

Southern Croquet Federation

Annual General Meeting by Zoom

Tuesday 23 November 2021 at 11.00am

Present:

Chairman: Chris Roberts.

Committee: Peter Allan, John Beckerleg, Steve Fisher, Ian Harrison [to item 4], Brian Jamieson, Richard Jenkins [to item 2.11], Richard Peperell and Roy Tillcock.

Club representatives: Roger Booth (Eynsham), Carol Jamieson (Caversham), Jean Hammond (Thames Valley), Richard Keighley (Wingrave), Joe King (Blewbury), Valerie Palmer (Eynsham), Norma Rayne (Thames Valley), Keith Southern (East Dorset), Janet Trueman (Hamptworth) [to item 2.7] and David Vincent (Blewbury).

Apologies: Alex Ball (Basingstoke), Frances Colman (Phyllis Court), Anthony Hardwicke (Bradfield College), David Long (Blewbury), and Paul Wolff (Blewbury).

1. Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 24 November 2020

Approved.

2. Reports

2.1. 2.1.Chairman

Chris Roberts said it had been a better year than 2020 with much more croquet played. He welcomed increased interest in schools. Bradfield College were active and had joined the CA and the Federation; other schools were also showing interest. Frances Colman had recently stood down as the Southern Constituency member on the CA Council. He paid tribute to the work that Frances had done over 10 years on the SCF Committee, including promoting competitive GC and developing handicapping. She would be continuing to chair the CA National Handicapping Committee and serve on its GC Tournaments Committee.

2.2. Treasurer and Annual Accounts 2020-2021

Presenting the Annual Accounts, John Beckerleg said after the previous quiet year the Federation's finances had returned to more normal levels. 21 clubs had paid subscriptions, which he recommended should stay at £25. Higher than normal engraving costs reflected some engraving carried forward from the previous year and the purchase of two new trophies. Overall income exceeded spending by £426, adding to the Federation's reserves. The Accounts had now been examined by Raymond Wood.

Ian Harrison proposed and Steve Fisher seconded that the 2020-2021 Accounts be accepted. Agreed unanimously.

Brian Jamieson proposed and Richard Keighley seconded that Raymond Wood be appointed examiner for 2021-2022. Agreed unanimously.

2.3. AC Leagues Manager

Introducing his report, Steve Fisher said he had tried to tackle some of the problems that had been apparent with AC leagues for some time. The main changes were:

- It would be entirely up to clubs to schedule matches, which must be completed by 15 September. The League Manager would not be involved.
- New procedures at the end of season for eliminating clubs who had not fulfilled all their fixtures.
- More formal procedures for improving communication between clubs, including sanctions if a club attempted to reschedule a match less than 72 hours before the previously agreed arrangement.
- Match results to be submitted using an online form designed to avoid errors.
- The format of the AC Handicap final to be simplified with all games on a single day and one game defined as the deciding game in the event of a draw.
- The Short Croquet league to again be offered, hopefully with more than the two clubs who competed in 2021.

Steve said that these changes would be incorporated into the league regulations he would be sending to clubs.

2.4. GC Leagues Manager

Roy Tillcock said that the GC leagues had worked well in 2021 after little competitive play the previous year. The main new feature was the trialling of Advantage play in the Handicap league. Unfortunately, Thames Valley, Littleton and Winslow were unable to field teams for various reasons. Only one match was not played and one could not be completed because of waterlogged courts. He would be sending out details of 2022 leagues and expected entries by the end of January.

Richard Keighley expressed his appreciation of the larger clubs who offered neutral venues to single court clubs, like Wingrave, who could not stage home fixtures.

