



# East Anglian Croquet Federation

## Minutes of the 28<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting

**21<sup>st</sup> March 2015**

The 28<sup>th</sup> AGM of the East Anglian Croquet Federation was held at the Bygrave Croquet Club, the Moat House, Bygrave, Baldock, Herts SG7 5EF.

The meeting was opened at 10:30am by the acting Chairman Terrey Sparks.

Attendees:- Arthur Reed, Terrey Sparks, Jonathan Toye, Simon Hathrell, Duncan Hector, John Noble, Tracy Martin, Chris Frost, Heather Bennett

### 1. Apologies for absence

had been received from George Collin (chairman), Howard Bottomley (secretary), Jason Carley, Andrew Parish, David Crawford, John Skuse, Harry Bruford and Martin French.

### 2. Minutes of previous meeting:-

The draft minutes had been circulated and were also available on the website. The minutes were approved by the meeting.

### 3. Officers' reports:

#### 3.1 The **Chairman** provided the following comments in his absence:-

"It is probably 20 years since I visited the Indoors at Soham. What I saw on 14th March impressed me. Pairs of all abilities competing in a single AC event. Effective local laws to maximise enjoyment and efficiency. Games ready to start as soon as the lawn was free. If only the same could be said of all outdoor events. As a federation, we can be proud of how the Indoor has evolved. Can the laws of GC be radically altered to create an equally successful indoor version?

Champions Days. Terrey is happy to manage on the days. If Howard issues the invitations to clubs but is unable to guarantee processing the entries, I don't mind doing that, as long as all responses are by email, IE the clubs must provide an email contact that will be relied on. Presumably, entry fees will need to be posted?

It is proposed that we agree and inform the CA Secretary that EACF wishes to be a member of the CA. I differ from Terrey in my understanding of what happens next - I am not expecting that we will have a vote or that anything at the EGM on 28th March will have a direct effect on Federations.

We may decide that we will only accept membership of EACF from clubs affiliated to the CA but I think a change to our constitution may not be needed. The package of proposals from the CA is that Federations will decide to dissolve and be replaced by branches of the CA but I understand this will be part of a later round of CA constitutional changes."

#### 3.2 The **Treasurer** circulated the 2014 accounts to the meeting (Appendix 1).

In summary:

- There is a healthy balance on the current a/c at Barclays
- An Indoor (Soham) surplus of £385
- A surplus from the GC leagues
- 1 club subscription is outstanding, with an untraced payment
- An "Examiner" is sought to replace the current Auditor Mark Homan. Trevor Hiorns was suggested.

- It was decided not to publish the EACF bank account details on the website for security reasons.
- No change to the fees for 2016: proposed by Jonathan Toye, seconded by Duncan Hector. **Agreed.**

The accounts were agreed.

### 3.3 Secretary:

Howard reported that there are 32 affiliated clubs, 27 of whom registered in 2014.

The outstanding 5 have been reminded and asked about their continued registration in 2015.

Whilst early days, 13 have already registered this year with one doing this online.

All their updated details have been entered onto the EACF.

### 3.4 Coaching, Development & Equipment

David Crawford had provided a review of GC coaching in the EACF region (Appendix 2).

Jonathan Toye reported on Development and Equipment (Appendix 3):

- The Norwich application for a Townsend Award was not successful
- Colchester obtained a mower from the CA
- Histon plans to move to a new facility with 2 courts in 1-2 years
- He is looking for a replacement for Coaching.

### 3.5 Golf Croquet

Jason Carley had provided a report (Appendix 4).

- Jason regretted that he had to withdraw from managing the GC Leagues in 2015.

Jason's suggestion that the EACF should pay court fees for the GC League semi-final and final was proposed by TS, seconded by AR, and was **agreed**.

Action: **George Collin** to write to Jason to thank him for his work.

