

Minutes of the 30th Annual General Meeting of the South East Croquet Federation held at Surbiton Croquet Club on Sunday 26 February 2017

The following 24 Clubs were represented:

Canterbury (R Loram); **Caterham** (J Gilbert; A Reade); **Cheam** (H Clarke; I Cobbold; J Cobbold; C Lyons); **Compton** (H Smith); **Dulwich** (A Gryce; P Newton ; J Reddish); **Ealing** (M Sherratt); **Ember** (R Dollimore); **Guildford & Godalming** (M Godfrey-James); **Hampstead Heath** (R Hilditch); **Hayes, Bromley & Keston** (S Gregory); **Littlehampton** (P Sherwin); **Merton** (C Doswell; G Withrington; N Furse); **Old College, Dulwich** (C Brook); **Preston** (J Munt); **Purley Bury** (J Overell); **Ramsgate** (T Longman & R Loram); **Reigate Priory** (M Peacock); **Roehampton** (A Wilkinson; D Mooney); **Rottingdean** (W Tennant); **Royal Tunbridge Wells** (J Diamond); **Surbiton** (D Beck; M Pulsford; N Furse ; G Noble); **Sussex County** (W Arliss; C Hayton ; J Isaacs); **West Wittering** (B Williams; E Williams) and **Woking** (M Hague; E McKenzie-Gray; M Town).

Apologies for absence were received from:

K Lennon (Ivychurch); C Roberts & F Coleman (Phyllis Court); K Chordia (West Chiltoning); D Carter (Worthing); C Corker (Hassocks); D Parkins (Medway); S Vallis (Angmering); J Johnston (Dogmersfield) and C Merrington (Littlehampton).

The minutes of the 29th AGM held on Sunday 28 February 2016 were approved as a true and accurate record. There were no matters arising.

Approval of the accounts for the year ended 31 December 2016

The Treasurer (Hilary Smith) presented the accounts.. The accumulated cash assets of the Federation (£6,211 as at 31 December 2016) would, she said, continue to be distributed by way of development grants and loans to members of the Federation as the Committee thought appropriate.

The Treasurer expressed her thanks to Clive Hayton (Sussex County) for undertaking the duties of Auditor (Independent Examiner).

A proposal that the accounts should be approved was carried *nem. con.*

Annual Subscription for 2017

The Treasurer's proposal that the annual subscription rate should be maintained at £10 was, as is usual, approved *nem. con.*

Tournament fees

In accordance with previous practice, the tournament fees fell to be increased to take account of the increase in the CA suggested rates for lawn hire. The objective remained the same – to break even after payment of those fees and the incidental expenses. Accordingly, it was proposed and accepted that the fees should be increased as follows:

AC Teams Doubles at Southwick: £40 (from £37.50)

Ladies' Teams Days at Southwick: £36 (from £34)

Southern Challenge at Southwick and Surbiton: £72 (from £65)

GC Teams Day at Southwick: £22 (from £20)

The entry fee for the One Ball Teams event at Roehampton (£40) will remain the same as last year, in accordance with the host Club's requirement.

The entry fee for each league will remain the same as before: £2.50.

Chairman's report

The Chairman (Bill Arliss) said that the Federation had gone from strength to strength during the past few years. He had reviewed the number of "player days" of competitive croquet in the period from 2008 to 2016 and had discovered that there has been a 55% increase in that measure. A very competitive atmosphere prevails in the SECF. We have the best coaching (in the Academy and elsewhere) and the largest number of clubs of any Federation.

The Chairman also explained that the Committee had taken the decision to require all Clubs entering the Federation Leagues to be full or affiliate members of the CA. It had been agreed in Committee that a motion would be placed before this meeting proposing an amendment to the Constitution but the Secretary had forgotten to include this on the agenda. However, (as the Secretary intervened to point out) there was merit in highlighting the proposed amendment now but deferring any vote on it until next year to enable all affected Clubs to consider their positions. The proposal would be that "Article 4 of the Constitution shall be amended by adding, at the end of the first paragraph, the words "provided that they are full or

affiliate members of the Croquet Association”. This would, if carried, require any potential member club of the Federation to be full or affiliate member of the CA. For the time being, Clubs could continue to be members of the Federation without being full or affiliate members of the CA but such clubs would not, in 2017, be permitted to enter the Leagues and Events. There was one Club (West Wittering) affected by this but it was anticipated that the members would vote to become an affiliate of the CA at their forthcoming AGM. [And they did].

