

ROYAL TUNBRIDGE WELLS CROQUET CLUB

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD ON SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 22nd 2008 AT 11.00 a.m. in FRANT

Present: Jon DIAMOND (Chairman), John TIMMIS (Treasurer), Mick BELCHAM (Secretary), Pamela CLARK, Richard CLARK, Duncan COX, Norman CROASDALE, Carolyn GUNSTONE, Frank GUNSTONE, Derek HEATH, John HOBBS, Alex JARDINE, Dan LONG, Ray MEECH, Angela MILNE, John MOORE, Pauline MORRIS, Roger MORRIS, Hazel MOSS-DAVIS, Stan OXENBURY, Miriam READER, Joyce ROCCA, Val ROCCA, Kate SANDER, Michael SANDER, Selwyn WARD, Joan WHITEHEAD.

PRELIMINARY

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies from those unable to attend were noted. It was noted with sadness that a past member, Wendy Horton, had died recently and that her husband Clive, a past Treasurer, was suffering from Alzheimer's Disease.

There were no Matters Arising from the Minutes of the 2007 AGM so they were duly signed by the Chairman.

1. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The Chairman reviewed the past year:

- The season has been wet!
- Our finances are in good shape
- Our membership level remains good at 60
- Our Committee is changing
 1. Mick has relinquished a number of his areas of responsibility during the year
 2. welcome to Dan Long who has picked up Membership
 3. welcome to Alex Jardine (co-opted)
 4. John Hobbs and John Timmis are both retiring from the Committee. Many thanks to both.
- We did well in the U League (3rd) and our first team was 3rd in the SECF Golf Teams single event.
- In other Tournaments Alex Jardine won the Ramsgate September Advanced Weekend (winning 7 out of his 7 games), Jon Diamond played for Kent in the Inter Counties Golf Croquet Championship and Mick Greagsby played in the CA's Golf Second Eights.
- We experimented with an Association Introduction Course this year.
- The lawns are better than ever and will be faster next year if the weather allows us to cut them at an appropriate height
- New fencing was erected by the Council on the basketball court boundary
- There was sufficient vandal damage to the old Bowls Club pavilion that the Council has boarded the windows up making it pretty unpleasant to use as anything but shelter. However we plan to continue to keep the old Bowls lawn in shape so that it can be used when the 3 upper ones are unavailable
- We plan to keep one upper lawn open when possible to allow winter play.
- We put on a successful afternoon of play and coaching at Penshurst Place – they even paid for it! – and we hope to repeat next year
- Our Corporate Challenge evening was a success with 20 teams entered
- We were on TV in a documentary concerning Royal patronage
- Our social programme of pub lunches continues to be well supported as was a very successful and thoroughly enjoyable BBQ hosted by Elaine and Mark Houslop. Many thanks! (A straw-poll showed that the majority of members would enjoy an annual dinner – perhaps next year)

2. TREASURER'S REPORT.

The Treasurer reviewed the Accounts for year ending September 30th 2008 and highlighted a number of points:

- Our Budget for this year predicted a £2,300 deficit. However mainly due to an under-spend on Lawn Maintenance we have instead achieved a small surplus
- Our subscriptions and donations were approximately equal to the previous year's
- On the assumption that donations (i.e. the Voluntary Contribution element of our annual subscriptions) will be at the same level next year, the Treasurer would recommend keeping the annual maintenance subscriptions (i.e. the fixed element) the same for 2009

The acceptance of the Accounts was proposed and seconded and passed unanimously.

3. LAWN MAINTENANCE.

Roger Morris reviewed the situation at the end of the 2008 season:

- The lawns are in their best condition yet
- We hope to keep one of the upper lawns open for play all winter but, as the grass is still comparatively new, we will have to close all 3 and revert to the lower (old Bowls club) lawn if they get too wet.
- Please remember to sweep with the dew brush before play to remove any dew and/or worm casts
- Norman (our lawns manager) is licensed to use commercial sprays on the lawns so we have bought a commercial sprayer machine which is proving to be very effective.
- Our fertilizer costs during the year have fluctuated wildly (with the price of oil) and overall have become very expensive
- Our drainage project early in the year has been successful. However it should now be extended further into the northern edges of lawns 2 and 3 and, to a certain extent, into lawn 1. This will cost in the region of £1,000 and we are applying to granting authorities for help.

