



# Royal Tunbridge Wells Croquet Club

## Minutes of the AGM held on 18th February 2017

**Present:** Jon Diamond, Richard Mann, Bob Bruce, Geoff Croxford, Nigel Barton, John Skates, Adrian Gossage, John Greenwood, Michael Hughes, Jolyon Creasey, Kate Sander, Michael Sander, Carolyn Gunstone, Frank Gunstone, John Hobbs, John Moore, Michael Lawrence, Sonia Lawrence, Derek Crocombe, Mick Belcham, Barney Lewis, Brian Kitching

**1. Apologies for Absence:** Jeff Chapman, Angela Chapman, Chris Barham, Duncan Cox, Derek Heath, Jane Smith, Jo Smith, Richard Smith, John Timmis, Mark Houslop, Elaine Houslop, Barbara Tasker, Ben Moore, Peter Sheldrake, Alex Jardine.

**2. Minutes of Previous Meeting:** The Minutes of the previous AGM held on the 27<sup>th</sup> of February 2016 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 at 65, and that John Skates had joined the Committee. He then paid tribute to members who were no longer with us including Barbara Kitching, Dan Long, and Hazel Moss-Davis (who had donated the funds for our current club house). Our 2016 internal competitions had all been completed with only one finals match not taking place by Finals Day. However on the external matches front – both AC & GC - we did not do at all well and must try much harder! The best league finish was in the Golf Handicap League and that was only 8<sup>th</sup> out of 17 teams. He thanked John Hobbs (Association) and Duncan Cox (Golf) for kindly arranging our external matches – both having done it for many years. He then listed the organisers for the 2017 season (see Item 6) and asked the members to give them their full support. He confirmed that we will be repeating our Introduction to Croquet course again this year together with other coaching programmes. Finally he thanked Michael Gentry and John Skates for arranging the Pub Lunch programme and for Kate & Michael Sander for their BBQ.

**4. Treasurer's Report:** Richard Mann presented the previously circulated Accounts – reviewed by John Timmis - and stated that although the deficit had increased slightly, we were still in a healthy financial position. The major variance was the £2316 increase covering the increased emoluments for our groundsman, and the additional lawn maintenance provided by external vendors. This variance had been partially offset by the successful application for Gift Aid in respect of Key Deposits. The Accounts were then accepted and approved, proposed by Michael Sander and seconded by Frank Gunstone.

**5. Lawn & Facilities Maintenance:** In his report submitted to the meeting, Jeff Chapman described the work done to enhance the playing surface of our lawns in terms of both flatness and speed, but then detailed the subsequent damage done to them by foxes searching for worms. This has been addressed on two fronts – firstly by great efforts by Jeff and John Skates installing boarding, chicken wire and other barriers to restrict entry to our lawns by the foxes, and secondly by the use of worm deterrent to reduce the attractiveness of lawns to the same animals. In response Mick Belcham stated that electric fences had been successful elsewhere and might be worth considering – Council permitting. In his report Jeff also mentioned the installation of new blinds (which Jon Diamond said must be operated electrically and not manually), the clearing of the bramble growth at the back of the club house and his last attempt (in April or May) to seek volunteers to perform the urgently needed redecoration of the club house. Finally Jon Diamond asked for a volunteer to look after the small garden area adjacent to the club house – please contact him if you can help.

**6. Tournaments, Competitions and Events:** Jon Diamond confirmed that we will be running our usual events this year, including the Kent Cup (Association), Montevideo Cup (Golf), Pegasus Plate (Association) and Honeygrove Cup. The organisers for the Club's participation in external leagues will be as follows:-

All Association matches – Alex Jardine  
Golf Level Play – John Greenwood  
Golf Restricted – Richard Mann  
Golf Handicap – John Skates  
GC Southern Challenge – Jon Diamond  
GC Teams Day – Derek Crocombe  
SECF Ladies – Jane Smith

Derek Crocombe will also organise the Golf Croquet Tuesday evening Team League. Other internal competitions will be organised as previously. The Finals Day this year will be on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of September. Jon Diamond apologised for the fact that unfortunately he will be unable to be present on that day. John Moore similarly apologised for not being able to attend on the day of the Penshurst event taking place on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of July, and asked for a volunteer to replace him. Jon Diamond said that he viewed the Penshurst type of event as coming under the auspice of the general marketing of croquet to the public rather than being an event aimed at attracting members, and he would welcome suggestions of any other places where we could similarly publicise croquet. He then referred to the upcoming National Croquet Day on the 4<sup>th</sup> of June and asked for someone to organise it. Bob Bruce described last year's NCD preparation and results, and told the meeting of the advertisement which will appear in this year's April issue of Index magazine highlighting both the NCD and our Introduction to Croquet Course. The meeting discussion then widened to include ways and means to publicize the Club and thereby attract more members. Jon Diamond referred to the Club's new Facebook page and the view that we ought to make more use of social media. Mention was made of the need to create an audience for successful Facebook interaction, and John Greenwood proposed the regular posting of pictures of our croquet matches

and events on our Facebook page. He added that if members emailed their pictures to him he would ensure that they appeared on our Facebook page.