2.5. Tournaments Manager

The programme of tournaments proposed for 2022 was:

Champion of Champions GC Handicap Tournament	Hamptworth	12 April 2022
Champion of Champions AC Handicap Tournament:	Hamptworth	13 April 2022
Solstice GC Level Play Doubles Tournament:	Hamptworth	11 June 2022
Armada AC One Ball Singles Tournament	Winchester	14 June 2022

2.6. Coaching Officer

Introducing his report, Ian Harrison said that the new Chiltern Croquet Academy was proving to be tremendous asset for the region, offering a wide range of courses. He reminded the meeting that Federation had a scheme for reimbursing club members' fees for courses such as coaching and refereeing, which would benefit the wider croquet community. He referred to the work of assistant Federation Coaching Officers, Roger Price, Pam Sim, Richard Stevens, Paul Wolff, Raouf Allim and Richard Keighley, who helped him provide coaching assistance across the clubs in the region. Finally, he drew attention to books on GC by Stephen Custance-Baker and on AC by Roger Mills, as well as his own GC and AC coaching videos available on the Basingstoke CC website.

2.7. Development Officer

Peter Allan said that White Horse CC had been officially wound up. Some of the former members had joined Harwell. A new club was emerging in Charlbury and there were plans for one at Hartley Witney. During the year he had helped Ryde, Hartley Witney and Eynsham clubs with potential development grant applications.

The CA Development Committee was encouraging clubs to use the Croquet Matters interactive tool to assess their performance in governance and development. It was available at:

<https://www.croquet.org.uk/?p=games/clubs/info/croquetMatters>

The CA Development Committee had purchased 12 sets of foxy hoops, with long narrow spikes instead of the usual carrots. These are designed for playing on lawns not exclusively used for croquet, such as bowling greens. Ian Harrison said he would like to try these hoops on the Basingstoke lawn, which was shared with a bowls club.

2.8. AC and GC Handicap Officers

Richard Peperell reported the results of a questionnaire he had sent to clubs' AC handicapping officers. It was based on the role of AC handicappers as described on the CA website.

- 12 out of 14 SCF clubs that play competitive AC had responded to the questionnaire.
- A few of these clubs did not have AC handicappers, but now do.

- The overall adherence to CA guidelines was only moderate, despite the efforts of the CA Handicap Committee to publicise what was required.
- The questionnaire exercise had succeeded in making SCF club handicappers more aware of CA guidelines and requirements of the job.
- There had been an encouraging degree of honesty from clubs about their current performance in dealing with AC handicaps.

Richard Jenkins said that he intended to prepare a similar questionnaire for SCF Club GC handicappers.

Joe King said that it was difficult for AC high handicappers (up to 24) to gain entry to tournaments. Should handicappers reduce handicaps to 20 to ease the problem? The Chairman (who sits on the CA Handicap Committee) responded that this is expressly forbidden by the CA handicapping guidelines. Joe said that his club, Blewbury, would again stage a high bisquers tournament in 2022 (handicaps (16-24). The situation would be improved if other clubs staged similar tournaments.

Joe also sought advice about handicaps for Short Croquet. When should players have a separate Short Croquet handicap, independent of their AC handicap, and use a Short Croquet handicap card?

The Chairman replied that occasional Short Croquet (SC) players should continue to derive a SC handicap from their AC Handicap. Individuals playing SC more than occasionally must use a separate SC handicap card. However, in the latter case, if a player's AC handicap reduces, they must adjust their SC handicap (on their card) accordingly. The reasoning here is because an improvement in AC skills level will be replicated in their SC skill level. When players should use a separate SC card and the relationship between AC and SC grades is explained fully on a dedicated page on the CA website:

<https://www.croquet.org.uk/?p=games/association/handicapping/short>

On this page is also a link to a downloadable SC handicap card (and printed 'card' versions are available to order from the CA Office).

2.9. Webmaster

Steve Fisher said that keeping the website up to date was a challenge. He was interested in knowing what clubs wanted from the website and hoped to receive some feedback.

2.10. Southern Constituency member of the CA Council

In the absence of Frances Colman, the Chairman highlighted a couple of points in her report.

Because of Covid-related travel restrictions in New Zealand, the 2022 World GC Championships would once more be held at Sussex CC, Southwick from 30 July to 7 August. This was an opportunity to see the very best players. Clubs should publicise the event amongst their members.

