

Minutes of the North West Federation of Croquet Clubs AGM

Saturday 19st November 2016

- 1 The Meeting was attended by 31 people representing:
- | | |
|------------------|--|
| Bowdon: | Ken Cooper, Graham Good, John Howarth, Steve Reynolds, David Walters |
| Bury: | David Barrett, Jean Hargreaves, Richard Harvey, Paul Rigge, Barbara Young. |
| Chester: | Sarah Andrew, Alan Clare, Pat Clare, John Dawson |
| Craig-y-Don | John Hannah, Jack Pattenden |
| Crake | Jim Alcock |
| Culcheth: | Bob & Ann Connop, Alan Wright |
| Fylde: | Peter Wilson, Liz Wilson. |
| Pendle & Craven: | Kathryn Schofield, Roger Schofield, Garry Wilson |
| Salford | Frances Rollinson, Irene Waterhouse |
| Southport: | Tony Thomas, Don Williamson. |
| Tattenhall | David Boyd |
| Westmorland | Ivan Wheatley |

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. **Apologies for Absence.** Brian Storey (Bowdon), Paul Kenworthy (Bury), David Crawford (Chester), Elmyr Hughes (Chester), Jean Mathews (Flixton), James Hawkins Liverpool, Georgina Llewellyn (Llanfairfechan), Howard Bowron (Penrith), Ruth Wrigley (Tattenhall), John Shakespeare (Westmorland)
3. The minutes of the Spring Meeting held on 5th March 2016 were confirmed as a correct record.
Proposed – Roger Schofield, Seconded – Garry Wilson
4. Matters Arising – none

5. Reports on the Past Year

- A **Chairman – Garry Wilson** said that his time had been gainfully employed by a) finding volunteers to fill vacant Federation Offices, b) discussions on the bonus points question in both AC Advanced leagues, c) the changes to the constitution, which are required to reflect the CA changes and to update the constitution and make it fit for the 21st century, and d) discussions with Croquet North and Yorkshire Croquet regarding the Pennine Cup, which are still on going. He thanked Graham Good for his assistance in framing the revisions to the constitution and hoped that the committee would be able to call upon his expertise again to fully review the constitution in greater detail.

B **Secretary (acting) Liz Wilson**

Nothing to report that is not up for discussion during the meeting.

C **Treasurer - Bob Connop** – See appendix i

Money from the Millennium Competitions was collected too late to show in the accounts and will be included next year. The subscription will stay at the present level of £20.00. Chris Slater was willing to be the Independent Examiner for next year's accounts and was re-appointed.

D **CA Representative - Peter Wilson (retiring)**

Appendix II is the article by Jeff Dawson regarding membership changes. The fourth paragraph mentions a delay to the on-line database but much progress has been made. Nevertheless the database is likely to go live without full functionality at first. In that report the membership categories are described as PREMIUM, SUPPORTER and STANDARD. These titles (but not what they represent) are now being discussed by various parts of the CA and may be changed.

IN THE FUTURE- It is expected many clubs will take the opportunity to maintain their own membership list directly on the CA website. Although this is unlikely ever to be compulsory it will be a useful resource to clubs that do so.

In fact the CA expects there to be a varied response from clubs not doing their own list. Some may keep the CA informed of comings and goings immediately while others may not be in a position to be so well organised.

POPULATING THE NEW DATABASE - With clubs responding in so many ways the CA office intends to take extra staff on when the data starts to come in. This transition year is going to be a one off, while clubs come to grips with what they want to do.

LAST THOUGHTS - Failure to register a member immediately hurts only that member who has not had standard CA membership conferred to them. They have no Gazette and no entry into tournaments. But then there will be a date when the clubs' annual levy is calculated by the system. Failure to register them by this date will result in the club not paying the full levy. As with the current levy there is no audit.

John Dawson

John Dawson reported that he had joined the AC tournament committee and marketing committee. He said that the CA was beginning to tackle the issues of governance (namely the size and representation of the governing body and "who does what" at the levels of club, Federation and national CA levels) in the new context of CA membership extending to all members of affiliated clubs.

E **League Manager - Tony Thomas** – See appendix ii

The Chairman thanked Tony for his efforts over the last 8 years. He has done an excellent job. The meeting added their thanks.

F Coaching Officer – Elmyr Hughes

1) Friday 13th May I ran an AC course aimed at beginners / improvers at Llanfairfechan, with 4 attendees from the Club. Even though the numbers were low we all had an enjoyable time and I was made to feel very welcome. I did extend an invitation to the players to visit Chester to help with their progress, but as yet this has not occurred.
2) Sunday 22nd May I was one of 4 assistant coaches at Bowdon, where an AC Course entitled "The Next Step " was organised and run by Ken Cooper. This course was well attended with 16 players participating and I believe it was well received by all concerned.

G Development Officer – James Hawkins

Three clubs in the North West have received grants from the CA over the last year, and the money has been put to use. At the November 2015 meeting of the Development Committee, **Penrith** received money for a trailer to transport mowers away from the flood-prone club to higher ground. This has now been purchased, but we must hope it doesn't see too much use. **Pendle** bought a new tractor mower. Normally, replacement equipment would fall outside the criteria of the Development Committee, but it was argued that it was part of a change to the maintenance regime at the club, rather than an upgrade. In view of Pendle's importance to the CA as a large tournament venue, the grant was approved, and the mower has been in use throughout the season. **Craig y Don** were granted the finances to insulate their clubhouse, enabling its use during cold weather. The work is now completed, and the CA hopes it proves successful in retaining existing members and recruiting new ones. The policy of the CA for development grants is set out on the CA site. In general the committee like infrastructure projects such as lawns and clubhouses, and dislike paying for equipment, such as hoops or mowers. That's not a cast-iron rule, as they remain receptive to any project which will see grant money well-spent. Small grants up to £2,000 can be awarded directly by the committee, and often can be greenlit quickly midseason without having to wait for a winter committee meeting. Grants up to £5,000 are referred to a Major Grants panel, and grants above that need to be referred to the Management Committee of CA Council. Clubs are encourage to apply, and I'm happy to discuss applications and how to tailor them to meet the requirements of the CA.

