
 - BW has advised CD to continue to clarify the situation and to involve the local elected counsellors
 - In the meantime, BW has offered to visit Stroud - once they have found out the necessary information from local officials
 - BW understands that there is some work needed to bring the bowling greens up to a croquet playable standard
 - Any funding would reflect the security of tenure
 - In the meantime, this club only has some old playing equipment, BW will contact CqE about donating a starter set

Abbey

- BW has visited Abbey in 2025 but recently visited as a GC Referee
- Their lawns on the outskirts of Butleigh Cricket Club
- Although the club members have done a lot of work to flatten the ground and cut the grass, the lawns are essentially 'agricultural grass and very 'bumpy'
- BW understands that their playing members are down to 6 (or 7) and they have carried out marketing to attract new members, but to no avail
 - Pamela Branley of Abbey advised BW that their finances were very low□ Just a 'head's up' - Abbey may not be able to continue
 - This is a pity as club members have put in a lot of time into the club and enjoy their croquet.

Appendix B

Coaching: Paul Francis report

1. Identifying active coaches in the SWF

I have contacted all clubs with regards information on their active coaches. The majority have now responded.

As expected, there are still some notable gaps with a good number of clubs with NO active coaches. A full breakdown to follow.

2. Grade 1 Coach Course

With changes in the requirements to become a grade 1 coach in AC or GC or both, I have had few enquiries and plan to promote a one day course in October. Date and venue to be confirmed.

3. Croquet England Coaching Review

This is about to happen and I suspect there will be some significant changes by 2027.