4. TOURNAMENTS, COMPETITIONS AND EVENTS

The Secretary is handing over Tournaments and Competitions (hopefully) to Alex Jardine in the coming season and expressed a hope that players in the 9 internal competitions that we run each year will be more punctual in playing their games!!

Alex listed a number of options he was considering for 2009

- Adding a 3rd internal competition for Golf Croquet players – Level play
- Entering the CA's All England Golf Handicap tournament and potentially entering two other CA Golf tournaments – Grass Roots and Centre Stage
- Perhaps offering our lawns for a regional qualifier in these tournaments
- Amending our current block-based internal competitions to be "draw and process", a kind of 2 life knock-out
- Encouraging more members to compete in tournaments run by other clubs
- Entering the Association Mary Rose Tournament
- Encouraging winter play including entering some of Southwick's winter programme and maybe organising a New Years Day (?) competition
- Ensuring that there is a full Friendlies programme

He would also consider how to organise the Golf ladder regarding 1 versus 3 games and their impact upon players' handicap cards

5. HANDICAPPING AND COACHING

Initial discussion revolved around the difficulties faced by members wanting to park when attending the Golf coaching/playing session on Thursday afternoons, and Club Afternoons on Wednesdays and Sundays. The Committee was asked to investigate different options

- Writing to TWBC re parking difficulties
- Providing a map of parking locations and restrictions
- Re-scheduling sessions until after 4 pm when restrictions change

The Chairman noted the amount of coaching available to all croquet players at other clubs, particularly Southwick.. Not only is there now a Croquet Academy based there but they also continue to hold their well-respected Summer School (a 1 week course in Association). There are 2 weekend courses in April for Beginners/Improvers in both Association and Golf.

We need to expand the number of coaches we have and there are courses for “coaching the coaches” and “rules for referees” too.

6. MEMBERSHIP AND NEXT YEAR’S SUBSCRIPTIONS

We currently have 60 members – 41 Full, 6 First Year, 10 Second Club/Student/Discretionary and 3 Honorary.

Regarding Subscriptions, the Secretary reminded the Meeting of the Club’s policy to have a two-tier Annual Subscription mechanism to allow those that feel they are able to make contributions over and above the minimum to do so in the form of Voluntary Contributions. He also reminded the Meeting that the purpose of this was to allow everybody to “define their own croquet experience” i.e. how to contribute to the club in some way. Some helping new members, some coaching, some being on the Committee, some answering calls for Work Parties, some organising club afternoons, some weeding the garden, some housekeeping etc. And of course, some contributing financially to the club’s development.

He also reminded the meeting of the Treasurer’s earlier comments regarding the necessity to keep the level of Voluntary Contributions at a similar (or higher) level than that in 2008 in order to avoid our having to raise our minimum Annual Subscriptions.

The Committee has proposed the following Annual Subscription rates for 2009:

- Full Membership:
 - First Year: £ 75
 - Thereafter: £100
- Student/2nd Club Membership: £ 35

In order to cater for exceptional or unforeseen circumstances, these rates may be varied by the Club’s Officers when deemed appropriate.

The existing schedule of Green Fees for visitors (i.e. £5 for a full day, £3 for a half day) would continue to be applicable for 2009

These proposed Subscription and Green Fee rates for 2009 were agreed unanimously.

The Committee was asked to check whether or not the club’s Constitution allows for the co-opting of additional Committee Members during the course of a year as has been its common practice in the past. (Secretary’s Note: it does).

7. ELECTION OF OFFICERS, COMMITTEE AND TRUSTEES

The Chairman noted that John Timmis was retiring as Treasurer and Trustee, and John Hobbs was retiring from the Committee. All other members of the Committee (including the Chairman and Secretary) were standing for re-election.

There was 1 nomination for Treasurer and Trustee – Selwyn Ward

There was 1 new nomination for membership of the Committee – Alex Jardine

The re-election of existing Committee members (including the 2 existing Officers/Trustees) as well as the elections of Selwyn Ward as Treasurer and Trustee, and of Alex Jardine as a new Committee member were proposed and unanimously approved.

The Committee then for 2009 is as follows:

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| Chairman | Jon Diamond |
| Treasurer | Selwyn Ward |

