

## **SOUTHERN CROQUET FEDERATION**

### **MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

HELD ON SATURDAY, 12<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER 2015 AT 1000 FOR 1030 AT  
WINCHESTER RACQUETS AND FITNESS CLUB

Chairman Chris Roberts welcomed those attending and apologised for the meeting being later due to many Croquet Association activities.

#### **The meeting was attended by:**

Committee Chris Roberts (Chairman), Frances Colman – Phyllis Court, Martin Brandt – Basingstoke, Rita Nunn – Winchester, Richard Harris – Ryde, Barry Dench – Bransgore, Richard Jenkins – Hamptworth and Gillian Pett – Thames Valley.

Club Members Steve Fisher – Harwell (Secretary Elect), Ian Harrison – Basingstoke, Glynis Hassell – Dogmersfield, Ivor Nunn – Winchester, Jerry Wilde – Hamptworth, George Bayliss – Bransgore & Hamptworth, Ian Fleming – Lymington, Vernon Gibbs and Jim O’Keeffe – Ryde, John McMordie – Aldermaston and Paul Wolff – Blewbury.

#### **1. Apologies were received from:**

Richard Keighley (Coaching Officer – Wingrave), Brian Fisk (Federation Representative), Norma Rayne (Thames Valley) and Roy Tillcock (Ryde).

#### **2, 3&4. Minutes of the 2014 AGM**

These, for the meeting held on 29<sup>th</sup> November 2014, had been circulated and there were no questions or matters arising and they were approved by the meeting.

#### **5. Chairman’s Report (Chris Roberts)**

Attendees were invited to contribute to the meeting by asking questions and Committee Members would attempt to answer them either immediately or as soon as practicable. The Committee were thanked for their work on behalf of the Federation. Brian Fisk was standing down from his dual roles as our representative to the CA and the AC Handicapper and he was thanked for his many years of service to the Federation. Also standing down was Rita Nunn who had been our Treasurer for as many years as Chris could remember and he had pleasure in presenting Rita with a Poinsettia plant.

He was pleased to report that our desire to support a main objective of the CA, in promoting competitive play, had been continued this past season and he welcomed the increase in entries for our Team League Competitions which was heartening. He would leave Committee Members to report on the various activities rather than creaming off the highlights in his own report.

Of particular merit were High Wycombe on being awarded the CA Townsend Award which recognises their achievements over the preceding two years, being won in adversity when they went from homeless status to being the proud owner of a brand new two court facility.

Highlighted were SCF Clubs who had played their part in hosting some of the CA’s own tournaments and he congratulated Ryde, East Dorset, Hamptworth and Winchester in this regard. Thanks were due to the organisers for attracting high profile events and some of the best players in the Country to our area.

Chris commended the website to the use of the membership and after some recent difficulties with the renewal of the licence, it had returned to be visited.

The Committee elected at this AGM has convened a meeting of its own this afternoon and will set out plans for next season and he wished there would be a successful and enjoyable season for 2016.

## **6. Secretary's Report (Richard Harris)**

Richard revealed that he had some reservations about taking up the post of secretary but the unexpected outcome was that he had been ill for much of the year and was therefore limited in his activities. His objectives had been to improve communications throughout the Federation and as far as possible the contact list had been updated but there were some recent changes that need to be recorded. He had also produced two newsletters for circulation to all the Clubs early in the year, although later most events had been covered by Committee Members and by viewing the website. He wished his successor, Steve Fisher from Harwell, every success in continuing, particularly with better knowledge of the electronic age.

## **7. Treasurer's Report (Rita Nunn)**

Accounts had been circulated and with the increase in subscriptions from £17 to £20, 22 Clubs had paid membership with one of them paying a late penalty, so these were up from £384 to £445. Tournament entries reflect larger numbers for the Armada this year and higher entrants' fees for the Champions' Tournaments. Tournaments brought in £680 in all.

Expenses had reduced considerably because of new trophies purchased in the previous year, so there was a net profit on tournaments of £130. Income exceeded expenditure by £556.

