



Royal Tunbridge Wells Croquet Club

Minutes of the AGM held on 27th February 2016

Present: Jon Diamond, Richard Mann, Bob Bruce, Kate Sander, Michael Sander, Brian Kitching, Barbara Kitching, Jane Smith, John Hobbs, Mark Houslop, Adrian Gossage, Pam Clark, Richard Clark, John Moore, Duncan Cox, Bob Fordham, Derek Crocombe, John Skates, Michael Lawrence, Sonia Lawrence, Geoff Croxford, Barbara Tasker, Richard Smith, Jo Smith, Jolyon Creasey, Derek Heath, Jeff Chapman, Angela Chapman, Mike Gentry, Barney Lewis.

1. Apologies for Absence: Chris Barham, Mick Belcham, Beverley Brown, John Greenwood, Carolyn Gunstone, Frank Gunstone, Elaine Houslop, Ray Meech, Ben Moore, Frank Parr, Chris Sturdy, Roy Turner, Nigel Walsh, Pauline Morris, Roger Morris.

2. Minutes of Previous Meeting: The Minutes of the previous AGM held on the 28th of February 2015 were approved and there were no matters arising.

3. Chairman's Report. Jon Diamond started by summarising the activities from the previous year, and said that our membership was now 62 - a great improvement over last year's 55. He then went through our results in the 2015 external competitions and summarised it by saying that we have done better in previous years! An exception was the individual performance of Barney Lewis coming 3rd in the Regional Final of the CA All England Association Handicap event! Jon said that we had a good Finals Day again with 8 finals played and only the Spa Salver not completed. The Winter playing programme had been poor with just one One Ball event taking place, whereas the Winter Pub Lunch programme had been very successful and we had a wonderful fireworks evening. Jon thanked Mike Gentry and Kate Sander respectively for their efforts in this regard and also thanked Duncan Cox for his organisation of our Tournaments. Finally Jon reminded the Meeting that the 10th of April will be this year's Opening Day with One Ball in the morning and Golf Croquet in the afternoon.

4. Treasurer's Report: Richard Mann presented the previously circulated Accounts – reviewed by John Timmis - and advised the meeting that the Club's finances were still in a healthy situation albeit with increased expenditure this year compared with last year largely due to our increased lawn maintenance and the repair of the scarifier. The Accounts were then approved unanimously.

5. Lawn & Facilities Maintenance: Jeff Chapman covered numerous items in his report starting with the drainage system which he said was working well and coping with the recent heavy and continuous rain. He mentioned the repair of the scarifier and said that typically it was now more economic to repair our expensive equipment rather than purchase new machines. He advised that the early autumn lawn treatment is showing good results, and that Ray will be doing more early morning

maintenance of the lawns - and anyone planning on an early morning game may therefore wish to pre-book a lawn.

Jeff then went on to tell the meeting that bramble clearing was continuing, that replacement of the heavy lawn dividers was being considered, and that the activity of badgers and rabbits is currently confined to the rough ground near Lawn 3 – but they are being watched! He also thanked Ray for his work on lawn improvements and mentioned that Alex Jardine is now in charge of marking out our lawns. Jeff added that the lawns had been repositioned so that they were now some 18 inches nearer to the Tennis Courts.

With respect to the Club House, Jeff stated that further redecoration would take place this year with the help of volunteers, that the broken blinds were being replaced, and that the equipment store doors were being replaced with oak. Derek Crocombe asked if it was possible to harden the ground around hoops to avoid rabbit runs but was advised by Jeff that they were already using a higher content of sand. John Hobbs also said that this was a universal problem that no-one had yet been able to solve. Kate Sander asked about the installation of splash-backs on the working counter surfaces and Jeff promised to investigate. Mike Gentry asked if we could have improved coffee making facilities and it was agreed that Carolyn and Kate would consider the alternatives.

6. Tournaments, Competitions and Events: Jon Diamond advised the meeting that we will be running our usual events this year. Also that 2 AC and 1 GC external tournaments will be held, and that Finals Day this year will take place on the 4th of September. In respect of the SECF Leagues, Duncan Cox will enter teams in both the A and the U leagues, as well as teams in the GC Restricted and Handicap Leagues. The Tuesday Team League will commence in the third week in April and end during the last week of August. Jon asked if anyone was interested in entering for the GC All England Handicap tournament and if so to please let him know by the middle of April.

The New Golf Handicap system was discussed in considerable detail and Jon advised that the scale has changed because of problems at both ends of the scale with too much congestion of players handicaps. He gave a detailed explanation of the new system and answered several questions from the audience, including one regarding the previous Effective Handicap Level - which no longer applies.

In respect of Events, Bob Bruce spoke about National Croquet Day on 5th June and shared with the meeting the plan for the event, both prior to NCD, and the fun and games on the actual day. The former includes advertising in several publications as well as a half-page advertisement in the Index magazine. Bob stressed that at least 13 volunteers will be needed on the day, and distributed a poster that members could use to advertise the event.

John Moore then advised the meeting of the planned event at Penshurst on the 26th of June, which will be run in a similar fashion to last year. It will require 4-5 volunteers to mentor members of the public to try their hand at croquet, and then take their details so we can follow up and encourage them to join the Club.

7. Coaching: Jon advised that the Introduction to Croquet Course will be taking place from 10 am to 4pm on the 7th and the 14th of May. He will detail the remainder of this year's coaching programme in an email shortly. Daphne Gaitley is not

available for GC coaching this year and an alternative coach was suggested by Duncan Cox. Finally Jon stated that the Club wishes to increase the number of Club coaches, referees and tournament managers and will therefore pay for any related training expenses for Club members.

8. Private Events. Bob Bruce advised that five private events took place last year with a sixth having to be cancelled due to adverse weather. Including Penshurst, 39 volunteer places were kindly filled by 17 members with Derek Crocombe again being our Star Volunteer. The income from these events totalled £1,668 which was slightly more than the previous year. Three firm bookings have already been received for this year, and Bob asked members willing to assist to kindly tick the 'Teaching Visitors' box on the membership Renewal Form. On a separate note, Jon advised that the arrangement that allowed Foreign Language Students the random use of our Lawns has proved disruptive and will be ceased. Instead prior notice and event booking will be required.

9. This Year's Subscription: The Committee recommended that all Subscriptions should remain unchanged and this was agreed without dissent.

10. Election of Officers, Committee and Trustees: The existing Committee members were re-elected as follows:-

Chairman - Jon Diamond

Secretary - Bob Bruce

Treasurer - Richard Mann

Committee Members - Jeff Chapman, Mick Greagsby, Carolyn Gunstone,
John Moore and Kate Sander

The Trustees re-elected were Jon Diamond and Richard Mann.

11. Any Other Business: Jane Smith asked if one or two evening Pub Lunches could be arranged for those who find Lunchtime events difficult. Mike Gentry agreed to investigate.

12. Presentation of Trophies: Brian Kitching kindly presented the following trophies for the 2015 season:-

! **Association**

- Lustau Cup: Chris Barham
- Lewis Shield: Barney Lewis
- Calverley Cup: Mark Houslop
- Howell Cup: John Moore
- Miriam Reader Memorial Doubles: Mick Greagsby & Mark Houslop

! **Golf**

- Hunter Plate: Jon Diamond
- Kitching Rose Bowl: Geoff Croxford
- High Bisquers: Bob Bruce
- Handicap Doubles: Duncan Cox & Mark Houslop
- GC Ladder: Duncan Cox
- Fraser Tankard (Teams): Cox's Pippins

The Meeting Closed at 12.35.

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