

**Minutes of the 33rd Annual General Meeting  
of the South East Croquet Federation  
held at Surbiton Croquet Club on Sunday 23 February 2020**

The following 20 Clubs were represented:

**Canterbury** (H Bryant); **Caterham** (F Collins; R LeServe) **Cheam** (I Cobbold;; J Cobbold; A Wilson); **Compton** (H Smith); **Dulwich** (P Newton ; J Reddish); **Ealing** (M Sherratt); **Ember** (S Charrington; S Edney); **Guildford & Godalming** (H Bird)); **Littlehampton** (R Clarke; W Payne; C Fastnedge); **Merton** (C Doswell; N Furse); **Purley Bury** (J Overell); **Ramsgate** (T Longman;; **Reigate Priory** (S Ling; M Peacock); **Rottingdean** (F Low); **Royal Tunbridge Wells** (J Diamond); **Surbiton** (A Dibben; N Furse;; G Noble); **Sussex County** (W Arliss; R Carline; L Farrow: L Gavigan; C Hayton; J Isaacs ; J Low); **Sydenham** (D Foreman; T Foreman; E Relevitch; M Relevitch; P Sowan); **West Worthing** (A Stewart) and **Woking** (S Anderson; J Dawson).

Apologies for absence were received from:

J Baker (Bexley); J Bateson (Medway); D Beck (Surbiton); A Besgrove (Bromley); A Bingham (Hurlingham); H Brown (Lodsworth); D Carter (Worthing); J Johnston (Dogmersfield); A Kasparian (Ealing); K Lennon (Ivychurch); J Sheridan (Sydenham) ); J Waite (Cheam); and E Williams (West Wittering);

The minutes of the 32nd AGM held on Sunday 27 January 2019 were approved as a true and accurate record. There were no matters arising.

**Approval of the accounts for the year ended 31 December 2019**

The Treasurer (Hilary Smith) presented the accounts. The accumulated cash assets of the Federation had increased to £6,922 as at 31 December 2019. The coaching and development costs went up in 2019 from £195 to £497. This expenditure largely consisted of payments of subsidies for players training to become coaches and referees.

The cost of league and event entries would remain unchanged (save for the Ladies AC Day where the teams had been reduced from 4 to 2). They would be as follows:

AC Teams Weekend (Southwick) £50 per team

One-Ball Teams Tournament: (Canterbury) £45 per team including lunch

Ladies AC Day: (Southwick) £25 per team

Ladies GC Day: (Southwick) £45 per team

The Southern Challenge: Divisions One and Two (Southwick and Surbiton): £85 per team

Golf Croquet Teams Day: (Southwick) £29 per team

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

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

A motion that there should be a vote of thanks to Hilary for her many years of efficient work as Treasurer was received and carried with acclamation.

**Annual Subscription for 2020**

The Treasurer proposed that, the annual registration fee having been increased to £15 in 2018 there should be no further increase this year. This was carried *nem.con.*

**Chairman's report**

The Chairman (Bill Arliss) said that he had again reviewed the number of "player days" of competitive croquet in the period from 2008 to 2019. There had been an increase from 1,200 to almost 2,000 in that period.. However, there had been a slight dip in 2019 for the first time in 5 years and this had been caused by reduced numbers for AC Tournaments.

The Chairman also announced that 2020 would be his last year as Chairman. He would also need to be replaced as the manager of the Tournaments and would offer instruction to his successor(s).

**Webmaster's report**

The Webmaster (Jon Diamond) reported that the site had continued to operate successfully throughout the year. Some minor changes had been made but there were no current plans for major changes to the site. He would welcome any suggestions for changes and/or updates and especially news of activities from member clubs that he could add. An innovation had appeared on the site. There was now a form available for use to enter the Leagues and Tournaments, as an alternative to completing the form sent out by the Secretary.

### **Secretary's report**

The Secretary (John Reddish) reported that the number of clubs registered as members of the SECF in 2019-2020 was 45. This was the same as in 2018-19. The Clubs registered were not all the same. This is because Old College (Dulwich) had effectively disbanded and Bognor Regis had declined an invitation to rejoin. However, Phyllis Court had rejoined and a new club – The Croqueteers (of Sedlescombe) – had joined. They were most welcome and would be receiving assistance, both from the CA and the Federation.

During the winter, he had made contact with representatives of both the EACF and the SCF and, in accordance with a decision of the Committee, he had invited each of these Federations to take part in an AC Challenge Match against the SECF (along the lines of that played annually between Yorkshire and the North). Both Federation representatives expressed enthusiasm for the idea but no date or venue had been established.

Three clubs had already used the form on the web site and had paid the fees that they expected that they would have to pay. This development was to be welcomed, not least because it was hoped that all entries would eventually be made in this way. However, they were premature, in that the Leagues and Tournaments that would be held in 2020 had yet to be announced. These entries would, nevertheless, be accepted.

The content of the forms that the Secretary sends out to Clubs was, to some extent, dependent upon decisions to be taken at the AGM. For this and other reasons, he would be sending out the forms on 24 or 25 February 2020 for return by 29 March 2020. John Low would then compile the fixture lists and make them available by 14 or 15 April 2020.

