

Minutes Of the AGM of Tunbridge Wells Croquet Club

Held at Frant Village Hall on 23rd February 2013, 11am-1pm

Before the meeting started a short remembrance was held for Peter Howell who died in November 2012. John Hobbs, explained in a few words, how TWCC was founded by Peter Howell and his wife Audrey at Frant in 1980s. After the hurricane of 1987 a new site had to be found and the club moved to Hawkenbury. During that time negotiations started with Tunbridge Wells Council for the grounds we have now. Peter and Audrey remained Chairman and Secretary for many years and a number of the benefits the club now offers its members are because of these formative years.

Present:

Jolyon Creasey, Bob Bruce, Roy Turner, Richard and Pam Clark, Mick Belcham, John Hobbs, Michael and Kate Sander, Barbara and David Tasker, Frank and Carolyn Gunstone, Mike Gentry, John Moore, Duncan Cox, Derek Crocombe, Frank Parr, Derek Heath, Sonia and Michael Lawrence, Roger and Pauline Morris, Sandra Smith, Richard Mann, Jon Diamond, Shirley Jones, Barbara Payne

1. Apologies For Absence:

Chris Barham, Jeff and Angela Chapman, Geoff Croxford, Lister Fielding, Barney Lewis, Ray Meech, John Skates, Chris Sturdy, John Timmis, Richard and Jo Smith.

2. Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the last AGM held in February 2013 had been circulated and were discussed. Motion to pass proposed by F. Gunstone and seconded by M. Sander and agreed unanimously

3. Chairman's Report

Overall 2012 was a fairly reasonable year. Our membership last year was stable, with us sadly losing a few members who are unable to continue, but we have acquired some new ones to replace these. However, we're struggling to recruit a younger generation of players.

We managed to do fairly well in external Tournaments, with our Golf Croquet teams doing rather better than last year in the SE Croquet Federation (SECF) matches. One of them even gaining a >50% outcome. Our team at the Southern Challenge did superbly, coming 4th and beating Ramsgate twice! Our Association teams did not so well, with our A League struggling against superior opposition and not winning any matches.

We haven't got too many individual successes to report again, but Jon Diamond did manage to win a hard fought tournament at Compton and Aaron Westerby, a sometime member of the club although resident in New Zealand, won the Bowl at the World Championship.

The Charity one ball event was successful at the club and the overall winner from TWCC Derek Crocombe had an enjoyable day at Winchester, competing in the Final.

Winter Social Events have been successful with up to 20 members enjoying Pub Lunches. The One Ball events were better attended and enjoyed lunch (thank you Kate). Attempts at the One Ball event in February eventually died due to the appalling weather.

The weather, and illness amongst some of our members, has led to quieter than normal club afternoons. We need to encourage more members and often a starting point is the Club afternoons. Derek Crocombe has been particularly attentive to our new members and they have all expressed their gratitude.

Hopefully with a pleasanter summer and fitter members we can look forward to a more active and successful 2013.

4. Treasurer's Report

Our Account shows us we have a healthy surplus. However we have to accept that this has happened because we were unable to do our expensive lawn maintenance this year due to the weather. Currently we are about breaking even, but next year we have to be aware that we need to spend money on lawns and the possibility of replacing our aged equipment, so although we appear to be managing we should not get complacent.

Money from subscriptions and Donations and the accompanying Gift Aid are absolutely vital to the club. Significant income was made from corporate and evening events and we need to continue this year. So please be prepared to help on these events. They can actually be great fun.

As well as major equipment, a general feeling was expressed on the need to replace balls and clips for day-to-day play at the club. Usually new balls are kept for competition and the old ones filter down for day-to-day use. We will continue this practice. Mike Sander explained he was involved with a sports charity that gave donations for equipment and suggested we should apply. He will provide the information. Richard Clark felt buying new balls should be a regular occurrence. This happens in other clubs.

Despite John Moore reading the water meter regularly we have never had a water bill. This has concerned Richard when he became treasurer. Now he is not going to remind them again!

So we need to encourage new members, keep our surplus to enable us to have healthy lawns and maintain our equipment.

5. Lawn Maintenance

Jeff Chapman's report had been previously circulated and shows that the lawns are reasonably healthy but are slower than equivalent lawns around the SE. The plan to do an expensive £2,500 autumn treatment was deferred by the weather. Plans for the

lawn this year include a spring light tinning, cut and maintenance, but we will need to do major works in the autumn.

For this reason we need to complete **all play and tournaments by the 15 September**. There is then to be major scarification and it will could up to 6 weeks for the lawns to recover.

We plan to do less watering in future (obviously we did none in 2012!) to allow the lawns to get quicker, but they will brown up. Putting the lawn under stress encourages deeper roots and a better-established lawn.

Ray will be undertaking work to remove some undulations where possible, but there is a limited window and time he has available, so that we can't expect to remove them all.

The Club house needs painting and then a thorough spring clean over a couple of mornings so volunteers are required, possibly by end of March.

