



DRAFT

East Anglian Croquet Federation

Minutes of the 35th Annual General Meeting

Held on 29th March 2021 - (By Zoom)

The 35th Annual General Meeting of the East Anglian Croquet Federation was held via Zoom by Geoff Johnson in the chair hosted by the Webmaster Simon Hathrell

The meeting was opened at 7.30 pm by the Chairman.

Present: Geoff Johnson (Chair), Terrey Sparks (Secretary), Arthur Reed (Treasurer), Jonathan Toye (Dev & Eqpt.), Cliff Jones (Coaching), Simon Hathrell (Webmaster), Paul Hetherington (Indoors Carpet), George Collin (Safeguarding), Brian Havill & Rich Waterman (CA Reps) and John Reddish (Co-opted) plus 17 club members.

1. Apologies for absence

Bury St. Edmunds, Chelmsford, Meldreth, Southchurch Park and Brian Havill who joined the meeting later.

2. Chairman

Geoff Johnson gave a short introduction to the meeting of the Federations activities during the year and the difficulties incurred due to the current restrictions caused by the current pandemic. Playing wise the season had been a disaster and nearly all events were devastated. Overall, work on Federation matters carried on. (Appendix 1).

3. Minutes of the previous meeting:

The draft minutes of the 2020 (Virtual) AGM had been circulated to clubs and were available on the web-site. The minutes were proposed by Ross Bagni & seconded by Arthur Reed as a correct record, which were then unanimously approved by the meeting.

4. Secretary

Terrey Sparks presented a written report in which he stated it had been a difficult year having to cancel all the agreed fixtures and refund monies. However, there was one bright light at the end of the season when we were able to stage both the AC & GC Club Champions Days at Wrest Park. Unfortunately, the weather left a lot to be desired. Membership held up and a new tool Zoom appeared which allowed us to keep in contact.

Hopefully, things look promising for the future and if all goes well the 2021 summer will revert to some sort of normalcy. (Appendix 2).

5. Treasurers Report & Accounts

Arthur Reed presented a written report in which he indicated that although they showed a surplus of £1,561.90 for the year ending 31st December 2020, £1,250.00 came from a payment of lost equipment on loan to New Hall School. Without this payment the annual surplus would have been £311.90.

To date only one club's subscription is overdue.

With regards to the current year's subscription the Committee had decided in view of last year's non-activity to discontinue the increases passed by the membership at last year AGM. Therefore, for the current year the amount would be £20 for a Full Member Club and £12.50 for Associate Members. It was further agreed that that the previously proposed rate of £25 for full membership and £12.50p for Associate membership would come into force for 2022 effectively a year later having been postponed for 2021. However, this would be subject to a review by the committee in December, who are empowered to delay it once more.

He then presented a copy of the Accounts for the year ended 31st December 2020 which had been agreed and signed off by the Hon. Examiner John Noble.

On a proposal by Arthur Reed and Seconded by Simon Hathrell that these Accounts be approved as a true and accurate record was agreed unanimously by the meeting. (Appendix 3 & 3a).

It was further reported that in view of the healthy state of the finances it had been decided by the Committee that this year a trial Grant be tried so that any surpluses would be returned for the memberships benefit. Therefore, to match the C.A. Subsidy of £25 to its approved courses such as Referees, Coaches and other approved learning events, East Anglian candidates would be entitled to claim a similar £25 from the Federation. Details available from the Treasurer Arthur Reed or the Secretary Terrey Sparks on request.

There then followed a short discussion as it appeared that the meeting was concerned regarding the high level of reserves held and should the committee be looking at reducing this by directing it back to the clubs. Ideas from several attendees included backing taster sessions, lawn hire for open days, training and generally promoting advertising of various club events. It was also suggested that it be directed mainly to the smaller clubs only. The Chairman indicated following a show of hands by 17 - 2 by the meeting that this would be reviewed and given careful consideration in setting up a fund for 2021 and this would be published on the website.

6. Development & Equipment

Further to Jonathan Toye's written report he informed the meeting that since then, Frinton on Sea had received a £3K grant to assist their development. Hethersett on the other hand had withdrawn their application as they could not accept the terms feeling them too onerous.

As previously informed Doddington will be hoping to open their lawns this year.

Ipswich were not having much luck re-allocating and the proposed move to the showground is in doubt. However, they do hold a good cash reserve in the bank.

Jonathan informed those present that he holds a good stock of equipment in store but, is looking to upgrade the position on croquet balls. (Appendix 4).

7. Indoors Croquet (Soham)

It was reported by Terrey Sparks who had been supported by Paul Hetherington (Peterborough), that the first three months of 2020 had been difficult to attract sufficient numbers to cover cost due to the on-set of the Corona-19 virus epidemic which had resulted in a £190 loss for that period. From November 2020 when Paul took over the running of the winter indoors, no sessions had been staged as the hall was closed due to the lockdown. However, we have been subsequently been informed by the leisure centre management that our sessions were secure if and when play can restart.