All teams entering the SECF tournaments (other than the One Ball Tournament at Canterbury) in 2020 were reminded that they are expected (subject to special dietary exceptions) to take and pay for lunch and refreshments at the host club for £12 per person per day. The entry fee at Canterbury included lunch and other refreshments.

### **Constitutional Amendments**

The proposal that the third paragraph of Clause 4 of the Constitution (which provided that:

*Member clubs shall be entitled to nominate a SECF Representative to the CA Council. All nominees and, when elected, the representative shall be a member of a club affiliated to the SECF and be a Member of the CA. The election of the representative for a period of three years shall be by postal vote with each member club having one vote)* should be deleted was carried *nem. con.*

The proposal that Clause 7(g) of the Constitution should be amended to provide that:  
*If at any time a person shall be elected as a member of the Council of the Croquet Association for the South East Constituency and not be already a member of the committee of the Federation, then such person shall ipso facto be deemed to be co-opted to the committee, unless he or she informs the committee that he or she does not wish to be co-opted, but shall not be counted for the purpose of the limit specified above.*

was also carried *nem com*.

### **Report on 2019 Leagues and Events**

The Secretary invited acclamation for the following winners:

AC A League: **Surbiton**  
AC U League: **Hampstead Heath**  
AC B League: **Ember**  
AC S League: **Cheam**  
GC L League: **Sussex County A**  
GC R League: **Reigate Priory**  
GC H League West: **West Wittering**  
GC H League East: **Ramsgate**  
AC Team Doubles: **Medway**  
One Ball Teams: **Sussex County**  
GC Ladies Teams: **Reigate Priory**  
Southern Challenge Division One: **Winchester**  
Southern Challenge Division Two: **Rottingdean 1**  
GC Teams singles: **Dulwich 1**  
GC Teams Doubles: **Reigate Priory 1**

Representatives of the winning Clubs (other than Hampstead, West Wittering, Medway and Winchester) collected the trophies and were applauded.

### **Development Officer's report**

Ian Cobbold reported that:

The Croqueteers of Sedlescombe, near Hastings had received their starting pack of equipment from the Croquet Association.

He had recently visited the Sevenoaks Cricket and Hockey Club which was hoping to start a croquet club on the cricket outfield. They were at a very early stage at present.

Two clubs had received grants from the CA during the year. West Worthing was given £1,900 towards the cost of installing solar panels on their clubhouse and Surbiton had received £3,335 towards the cost of a new storage facility for compostable material before removal by a contractor for composting. The SECF had also given Surbiton £500.

Reigate Priory had applied for a grant of £1,000 towards their major lawn levelling project. Their application been approved at a Development Committee meeting held on the day before our AGM.

There was news of the two clubs that were threatened with closure or the loss of a lawn. Hayes, Bromley and Keston had been able to move to a nearby bowls club which was closing and they had now changed their name to Bromley. Ealing was still threatened with the loss of a lawn but was continuing to fight hard and had won a stay of execution from their local council.

### **Coaching Officer's report**

Richard Carline reported that he had taken over from Jonathan Isaacs as Director of the Croquet Academy and as Federation Coaching Officer. He paid tribute to the work and achievements of Jonathan and of Janet Hoptroff, who was standing down as Secretary of the Academy after 7 years and handing over to Chrissie Merrington.

The Academy's attendance number (156) was similar to 2018 but the worrying area was a lack of new players coming into AC. Any thoughts on how the Academy could stimulate interest would be seriously considered. The popularity of GC was continuing.

During the winter the Academy had held 1 to 1 coaching sessions and a GC Workshop at Southwick. Unfortunately a second Workshop had to be cancelled because of flooding.

In 2020 one-day module courses would be replacing multiple day courses in an attempt to attract more participants.

There would be a Coach Training Course and a Coach Qualifying Course in 2020..

He knew Ian Shore (the director of the new High Wycombe Coaching School) well and would be working with him to avoid clashes when formulating the calendar for 2021. He had been involved with the popular Guildford & Godalming Coaching POD and felt that the Academy should consider a similar thing for existing coaches and referees. This would be a good way to enable coaches to extend their repertoire.

In 2020 he would be looking into the extent to which current Club Level Coaches were active.

He planned to encourage more young players and to get schools to explore croquet as a sport.

#### **Election of Officers and Committee for 2020-21**

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

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

Secretary: **John Reddish** (Dulwich)

Treasurer: **Andrew Stewart** (West Worthing)

Committee members: **Richard Carline** (Sussex County); **Ian Cobbold** (Cheam); **Jon Diamond** (Royal Tunbridge Wells); **Jonathan Isaacs** (Sussex County); **John Low** (Sussex County) and **George Noble** (Surbiton).

