



HIGH WYCOMBE CROQUET CLUB

Minutes of Committee Meeting

Thursday 18th May 2023, 19.30

Venue: Little Wood Corner, Wood Lane, HP16 0RB

Present: Nigel Clogg	Chairman NC
Guy Priestley	Secretary GP
Richard Coward	Treasurer RC
Wendy Kingon	WK

1) Apologies

Chris Webbley CW

Ed Olhausen EO

Alan Clark AC

With 4 of 7 Committee Members present the Chairman declared the meeting quorate.

2) Approval of Minutes of Meeting 26th January 2023

Approved unanimously.

3) Matters arising from the last minutes/actions outstanding

All items resolved except:

CHAIRMAN

Involving younger members (AC/GP) **Carried forward**

LAWN MANAGEMENT

Recruit assistant lawn manager (NC) *Move to regular Agenda*

Lower sprinklers (RP)

RP expressed frustration at lack of progress in his report **Carried forward**

MAINTENANCE

New Maintenance Manager (NC)

NC proposed to engage a new manager on a casual basis at £25 per hour. NC will check that our liability insurance covers him. **Approved**

Work to clubhouse roof/edges (NC)

It will cost about £3k, but is not urgent. In order to provide a focus for fundraising at eg the Summer Party, it was **AGREED** to establish a separate Roof Fund to finance this work.

Paint roofs of green sheds (RP)

NC volunteered to help RP with this.

Carried forward

New key safe (NC)

It was **AGREED** that the existing safe was adequate. *Resolved*

AOB

Push-button automatic lock (RP)

Carried forward

Change Club Officers' email addresses (RP/SW)

NC in particular receives mail to multiple addresses. Would everyone please use the chairman@hwcroquetclub.com

4) Chairman's Report

New Lawns and Floodlights: see Treasurer's Report.

Membership drive: Chairman sought volunteers for the next Come & Try on 04JUN23. The club would benefit from strengthening its AC element: only about 15 members are currently AC players, and some of those also play GC. RC supports a dedicated AC intro area on the lawns.

RC expressed concern that if recruitment was too successful – especially via Come & Try - the lawns and Roll-ups might be overloaded, especially as a majority only attend Roll-ups. WK noted the period allocated to Roll-ups had been extended; yet still the lawns were under-used mid-week and the use of tertiary balls at roll-ups was increasing.

RP (non-member, not present) disagreed: if applications were too many we should consider prioritising existing/serious players.

Chairman felt it important to maintain the Club's social flavour: he thought an unofficial target of 120 was suitable, and we are currently well short of this. We are also, sadly, likely to lose members due to age.

The Committee agreed to take a wait-and-see approach, at last until we hit 110 members.

Fund raising: the Committee discussed whether the forthcoming social event should feature an auction or a draw. WK suggested we have a lottery, but have sealed bids for any high-value prizes. More prizes were needed. Chairman asked WK to liaise with Mark Higgins.

5) **Treasurer's Report**

The overall picture remains good: revenue is on target, with most subs received, whilst expenses are running slightly below budget (although they will probably catch up due to timing differences). The only category over budget is Marketing.

More Lawns Fund

The fund has a balance of over £37k, but given performance to date it seems we will not be able to add lawns for a minimum of 3 years. Lengthy delays in internal planning and external approval may push this out further.

After discussion **it was agreed** that the Chairman should propose to Ian Shore that we re-name 'more lawns' fund to 'Development Fund' to add flexibility to use of available funds. This would be done on the strict condition that such funds were not to be used for running or operational costs.

In this context, the Committee discussed the feasibility of floodlights. The leading proposal is a portable, rechargeable package. There are pros and cons, and it is not yet known if formal Council permission will be required. In any event, this would need to be a separately funded project, and the roofing repair (see Maintenance above) would need to take precedence. It was agreed to defer the issue until a dedicated Sub-Committee could meet and review the matter thoroughly and issue a proposal to the Committee.