### 3.6 Indoors

Terrey Sparks reported that

- good weather had helped the indoor attendance (!), but that the October weekend had been tricky because there was still outdoor play in several clubs,
- the AC county competition had worked well in 2014
- it was intended to start the 2015-16 winter season a bit later, but otherwise to repeat the 2014-15 fomats

The PC timer program needs an 'auto-run' option. Action: **SH**.

### 3.7 CA Representative

Terrey Sparks reported that the CA finances are OK at present. See Appendix 5.

### 3.8 Webmaster

Simon Hathrell reported on hosting fees and some security concerns. See Appendix 6.

## 4. Election of Officers and Committee members for the 2015 year

Peter Allnutt retired from the committee.

Re-election of Officers for 2015: proposed by JT, seconded by DH, **agreed**.

Re-election of Jonathan Toye as "Development Officer": proposed by DH, seconded by AR, **agreed**.

Election of John Noble as GC League Manager, re-election of Terrey Sparks for Indoors and Simon Hathrell as webmaster: proposed by JT, seconded by TM, **agreed**.

Election of Tracy Martin and David Crawford to the committee: : proposed by AR, seconded by JT, **agreed**.

#### 5. Election of the Auditor

Election of Trevor Hiorns was proposed by DH, seconded by JT and **agreed**.

#### 6. 2015 Programme

The 2014 holders are:

AC Club Champions

'A' block: Simon Hathrell

'B' block: Tim Brewer

'C' block (handicap): David Matthews

GC Club Champions: David Crawford

AC leagues: St. Albans

GC Level Play League: Ipswich

GC Handicap League: Hunstanton

The 2015 AC Club Champions tournament is scheduled for the last weekend of April. Entries from clubs were needed urgently for that, as well as entries for the GC Club Champions tournament in June.

Action: **HB**

#### 7. CA Federation arrangements

Following lengthy debate and comments from clubs it was proposed that the EACF would join the CA in accordance with the CA's new organisation proposals. Proposed by AR, seconded by TM, **agreed**.

#### 8. AOB

After extensive analysis of GC handicaps, Martin French had proposed a new GC Handicapping scheme to the CA, and that the EACF Region should trial the new scheme in the 2015 season. Other Federations would remain using the old scheme (using "effective handicaps") for 2015. Special arrangements had also been made to allow for the relatively small number of cases where players from the EACF played in other regions, and vice versa.

**Agreed.**

Details of the new scheme would be made available via the EACF website. Action: **SH**

## EAST ANGLIAN CROQUET FEDERATION

Statement of Accounts for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2014

	2014	2013
£		
£		
<b>Income</b>		
Subscriptions	600.00	620.00
Equipment hire and sales	94.00	-
Interest received	7.10	3.04
Net surpluses on playing activities		
GC league	190.90	145.80
GC Champions Day	30.00	30.00
GC Inter-Counties –Ken Wheeler Shield	24.00	31.00
AC Champions Day	00.00	4.00
AC League	10.00	(75.00)
Indoor Croquet	385.00	7.00
	<u>1,341.00</u>	<u>765.84</u>
<b>Less Expenditure</b>		
Sundry Expenses	20.76	-
AGM Hall Hire	88.00	71.50
Website	48.99	49.00
Equipment, indoor	366.52	-
Equipment, outdoor	60.00	100.00
Net deficits on playing activities		
GC High Handicap Tournament (not played)	-	7.00
	<u>584.27</u>	<u>227.50</u>
Surplus for the year	<b><u>756.73</u></b>	<b><u>538.34</u></b>
<b>Balance Sheet</b>		
Funds brought forward	4,677.32	4,138.98
Add surplus for the year	756.73	538.34
Funds carried forward	<b><u>5,434.05</u></b>	<b><u>4,677.32</u></b>
Represented by:		
Barclays Bank	1,860.16	1101.54
Nationwide Building Society	3,553.89	3546.79
Debtors and prepayments	20.00	28.99
	<b><u>5,434.05</u></b>	<b><u>4,677.32</u></b>

Arthur Reed .....  
Honorary Treasurer

I have examined the books and records of The East Anglian Croquet Federation. The above accounts are in accordance therewith and with the information and explanations I have received.

