

ROYAL TUNBRIDGE WELLS CROQUET CLUB

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD ON SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 17TH 2007 AT 11.00 a.m. in FRANT

Present: Jon DIAMOND (Chairman), John TIMMIS (Treasurer), Mick BELCHAM (Secretary), Chris BARHAM, Ann BOYLE, Margaret BUCKLAND, Paul BUCKLAND, Pamela CLARK, Richard CLARK, Duncan COX, Jolyon CREASEY, Derek CROCOMBE, Tony DE GUINGAND, Michael GENTRY, John GREENWOOD, Derek HEATH, John HOBBS, Anita HUNTER, Dan LONG, Richard MANN, Ray MEECH, Roger MORRIS, Hazel MOSS-DAVIS, Stan OXENBURY, Miriam READER, Joyce ROCCA, Val ROCCA, Peter SINCLAIR, Gerald WHITE.

PRELIMINARY

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies from those unable to attend were noted. There were no Matters Arising from the Minutes of the 2006 AGM so they were duly signed by the Chairman.

1. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The Chairman (being unable to attend last year's AGM) thanked last year's Chairman (Richard Clark) for his efforts and successes. He then summarised this year's highlights.

We were awarded the CA's Apps Heley Award for our "contribution to the world of Croquet". In addition three of our members (John Hobbs, Richard Clark and Roger Morris) were awarded the CA's individual Diplomas.

He noted that this year the Club had been successful with our membership growing to a record of 62. This growth has meant that the 2 Club Afternoons have frequently become over-subscribed and resulted in our scheduling 2 additional open sessions.

Two sad events this year – the illness of Ursula Powell and the death of Jean Heath, a long time member and past Committee member.

For a number of reasons we were only able to fix one Friendly fixture but we hope to return to normal next year.

We hosted 5 Open Tournaments this year including the competitive Kent Cup for advanced Association players

On the marketing front we now have a new club logo and improved club signage

Our Corporate Challenge was again popular with 11 local teams entering compared with 6 in 2006.

We are due to be on TV in a documentary series entitled "By Royal Appointment" to be broadcast on Meridian and London ITV in the New Year.

We supported Ightham Moat and Batemans and have an invitation to Penshurst Place as well next year.

On a social front we had an excellent well-patronised evening BBQ (indoors due to the weather) as well as a number of popular pub lunches.

We have at last got a signed Lease with TWBC. Our thanks go to Helen, Richard and Pamela Clarke's daughter, for her help in getting it right!

TWBC has at last replaced the boundary fencing; not satisfactorily but unlikely to be rectified by them. We hope they will do something to prevent fox incursion.

Our lawns are hugely improved and getting even faster. The increased usage is causing significant wear and tear so we are going to have to work on reducing this. We have a drainage problem on the north boundaries of lawns 2 and 3 which we are investigating and are likely to have to spend money fixing next year.

And finally, it would appear that we will be sharing the Bowls Green pavilion with the Kent Youth Service who are planning also to use the Bowls Green itself for (light) youth activities. Perhaps they could be encouraged to play croquet.

2. TREASURER'S REPORT.

The Treasurer reviewed the Accounts for year ending September 30th 2007 and highlighted a number of points:

- Our Subscriptions and Donations this year were both higher than in the previous year. This coupled with the cost of Lawn Maintenance being lower has had a substantial (healthy) net impact upon our cash reserves
- This is unlikely to be repeated next year as our projection is for a significant increase in Lawn Maintenance costs
- Assuming that member Subscriptions and Donations continue at a similar level to that achieved this year, we project a deficit for next year of £2,300
- Given our higher-than-normal cash reserves, such a deficit is acceptable in the short term though this will be kept under review for following years

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

3. LAWNS, EQUIPMENT AND FACILITIES.

Roger Morris reviewed the situation at the end of the 2007 season:

- The 3 main lawns are in good condition and are a basis for further improvement next year.
- We have not spent as much on maintaining them this year as had been budgeted, mainly due to the number of voluntary hours of maintenance work put in by our own members.
- We should beware of over-relying on our members' willingness to help-out in this way and we are therefore attempting to recruit a "lawn manager" to work on a part-time basis throughout the year. He would not only carry out the additional maintenance work (i.e. additional to regular scheduled mowing) but also monitor the condition of the lawns/grass and identify the additional work necessary.
- The Budget for Lawn Maintenance in 2008 is considerably more than that spent in 2007, not only because we expect to be paying for the "lawn manager" but also because of our upgrading our overall maintenance programme to ensure high quality lawns.
- The planned drainage improvements to lawns 2 and 3 are likely to cost between £1,500 and £2,000 should they be deemed necessary.