Bank Account (point 2(c)): the Club has a total of £62,062 as at 05MAY23. This is all held in a single Current Account, but divided into three in our internal accounts: General Fund, Reserve Fund and More Lawns Fund.

RC advised that Banks are reluctant to open Association and Charity accounts, and even more so to offer complex, multi-level authority structures. After much effort the Club currently has a Current Account with Lloyds, which requires one electronic signature (RC) up to £500 and two for transactions above that. This imposes a substantial administrative burden on him.

It was **AGREED** that RC should be empowered to approve Club payments up to **£1,500** and require secondary approval for payments in excess of this.

To this end, to rationalise our banking arrangements and to take advantage of recent rate rises, it was **AGREED** to establish a three-tier banking structure for Club funds:

- a. £40k should be transferred from the Current Account to a 1 Year term deposit with Cambridge and Counties. Dual-control only.

- b. Approximately £20k should be transferred to a Buckinghamshire Building Society Notice Account. This allows up to two withdrawals per month, provided the balance does not fall below £10,000. Dual-control only.
- c. The balance to be retained in the existing Current Account with a single-signature limit of £1,500 as agreed above.

Itemised Receipts: RC noted that funds credited to the Club account via the clubhouse machine are not itemised. To make reconciliation and attribution easier he would ask Ed Olhausen to fix this. **Action: EO**

6) Lawn Manager's Report

CA Tournaments: NC advised that payments for CA Tournaments would be received before year-end.

It was **AGREED** to retain Aaron and Russell. We receive regular positive feedback on lawn quality.

We continue to seek an Officer responsible for this critical function. NC had identified a high-energy member he felt would be suitable. However, there were several practical considerations including the member's very full calendar at present. The Committee agreed NC should approach the individual to test his willingness. **Action: NC**

7) Membership Secretary's Report

NC commended Ed Olhausen for doing a great job on managing subscriptions.

It was **AGREED** that the membership discount we provide people in full-time employment should not be included on application forms but used case by case at Membership Secretary's discretion.

8) Marketing Report

NC noted that the flyers seemed ineffective: many members did not know they were there, and very few were distributed. It was agreed that this should be brought to members' attention and all encouraged to pass them to friends and contacts.

Quarter-page advertisements had been placed in about 48,000 local news sheets. The Local Directory magazine for Amersham and Missenden/Hazlemere additions reach 16,000 homes; and free adds in a further six directories reach an additional 32,000 homes.

NC placed on record his thanks to Sharon Clark for her work.

9) Competition Report

The contents were noted. The Committee formally thanked Chris Webley (in absentia) for his great contribution to this vital element of Club activities.

10) Croquet Academy Report

All reviewed and noted.

11) Safeguarding Report

It was agreed that we should itemise and document specific actions taken by the Club eg who needed/had obtained DBS clearance. **Action: GP**

12) Changes to the Constitution

After discussion, it was agreed that no further changes are currently needed to cover disciplinary matters. If necessary, a verbal warning will be delivered by the Chairman in the presence of a third party, and the action noted. The matter will then be reviewed by the Committee one month later.

13) AOB

13.1 Volunteers: the need for more volunteers was noted.

Action: All

13.2 Hospitality: this was discussed at length. GP stated that he did not feel able to commit to taking on responsibility for this; but he would liaise with Mark Higgins to document and circulate procedures for handling hospitality events. This would hopefully help the Club to identify a permanent coordinator.

Action: GP

13.3 Croquet England: CW to collate information and forward it to CE Buckinghamshire Croquet Facebook Site.

Action: CW

13.5 Prospective member query (WK): a prospective member, who had previously attended at the invitation of a Committee Member with his young (7 and 10) grandchildren, had requested a further session, and wished to bring them again. What is our minimum age limit?

After discussion it was agreed that although they had behaved in exemplary fashion on their previous visit, and the Club does not have a formal minimum, these ages are too young. The gentleman may come again on his own.

Date of next meeting: 16th November 2023

Venue: WK's house