Mark Homan FCA .....  
Honorary Auditor

## EAST ANGLIAN CROQUET FEDERATION

Treasurer's Report  
AGM and Committee Meeting 21st March 2015

### 1. Accounts

#### Barclays Bank

The balance on the account is **£1697.78**

This allows for an expenditure of £180 for the supply of a wooden box to house the monitors used for indoor croquet.

#### Nationwide

There has been no occasion to make any transactions on this account and the present balance is **£3553.89**

### 2. Bank Mandate

The signatories on the accounts are currently The Chairman, The Treasurer and The Tournament Secretary. No change is necessary

### 3. 2014 Audited Accounts

Copies of the accounts have been circulated and copies of the *signed* accounts will be available at the AGM. There was a surplus of **£756.73** on the I and E account compared with £578.34 in 2013. Subscription income was down slightly due to 2 members deciding not to renew. There was an income of £94 against equipment which was from the Histon & Impington Club for equipment hire and reimbursement for the cost of repairing some mallets. A healthy surplus was achieved on the GC league which should be borne in mind when we decide if EACF should cover the costs of lawn hire for the semi-finals as well as the final of the GC handicap league. Other outdoor events generally generated a small surplus. The surplus made from the indoor weekends was sufficient to cover the cost of two new monitors and extension leads

The cost of hiring a room at the Hyndham Centre for the AGM was higher because the usual room was unavailable so we had to use a larger room. The outdoor equipment cost of £60 was principally for the repair of some mallets.

### 4. Auditor

Mark Homan has retired as auditor and Trevor Hiorns has kindly agreed to take on the role of examiner from 2015

### 5. AC League Fees

There was a problem in collecting the AC league fees from the Essex and Suffolk league last year because of lack of communication with the organiser and it has been agreed to write these off for 2014. However we need to ensure that the 2015 organiser is aware of this requirement.

### 6. Indoor Equipment

The storage arrangements for equipment such as clocks and monitors needs to be decided as well as any need for insurance cover.

A. Reed

## Review of GC Coaching in the EACF Region

### 2014:

Data was made available to EACF from 16 clubs (about half of the clubs listed)

Six clubs require help

Two – help with beginners only

Two – help with beginners and improvers

Two – help with improvers only

Club members are mostly not prepared to travel to obtain coaching

Five known and recorded full GC coaches in the region (but there may be more)

Nine known and recorded club GC coaches in the region (but there are more)

### The response rate was disappointing

Suggests that coaching is by no means a universal issue

Raises questions about the viability of an EACF coaching programme, were it to be instituted

Could pursue clubs that have not responded – but worthwhile?

### How to respond in 2015 to clubs requesting help?

Options:

Do nothing

Reply saying demand is low and not viable to help

Circulate memo to coaches to gauge willingness to travel & help

Circulate clubs the gauge willingness to pay travel costs

Just go ahead and organise *ad hoc* coaching days at the clubs

Limit coaching to certain handicap levels

Offer coaching to all handicap levels

Inventive alternatives .... suggestions welcome

### UPDATE:

#### February 2015

#### 1. Of the options available and mentioned in the last Review, I have decided upon

- a) 'just go ahead and organise *ad hoc* coaching days at the clubs' initially interested in having GC coaching
- b) Limit EACF-headed GC coaching largely to improvers, but with the proviso that newer (small clubs) entering the competitive foray being able to call on an EACF coach or coaches for initial assistance with basic coaching for match play.
- c) Go ahead with an 'inventive alternative' and offer a 'master class' day given by a high-ranking GC player of note.