The CA Council and its Executive Board had made progress in the difficult area of safeguarding children and vulnerable adults. Ron Carter (Ealing CC) had been appointed CA National Safeguarding Officer. He wanted to receive the names of clubs' safeguarding officers. In the absence of a nominee, club chairmen would be deemed to be responsible.

In conclusion, the Chairman thanked Frances for her past efforts and achievements and introduced Peter Allan who had been elected as her replacement on CA Council.

Peter said he had attended his first two Council meetings. Charitable status for the CA and diversity had been the two main matters discussed.

3. Amendments to the Constitution

The Secretary said there were four significant proposed amendments to the SCF Constitution. The amendments were designed to:

- i. Permit the Federation's General and Committee Meetings to be held electronically (*Para. 6*).
- ii. Allow nominations of candidates for election to the Committee to be made electronically, bringing this in line with other communication between Member clubs and the Federation (*Para. 7*).
- iii. Implement a Committee recommendation to disallow postal or proxy voting at General Meetings (*Para. 9*).
- iv. Update the titles of Committee members (*Para. 10*).

In addition, there had been several improvements to grammar and presentation, none of which was material to the provisions or intentions of the Constitution.

Brian Jamieson proposed and Richard Peperell seconded that amendments be accepted *en bloc*. Agreed unanimously.

4. Evaluation of SCF Advantage Golf Croquet Trial

Roy Tillcock said that, following the trial of GC Advantage play in the SCF GC Handicap league in 2021, he had analysed 836 of the games played in the trial and compared them the results of 903 league games in Extra Strokes handicap play in 2019. He also benefited from valuable feedback from clubs and players.

His analysis showed the trial had a bias in favour of weaker players when handicap differences were large. To counter this bias he had recalculated starting scores so that weaker players never started with more than +2 hoops. He believed that an extension of the trial in 2022 would show results closer to a 50/50 parity between weaker and stronger players across the range of handicaps that were likely to occur in the SCF league.

He had submitted a fuller, seven-page report to the WCF, which should be considered before the end of the year.

Thanking Roy for all his work on the 2021 trial, the Chairman said it was evident that the WCF wanted GC Advantage play to go ahead. There was a new section on Advantage play in the draft 6th edition of GC Rules, available on the WCF website. It was seen as an alternative to Extra Strokes handicap play, not a replacement. The CA would have to decide their policy on Advantage play. In the meantime, subject to WCF and CA approval, the SCF would adopt Advantage play in the GC Handicap league in 2022, using the modified starting scores that Roy had calculated.

5. Prize giving

Chris Roberts announced the winners of the Federation's leagues and tournaments in 2021, as follows:

Competition	2021 Winner
AC Advanced A-Level	High Wycombe
AC Advanced B-Level	Hamptworth
AC Handicap	Ryde
Short Croquet	Blewbury
GC Open	Phyllis Court
GC B-Level	Blewbury
GC Advantage	Ryde
GC One Court Clubs Handicap	Caversham
GC Doubles	Eynsham
Solstice GC Level play Doubles	Keith Southern & Tim Hughes (East Dorset)
Armada One Ball	Chris Pegrum (Caversham)
AC Champion of Champions	Peter Allan (Harwell)
GC Champion of Champions	Tim O'Donnell (Hamptworth)

6. Election of Committee

Chris Roberts reminded the meeting that the entire Committee had to be elected at each AGM. Nominations were as in the following table.

Carol Jamieson proposed and Richard Keighley seconded that the nominees be elected *en bloc*. This was agreed unanimously.

Chris Roberts	Chairman
John Beckerleg	Treasurer
Brian Jamieson	Secretary
Peter Allan	Development Officer
Ian Harrison	Coaching Officer
Richard Jenkins	Tournaments Officer
Steve Fisher	AC Leagues Manager
Roy Tillcock	GC Leagues Manager
Richard Peperell	AC Handicapper
Richard Jenkins	GC Handicapper
Steve Fisher	Webmaster
Anthony Hardwicke	Schools and safeguarding
Peter Allan **	Southern Constituency member of the CA Council

** : This post is not decided at the AGM.

The meeting concluded at 1.35pm.

November 2021