6. Club Sessions

There had been a suggestion during the winter that we should change the Wednesday club afternoon to a Thursday, after discussion this motion was overwhelmingly defeated.

Lawn supervisors for club afternoons would be organised by Duncan Cox amongst regular members to encourage more mixed play, teaching games for new comers, and game play for the new ladder.

The successful Tuesday evening league will continue this year and throughout the season, but with two matches against other teams as opposed to one.

7. Coaching

Much discussion around the type of coaching needed ensued. Definitely newcomers need help and training games during club afternoons, and new members requested a thank you to Derek Crocombe for his help last year.

A suggestion for Golf Croquet players is that they should take some of their games more seriously, and play more serious ladder games during club afternoons. People were encourage to enter these on handicap card as a note for reference, i.e. there should be no change to the Index number as a result of these. The Chairman encouraged people to do regular practice if they wanted to improve. He also encouraged players to take advantage of the courses run by the Croquet Academy at Southwick, only an hour away, in both Association and Golf croquet.

We need to review how other clubs manage their coaching, as we seem to have been unsuccessful in the last few years.

Special coaching was requested regarding GC bisque taking, and we would be requesting Daphne Gaitley to provide another 2 days this year.

Association Croquet has a number of good players in the club, but few new members have signed up to play, so an introductory course was needed..

A discussion on handicapping ensued. John Hobbs is giving up the Golf Club Handicapper role and it is to pass to Jon Diamond. It was asserted that the handicap system in Golf Croquet is not as effective as in Association. A slightly new format for Golf handicap cards was now being used and copies for each member would be obtained from the CA.

8. Tournaments, Competitions and Events

We had 8 sessions of corporate events last year. We will continue with that number and no more to preserve the lawns and the volunteers, however they are fun for everyone and we need new members and you never know! Also they are **Lucrative** for the club.

All our tournaments and events are on the website, plus a diary of events is put up in the clubhouse. The Chairman noted that a Southern Challenge is to be held in July for GC and that there was a CA national GC competition for those with handicap between 5-8. Entry for this had to be in by the end of May.

Association Croquet Lewis Shield is to be held when B. Lewis is available.

We are entering the SECF SC U and A leagues and the GC R league and two teams in the Handicap league. The club would like to enter a B league for Association as well but we need commitment from more high handicap members.

Chairman would like to encourage everyone, new members as well to enter internal competitions, as it is a very good way to learn. He also encouraged as many as possible to play in external tournaments (especially the GC one being in Tunbridge Wells!).

One Ball: There would be one more winter one-ball event in March and we are doing the one-ball national charity event heats again this year on March 24th. It was suggested that we should continue with One Ball during the summer.

9. Constitution Change

A proposal to change the constitution to insert a sub-clause D to clause 3:
"D. Corporate Membership - Companies, Clubs and other similar organisations. Members of a Corporate Member organisation will be entitled to use the club facilities at a reduced rate."
was proposed by Duncan Cox and Seconded by Jolyon Creasey and passed unanimously.

Hopefully, this may be a way to encourage Corporate events and also younger people who work in T.Wells to enjoy croquet after work (and at other times) and join the club.

10. Subscriptions

The Committee proposed the following Annual Subscription rates for 2012:

Full Membership:	
○ First Year:	£ 50
○ Thereafter:	£100
Student/2 nd Club Membership:	£ 35
Social Membership	£ 35
Corporate Membership	Not less than £100

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

The Green Fees to be £4 for a half-day session and £7 for a full day (a maximum of three times).

These were agreed unanimously.

11. Election of Officers, Committee and Trustees

All the Officers had offered themselves for re-election and were unanimously approved. There was till a vacancy for Secretary, which was now a much less onerous task than that which Mick Belcham undertook, and the Chairman asked members to consider putting themselves forward for the role.

All the Committee members offered themselves for re-election and there being no other nominations were declared elected.

The Committee then for 2012 is as follows:

Chairman	Jon Diamond
Treasurer	Richard Mann
Secretary	Unfilled
Committee	Jeff Chapman, Mick Greagsby, Carolyn Gunstone, John Moore and Kate Sander

The Trustees Jon Diamond, Richard Mann and Mick Belcham were re-elected, although Mick Belcham noted that this would be his final year.

12, Any Other Business

- Trophies were presented to:
 - Golf
 - Hunter Plate: Michael Gentry
 - Kitching Rose Bowl: Derek Crocombe
 - High Bisquers: Michael Sander
 - Handicap Doubles: Derek Crocombe and Barbara Tasker
 - Fraser Tankard (Teams): Chairmans Choice
 - Association
 - Spa Salver: Jolyon Creasey
 - Lustau Cup: Richard Mann & Barney Lewis

- Calverley Cup: Jeff Chapman
 - Lewis Trophy: Barney Lewis
 - Miriam Reader Memorial Doubles: Jolyon Creasey and John Moore
 - Howell Cup: Jeff Chapman
- The Chairman made a presentation to Derek Crocombe for his efforts in recruitment and helping other players in 2012.