**2. What has been done**

- i) Clubs desiring coaching have been contacted and discussions are underway to undertake a universal trial programme for improvers in 2015
- ii) A syllabus, with an outline coaching course for improvers (typically 7 down to 3), has been drawn up under the title 'Malletcraft, Ballcraft and Witchcraft'. This will form the basis of the trial coaching days. Notes will be distributed electronically for the clubs involved; they will reproduce them for members, but not to coaches for use other than at EACF sessions.
- iii) Volunteer coaches for the improvers' courses have been recruited from skilled and willing CA coaches in the region.
- iv) Clubs partaking of the improvers course seem agreeable for the trial year to pay travelling costs for coaches to visit the club itself.
- v) A GC 'grand-master' has been approached and has agreed to give a master class of his choosing in the season. It is intended that the master class will appeal to players of handicap below 4. A club, fairly central to the region has been approached for a venue, and agreed.
- vi) Outline advertising has been drafted to make clubs aware of the activities of EACF in this area – one club has already, having originally no interest, decided to avail themselves of the trial service.

**3. Implications to EACF**

No financial commitments for the trial year. Improved benefits to members.

**4. Benefits to EACF clubs**

Consistency of learning. Introductions to more advanced techniques in golf croquet. Raised standards across the region. More interest in match-play croquet.

**5. The future**

A review of activity will take place at the end of the 2015 season. The hope is that the improvers and master-class concept will prove popular and attract players back year on year in manageable proportions. But we will see.

David Crawford  
February 2015

EACF Development Officer Report      Feb 2015

Norwich supported for Townsend Award.

Histon & Impington for Equipment grant.

Mid-Suffolk (Thurston, nr Bury St Edmunds) for Equipment grant.

Colchester supported for mower.

Loaned equipment returned by Thurston.

Equipment loans to Hethersett and Histon continue.

Jonathan Toye Feb 2015

# 2015 E.A.C.F. Golf Croquet Leagues Report A.G.M. 21st March 2015

## Handicap League

Wrest Park will host the Final on Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> October 2015.

### Attracting new clubs

I re-contacted clubs still not participating in the league, including those with ONE lawn, as a result:

- (E) “Purleigh” are likely to participate in **2016**.
- (C) “Meldreth” are likely to participate in **2016**. As they have only ONE lawn they have agreed to play away games only (unless a venue can be found for their home games).
- (N) “MidSuffolk” are likely to participate in **2016**.
- (N) “Hetherset” – currently awaiting a response: 2015 seems unlikely now, 2016 more likely?
- (W) “Dunstable” are likely to participate in **2016**. As they have only ONE lawn *Leighton Linlade* have agreed to host their home games.
- (W) “Wingrave” are likely to join the EACF and participate with two teams in **2016**. As they have only one lawn *Leighton Linlade* have agreed to host their home games.

Many of these clubs will be playing friendly matches this season as a build up to the League in 2016.

A number of other clubs were contacted but could not produce a team, including “Colworth” (with one lawn) who, for future reference, could have played their home games at *Wrest Park*.

Although no new teams are likely for 2015, there is the prospect of SEVEN additional teams in 2016:

	<u>2013</u>	<u>2014</u>	<u>2015</u>	<i>(projected)</i> <u>2016</u>
<u>Eastern</u>	5	5	<b>5</b>	6
<u>Western</u>	5	6	<b>6</b>	9
<u>Central</u>	5	6	<b>6</b>	7
<u>Northern</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u><b>6</b></u>	<u>8</u>
	<u>20</u>	<u>23</u>	<u><b>23</b></u>	<u>30</u>

### Changes to Rules

It was pointed out to me by several clubs across last season that this League was originally set up to encourage new players, and can be daunting for them without having a minimum team handicap.

It is also preferable to distinguish between this League and the Level Play League.

So I have re-introduced a minimum team handicap of **actual** ‘16’, previously *effective* of ‘20’ in 2013;

Additionally, teams may only play a maximum of one player of **actual** handicap ‘under 3’;

As a result, the “7 day handicap change rule” has been re-introduced (in accordance with C.A. rules), however, this will not apply if it results in more than one player having an actual handicap ‘under 3’.

These changes are unlikely to fundamentally affect the make-up of any teams based on last year’s totals.

## Level Play

Colchester will host the Final on Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> October 2015.  
Terrey Sparks has agreed to officiate.

