

The Minutes of the 35TH Annual General Meeting of the South East Federation held on Sunday 7th November 2021

Committee members present were: Andrew Stewart (Chair) Louise Taylor (Secretary), Ian Cobbold (Development Officer), Jon Diamond (Webmaster) John Low (League Organiser), Richard Carline (Coaching Officer) and George Noble.

The following clubs were represented: (Cheam) Jenny Lugton, (Crawley), Philip Constance, (Dulwich) Paul Newton, (Ealing) Simon Tuke and Tony Eliot, (Merton) Ann Barry, (Guildford and Godalming), Andrea Huxley, (Hurlingham), Mark Ormerod, (Littlehampton) Bob Clark and Robyn Clark, (Ramsgate) Trevor Longman, (Surbiton) Andy Dibben and (Southwick) Bill Arliss, Clive Hayton, (Rottingdean) Frances Low (Reigate Priory) Martin Peacock and (Purley Bury) Janet Overell.

Apologies for absence were received from and Jackie Waite (Cheam), Sara Anderson (Woking), Jane Sheridan (Sydenham), Liz Farrow (Southwick), Henry Bryant (Canterbury), and committee members David King and Samir Patel.

Minutes of the last AGM held by Zoom on 22nd November 2020 were adopted with no objections.

Election of officers for 2022 The Chairman: Andrew Stewart (West Worthing), Secretary: Louise Taylor (Merton) and Treasurer: David King (Southwick) were elected unopposed, but Linda Gavigan (Marketing and Public Relations) with Jonathan Isaacs taking over Public Relations and Ian Cobbold (as Development Officer) had both stood down. We need nominations for the important role of Development Officer.

Treasurer's Report was read by the Chairman because David King was unable to attend. The accounts were accepted without opposition.

Appointment of the Auditor: The accounts had been examined by Clive Hayton who is willing to carry on in this role next year.

Chairman's Report There was one objection. Bill Arliss said he was disappointed that this report was confined to results thus ignoring the many clubs that took part. He felt that the emphasis should be on how croquet is a worthwhile pastime for all players and that there should be less focus on how many champions we could produce. Jon Diamond pointed out that a full report on the matches was included on the website. Ian Cobbold said that a number of clubs had recruited a number of new members and we were hoping some of these would take part in competitions in the future. The chairman, Andrew Stewart accepted Bill's point that everyone should be acknowledged.

In his report the Chairman thanked all the Committee for their support during the year and particularly the outgoing members who will be hard to replace.

Webmaster's Report: Jon Diamond wanted to emphasise that the website had been completely revamped and for people to let him know if they "had any suggestions or comments".

Development Officer's Report: Ian Cobbold said Littlehampton and Sydenham both intend to apply for CA grants but there was still money available so now would be a good time for other clubs to apply. He recommended 'Croquet Matters' as a good source for those who are looking for ways to improve their club and said he has a link to a presentation. He is aware that many bowls clubs are in trouble and he would be grateful to anyone letting him know of a bowls club which was closing down so he could see whether their lawns could be used for croquet. He also pointed out that the new 'foxy' hoops did not make the big holes in the lawn that those with big carrots did and this might encourage existing bowls clubs to share their lawns with croquet clubs. Foxy hoops are more expensive than the old hoops but any new clubs would be given a set of either type of hoops without charge. He also asked members to contact him if they wanted to know what the role of Development Officer entails.

Coaching Officer's Report: Richard Carline had been very busy this year visiting clubs belonging to the Federation. Many clubs have a healthy number of new members; some struggle with very poorly maintained lawns. He wants all clubs to have referees and coaches; clubs cannot successfully enter competitions if they don't know the rules. More seminars for coaches are being planned and he is looking for ways to enable people to train as referees. Although the facilities are excellent at Southwick, using other clubs as training hubs would make training more accessible. He reminded everyone that the SECF subsidises referees in line with what the CA is doing.

League/Tournament Organiser's Report: John Low is hoping the Teams Day which had involved only a few clubs this Covid year, would be fully restored but he pointed out that it would now take place in May. He would let us know who would be managing once someone is appointed.

