

SOUTHERN CROQUET FEDERATION

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting

of the Southern Croquet Federation

Held at the Winchester Tennis and Squash Club

On

Saturday 23rd November at 11am

Attended by :-

Committee –Chris Roberts-Chairman, Development Officer and GC Handicapping Officer, Jim Pertwee-Secretary, Rita Nunn-Treasurer, Frances Colman-GC League Manager, Martin Brandt-AC League Manager, Richard Jenkins-Tournaments Officer, - Richard Stevens-Hamptworth, Coaching Officer, Brian Fisk-AC Handicapping Officer and Representative at CA, Gillian Pett -Officer w/o Portfolio

Club Members –Raymond and Pauline Wood-Phyllis Court, Norma Rayne-TVCC, Valerie Pertwee-TVCC, Richard Keighley-Wingrave, Roger Parsons-E Dorset, , Yvonne Cunnane-Great Bedwyn, Roger Price-Bransgrove, Alan Truckel –Ryde, Richard Harris –Ryde, Janet Trueman-Hamtworth

Apologies –Steve Woolnough-Reading, Ian Harrison-Basingstoke, Paul Wolff-Blewbury

Welcome –The Chairman welcomed all those present and thanked them for finding the time and making the effort to attend the AGM. He also welcomed Yvonne Cunnane and her new club-Great Bedwyn CC-to the Federation and the meeting. He also thanked Rita Nunn for once again arranging the venue for the meeting.

1. **Minutes of the AGM held on the 22nd November 2012**

These had been sent to every club via their Secretaries

2. There being No Matters arising the Minutes were adopted

Proposed-Norma Rayne Seconded by Roger Price

3. **Chairman's Report** – Chris Roberts

I am pleased to welcome you all here today and trust that you will contribute to this meeting by bringing to the attention of this committee matters that concern you and your clubs. We cannot promise to answer all questions immediately as some will doubtless require consultation and/or research in order to give a full response, but all will be addressed as soon as practicable.

Communication has been good from most members of the committee but noticeably quiet in a couple of cases, however a consensus has always been reached before decisions have been made on policy. Before getting to the office of Chairman, I was an advocate of having more formal meetings because I felt the lack of such gatherings was hampering our decision making. However, I am pleased to say, that

thanks to an increase in e-mail traffic, I am content to have our business conducted via that medium and/or face to face contact during the course of other croquet activity.

This has the advantage that everyone has the opportunity to contribute to a debate unlike at formal meetings where a full attendance is never likely. The biggest advantage of course is that the cost in expenses of getting the committee in one place is saved and our treasurer will highlight this saving in her report later. This approach

will be monitored on an issue by issue basis, and formal meetings will be arranged if necessary.

I thank the SCF committee from the outset of this report for their work on your behalf.

Richard Stevens stands down at this meeting from his role as coaching officer and we thank him not only for his co-ordination but also for his time actually coaching at some of our clubs. I for one have benefited from his input to my game and am pleased to report that he is still keen to share his experience in seasons to come whilst taking a deserved rest from committee work.

In reviewing the past season and looking forward to the next, I firstly welcome the newest club to join our Federation – Great Bedwyn Croquet Bowls Club, from the village of the same name near Marlborough – you are very welcome indeed. Yvonne Cunnane is the driving force behind this new venture which stemmed from the discovery of a redundant bowls lawn in the village and some quick thinking on her part.

Some careful negotiation behind the scenes now sees the fledgeling club now established and members of both our Federation and the CA.

Both organisations have assisted with equipment loans and modest monetary grants to get things moving – surely this is what the SCF and CA are all about.

From an SCF committee perspective, I am pleased to report that most things appear to have run smoothly this season and our desire to support a main objective of the CA to promote competitive play has been achieved. This can be evidenced in the increased numbers entering our league in programmes and there was further increased participation in both of our existing tournaments and the very welcome introduction of two new ones.

The committee members with the briefs for the management of these activities will report later and it is not my intention to steal their thunder by picking out their best bits!