### Attracting new clubs

I contacted several clubs who have declined, so it seems unlikely there will be any new clubs for 2015. This seems primarily due to some of the low handicap players that are now playing in this League. I believe the only way to attract more clubs is to have a two tier system - I have formulated a new system for 2016, consisting of 'A' and 'B' divisions - to be discussed at a later date.

## Both Leagues

- The doubles are now to be played **first**.  
This will help to keep ties alive right up to the last round as there will be 4 games (and not 2).
- New score sheets produced for 2 or 3 / 4 courts – better structured and simpler to understand.  
(Thanks to Simon for his assistance)

## Finance

I propose to keep the lawn fees payable for both League Finals in line with C.A. guidance at £30 per lawn.

**I propose for 2015 that the EACF should pay £30 per lawn for two lawns towards the cost of both semi-finals, being a total cost £120\*.**

It is unfair to penalize clubs for progressing through to latter stages of the competition.

The cost will be covered by unspent entry fees:

### 2015 Fees vs. Costs:

Income:	Handicap (est.)	230
	Level Play (est.)	<u>110</u>
		340
Expenses:		
	Handicap travel expenses – Manager (est.)	(10)
	- photographer (est.)	(10)
	Lawn fees - <b>Handicap Semi-Finals</b>	<b>(120)*proposed</b>
	- League Finals	<u>(120)</u>
		(260)

Net Income: **£80**

I shall update the Treasurer as to any outstanding entry fees for 2015, later this month.

- Tracy Martin has offered to attend meetings on my behalf, she will also submit Level Play results to C.A.
- I managed to have both 2014 Finals included in the December issue of the 'Croquet Gazette' (page 22).

Jason Carley  
(EACF Leagues Manager)

## E.A.C.F - C.A. Representatives Report

21<sup>st</sup> March 2105

Since the last AGM I have attended two Council and numerous Federation Working Party Meetings dealing with the proposed C.A. Reorganisation. I also serve on the Handicap and Golf Croquet Tournament Committees. Unfortunately due to unforeseen family commitments I was unable to attend the last AGM held in October. Although meetings on both Committees are few in number there has been rather a lot of work by e-mails dealing with the reorganisation and changes to the GC handicap system.

Most of the C.A.'s time during the last year has been discussing and preparing the way in respect of the proposed reorganisation. However, despite this early figures show that for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2014 financially we had a good year in that a projected loss of £8K had provided a surplus of £17K. There are several factors for this such as:

- a): Subscriptions up £2k more than projected.
- b): Donations up £1,200.
- c): Advertising income up £1k.
- d): Grants down by £10k. (Fewer claims received).
- e): £7k grants re-written back. (Not able to take up).
- f): Administration costs down by £3,500.
- g): Marketing costs underspent by £3k.
- h): It was a tough year for the shop. Even though sales were down by £4k profits only fell by around £700.

Congratulations go to David Tutt and Colin Gregory of Letchworth plus Cheryl Stephenson of Chelmsford & Bentley in being awarded Certificates of merit for their voluntary commitment to their clubs.

### C.A. Reorganisation

#### Proposed Timetable of Changes

##### Rationale:

Although finances are healthy at present the CA Council are worried that too few Tournament Members are bearing a too high a burden of the total income and if steps are not taken due to age and the dwindling number of players joining the CA this income will substantially decrease and will lead to financial difficulties. During 2014 there were 204 clubs registered with the CA and a levy of £7.80 per member was paid in respect of 8,168 club members raising £64K. Of these, only 1,699 were registered as Tournament Members paying £42.50 in membership raising £72K. It is this imbalance that the CA wishes to address.

Under the 5 year transitional period the following action is proposed if the proposals at the next SGM on 28<sup>th</sup> March are passed.

## **Plan of Action:**

1. For the first 5 years the club levy will be raised by £1 per annum over the agreed inflation rate.

So for the first year ie; 2016 the levy will increase £8.40 + £1 to £9.40. All club members will be associate members of the CA and entitled to vote at General Meetings and receive other CA benefits. The club vote will be abolished.