4. TOURNAMENTS, COMPETITIONS AND EVENTS

The Secretary reviewed the past year's programme:

- We had mixed results in the Leagues this year. Our best performance was in the Association B League in which we were 2nd out of 19 teams. In Golf Handicap we also acquitted ourselves well coming 4th out of 18 teams. Our other 2 teams were less than successful!
- We had a number of successes in the five Open Tournaments we hosted this year including one overall win (Miriam Reader in the Open Golf Handicap) and a number of runners-up
- Our 9 internal competitions were well supported though generally completed behind schedule – the Calverley Cup Final was not played until November 10th!
- We have been asked by the Croquet Association to host an important national event in 2008 – the Musk Cup. This is a Golf Croquet Invitational Event for the UK's top players. It is scheduled for the weekend of August 16/17th. A real spectators opportunity.

5. HANDICAPPING AND COACHING

John Hobbs requested that all Golf Handicap cards be handed in to him so that he can adjust handicaps to being more appropriate to playing inter-club games

Club Afternoons are becoming too crowded for effective Golf coaching so he is considering whether or not to organise a coaching day during the week.

He is planning 2 Association coaching courses – Beginners and Improvers. He agreed that any Association coaching course would be extended to include a coached game.

He reminded members that there are a number of coaching courses organised at other clubs by the Croquet Association and the South Eastern Federation

6. MEMBERSHIP AND SUBSCRIPTIONS

We currently have 62 members, 10 more than this time last year

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 of the Treasurer's earlier comments regarding the need for these donations in order to maintain our income stream at an acceptable level.

The Committee proposed the following Annual Subscription rates for 2008:

- 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 2008

These proposed Subscription and Green Fee rates for 2008 were agreed unanimously.

7. PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO THE CLUB'S CONSTITUTION

The Proposed Amendment concerns the initial sentence of paragraph 11.c of the Constitution – "GENERAL MATTERS - Notice and Date of Meeting".

It was agreed by the Meeting that the existing sentence reading:

"Notice convening the Annual General Meeting shall be made in writing to all members not less than 14 days before such meeting takes place."

should be replaced with:

"Notice convening the Annual General Meeting shall be made to all members not less than 14 days before such meeting takes place. Such notice shall be made electronically to each Member who has registered an electronic address with the Secretary or, in the absence of such registration, in writing by post".

It was also agreed that any electronic notice should also request that an electronic receipt be returned.

The Committee was asked to review its use and publication of electronic addresses to ensure that it is not in contravention of any Data Protection requirements.

8. ELECTION OF OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE

The Chairman noted that Selwyn Ward and Ann Boyle were both retiring from the Committee this year and that this would leave 3 vacancies on the Committee. All other members of the Committee (including the 3 Officers) are standing for re-election.

There was 1 new nomination for membership of the Committee – Mick Greagsby

The re-election of the 3 existing Officers and the other 3 existing Committee members as well as the election of Mick Greagsby as a new Committee member were proposed and unanimously approved.

The Committee then for 2007 is as follows:

Chairman	Jon Diamond
Treasurer	John Timmis
Secretary	Mick Belcham
Committee	Mick Greagsby, John Hobbs, Elaine Houslop, and Roger Morris

The re-election of the Club's 3 existing Trustees – the Club's 3 Officers – was also proposed and unanimously approved

9. PLANNING FOR NEXT YEAR / ANY OTHER BUSINESS

In addition to the 2 Club Afternoons (Wednesday and Sunday) two further "open" sessions will be planned – Wednesday mornings for Association and Thursday evenings for Golf (Singles play). Also some form of coaching for those who work will be considered for Saturday mornings

In 2008, Interclub Friendly games will return to being a major feature in the Club programme.

The issue of communication was raised in the light of the increased usage of Email and the Club's Website to inform members of events etc. It was suggested that those without access to either medium are not being kept up to date or involved. It was agreed that, while there was no easy and/or comprehensive solution to the problem, the author of any "all points" Email (or of any significant update to the Club's Website) would, where possible, post a copy of this on the Club's noticeboard and make personal contact with anyone without electronic access to whom the matter might be important.

There was little interest in the Club purchasing logo items such as woven badges, scarves, ties etc

The Committee was asked to consider a change to the format of competitive Golf competitions to encourage more participation e.g. replacing the full 3-game format either with a standard best-of-three or with a single game of 13 points. The objective would be to shorten such matches.

10. PRESENTATION OF PRIZES

The Chairman then presented the following trophies and closed the Meeting

John Greenwood	Golf Croquet Rose Bowl
Elaine Houslop	Golf Croquet High Bisquers
Jolyon Creasey	Spa Salver
Mick Belcham	Calverley Cup
Richard Mann	Lustau Sherry Cup
John Greenwood	Lewis Shield (All England Handicap)
Chris Sturdy and Miriam Reader	The Doubles Goblets
Chris Berwick	The Howell Trophy
Miriam Reader	The Association Ladder