However, I do think that there is still room for improvement and see the area where our offering is poorest, is at the top level of AC where just four Club teams compete, most matches were played late in the season and one was not played at all.

Bearing in mind that teams in this league only have two players in each, it is disappointing that games are not played to a more timely fashion and also that more competitive opportunities for this group are currently not offered under the SCF banner. This is something that I believe our committee should explore further.

There is also that matter of handicaps in both codes and the presentation of correctly completed handicap cards at league matches. Your committee will be discussing this at our meeting which follows this AGM.

Please be aware that for next season our league rules are likely to have tighter stance on this. Communication between clubs and Federation, and vice versa, has been good in some areas and not so in others. The interaction between Federation League Managers and clubs own league representatives has been very good; fixture dates and match results were reported in a

timely fashion by most and our website was always showing an up to date picture of fixtures, results and league standings.

Communications between Club and Federation Secretaries however, was somewhat more sporadic, with nothing heard from some member clubs all year!

I have a concern about this from a wider croquet perspective because like this Federation, the CA rely solely on the office of Club Secretary to be the conduit for telegraphing information to club players. Too often it seems, Club Secretaries filter out important information on their own whim, and this is typically true in regard to competitive playing opportunities.

Some clubs' players never get to hear about tournaments, competitions or coaching opportunities (even including some that are on their own

doorsteps) because their Club Secretary fails to cascade the information simply because he or she isn't personally interested and assumes other club members to be of a like mind.

Even more concerning is the apparent lack of knowledge amongst club official and players about the possible changes that are under discussion concerning membership of the CA that could affect every club and every player in the country.

- How many Clubs have discussed the CA's Federation Working Party Report, which has been available for months on the CA web site (link from the front page) and was highlighted to all SCF Club Secretaries along with notification of the AGM?

- How many of our Clubs will be attending one of the three Club Conferences being hosted by the CA between now and February?

- How many don't even know about them?

I implore you address this information blockage with your Club Secretary and ask that your club take full part in this membership debate. Tomorrow, Frances Colman and I will be representing this Federation and our own club at the first of these Conferences in Weston-super-Mare.

We are going all that way because we will be playing croquet in South Africa at the time of the more geographically convenient third Club Conference at Surbiton on Sunday 16 February.

Please make every effort to have your Club represented at that conference and let the CA know your views.

Brian Fisk is your representative on the CA Council and, so far as I know, there has been little discussion between him and you all on this subject and I hope that a two way communication can be established between your club and him:

master@brianfisk.net

Moving on to our more successful ventures, yet still leaving aside our own SCF competitions and tournaments for other committee members to report on:

SCF clubs have played their parts in the CA's tournaments calendar and I especially congratulate both Ryde and Hamptworth in this regard. Ryde hosted both of the CA's top selection tournaments, the AC Presidents Cup and GC Musks Cup which rank closely behind the British Opens in both codes.

Hamptworth hosted a large number of events including the first National Final of CA's Golf Croquet B-Level Series and, now with five courts, they continue to be a very valuable asset to the UK croquet scene. All these events and others hosted by Ryde, Hamptworth, Blewbury, East

Dorset, Harwell, Phyllis Court and Thames Valley, all give good exposure for our Federation and are commended.

Mention of the GC B-Level series, leads me nicely on to personal achievements by players from SCF member clubs, and to record our congratulations to the inaugural winner of that national title, Ian Norris of Phyllis Court.

The SCF had a wonderful showing in the Peel Memorial AC Tournament (first played in 1898) with Winchester pair Rita Nunn and Roger Barnacle winning the individual Women's and Men's Cups

and Roger Hesketh from East Dorset half of the Doubles winning partnership.

Mention too should be made of Blewbury's Paul Wolfe who represented the CA in their victorious annual match against the CA of Ireland. Congratulations to them all and apologies to anyone else that I have missed out; you all also bring great credit to our Federation.

Please can I ask you to highlight the SCF website to your membership, as this hosts all the croquet activity in our Federation area and is another good organ for getting information out to you. Having a link to the SCF website from your own club site would very useful indeed.