Report on the further development of the SECF web site

The Webmaster (Jon Diamond) reported that he had “revamped” the site extensively. He said that it would now work on smart phones and tablets (whatever they may be) and contained new material (including past Newsletters and Development Officer’s reports) which might be of interest. He also invited corrections and additions to the site from viewers.

Secretary’s report

The Secretary (John Reddish) said that the Federation consisted of 46 member clubs in 2016. He would be circulating the SECF Calendar in due course and invited all Clubs with tournaments not in the CA Fixtures Book which were open to non-members to let him have the details for inclusion.

Following a request for an oral presentation of the paper on the “Governance of the CA” (circulated with the Agenda) the Secretary gave an extensive summary of the proposals (formulated by him on behalf of the Committee following their meeting in January 2017) and said that these proposals had already been submitted to the CA Working Group. Various murmurings of approval were heard.

Report on 2016 Leagues and Events

The League Organiser (Richard Hilditch) invited acclamation for the following:

AC “A” League winners: **Dulwich**

AC “U” League winners: **Medway**

AC “B” League winners: **Merton**

GC Level League winners: **Woking**

GC Level Restricted League winners: **Merton**

GC Handicap League winners: **Preston**

AC Team Doubles Champions: **Sussex County**

Ladies’ Team Champions: **Sussex County**

Golf Croquet Team Doubles Champions: **Sussex County**

Golf Croquet Team Singles Champions: **Dulwich**

The GC Southern Challenge Division One Champions: **Ramsgate**

The GC Southern Challenge Division Two North Champions: **Cheam**

The GC Southern Challenge Division Two South Champions: **Rottingdean**

One Ball Team Event: **Roehampton**

Representatives of the winning Clubs (other than Medway who sent apologies) collected the trophies and were applauded and photographed, some more than once (or twice).





In order of appearance: Bill Arliss and John Reddish (Dulwich); Carolyn Doswell (Merton); Mike Town (Woking); Carolyn Doswell (Merton); John Munt (Preston); Clive Hayton (x3) (Sussex County); Paul Newton (Dulwich); Trevor Longman (Ramsgate); Jean Cobbold (Cheam) and Wray Tennant (Rottingdean).

Coaching Officer's Report

The Coaching Officer (Jonathan Isaacs) drew attention to the continuing success of the Academy and urged early application for the few remaining places on the 2017 courses.

2016 was, he said, another successful for Coaching in the SECF. Over the past 3 years 89 places had been taken on Coaches' Qualification Courses through the Academy and 19 people had attended Academy Referees' courses. In addition to Academy courses, Academy coaches ran a series of ½ and 1 day courses at various clubs in the Federation at the request of the Clubs concerned.

The CA had been trying to develop the national squads both in the short and longer term as well as creating a platform for "ongoing player development". In 2016 AC development sessions were run at various locations in the South East as a stage in helping improving players towards A level and elite play. In 2017 the AC Development Squad will be in action again at Surbiton, Medway, Hampstead Heath and Southwick. In addition, the Academy will be introducing 3 GC modules during the summer. These will be at Canterbury (organised by Tobi Savage); Dulwich (organised by Pierre Beaudry) and at Southwick (organised by Richard Brooks and Daphne Gaitley). They are targeted at players with a handicap of 4 or fewer who are looking to develop themselves at A class and possibly as elite players. Rapid improvers with a handicap of more than 4 may also be considered. Each session will seek to identify people showing potential to play at the top level and at the end of the summer some players showing exceptional talent will be invited to attend a GC Development Squad session, probably during October 2017.

The Academy 10th Anniversary programme was launched in November 2016 and many courses were already full, or nearly so. This year there will be 4 new courses: a GC Referees' workshop (designed to update existing GC Referees on the latest rules as well as advice on improving refereeing techniques); a new AC course entitled "Perfecting your AC Stroke & Break Play" (an ideal course for players aspiring to play A and B level tournament croquet and also ideal as preparation for the Triple Peel Course); a course on GC Rules run by Daphne Gaitley (those wishing to take the examination may sit it on the second day) and a GC coached Games Day (which will be split into groups based on handicap level and is specifically designed to introduce and improve players' competitive play).

The Coaching Officer also announced that the SECF will subsidise attendance at approved referees' and coaches' courses at up to £15 per head. In addition the CA will subsidise the approved coaching and refereeing courses at £25 per head. The effect of this would be that attendance at the relevant Academy courses would be free. Those receiving the SECF subsidy would be expected to take the qualifying examinations and would only be eligible for one subsidy.

The approved courses in the SECF are:

- 25/26 April GC Rules & Referees' Course. Full
- 29/30 April GC Rules & Referees' Course. Extra Course - vacancies available.
- 10/11 May Coaches' Training Course.

