

Soham 2023/4

Publicity

Soham has been publicised in the Croquet Gazette and E-news plus the Notts list and Croquet England social media channels, as well as by email direct to all those who have played in the past five years three times and on Croquet England social channels.

Costs

The cost for playing at Soham remains £20 per session. We require a minimum of 14 teams (28 entries) across the weekend to break even as the centre is now charging £550 per event.

Events

November

20 players across the weekend income £400 so loss of £150

Saturday November 11th 2023 Inter Counties level advance alternate stroke speed doubles with peels. Winners David and Alison Maugham

Sunday November 12th 2023 MCP Mallets speed doubles. Winners David and Alison Maugham

December

22 players across the weekend income £440 so loss of £110

Saturday 16th December 2023 Rose Bowl, alternate stroke speed doubles. Winners David and Alison Maugham

Sunday 17th December 2023 Soham Trophy, normal speed doubles. Winners Duncan Hector and Colin Spencer

January

17 players across the weekend income £340 so loss of £210

Saturday 13th January 2024 Belgian Cup, alternative shot doubles. Winners Adrian Kirby and Stephen Cornelius

Sunday 14th January 2024 The Soham Trophy, normal speed doubles. Winners David and Alison Maugham

February

22 players across the weekend income £440 so loss of £110

Saturday 10th February 2024 Albert Lawrence Trophy, alternate shot speed doubles. Winners Gabrielle Higgins and Anable McDiarmid

Sunday 11th February 2024 The Martins Trophies, progressive doubles. Winners David Maugham and Ken Knock

March

Saturday 9th March 2024 The Cornelius Cup, alternate shot speed doubles. 7 entries

Sunday 10th March 2023 The Millennium Cup, speed doubles. 6 entries

Attendance

Most of those who would have been considered Soham regulars in the past have dropped out or reduced attendance primarily due to age and ailments and increasingly we are having to pull in entries from further afield. Despite Soham railway station now being open again it is proving difficult to recruit attendees. Also generally milder winters mean increasingly clubs keep at least one lawn open over winter whilst many other smaller scale indoor set-ups now prevail in the region again all factors in reducing attendance.

Rules

Golf Croquet has been tried in the past but was found not a viable option on the indoor carpet so all games run to a slightly modified version of the Short Croquet Association rules.

The Future

I am happy to continue managing the tournaments at Soham but I do believe the federation needs to consider the long term feasibility of indoor croquet and formulate an exit plan as again we are looking at making a financial loss on supporting an activity where a large proportion of the participants are not members of clubs in our federation.

Negotiations with the Soham sports Centre may yield a viable new plan, the bowls club which has its own indoor room no longer operate on weekends and our court could be set up in this room which would cost less to us as has no other use whilst the centre can relet our room at a higher premium for football or roller hockey. Negotiations are on-going but suggesting we pay a base rate of £350 per weekend and then profit share any surplus. There is also a local funder who would fund the creation of a Soham Indoor Croquet Club by a substantial sum that would be enough for activities to continue next season as per this one. To pass the responsibility on to a new Club will save the EACF from losing further monies on supporting indoor croquet but at the same time enable the continuation of this facility.

It could also in the future lead to Soham becoming a centre for Para-croquet as the carpet is a great surface for wheelchair users.

Proposal

The EACF to initially loan for free the indoor kit to a newly formed Soham Croquet Club on condition that it affiliates to both the Federation and Croquet England.

Paul Hetherington 12/02/2024