



HIGH WYCOMBE CROQUET CLUB

Minutes of Committee Meeting

Tuesday 14th May 2024, 19.00

Venue: Hazlemere Memorial Hall, Amersham Road HP15 7QW

Present: David Cotton	Chairman DC
Guy Priestley	Secretary GP
Richard Coward	Treasurer RC
Matthew Miles Griffiths	Membership Secretary MMG
Kenny Weir	Playing Equipment Manager KW
Wendy Kingon	WK
Alan Clark	AC
Nigel Clogg	NC
Ian Shore	Guest/Chiltern Academy (IS)

1) Apologies

Chris Webbley CW

With 7 of 8 Committee Members present the Chairman welcomed those present, declared the meeting quorate, and opened the meeting at 7.00pm.

He noted some overlap between previous minutes and current Agenda, notably the need for a new Lawn Manager and a new Sprinkler Manager. These were addressed later (see below).

All Committee approvals below were carried unanimously.

2) Approval of Minutes of Meeting 30th January 2024

Approved.

3) Matters arising from the last minutes/actions outstanding

All items resolved except:

New Lawn Manager

RP still unable to recruit lawn and sprinkler managers to replace him. The matter is long outstanding, a concern as the lawns are our single most important asset.

The Committee agreed that a fundamental problem is the importance/ demands of the job coupled with lack of clear job descriptions to empower the person assuming the role.

It was agreed that DC would ask RP to provide a clear role description. We would ask CW to advertise this and other vacant club roles to the club's membership.

Action: DC

It was further agreed that Sprinkler Manager should not be a separate position but subsumed into the duties of the Lawn Manager. The role description would also need to reflect the fact that the system supplier no longer provided support for the system. DC would communicate these matters to RP.

Action: DC

Safeguarding: GP confirmed a policy had been drafted and circulated.

The most important element was ensuring DBS or Enhanced DBS checks were in place wherever necessary. GP would prepare and maintain a formal record of this.

Action: GP

Hospitality Procedures)

Expenses/entertainment guidelines) see below

Sprinkler manager role)

Paint shed roofs: NC had done this, but they probably need another coat (about an hour's work). DC volunteered to help NC do this.

Action: DC/NC

Drill holes in paving/paving slabs Status uncertain. Richard Peperell (RP) had reported that this was down to groundsman (Russell), but he had not done it. DC to liaise to clarify.

Action: DC

Bore-hole formal proposal: AC said an external consultant had originally advised this initiative would cost c. £20k with a 20% chance it would not hit water. The Committee agreed the risk was out of proportion to the benefit, as the best-case payback on the cost would be over 20 years. It was **AGREED** to shelve this initiative but review annually.

Rubberised roof: NC noted that rubberised roofs are significantly more expensive than felt. Last year's Fun Day raised £800 towards re-roofing, but during the winter the loo roof was damaged by wind. Rubberised would cost c. £1,600 so NC

chose felt, which was within budget. There was no immediate need for further action.

4) **Any submitted reports - Issues and questions raised**

4.1 Academy (IS)

The issue of flood-lighting was raised. After discussion, the Committee decided that the considerable expense outweighed the benefits. In addition:

- Permanent lighting would be very expensive (and need planning permission); but if people had to set up and put away mobile units, we would need secure storage and probably start losing components (NC)
- They would present a significant risk of theft, and the insurance premium would rise
- They would not be needed during summer months, and there is limited evidence of demand from players after (say) 4.00pm in the winter months, especially during periods of bad weather
- Nearby residents might object to light pollution

IS raised the matter of the Academy's Management Board. This needed at least one member appointed by the HWCC Committee. It was agreed DC would approach a number of possible candidates. **Action: DC**

The existing contract between the HWCC and the Academy expires shortly. IS asked the Committee to appoint a volunteer to negotiate the wording/terms for the next 3 years. RC was volunteered. **Action: RC**

4.2 Membership (MMG)

DC noted membership fees received to date (86/£18,970) appeared healthy. How confident was MMG of receiving the outstanding 23 members' fees? MMG advised he had chased all. Some were pretty certain, others dragging their feet. Four indicated they might not renew, but had asked if the Club would offer some sort of off-peak or discounted membership. We needed a policy on how and when to cancel membership if fees were not received. RC considered most of these would not renew: they were new joiners who had actually not used the club very much.

Given fees are due by 30th June, the Committee agreed the Membership Secretary should issue a letter/email around 31st May reminding members that if the fee was not received by the end of June, the Club would assume they no longer wanted their membership and would re-allocate it. In addition, the fee would rise if paid after 30th June. This would both incentivise people to pay promptly and free up slots that would otherwise exist in limbo.