In the Balance Sheet, debtors of £200 represented entry fees received after the year end, with creditors of £562 being in respect of lawn hire, secretary expenses and engraving. The bank balance stood at a healthy £3,858 being an increase of some £550 on 2014. Rita suggested that we may need to be thinking of projects to utilise some of the funds.

**Comment** – Paul Wolff commented on the question of lawn fees, with the CA having increased the fixed fee from £25 to £30 with further increases for inflation in future. Rita was asked whether there was a payment for room hire for the AGM and she pointed out that it was free at the moment. The Accounts were approved by the meeting on a proposal by Ian Harrison, seconded by Paul Wolff. It was agreed that the subscriptions should remain at £20.

## **8. Association League Manager's Report (Martin Brandt)**

Martin announced that the Advanced A League had again been won by Blewbury who were also the winners in 2014. The Advanced B League was retained by Aldermaston, with Blewbury having finished with the same number of points but Aldermaston were champions as they had won the match between them.

The Handicap Northern Division was won by Oxford University and the Southern Division was won by Ryde, with a superior number of games. Oxford University won the play off against Ryde 6-1.

Oxford, as the 2014 champions, represented the Federation in the Secretary's Shield and he was very pleased to report that they won this, beating Nottingham in the final. This means that Oxford University will be able to enter the 2016 competition as defending champions and Ryde, as this year's runners up, will represent the SCF.

A suggestion had been put forward that we should consider having an AC Short Lawn Team Tournament or League. He reported that the South West Federation held a tournament in 2015 and had 20 entries (4 per team) playing over two days. On questions from the floor, various additional information regarding the game was revealed with the court being 24 yards by 16 yards with different hoop positions. Games were 90 minutes played with handicaps. Paul Wolff suggested dividing a lawn into halves but there could be a problem of setting it up as the hoop holes would be in a different position. The Secretary is to write for responses.

Finally, in the Federation, the winner of the AC Handicap Champion of Champions was David Williams (East Dorset & Hamptworth) and the Armada doubles was won by the Winchester pair of Ivor Nunn and Artur De Costa.

### **9. Golf Croquet League Manager's Report (Frances Colman)**

Frances was pleased to report that all Clubs played their part in the smooth running of the programme, with all matches played on time and the results having been available on the website throughout the season. The past problems with players not producing handicap cards for inspection, appears to be largely a thing of the past. On a couple of occasions, non presented cards had to be sent to the League Manager. The only problem discovered was to do with eligibility. A player can represent more than one Club as long as it is not in the same League. A player may represent the same Club in all Federation Leagues or he may also play for three different Clubs in each of the three Leagues. What is prevented, however, is to play for more than one Club in any one league and unfortunately two players had played for two different Clubs in the Handicap League. This resulted in their games having to be awarded to opponents, which was not an enjoyable task and Captains were reminded to check the eligibility of their players.

Frances also reported on the continuation of the effective handicaps trial, following an experiment in East Anglia the CA Handicap Committee had decided the previous weekend to put forward this alternative system to council. Details will be circulated in due course, together with being supported by articles in the Gazette. It was also recommended that all Club handicappers must check cards during the winter and make adjustments accordingly.

Winners of Leagues were announced and presentations made to Golf Croquet trophy winners as follows:

Level Play League – Phyllis Court A won the title for the first time, preventing Ryde, who came second, achieving a hat trick.

Handicap League – Phyllis Court C won the North Division again, but in the South there was a first time win for Bransgore who went on to win the play off final hosted at Winchester.

Doubles Only League – Ryde completed their league programme undefeated and headed the table by 3 clear points from last year's winners Eynsham.

Solstice Doubles Tournament – was won by Richard Harris and Jim O'Keeffe from Ryde, beating the other Ryde pair of Robin Thornton and Joan Grove.

The GC Handicap Champion of Champions winner was Ian Norris of Phyllis Court.

### **10. Tournament Officer's Report (Richard Jenkins)**

For the second year running, Hamptworth hosted the Solstice and Armada Doubles Tournaments with the two reserve pairs called upon to make up the full number of 16 in the Solstice and the Armada hosting 8 pairs. For the third year the AC and GC singles Champion of Champions tournaments were also held at Hamptworth with 8 entries for the AC and 12 for the GC. Unfortunately, because of various reasons, Ryde were not able to enter either event. Richard requested that all Clubs support the end of season tournaments which provided a highlight to the year. He suggested that play offs could continue into October if required and the final tournaments be held at the start of the following season to take the pressure off Clubs.