2. The second year the levy will increase from £9.40 + £1 to £10.40. It will be at this stage the CA will look at the possibility of staged reductions of the Tournament Members Subscription.

3. The third year the bi-annual inflation rate will be taken into account + another £1 on top of the previous year. At this stage Associate Members will be able to enter CA Fixture Book Tournaments at a daily rate of say £5 per day provided there are vacant places not taken up by Tournament Members.

4 & 5. For the next two years this course of action is proposed to continue so that by the end of the period subscriptions will have equalised and all members will be paying the same subscription and will therefore all become Full members. (However, these changes will only apply to those clubs who have two playing lawns or more).

6. During this period finances will be kept under constant review and modifications made if necessary to the proposed plan.

## **Federations:**

At the present the Federations which comprise of 9 in total and are all sub-autonomous bodies are to be offered free membership of the C.A. and a vote on Council which at present they do not have. The effect of this is that they will lose their limited freedom and come under the auspices of their governing body By doing this there may be a name change to something like 'Croquet Association Eastern' or similar. In addition we may forfeit our responsibility to raise our income from our member clubs which might pass to the C.A. in a single paying point from which we might be financed. However, these details are to be sorted out at a later date. Further to this all individual club members of the Federations will be required to register with C.A. At present there are only two Federations who do not require this stipulation the E.A.C.F. being one of them. Therefore, our constitution will require change should we elect to go in this direction.

Finally, all of these proposals will go to a vote on 28<sup>th</sup> March next when the Croquet Association have called a Special General Meeting to discuss and vote on three proposals. All registered clubs and Full Tournament Members are eligible to vote.

Terrey Sparks  
C.A. Representative

## EACF AGM - Webmaster's report

The EACF website has been operating normally for the last year without any particular incidents. However, the company which hosts the service - Streamline.net - was taken over by Fasthosts a few months ago, so the website is now hosted by Fasthosts. The hosting service has recently been renewed for another 2 years for a fee of £91.93, an increase of about 5% over the previous 2-year renewal.

It is a matter of some concern that the website system logs provide evidence that there have been several attempts from other parts of the world to hack into the underlying database via the 'administration' login using a well-known technique call 'SQL injection'. Fortunately the website contains safeguards against this, and to the best of my knowledge these attacks have not yet succeeded, though I can not be sure.

This prompted a review of the security arrangements, and in particular the way in which user passwords are protected. They had been stored as 128-bit strings using a non-reversible encryption method in such a way that there is no decryption key, nor any direct decryption method. However, it is still possible to apply "rainbow" attacks, i.e. trying huge numbers of possible combinations of words and numbers until one is found which, when encrypted, matches the encrypted one that is stored. I found a public website which advises on password security, and offers to test your security by checking all possible passwords based on every word published in the whole of Wikipedia together with some simple adjustments such as tacking a small number on the end.

I decided to try this out on the encrypted passwords of committee members and others with EACF login rights. A 128-bit encrypted password value means that there are about 250,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000 different possibilities to try, but I was shocked to discover that this website was able to decrypt all but 3 of the EACF passwords **in less than 1 second each**. This is because there are far fewer combinations of everyday words and numbers that people actually use as passwords, and although in the millions, that range is still small enough for a modern computer to check in a fraction of a second. I also noted the weakness of the passwords that most EACF website users had actually chosen!

The website password encryption method is now changed to an even stronger one, and with an additional random component such that this particular type of "rainbow" attack should no longer be possible in practice. Some other security measures are also being introduced to reduce the scope of possible damage if a hacker does break in. However, it is still incumbent on people to choose good passwords:

- Avoid common words or names, even with a small number tacked onto the end.
- Alter *any* ordinary words contained within a password into parts which do not appear in any dictionary or other document, either by inserting other letters or numbers, or by mixing uppercase and lowercase letters in a non-standard way. Preferably both.
- Always use a mixture of letters and digits, and jumble uppercase and lowercase.
- If Google can find anything that matches your password, then so can a hacker!

Simon Hathrell  
March 2015