Please ask your club web-master to contact me:

Chris Roberts, info@kickphoto.co.uk, 079 7378 7710.

The committee elected later in this AGM will convene a meeting of their own this afternoon and set out plans for next season. If we can iron out a few procedural creases, I am confident that we can look forward to an enjoyable 2014 season ahead.

4. **Secretary's Report** –Jim Pertwee

This has been a very easy year for the secretary as we had no meetings after the post AGM meeting. However I feel that all topics that have arisen have been dealt with by the Committee (through personal, e-mail and telephone conversation) and everyone has been kept informed and all problems resolved.

Please tell me when important posts within your Clubs change.

I will upgrade the contacts list in March 2014 and will make certain that details go on the SCF web site.

5. **Treasurer's Report** –Rita Nunn

a.Income

Increased in all areas this year.

Subscriptions include East Dorset for first time, who have joined us as well as the South West Federation.

Next year we should also have another new member Great Bedwyn near Marlborough.

The Armada Trophy at Winchester had the best attendance for some time, and likewise with the Solstice, held at Thames Valley, also showed a healthy profit.

The two Clubs' Champions Tournaments are new end of season events, also held at Hamptworth this year.

Equipment sold - Hopewell hoops to Hamptworth

.

b.Expenses

Secretarial/admin costs up due to £20 in courier costs for wire hoops for training purposes at Magdalen College School.

Development grant was a donation to a new club- Great Bedwyn

All other costs considerably reduced in year.

Giving an overall excess of income over expenses of £725.04

Balance Sheet at Annex B

The debtor is the income due from the Champions Tournament, which had not been

received at the end of the financial year.

Bank balance brought forward added to this year excess gives us a healthy £3117.95 in funds at year end.

Outstanding Debt

TVCC are due to pay £150 for some second hand cross hoops that were surplus to requirement in the SCF. Cheque is on its way

Subscriptions

There would appear to be no reason therefore to increase subs from the present level.

6. Association Croquet Manager's Report –Martin Brandt

You might recall that Phyllis Court won the handicap league in 2012, which meant they represented the SCF in the Croquet Association's Secretary's Shield tournament this year. Unfortunately they were knocked out in their first match by Nottingham 5-2. However it is not as bad as it seems, as Nottingham won the event and Phyllis Court lost two of their games only by the 'golden hoop'.

No club got a better score against Nottingham.

Our Chairman was one of the two game winners for Phyllis Court.

This year 4 teams took part in the Advance League. Blewbury were the winners, with Oxford University the runners-up.

I'd like to thank Steve Woolnough for organising it.

12 teams took part in the Handicap League, with one division for the North and one for the South. Oxford University won the Northern Division (Harwell were runners up) and Aldermaston the Southern Division (Littleton were runners up).

Oxford University won the play-off against Aldermaston and are therefore the SCF champions."

7. Association Croquet Trophy Winners

Advanced League – Blewbury

Handicap League – Oxford University

Armada Tournament – Frances Colman & Chris Roberts (Phyllis Court)

Club Champions Tournament – Roger Barnacle (Dogmersfield)

8. Golf Croquet Manager's Report – Frances Colman

I am pleased to report that most clubs played their part in the smooth and timely running of the GC leagues programme this season.

Only one match was left unplayed and I will refer to this later in this report.

As a result of this smooth running, I did not feel it necessary to hold a end of season GC 'wash-up' meeting this year, because I didn't think there were really enough issues to discuss. However, if anyone has and points they would like to bring up, there will be time to air them later.

I am pleased to report that all League Matches were played on time and the results have been on the web site for some time.

One concern that was raised by a number of Clubs was HANDICAPS. Particularly in The Handicap League.