The aim is to get all SCF Clubs to run at a minimum, at least a GC or AC internal handicap competition so that the entry for the Champions Tournament is the champion and not just a representative. However, he reminded the meeting that entries should be selected by their Clubs. His feeling as a long standing organiser of events was that Clubs with a minimum of two lawns can run a very good and successful singles tournament with 8 to 10 players. There are many medium/high handicap players as well as low handicappers who want to play competitive croquet. He was only too pleased to help any Club with advertising and obtaining entrants with an example being the AC tournaments at Harwell and Blewbury who had increased their entries for 2015.

### **11. Coaching Officer's Report (Richard Keighley – Read by Richard Jenkins in Richard Keighley's Absence)**

Richard K requested that Clubs contacted him with their coaching requirements and he again requested that they do so looking through to 2016.

For the second year in succession, Hamptworth offered a series of courses in late March/early April 2015 which were run by Cliff Jones (Croquet Quest Academy). They were run for players in both AC and GC but there was also a two day CQC for potential coaches in both versions of the game. There was also a handicapper's workshop to which both GC and AC handicappers were invited to discuss and suggest improvements in the present system. These courses were well attended and also marketed outside our own Federation area.

In April Richard staged a course for GC improvers at Blewbury. Specifically targeted were Clubs not participating in the SF Handicap League in any division and the emphasis was on coaching, concentrating on singles play and the use of and defence from extra turns. This attracted 18 participants from 4 Clubs and was led by three coaches.

High Wycombe requested coaching in AC for their improving players and a session was arranged and conducted by Richard Stevens. In May, after a contact from Buckingham U3A (with 18 members playing for two hours every Friday afternoon in the season at Buckingham Cricket Ground), he organised two beginner's coaching sessions (with two coaches) for this group and put them in touch with other local Clubs which organised friendly games with them.

In 2016 he was aware that Hamptworth proposes to arrange a further series of courses by Croquet Quest Academy and he has in mind organising another GC improver course in mid April himself.

**Comment** - Ian Harrison reported that he was involved in a Hampshire Coaching Pod under Dave Kibble for players with handicaps of 7 or less.

## **12. Development Officer's Report (Barry Dench)**

Barry reported that, in his first year, he was settling in to the job and reacting to situations that had arisen. He had attended two CA Development Committee Meetings to judge grant applications for which only two were received from SCF Clubs and as at the last meeting, only £7,000 had been granted from a total budget of £30,000 for the year 2015.

Contact and consultation activity had taken place with Great Bedwyn to formulate a Committee; with Blewbury with regard to a request for loan of Dawson balls; with Bransgore (his own Club) in respect of a lawn improvement programme under the direction of Duncan Hector which involved the purchase of a roller and towed sprayer for the application of fertilisers and other treatments. Ryde had made contact as they were in the process of a grant application for improved facilities to Sport England for an extension to the Clubhouse. This was turned down but several suggestions were made to the Club for other funding and to enhance future applications. Harwell were looking for a development application and grant to equip a third lawn but this was unsuccessful as the CA normally expects established clubs to provide funds for expansion from their own resources. A contact had been made through Joel Taylor with Wycombe Abbey School and we have provided a set of equipment on loan and hope to continue this support through 2016.

The plan for 2016 is to be more proactive and visiting more Clubs. As there was a large budget surplus of the CA Development Fund, a second start up kit has been approved for the SCF which will give more flexibility to help new and/or struggling Clubs. As well as asking for enquiries from SCF Clubs, consideration is being given to the Committee to earmark a proportion of the Federation's cash balance for worthy development purposes, not otherwise qualifying for a CA grant.

On a query from the floor on junior coaching, it was agreed that there was a problem in providing DBS clearance for coaches involved. With schools it was preferable that a member of staff be in attendance.

## **13. Handicapping Officers' Report**

### **Association – Brian Fisk**

Brian Fisk was attending a CA Management Committee Meeting in London on the day and has nothing to report as AC Handicapping Officer.

