

**Minutes of the 26th Annual General Meeting  
of the South East Croquet Federation  
held at Surbiton Croquet Club on Sunday 27 January 2013**

The following 27 Clubs were represented:

**Bookham U3A** (M Pulsford); **Caterham** (J Gilbert & K Slatter); **Canterbury** (R Loram); **Cheam** (I Cobbold); **Compton** (H Smith); **Crawley** (A Rew); **Dogmersfield** (J & R Catt); **Dulwich** (A Gryce; S Lightbody; P Newton & J Reddish ); **Ealing** (J Reynolds); **Ember** (T Eddy; M Lambert & R Dollimore); **Guildford & Godalming** (C Martin & J Tremble); **Hampstead Heath** (R Hilditch); **Hassocks** (C Corker & G Elsey); **Ivychurch** (G & P Croxford ; K Lennon & V Phipps); **Littlehampton** (P Sherwin); **Merton** (C Doswell and N Furse); **Old College, Dulwich** (T Bingham & C Brook); **Phyllis Court** (F Colman and C Roberts); **Purley Bury** (J Belcher & J Greenacombe); **Ramsgate** (R Loram); **Reigate Priory** (G Gunton); **Roehampton** (S Davies and D Mooney); **Rother Valley** (N Allen & K Minchin); **Royal Tunbridge Wells** (J Chapman); **Surbiton** (N Furse; D Mooney; G Noble & M Pulsford); **Sussex County** (W Arliss; J Isaacs and A Rew) and **Woking** (M Hague; E Mackenzie-Gray; B Jones & M Town).

Apologies for absence were received from:

D Francis (Medway); R Shipp (Preston); A Oulton (Rottingdean); B Williams (West Wittering); R Tillcock (Ryde); M Sinclair (Hayes, Bromley and Keston); S Vallis (Angmering); G Higgins (Hampstead Heath); D Beck (Surbiton) and M Thompson (Guildford & Godalming).

The minutes of the 25<sup>th</sup> AGM held on Sunday 29 January 2012 were approved as a true and accurate record.

**Matters arising from the minutes**

R Hilditch reported that the play off to establish the winners of the 2011 U League had been won by Surbiton. They had represented the Federation in the Secretary's Shield in 2012.

The Chairman (W Arliss) drew attention to newly engraved (and several newly acquired) trophies on display. He drew particular attention to (and held aloft) the Simon Carter Rose Bowl – the splendid silver bowl acquired by Simon Carter for presentation to his own Dulwich team following its triumph in the Southern Challenge. The Chairman also expressed the hope that all trophies would be returned by the holders before the end of the forthcoming season for consistent engraving and subsequent re-presentation at the 2014 AGM.



**Approval of the accounts for the year ended 31 December 2012**

The Treasurer (H Smith) presented the accounts and invited questions about their contents. The accumulated cash assets of the Federation (£7,174 as at 31 December 2012) would, she said, continue to be distributed by way of development grants and loans to members of the Federation as the Committee thought appropriate. Applications for financial assistance for suitable projects were invited.

A Rew (SCCC) proposed and P Sherwin (Littlehampton) seconded a proposal that the accounts should be approved. This was carried *nem. con.*

**Annual Subscription for 2013**

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

**Amendment of the Constitution**

The Secretary proposed the following motion:

Add to paragraph 7(a) of the SECF Constitution (which provides that "The committee shall consist of a Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer and at least two but not more than six other persons") the following:

*"Nominations for these posts may be made by member Clubs and must be accompanied by an agreement to serve, signed by the nominated person. All nominations and agreements to serve must be sent to the Secretary to arrive no later than 7 days before the Annual General Meeting at which the committee falls to be elected."*

The Secretary explained why such an amendment of the (commendably brief) SECF Constitution seemed to be required and fielded questions as to the implications of the change. The amendment was approved with a sufficient number of delegates voting in favour to constitute a two-thirds majority (since none voted against).

#### **Report on the further development of the SECF web site**

The Webmaster (W Arliss) reported that the system for reporting League results via the web site had proved very satisfactory, with over 90% of results being conveyed by that means. The Webmaster pleaded for a supply of reports and photographs so that he could achieve his aim of making the site a scintillating, illustrated newspaper for the Federation. P Sherwin (Littlehampton) asked whether the Federation could make web-site creation and maintenance expertise available to member clubs who might need it. The Webmaster (with that modesty for which he has become notorious) deferred to others with greater skills than he possessed and agreed that the Committee would consider how help might be channelled to those in need from those with appropriate expertise.