DC also asked MMG to distinguish in future reports between members who were paid up to date, members who were nominally active but whose fees had not been received, and those who were current until end of year but had indicated they would not renew. This would give a truer picture of the membership, and allow more recruitment within the 120 cap. **Action: MMG**

GP asked the Committee to clarify its policy on partial/discounted memberships. It was agreed that as demand for memberships exceeds supply, no discounts need be formally offered. However, the Membership Secretary could make exceptions on the merits of each case eg where an individual did not attend frequently but brought valuable coaching skills. MMG advised that he would generally charge new members a half year if they joined during the year (even if they thereby got e.g. 8 months), but thereafter if they stayed they would pay the full fee.

Departures: it was agreed that Membership Secretary would draft a simple ‘thank you and hope to see you again’ letter for signature by the Chairman. He would also, where possible, take the opportunity to ask departing members for any suggestions they might have to improve the Club. **Action (ongoing): MMG**

4.3 Catering Finance

CW had submitted a proposal to govern how organisers of tournaments hosted by HWCC should entertain the guests, and how any costs should be defrayed.

It was **AGREED** to adopt a simple policy, that

- Refreshments etc should err on the side of generosity: we want to be known as a welcoming club
- Refreshments should be purchased by the organiser/team captain, not catered
- Members of the home team should routinely be asked to contribute an amount sufficient to cover the refreshments.
- The organiser/Team Captain should not be out of pocket, so if for any reason there is a shortfall the Club will reimburse them.

4.4 Marketing

The Committee noted the report, and thanked Nigel for his active and successful promotion of the Club. NC encouraged all members to put up flyers wherever possible. WK had recently put one in the new Amersham Sports complex. She suggested putting one up in Hazlemere Memorial Hall: it is close to HWCC, and many parents pass through.

Come and Try day was scheduled for 1st and 2nd June. NC encouraged any member with Facebook membership to access the Club’s page and forward the notification; or otherwise try to make it widely known.

4.5 Equipment

KW advised that he had replaced 2/3 of club mallet grips.

New hoops generally a success, and Croquet England is standardising on these. It was suggested that players could put pegs on top of the hoops to improve visibility.

NC reported a recent incident where balls had been replaced in storage tubes without regard to whether they were primary/secondary/tertiary. Everyone providing coaching or leading a roll-up should stress to all members present the importance of proper equipment storage.

4.6 Who does what chart

DC noted that the current chart requires significant pruning and simplification to be useful; would benefit from tighter version control; and a number of gaps need to be filled by volunteers. He would discuss with RP. **Action: DC**

4.7 Top-dressing

RP sought permission to cancel a roll-up (Monday or Sunday) and the following day for the annual top-dressing. The Committee **approved** this, and DC encouraged members to volunteer to help on the day.

5) Finances

The Committee noted the finance report and thanked the Treasurer. RC asked members to let him know of any unbudgeted expenditures that might arise before year end. This was especially important as Club revenues were very much front-loaded. He would be working on the next year's budget between now and the next meeting and would greatly appreciate advance warning on any material changes.

He drew attention to the healthy interest income the Club was earning since the accounts were restructured last year: this was a further argument in favour of being very careful with expenditures.

The Committee **confirmed** the Treasurer's authority to move money freely between the Operating Account and Savings account to optimise interest income.

RC sought guidance on what he should do in September when the bond matured. Revenue had been healthy, and the Academy contribution very generous. Also, the balance held on the operating account had proved conservative. He therefore proposed to increase the Bond from £35k to £45k or even £50k if the September cash balances allowed. This would leave about £10k in the Savings/Current Accounts. AC suggested RC consider splitting the bond in two, and placing one portion at a longer maturity to obtain a better rate. RC agreed to look into this.

It was **AGREED** that the bond should be renewed at the increased balance, the exact amount and maturity split to be at the Treasurer's discretion. **Action RC**

6) Insurance

RC: Club holds two sets – property (which we arrange) and liability (under a group policy taken out by CE). The Certificate in the Clubhouse is out of date. GP advised he has updated version – will put it up. **Action: GP**

7) Defibrillator

There is one in the Memorial Hall, readily accessible from the club. It was agreed that this is sufficient for the Club's needs: we do not need another. However, we should post a clear and simple notice at the clubhouse directing members where to go and what to do. We should also have an annual briefing of all members. **Action: GP**

8) Plant Pots

Existing pots damaged by stray balls. **APPROVED** £200 to buy replacements. However, need to be placed where they won't be damaged. **Action: AC**

9) Informal Social Events

RC and KW suggested more regular casual BBQs: say every 2 weeks or so. Attendees would pay – say, £10 for food, and BYO for drinks. AC suggested limiting it to Wednesdays, but the Committee ultimately agreed that it would be best on Fridays, as the rollup would attract more members. KW will take it forward. **Action: KW**

10) **Date for next meeting:** Tuesday 19th November 2024, Hazlemere Memorial Hall.