Everyone was sent a copy of the 2013 League Rules at the beginning of the season in which it states

(under eligibility):- *"At each match, all players must produce their current handicap card, properly signed off by their Club Handicapper.*

All singles games must be recorded on the players' handicap cards and count towards the automatic handicap system"

Quite a few players did not adhere to this rule by not having handicap card filled in correctly, not having it signed by a Club Handicapper or indeed not bringing the card with them at all! I am concerned that this is happening and after much thought I will be bringing this to the attention of this Committee at our meeting this afternoon.

I will inform you of what action is to be taken on this matter.

There was a good spread of winners in our GC Leagues this season.

In the Level Play League, Ryde tied on league points with Winchester and won the league by virtue of the victory in the head to head match between them.

In the Handicap Leagues, Phyllis Court 'B' were champions of the North Division and Hamptworth were winners in the South, thus setting up a repeat of last season's final. This time Phyllis Court turned the tables to win the final.

In the Doubles Only League, Ryde again tied on league points, this time with Eynsham.

However in this instance, the 'who beat whom in the head to head match' rule worked against the 'small islanders' and Eynsham duly won the league.

I have a concern about a pattern of instances that has emerged where the league fixtures programme has not been fulfilled and thus the awarding of a match to the non-offending club has distorted the final league placings.

Again I shall be bringing this to the attention of this committee as I believe that the item has unfortunately come where a more severe penalty should be imposed on repeat offenders.

I will report the committee's decision to all GC representatives in due course.

I see that we have representation from a number of our GC Leagues winners and would ask our Chairman Chris Roberts to do the honours and present the trophies.

9. Golf Trophy Cup Winners

Level Play League – Ryde

Handicap League – Phyllis Court 'B'

Doubles Only League - Eynsham

Solstice Tournament – Roy Tillcock & Jim O'Keeffe (Ryde)

Club Champions Tournament – Richard Jenkins (Hamptworth)

10. Development Officer's Report –Chris Roberts

There has been a good deal of activity on the development front in the past year.

I have attended the two annual meetings of the CA's Development Committee in London and sat in judgement of numerous grant applications from clubs up and down the country.

One such recipients of a CA grant was SCF member Wingrave, who got £950 towards the cost of a new lawn mower and our new members Great Bedwyn have equipment loans from both the SCF and CA, who also each made grants of £75 for initial advertising of the new venture.

High Wycombe can now show off their new two court facility to the north of the town at Hazlemere and this too was partly achieved with grant aid from the CA (£3000 grant & £2000 loan). Moving from Battersby Mannor has been a very long haul indeed and they have done

very well to hold their club together during the process. They will be looking forward to fully establishing themselves at their new home and to be able to host league matches for the first time in some years.

Sadly Basingstoke are still in the mire of local council prevarication and red tape as they look for a more suitable site than their current home.

Hamptworth now sports a fully playable fifth court after the poor winter and autumn delayed its opening

All SFC clubs are reminded of the grants that are available from the CA and indeed our own SCF funds for development projects. There are strict criteria to be met prior to any grants being awarded but it all starts with need, desire and ideas. So please do not be slow in coming forward for assistance, the SCF and CA are here to help you.

On a different front, we extended croquet a opportunity to a couple of schools in our area and have received inquiries from a couple of others.

Frances Colman and I introduced our sport to the charming young men at Papplewick Prep School in Ascot where we spent an evening of instruction and fun.

We also taught croquet to the 6th form girls at Magdalen College School in the center of Oxford. This was a larger than expected commitment of two formal lessons in the middle of the day, twice a week throughout the summer term. Whilst we will have to see about the validity of offering the same service next season, it is hoped that MCS will take part in a reintroduced National Schools Championship in 2014 along with Eton College who were again hosted at Phyllis Court for their school croquet finals.

This brings me on to a mention of children in croquet clubs. All clubs should be aware of child protection legislation and adherence to this cannot be over emphasised. If you have under 18s or vulnerable adults attending your club you should be aware.

Through my professional photography work and more recently our croquet activity at MCS, both Frances and I have a good understanding of this subject, and we both hold the necessary clearance certificates for working with children. Please do ask either of us for advice, or you can contact the CA's Child Protection Officer Jean Hargreaves, who's details are on the CA web site.