### **Golf – Chris Roberts**

With the changes proposed in the GC handicapping system for next season, there is little to report until the details are distributed early in the 2016. We are lucky that Frances Colman sits on the Handicapping Committee and so SCF should be well positioned to be kept informed in this regard. It is vital that all Clubs appoint a Club Handicapper and in this respect Chris is putting together a register of Club Handicappers. At the moment, GC League results are inputted to the website by Chris and so he is in a position to monitor “unusual” results should they occur.

In closing, he would earnestly encourage those Clubs who do not currently participate in our Handicap Leagues to seriously consider an entry for 2016 and to put you on the road to competitive singles play that your players will enjoy.

### **14. Regional Representative on CA Council Report – Brian Fisk read by Richard Harris in Brian’s absence.**

In a note to his report, Brian said “I have enjoyed my time serving on the Committee (over 10 years) but it is probably time for it to end as I am no longer taking an active part in any of the SCF Clubs. I would like to thank everyone who has given me help and support over the years and wish you all every success for the future.”

In his report Brian pointed out that, as a Council Member, he is Chairman of the AC Tournaments Committee and therefore also sits on the Management Committee which oversees the work of Council Committees. He is the Director of the Inter-Club events, such as, the Longman Cup and the Secretary’s Shield and sits on the AC Laws Committee and the Handicapping Committee. In the role of Director he arranged the annual CA versus CA of Ireland match which took place at Hamptworth, with over half of the CA team coming from the Southern Federation.

The major activity of the CA Council over the last year has been the changes to the Constitution to enable Federations to become members of the CA which they have all done so by now. It also enables members of individual Clubs to be members of the CA through paying their Club’s subscriptions with some access to tournaments. This will take some time through necessary changes to the administration systems.

Brian also reported on the proposed changes to the current GC handicapping system, as reported elsewhere.

A second Coaching Academy has been set up based at Budleigh Salterton and will start running courses in 2016. National Croquet Day has been established and will take place for the first time on 5<sup>th</sup> June 2016. Details will be passed to Clubs in due course.

Consideration has been given to the practical problems experienced by players with colour vision deficiency (CVD).

A problem has arisen with regard to elections for representatives on Council where Federation meetings do not coincide with the Council AGM in October. Frances Colman will replace me on Council and this makes sense as Frances is much more actively involved in the SCF than I am.

Chris Roberts commented that the problems with CVD will be dealt with in articles in the Gazette and details of the National Croquet Day will be distributed by the Marketing Committee.

### **15. Election of SCF Committee Officers for 2016**

The following members presented themselves for election and the following list was voted en bloc:

Chairman	Chris Roberts
Secretary	Steve Fisher
Treasurer	Richard Harris
GC League Manager	Frances Colman
AC League Manager	Martin Brandt

Development Officer	Barry Dench
Tournaments Officer	Richard Jenkins
Coaching Officer	Richard Keighley
Handicapping Officer (AC)	Frances Colman
Handicapping Officer (GC)	Chris Roberts
Member without Portfolio	Gillian Pett
Representative to CA	Frances Colman

### **16. Any Other Business**

Ian Harrison reminded attendees that the Federation owned an indoor croquet carpet which was available for usage amongst Clubs. This was one third of the size of a full court and had provision for fixed hoops. Details could be obtained by contacting Martin Brandt or Ian Harrison.

Ian Harrison, as a member of Basingstoke and Winchester but speaking on his own behalf, reminded members that 2016 was the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Alice in Wonderland. He had put together a video demonstration basically about a four ball break but could prepare modular videos on the same subject. He could be contacted if these were required.

Ian also reported that the Wessex Shield 18 Hoop AC Singles Tournament would be held at Winchester and Littleton on 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> May.

Chris Roberts reported on the difficulty of fixing a date for the 2016 AGM, principally because of CA Committee Meetings taking place at around about that time of the year. He made the suggestion that consideration be given to holding the Federation AGM on a week day rather than Saturday and this would be circulated by the Secretary.

The Meeting closed at 12.42pm

Richard Harris  
Secretary