#### **The requirements of the Disclosure and Barring Service**

C Roberts (Phyllis Court) gave the meeting useful information as to the existing requirements for CRB checks and the forthcoming alterations to the scheme which would require all those working with children as coaches (and possibly in other capacities) to have appropriate certification or to be supervised at all times by somebody with the same. Detailed guidance was to be expected from the CA in due course.

#### **Report on 2012 Leagues and Events**

The League Organiser (R Hilditch) reported that the “failure rate” (matches not arranged or played) was commendably low and invited acclamation for the following:

AC “A” League winners: **Woking**

AC “U” League winners: **Rother Valley**

AC “B” League winners: **Woking**

GC Level League winners: **Dulwich**

GC Level Restricted League winners: **Merton**

GC Handicap League winners: **Guildford & Godalming “A”**

AC Team Doubles Champions: **Ramsgate**

Ladies’ Team Champions: **Rother Valley**

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

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

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

The GC Southern Challenge Division Two Champions: **Merton**

Representatives of the winning Clubs collected the trophies and were applauded and photographed.

#### **Development Officer’s report**

The Development Officer (M Hague) apologised for the fact that he had been obliged to borrow his wife’s rather lavish spectacles to enable him to peruse his notes and reported on the progress made by Clubs who had received grants from the Federation and/or the CA.

West Worthing had made a good start, doubling their membership in their first season. They had taken part in both the GC Handicap and GC Restricted Leagues and had won matches in both.

West Wittering and Ember had both completed their irrigation projects which had presumably been of significant advantage during the wettest summer since time immemorial.

Crawley had secured their new courts; overcome some municipal foolishness in connection with a proposed lease and were fund raising to meet the full cost of a new, “log effect”, chalet style, vandal proof pavilion, vigorously seeking to move even closer to their target of £25,000.

Cheam had used the grant from the Federation for initial publicity to remarkably good effect and had recruited a staggering 75 members (to use one lawn). The number of members had now risen to 88. Cheam would be entering the GC Leagues in their second year and accepting further coaching courses from the Federation to maintain their "flying start".

Another new Club had been formed at Lodsworth in West Sussex with good support from their neighbours at Rother Valley and money (after a successful appeal) from the CA. They would shortly be receiving a grant of £250 from Federation funds.

A major new development was about to be undertaken at Medway. The Club had despaired of gaining improvements to their existing lawns and had decided to move to a completely new site. They had a substantial mountain to climb and would welcome all suggestions as to how they might raise the funds they needed. They had been offered, and would be receiving, lawn advice from the Federation's Officer (G Noble).

The Development Officer issued a plea for any equipment found to be surplus to requirements (however insignificant or dilapidated) to be donated to the Federation for onward transmission to the needy. He was holding a reasonable supply of mallets but had a shortage of hoops (i.e. he had none left).

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

The Coaching Officer (J Isaacs) reported that that, in 2012, the Academy had held 11 courses of which 3 were new. The Supervised High Bisque Tournament had been a great success with over 20 players participating.

The feedback forms completed after the course had shown that participants in the Bronze course wanted it extended to 3 days to give more time for supervised practice. Conversely, feedback indicated that participants in the GC Improvers Course would have preferred a one day course. The lead coach on this course was also of the same opinion. A one day version was successfully trialled in the West Country and that format would be followed by the Academy in 2013.

One of the Federation's aims was to get clubs to be more self-sufficient in beginner coaching in both GC and AC. The Academy therefore ran a CQC course for 12 would-be coaches at various levels. 10 of the 12 people attending the course were now fully qualified, having completed their training sessions successfully following the course.

In addition to the Academy programme, a number of bespoke courses were run throughout the region from Rye in the east to Cheam in the north & Rother Valley in the west.

In 2013 the Academy was planning to run 11 courses for the CA and the Federation. That number had now been increased to 12 because of the demand. There would also be 4 courses for the WCF. Communication on these courses would probably be quite interesting, having regard to the native languages of the participants.

For Golf Croquet players there will be, in 2013, a GC referees qualification course, a coaches training course and 2 GC improvers courses.