11. Coaching Officer's Report –Richard Stevens

There was nothing new to report.

The Chairman thanked Richard for his time in post as he was now handing over the post and leaving the Committee

12. Tournament Officer's Report –Richard Jenkins

When I took on the position of SCF Tournament Officer last November, I had two priorities. The first was to improve the number of entrants taking part in the GC Solstice and AC Armada doubles in June, 2013. I am pleased to say that this was achieved. We got the maximum of 16 pairs for the Solstice at Thames Valley with 2 pairs in reserve. The 8 pairs maximum for the AC Armada was also achieved at Winchester.

In order to try and improve numbers again for the 2014 Armada, and having discussed the matter with our Chairman, it is proposed that both the Armada and

Solstice Tournaments could be held at Hamptworth over one weekend in June.
(The weekend of 7/8 June is currently available).

My second priority was to try and create two new SCF singles tournaments, so in February I sent out a survey to all the SCF GC and AC contacts to see what interest there would be.

I was very encouraged by the response.

Out of the 11 clubs who held internal AC competitions and the 13 clubs who held GC internal, the majority were in favour of holding SCF Handicap events.

So on 15th and 16th October the SCF Club Champion Handicap Tournaments were held at Hamptworth – GC on 15th with 10 entries from 10 clubs and AC on 16th with 12 entries from 11 clubs. Both events were well-supported and seem to have been enjoyed by all involved.

It is proposed that the dates for 2014 will be 14th/15th October - again at Hamptworth.

Please support all 4 of these SCF Tournaments in 2014.

13. Handicapping Officers Reports

- a. **Association Croquet** –Brian Fisk –
Nothing to Report

- b. **Golf Croquet** –Chris Roberts

There has been concern raised that some players at some clubs are not keeping handicap cards correctly or even at all, yet are still representing their Clubs in SCF League Fixtures. The SCF League rules clearly state that handicap cards should be presented at all league matches and the committee will be discussing possible action to work towards the eradication of this poor practice.

There are a number of options open to the Leagues Manager and whichever is decided will be incorporated into the league rules for 2014.

Revised rules will sent to all competing clubs and displayed on the SCF web site with the changes highlighted.

It is apparent that some clubs do not have a 'club handicap officer', who's task it is to monitor players handicaps and to make minimal adjustments where the Automatic Handicapping System fails to keep up with rapid progress or decline in playing standard.

All clubs should have a designated officer fulfilling this roll and I will be contacting everyone to note those that are in compliance and those who are not.

14. Regional Representative on the Council of the CA's Report - Brian Fisk

I am the representative of all Croquet Association affiliated clubs within the boundaries of the Southern Federation (irrespective of membership of the Southern Federation). I took over from my late wife some two years ago so have another year of my three year term to serve before an election next AGM.

My role is one of two way liaison and communication between the clubs I represent and the CA. I therefore sit on the Federation committee and on the CA Council.

As a CA Council member I also sit on various sub-committees. Over the past year I have served on the handicapping committee and the AC Laws committee. I was also co-opted onto the CA working party looking at how the Federations works and to look into improving the workings of the Federations and their relationship with the CA.

Unfortunately the working party was sworn to secrecy so I wasn't able to openly discuss its deliberations before it produced a report.

Our chairman will tell you that I did my best to solicit input from the federation without revealing exactly what was being discussed.

This year I have also joined the AC Tournament committee and have special responsibility for all the Interclub competitions sponsored by the CA (Longman Cup, Secretary's Shield, Mary Rose, etc).

I recently attended the CA AGM (along with Chris Roberts and Frances Colman).

The most important subject that came out of the AGM was the results of the work of the CA working party on Federations. There has been a change in the habits of croquet players over the past few years and this is upsetting the way that the CA is funded. Currently both clubs and individuals can be members of the CA (and both have voting rights at a general meeting) and both help fund the CA along with a levy of tournament entry. Fewer people are entering tournaments and more people are playing social and federation croquet (especially GC players) which means fewer people are joining the CA as tournament members. The net result of this is that the CA predicts a funding gap in the future if the status quo is maintained. This would affect the CAs level of development grants to clubs which is currently some £30,000 pa.