He had held back reporting some of the results of the Leagues due to a problem with the A League. Deciding on a winner had been complicated because of the small number of Matches played. After a lot of discussion he had decided to void the league this year No-one had appealed this decision and the problem was unlikely to recur.

He had organized a number of surveys this year and announced the following changes:

1. Clubs should no longer be expected to provide a lunch for visiting teams.
2. He would be organizing a Short Croquet competition for the coming year and would like to be informed of any clubs who are willing to host it.
3. "Single lawn clubs are being encouraged to host leagues. Many single lawns clubs had hosted competitions this year with many different arrangements tested. These would be put on the website. "

Three motions were proposed to amend the league rules:

The first motion Proposed by the Committee was to clarify how to decide league winners as the old wording is not clear enough. That the wording,

'The league winners will be the teams with the most league points. Ties will be decided by head to head matches, percentage games won and then by play-off of 2 or more teams. Any play-off will be held before April next year.'

Changed to 'The league winner will be the team with the most points. If two teams only are tied and have played each other, then the winner shall be the winner of that match; otherwise the tied teams shall be placed in order of percentage games won; if necessary, these two stages may be repeated until a winner is found. If there remains a tie then play-offs among the tied teams will be held before April of next year.

This motion was supported unanimously.

The second motion, proposed by Tunbridge Wells would make the B league easier for novices to enter. Three rounds of 14 point games would enable more people to play more with a shorter time limit so that more games would be completed. Limiting teams to 3 players instead of 4 four would allow games to be double-banked. They proposed that the format and rules for the AC B League should be changed to:

'Each match consists of 3 players and each match consists of 3 rounds of 14 point games, each being one singles and one doubles. League teams will be listed in ascending handicap order A to C versus a to c. In the first round A will play singles against a, in the second round B will play singles against b and in the third round, C will play singles against c. All games shall played with full bisques to a base of 6. Appendix 3 of the Laws of Association shall apply. All games are to be played handicap, with a time limit of 80 minutes. If a lawn is less than 2/3 size, normal handicap difference are to be reduced by a factor of 2/3. Each player's handicap must be at least 10 when the fixture is arranged.'

After some discussion and a few dissenting voices, this was put to the vote and the motion was carried.

The third motion, proposed by Ealing Croquet Club was that the rules for the AC U League be amended to replace the sentence

‘All games are played handicap’

with ‘All games played on a full bisque handicap basis, with a base handicap of 10; Appendix 3 of the Laws of Association Croquet shall apply.’

Jon Diamond suggested a base of 6 rather than 10. The motion was passed unanimously with this change.

Fixing the rate of the annual subscription for 2022. The committee had decided that the annual subscription charge should remain the same.

The amount of tournament and league fees for 2022: the league fees should be increased from £2 50 to £3. The CA has agreed an increase in lawn charges for tournaments and our tournament entry fees will need to reflect this. Clubs will be advised of the new fees shortly.

The Report by the South East Constituency Representative(s) of the Council of the Croquet Association:

A summary was provided by Ian Cobbold. He told us that Samir Patel had replaced Jonathan Isaacs as Chair. The Main issue currently is whether to incorporate the CA and also make the CA a charity. The Council are now looking at the details of how this would be done and it would be put to the vote at a special general Meeting some time next year. The proposals to increase inclusivity and diversity in clubs has been approved and a team led by Paul Brown will be advising clubs as to how this might be implemented. The Federation will hold a Zoom seminar on the subject during the winter.

There had also been a report on competitive play concerning how to resuscitate Association Croquet and how to build on the success of Golf Croquet.

Other Business: the Chairman asked the meeting whether the Zoom format should continue for the AGM or whether a face-to-face format was preferred. After a discussion about which format produced the higher attendance, it was decided that generally members preferred the Zoom format.

Phillip Constance (Crawley) wanted to thank Ian Cobbold for all he had done to assist the club whose lawns had been poorly maintained by the local council. Some maintenance has begun for the first time in five years.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 12 o'clock.