Paul then informed the meeting that the C.A. had relinquished ownership of the carpet to the E.A. Federation and we are now responsible for it.

A short discussion took place on making use of the carpet more popular particularly as a lot of the regular players are getting older. Chris Joslin (Maldon) raised the point its use is not that well known and it needs to be advertised more. Terrey agreed but made the point, that as the carpet from experience is not conclusive to GC this does restrict its use. (Appendix 5).

8. Webmaster:

Having previously submitted a written report which is attached Simon Hathrell pointed out that details and a full history of the indoor carpet that go back several decades are published on the web pages of the Federation.

Hits to the site are at their highest level ever and the Club Booking System is proving an outstanding success. Hosting costs are also down. (Appendix 6).

9. Election of the Officers & Executive Committee

Apart from the existing members currently serving as Officers or Members on the Executive Committee, no other nominations for office having been received by the Secretary by the published cut-off date and as all those in office have currently indicated that they are willing to commence in office for a further 12 months, on a Proposal by Chris Joslin (Maldon) Seconded by Heather Bennett (St. Albans), the Committee was elected on-block and will comprise of the following

9a. Officers: Geoff Johnson. (Chairman & Golf Croquet League).
Terrey Sparks. (Secretary + AC Leagues & Tournaments).
Arthur Reed. (Treasurer).

9b. Executive Committee:

Jonathan Toye. (Development & Equipment).
Cliff Jones. (Coaching & Handicaps).
Paul Hetherington. (Indoors Carpet).
Simon Hathrell. (Webmaster)
George Collin. (Safeguarding)
John Reddish.

9c. Ex-Officio. Brian Havill & Rich Waterman being C.A. Representatives do not have to seek re-election as serving terms of office for three years.

10. Examiner.

Following a proposal from Geoff Johnson (Watford) Seconded by George Collin (Wrest Park) John Noble (Letchworth) was re-elected as the Hon. Examiner for the current year. He was thanked by The Chairman for his previous year of service.

11. 2021 Programme of Events

The meeting was informed that following a subsequent relaxation of the lockdown it is proposed to stage a full programme of events for the current year.

a. With regards to the Golf Croquet Leagues, Geoff Johnson reported that advanced planning was underway and published on the website. Once confirmation and entry fees have been received numbers will be confirmed. However, there is already indications that the leagues may be slightly smaller due to a reluctance to travel from the more nervous members.

b. Terrey Sparks reported that apart from the Essex/Suffolk league in which in which entries are slightly down the other two sections the Herts/Beds and Norfolk/Cambridgeshire are holding up on their numbers both having 6 entries each and he expects play to commence late May or early June once travel restrictions have been hopefully lifted.

The Ken Wheeler Shield has been arranged at Wrest Park on 25th July but, he will leave the allocation of both the AC & GC Club Champions Days until later in the year when lawn availability is better known.

12. Any Other Business

a. Mike Hills reported that due to the Northampton Clubs eviction their new lawns situated at Wellingborough will not be ready for play. However, all league games and other events will be played away this year.

b. It is proposed to re-instigate the National Short Croquet which will comprise of 14-point team short games which had to be cancelled last year due to the pandemic. Jonathan Toye pointed out that all club secretary's will be circulated shortly with the details which is designed to attract the higher handicap players.

c. David Frost (Enfield) raised the point in which he considered the current GC league regulations by imposing handicap restraints prohibited certain classes of players playing in the GC leagues. The League Manager pointed out that at the end of every season he issues a questionnaire to all the club captains asking for their views on what worked well, and what could be improved. The results of this survey are then used to formulate the following season formats and rules, and any changes are based on a **majority** view of the respondents. This will happen again this year at the at the close of the season.

d. Paul Chard (Northampton) Asked if there was any possibility of introducing a Higher Handicap league say above 8-9? He was informed that it was too late at the moment for the present time. However, it would be explored for the next year.

e. George Collin pointed out that all clubs are expected by their parent body the C.A. to appoint a Local Safeguarding Officer (LSO). There is a National Safeguarding Officer Ron Carter who was available for advice on this subject. It is intended that the E.A. Federation proposes

to stage a Webinar Zoom meeting on the subject and asked Dr Carter to explain the position and our legal responsibilities. All clubs will be notified.

13. Next Meeting

As there was no further business the Chairman on closing the meeting at 9.05pm and thanking all those logging-in, he thought that the Zoom meeting had been a great success and might be the way to proceed in the future to reduce travel. A poll of all present was unanimous in agreeing this was a great improvement than previously achieved.

The date of the next and 36th Annual General Meeting will be notified at a later date.

Presentations

Immediately after the closure of the meeting Paul Hetherington (CA Marketing) & Simon Hathrell (EACF Webmaster) presented short sessions on Marketing & Utilising the EACF Lawn Booking System respectively to which a majority of those logged-in attended.

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