#### **Election of an Independent Examiner**

The Treasurer proposed Clive Hayton (Sussex County) as an appropriately qualified candidate. He agreed to continue. The meeting approved his re-appointment *nem. con.*

#### **2020 Events**

The Secretary announced that the dates for all of the 2020 events had been fixed. They were:

AC Teams Weekend: 9/10 May (Southwick)

One-Ball Teams Tournament: 7 June (Canterbury)

Ladies AC Day: 1 July (Southwick)

The Southern Challenge: Division One 27/28 June (Southwick)

The Southern Challenge: Division Two North 27./28 June (Surbiton)

The Southern Challenge: Division Two South 4/5 July (Southwick)

Ladies GC Day: 15 July (Southwick)

Golf Croquet Teams Day: 9 August (Southwick)

#### **Plans for the AC Ladies Day 2020**

The Chairman drew attention to the supplementary paper in which the revised arrangements for the tournament were set out.

#### **The 2020 League Rules and rules to be applied in SECF events and tournaments**

Several motions proposing changes to the Rules were debated with outcomes as follows:

The motion that: *"In SECF League Fixtures all away players/supporters should make a contribution to the host club in respect of refreshments provided: a standard contribution of £5 per head is suggested"* was defeated by a large majority.

The motion that: *"The results of individual matches played during SECF League Fixtures to advanced rules should be reported by team captains and recorded on the relevant CA ranking/grading system"* was withdrawn on the basis that such a provision is already in the League Rules.

The motion that: *“The results of individual matches played during SECF events and tournaments to advanced rules should be reported by team captains/organisers and recorded on the relevant CA ranking/grading system”* was accepted *nem. con.*

The motion that: *“In all SECF GC Handicap Leagues and Events a handicap limit of 12 will apply”* was defeated by an overwhelming majority.

It was therefore unnecessary for the alternative motions (either: *“Players with a handicap of more than 12 may compete but they must play as if they have a handicap of 12”* or *“Players with a handicap of more than 12 will not be eligible”*) to be considered.

The motion that: *“In all SECF AC Handicap Leagues a handicap limit of 20 will apply”* was defeated by a substantial majority.

It was therefore unnecessary for the alternative motions (either: *Players with a handicap of more than 20 will not be eligible* or *Players with a handicap of more than 20 may compete but they must play as if they have a handicap of 20*) to be considered.

The motion that: *“The club eligible to take the Federation’s place in the Federation Shield shall be the winner of the East and West Divisions of the GC Handicap League with the better result (determined by the number of League points and then the percentage of games won). If the two winners have identical results the nominee shall be chosen by a coin toss, or similar method, arranged by the Secretary. If a club cannot take up the place by choice or circumstance iott shall be given to the winner of the other Division. If neither of the winners of the Divisions can take up the place it shall be given to the team from either Division which has the next best result”* was carried *nem. con.*

The motion that: *In the SCEF AC A League teams may, if necessary and by prior agreement, play a match in which both sides field only 3 players*” was carried *nem. con.*

The motion that: *“In the SECF AC B League, by prior agreement, the competing teams may add to their match a further round of 4 singles games, paired in handicap order, each of which will count towards the result of the match”* was withdrawn by the Proposer.

### **Report by one of the South Eastern Constituency Representatives on the Council of the Croquet Association (and the Chairman of that Council)**

Jonathan Isaacs reported that the new CA structure had been in place for just over 4 months. During that time a lot of work had been put in both by the new Council and The Executive Board.

The first agreement was the overall aim: “Getting more people playing more croquet in more places” by promoting, developing and administering the sport.

Council had conducted an on line brain storm where they questioned the various elements of the CA.. They asked what worked well and what needed improvement. They then went on to look at ideas on how they could develop the sport. They realised that they needed extra facts concerning the current state of croquet and instigated a survey. Thanks were due to all of clubs who participated. The SECF gave a good response and the results of the survey were going to be discussed at length in March.

The CA had to prioritise activities. Being a volunteer based operation they have limited time and resources. They therefore decided to concentrate on marketing and on the efficiency of the operation. To do this they set up 3 working groups and a steering group. The 3 working Groups were “ICT issues”; “Efficiency covering non ICT matters” and “Marketing and Communications”..

They were not going to be able to improve everything at once, but changes to the CA website were already well under way, with the objective of making it easier to navigate. They were hoping that trials of this would be completed to enable it to be launched this spring.

Jl's own theme for 2020 was to get Croquet into action mode. There was a lot right with the CA but there were a number of decisions that had taken far too long to be implemented. If the CA could speed up its processes this would be a step in the right direction.

Another area that needed to be agreed was communication between the CA the Federations and the clubs. This was not an easy matter because of the wide variances in how each Federation operated. The CA wanted to improve communications between the organisations. To do so, both the Feds and the CA would need to define what they wanted from the relationship.

Finally, Jl made an appeal for more people prepared to help, especially on action orientated working groups. If members of clubs had a skill (whether it was in IT, marketing, PR, general management or project management) or were just good at making things happen, they should get in touch with him or the Hon Sec., Ian Vincent.

#### **Other business**

There being no further business, the meeting closed and those attending moved furniture and partook of another excellent lunch prepared and served by George Noble and his team (Andy Dibben).