The working party suggested that there should be a more formal relationship between Federations and the CA (currently the Federations are independent of the CA) and that there was merit in looking to see if there was some acceptable way to raise money from all competitive play in the Federations. There was an interesting debate at the AGM and the CA chairman, Jeff Dawson, will be attending three regional meetings to discuss the way forward with Federation and club representatives. As a member of the working party I shall be helping out at the two meetings next year. There is one on the same day as our AGM which I can't attend. I don't want to steal Jeff's thunder so I will leave further comments to a later date.

The handicapping committee deals with various aspects of handicapping for both GC and AC and chooses the recipients of the CA's annual awards for most improved players. This year we also introduced a trial of an alternative way of setting handicaps for AC doubles which seems to remove the advantage that pairs which include one high handicapper and one A class player appear to have. We will discuss the results of the trial at our next meeting in January.

There was very little activity in the AC laws committee, certainly little of it will affect people in this federation. GC laws is another matter but I'm not directly involved with that except as a council member. Currently the CA is unhappy with the way that our input to the debate on the new GC laws has apparently been ignored so we won't be adopting any new laws until we are happy that they are of sufficient merit to justify adoption.

I would like to keep this report to one page so I shall end there. I will, of course, be very happy to deal with any questions at the meeting and will listen to any feedback you have on the CA. I hope that the regional meetings next year will bear fruit and that the views of this federation and its member clubs will be well represented.

Discussion Points Besides the monetary problems Regional Boundaries were discussed. It was felt at this stage there would be little or no change to existing boundaries.

It was also felt that committee meetings were too far away. The nearest of three meetings being at Weston-super Mare and Surbiton. Details of these meetings are outlined at Annex C. The Chairman hoped that Clubs would try to attend at least one meeting

15. Proposal to Amend the Constitution

To include the post of Tournaments Officer to the list of committee rolls and 'tidy up' other job titles, thus:

Curent wording: The committee shall consist of the Officers, the League Organiser, the Development Officer, the Golf Croquet Officer, the Coaching Officer, the Handicapping Officer and the Regional Representative on the Council of the CA, and one other person, who shall be a member of a Member Club.

Proposed new wording: The committee shall consist of the Officers, AC and GC League Manager(s), Development Officer, Coaching Officer, Handicapping Officer(s), Tournaments Officer, Regional Representative on the Council of the CA, and an Officer Without Portfolio

The Amendment was Proposed by Norma Rayne and Seconded by Janet Trueman

The Amendment was carried by those present at the meeting. The amended constitution is at Annex D

16.Election of SCF Committee Officers for 2014

As shown in the Nominations at Annex A of the AGM Agenda

The nominees for the 2014 SCF Committee posts are:

Chairman	Chris Roberts	(Phyllis Court)
Secretary	Jim Pertwee	(Thames Valley)
Treasurer	Rita Nunn	(Winchester)
GC League Manager	Frances Colman	(Phyllis Court)
AC League Manager	Martin Brandt	(Basingstoke)
Development Officer	Chris Roberts	(Chris Roberts)
Tournaments Officer	Richard Jenkins	(Hamptworth)
Coaching Officer	Richard Keighley	(Wingrave)
Handicapping Officer (AC)	Brian Fisk	(Hamptworth)
Handicapping Officer (GC)	Chris Roberts	(Phyllis Court)
Member w/o Portfolio	Gillian Pett	(Thames Valley)
Representative to CA	Brian Fisk	(Hamptworth)

The nominees were Proposed by Alan Truckel Seconded by Roger Price

All were elected

17. Any Other Business

Mr CR Wood was asked to remain as auditor of the accounts

18. Next AGM

This would be in November 2014. Location and Date to be announced

Start to be 10.00 for 10.30

The meeting finished at 1.45 pm