For AC players there will be 3 x 3 day courses and 2 x 2 day courses which will cover all players from scratch to complete beginners. The Coaching Officer said that he would particularly like to highlight the development course in AC handicap play which was a "super bronze" course and was designed to prepare players to be ready to start Advanced AC in the following year.

The Academy would also be running a 2 day AC referees course. It was hoped that many would attend since there was a real need for more referees.

One totally new course was being introduced at the request of one of the Federation's clubs – a one day, one-ball course. It was hoped that this would be well attended as it would be a useful introduction to AC croquet, as well as being a good game for all levels of players.

As an innovation, one club would be visiting the Academy as a coach party for a bespoke, one day course.

If member clubs needed any bespoke coaching (either at their own club or by visiting the Academy) they should make contact with J Isaacs and he would endeavour to get suitably qualified coaches to meet their requirements.

#### **Election of Officers and Committee for 2013-14**

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: **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 and Surbiton) is also a member of the Committee

#### **Election of Auditor (Independent Examiner)**

The Treasurer proposed Graham Thompson (Compton) as an appropriately qualified candidate and the meeting approved his appointment *nem. con.*

#### **The 2013 League Rules**

The Chairman drew attention to his paper on handicap cards and their use and validation. He emphasised that the role of the Club Handicapper was not limited to the allocation of new handicaps but included ensuring that all players participating in an event outside the Club were in possession of a validated and properly completed handicap card; authenticating new cards or changes outside the automatic system by means of a legible name and a signature; examining and reconsidering Club members' handicaps regularly and specifically monitoring the handicaps of players allocated an initial handicap in the season.

The League Organiser (R Hilditch) opened a debate on the requirement that handicap cards should be produced at all SECF League matches and events. He noted that the rules already provide that cards shall be produced for GC matches and that any defaulter must play off a handicap of 6 or the handicap specified in table 3 of the CA's GC handicapping guide where they have an AC handicap of below 6. After a short debate it emerged that there was only limited support for a change from "should" to "must" in relation to AC matches and the suggestion was therefore not pursued.

The motion (proposed in the name of Ramsgate CC) that:

*"In the SECF GC Handicap League no person may play on a handicap greater than 10"* was debated. Thereafter, a vote was taken. 9 were cast in favour of the motion and 14 against. The motion was not therefore carried.

The League Organiser invited consideration of a proposal by the Committee for the splitting of the GC Handicap League (which had 28 teams in 2012) into two regional divisions, with the leaders of each division playing against each other for the right to receive the trophy. It was agreed that he should undertake an appropriate East/West split and should ensure (as he has always done - with one notable exception) that travelling would be kept to a minimum and that clubs would not always play the same four opponents as in the preceding year.

A proposal that the GC League rules should be amended to include a provision for the imposition of a time limit on all single games of one hour unless the team captains otherwise agreed was debated and agreed by a substantial majority.

#### **2013 Events**

The Secretary announced that the dates for all but one of the 2013 events had been fixed and would be published on the Calendar which was presently in draft but would be published in due course. The dates were 18/19 May: AC Team Doubles; 3 July: AC Ladies' Day; 6/7 July:

GC Southern Challenge; 4 August: GC Team Doubles and Singles. The date and venue for the One-ball Teams event would be announced following the exertion of sufficient pressure to produce a volunteer.

**Report by the Federation's Representative on the Council of the CA**

D Mooney reported that significant changes in the way in which the CA would be funded were being formulated and invited members' attention to the proposals which would soon be published. He would be pleased to receive responses from member Clubs to inform his contribution to the debate.

**A proposal for changes of the venue of the AGM in future years**

The Secretary invited consideration of a suggestion that, in future years, members might seek to abandon the delights of Surbiton Croquet Club and "rotate" the venue of the meeting to somewhere like Ramsgate or Dulwich. Faced with such a presentation, the meeting firmly expressed a wish to remain with Surbiton for so long as the Club were prepared to extend its splendid hospitality.

**Other business**

There being no further business, the meeting closed and Club members' representatives partook of an excellent lunch (a smoked fish delight followed by steak and ale pie with duchesse potatoes and mixed vegetables and brought to a delicious conclusion by sticky toffee pudding with deluxe ice cream) – all prepared and served by George Noble and his team of Surbiton members.