Development Officer's report

The Development Officer (Michael Hague) reported that a new Club in north London called Finchley Victoria had been welcomed into the fold. They had excellent off-court facilities but they needed on-court assistance and guidance. Richard Hilditch said that he would be pleased to offer coaching support.

No grants had been made to SECF Clubs at the recent meeting of the CA Development Committee. The next meeting would be held in October 2017 and any developments requiring financial assistance should be brought to his attention well before then. Grants would be available from the CA and the Federation for renewal and/or upgrading of facilities but not for routine maintenance.

Federation Clubs were successful in the recent competitions for CA Awards. Sussex County were given the Millennium Club Award (given every two years to the club with five or more courts that has made most progress at national or local level in any of two of the previous three years). Cheam were given the Townsend Award (given every two years to a club with one or two lawns that has, in the opinion of the Development Committee, made exceptional progress in providing a good playing environment over the previous two years). Guildford & Godalming put forward a meritorious application for the Apps Heley Award (given every two years to the club with three or four lawns that has made most progress at a national or local level in the last two years) but did not succeed. The Award was shared by Plymouth and Bath.

Election of Officers and Committee for 2016-17

The following persons offered themselves for election and were not opposed.

Chairman: **Bill Arliss** (Sussex County)

Secretary: **John Reddish** (Dulwich)

Treasurer: **Hilary Smith** (Compton)

Committee members: **Jon Diamond** (Royal Tunbridge Wells); **Michael Hague** (Woking); **Richard Hilditch** (Hampstead Heath); **Jonathan Isaacs** (Sussex County); **Roger Loram** (Canterbury and Ramsgate) and **George Noble** (Surbiton).

The elected SECF CA Representative **David Mooney** (Roehampton) is also a member of the Committee. An election takes place every 3 years. If necessary, this will be arranged before the CA AGM in October 2018.

Election of Auditor (Independent Examiner)

The Treasurer proposed Clive Hayton (Sussex County) as an appropriately qualified candidate. He agreed to continue and the meeting approved his appointment by acclamation.

The 2017 League Rules

The League Organiser (Richard Hilditch) reported that, in 2016, the mid-September deadline for the completion of matches in the GC Handicap League had been maintained (to enable the play-off to take place before the end of the season) and that Preston had defeated Reigate Priory 6-3.

The motion proposed (and subsequently amended) by Dulwich and supported by Merton that "The rules of the GC Restricted Level Play League shall be amended to provide that no player with a handicap of less than 2 shall be eligible to play" was debated and carried by 8 votes to 7 with 5 abstentions.

The motion proposed by Merton that "The rules of the GC Restricted Level Play League shall be amended to provide that the minimum of the combined handicaps of the players in the team shall be 12" was defeated by a substantial margin.

The motion proposed by Merton that "The rules of the GC Handicap League shall be amended to provide that the minimum of the combined handicaps of the players in the team shall be 24" was withdrawn after debate.

It was agreed that, since the change in GC Restricted Level Play League rules would take effect in 2017, further entries for that League would be accepted by the Organiser for a period of one week.

The proposals for a separate “3 person team” AC Handicap League and for a new “B Level GC League” with a minimum handicap requirement received approval and will be worked on by the Committee for possible introduction in 2018.

The problem which had arisen during 2016 with regard to one-lawn Clubs playing in the AC B League had been resolved by the Organiser. He had ruled that one-lawn Clubs must play all of their matches away from home unless otherwise agreed. He was prepared to be overruled by the meeting. A motion that one-lawn Clubs playing in the AC B League should be permitted to play at home irrespective of the agreement of their opposition was defeated by 7 votes to 6.

2016 Events

The Secretary announced that the dates for all of the 2017 events had been fixed and would be published in the Calendar. The dates were 20/21 May: AC Team Doubles (Southwick); 10 June: One Ball Teams (Roehampton); 1/2 July: GC Southern Challenge Division 1 (Southwick) and GC Southern Challenge Division 2 North (Surbiton); 5 July: AC Ladies' Day (Southwick); 8/9 July GC Southern Challenge Division 2 South (Southwick); 6 August: GC Team Doubles and Singles (Southwick) and 16 August: GC Ladies' Day (Southwick). It was agreed that the new GC Ladies' Day will be a handicap event.

The proposal for a “Festival of Croquet” involving AC and GC completion in the same, two-day event, met with widespread approval but it was agreed that a “practical format” needed to be devised by the Committee for introduction in 2018.

Other business

There being no further business, the meeting closed and those attending moved furniture and partook of an excellent lunch prepared and served by George Noble and his team of Surbiton members.