**7. Coaching:** Carolyn Gunstone advised the meeting that following last year's success she is arranging for Katharine Minchin to provide 2 days of 10 to 4 Golf Croquet coaching on the 5<sup>th</sup> of May and 5<sup>th</sup> of July. With respect to Association Croquet, Jon Diamond spoke about the Introduction to Croquet course being run from 10 to 4 on Saturdays 29<sup>th</sup> April and 6<sup>th</sup> May. Although priority will be given to registrations from the public, existing RTWCC members may also apply to take part. Jon added that follow-up coaching will then be given on successive Saturday mornings. Mick Belcham encouraged the use of 'Garden Rules' by AC beginners as a way to improve their game without experiencing the frustrations of the full AC rules. Jolyon Creasey will conduct an AC Coaching session for Waldron players on the 20<sup>th</sup> May and the meeting was advised that RTWCC 'not so beginners' can also apply to take part subject to numbers. Richard Clarke suggested the use of mentors to help players and Jon promised to discuss this suggestion at the next Committee Meeting. The wide availability of coaching at Southwick was also discussed and Jon advocated the Oxford University Croquet website as a useful place to gain tips on playing better croquet.

**8. Private Events.** Bob Bruce advised that 8 events including NCD were organised last year and 26 members kindly volunteered to provide coaching to visitors at one or more of these events. Many though volunteered for several and once again Derek Crocombe was the Star Volunteer representing the Club at 6 of the 8 events. The 3 events which brought in the most income were Wells Associates, Willsher Family and Crowborough Probus. The total income for 2016 was £1800 which was better than 2015 which itself was better than 2014. We came close to getting an order to go and organise an event for Sevenoaks Town Council but it fell down on price. Finally Bob reminded the meeting that volunteers are again needed this year for our regular events, and asked them to please tick the Volunteer box on their membership form.

**9. This Year's Subscription:** Following some history of the subscription levels by Mick Belcham, the meeting accepted the Committee's recommendations that all Subscriptions should remain unchanged. Proposed by Frank Gunstone and seconded by Derek Crocombe. Earlier Adrian Gossage had asked if our current membership charge was a barrier that put people off from joining the club. Other members disagreed and quoted similar charges at other clubs. Jon Diamond then explained the purpose of the new 'Visitors and Guests' notice that will be prominently displayed in the club house.

**10. Election of Officers, Committee and Trustees:** Jon Diamond advised the meeting that Bob Bruce had resigned as Secretary and that John Greenwood had kindly agreed to serve in his place (proposed by John Diamond, seconded Bob Bruce). He also reconfirmed the election of John Skates to the Committee (proposed Jon Diamond, seconded by Bob Bruce). The election/re-election of Officers, Committee and Trustees for 2017 were then proposed by Kate Sander and seconded by Carolyn Gunstone, and agreed by the meeting as follows:-

Chairman - Jon Diamond  
Secretary - John Greenwood

Treasurer - Richard Mann  
Committee Members - Jeff Chapman, Carolyn Gunstone, John Moore, Kate Sander &  
John Skates  
Trustees - Jon Diamond and Richard Mann

**11. Any Other Business:** Jon Diamond asked all GC players to show him their handicap cards after the meeting. Kate Sander asked about the remuneration of our groundsman and also said that she needs volunteers for the club Spring Cleaning day that she is organising. Finally Geoff Croxford expressed his thanks to all the Officers, Committee and Trustees of the Club “who do a fantastic job”.

**12. Presentation of Trophies:** Bob Bruce presented the following trophies for the 2016 season:-

! **Association**

- Spa Salver: Jon Diamond
- Lustau Cup: Alex Jardine
- Lewis Shield: Richard Mann
- Calverley Cup: Mark Houslop
- Howell Cup: John Moore
- Miriam Reader Memorial Doubles: John Hobbs & Elaine Houslop

! **Golf**

- Hunter Plate: Jon Diamond
- Kitching Rose Bowl: Kate Sander
- High Bisquers: Adrian Gossage
- Handicap Doubles: Jon Diamond & Lister Fielding
- Fraser Tankard (Teams): Derek's Dragons

**The Meeting Closed at 12.30.**