H NW Championships – James Hawkins

Culcheth won this year's Golf, Bowdon won the Short, and Fylde won the Handicap, the Advanced and the Overall Championship title. Congratulations to all. This was my first year in the Manager's role, and I must address my thanks to Southport as hosts, and particularly to Jean Hargreaves for her hard work in behind the scenes planning in the weeks before the event. I've inherited an event which already runs smoothly. Next year I need to make some contingency plans for dealing with results, particularly when the scoresheets get so wet that the ink dissolves. I look forward to 2017. There's room for more teams than we had this year, and I encourage clubs to field as many entrants as they can. Both socially and competitively, it's a great event and one the Federation should be proud of.

I Safeguarding Officer – Jean Hargreaves

No Safeguarding issues regarding members under 18 years of age reported.

J Pennine Cup Captain - Garry Wilson – Garry reported that he had found a sponsor but that the event did not go ahead due to lack of willing competitors

K Federation Handicapper – Don Williamson

There is a perennial problem, not only in the North West but country wide, of differences in the level of handicaps at different clubs for the same level of skill particularly when few players take part in competitions away from their home club. The CA Handicap Committee has tried over the years to find solutions with limited success, the automatic system works but is not effective for those who only play few competitive games or who improve rapidly. The handicap web pages on the CA site have just been up-dated to expand the role of handicappers in managing the system and to define the levels of responsibility of Club, Federation and CA handicappers. It is essential that all handicappers adhere to the guide lines particularly in setting new handicaps, allocating a handicap for players moving to a different version and players returning after an absence from the game. Whilst there are separate pages for AC & GC there are very few differences, the main being in the tests for setting initial handicaps. I urge ALL handicappers to review the CA website handicap pages. The CA records handicapper's level on the membership data base but the information is not necessarily correct and in some cases differs from the information on the NW Fed site. It would assist if Clubs could send me a list of their handicappers AC & GC at Club and CA level and who is the main one for contact. If any Club Handicapper would like any help please contact me. If any Club appoints a new club handicapper please let me and the CA office know contact details. We had a meeting of handicappers in 2013 if handicappers feel another would be useful please let me know.

Much discussion ensued and the main point to come out was that players MUST have their cards at matches. The League Rules (5c) say team captain should vouch for player Handicap stated in the absence of a card. If opposing captain unhappy, write to League Manager after the match who will then confirm correct handicap with club and if there is a difference, player games will be conceded retrospectively. It is up to players and the captain to ensure cards are available.

It was agreed that another course would be useful. This will be arranged at Whitehead Park early in the Spring. The date to be agreed. It is hoped that ALL clubs will send their Club Handicappers to this event.

6 Adoption of the New Constitution for the North West Federation of Croquet Clubs

6a This was postponed until later in the meeting after the new officers had been elected – See later in the minutes

7 **Provision of Meals at NWFCC League Matches**

The Proposal from Bowdon - *That, in ALL NWFCC League matches, ALL players shall provide their own food catering during the match and afterwards. The Home team shall provide, free of charge to the away team, beverages of hot coffee and tea, water and biscuits as required by any player from their arrival at the match venue* – was withdrawn.

It was then re-proposed by the Chairman and seconded by Graham Good. There was much discussion on both sides. The motion was defeated.

Please note there will be no change for the Level Play Golf – players take their own lunches.

8 **Bisques in Short Croquet League Matches – proposal from Don Williamson**

Rule 18 – delete “to base 4” and new rule 18 to read “Games shall be played full bisque handicap”

Short croquet was introduced to encourage newer players and to enable them to learn to play 4 ball breaks and to experience the end game including pegging out. The handicaps were designed to ensure that majority of games finished with a peg out. As players improved they learned how to peel an opponent through hoop 6 and peg them out, the opponent learned how to play a 3 ball break. The use of base four in the League has destroyed this. In league games fewer than 25% have ended with a peg out and in 1 club's internal competition using base 4 only 10% pegged out, however in a club not using a base over 80% pegged out. It seems clear no base means more games finish with a peg out.

Again much discussion. Fylde reported that they had run their internal Tournament without a base and it worked very well.

Chester suggested lengthening the time limit to 90 minutes. The proposed amendment to lengthen the time to 90 minutes was passed. The proposal to delete the base was then voted on and was passed.

9 **Handicap in GC Handicap League Matches – proposal from Jean Hargreaves**

League Rules for Handicap Golf Croquet Rule 21 amend 21 (b) to read:-

(b) No player shall play off a handicap higher than 14. Current (b) to be renumbered (c)

This was discussed and the original proposal was amended so that the highest handicap should be 12 not 14 The amended proposal was then passed.

10 Arrangements (dates and locations) for NW Federation Millennium Competitions

- a) Advanced Fylde – 8-9 April
- b) Handicap Pendle – 6-7 May
- c) Short Chester Sunday 14th May
- d) Hcp Golf Bury 14th May
- e) Lvl Golf Bury 17th June

11 Arrangements for Festival of Croquet – 24th and 25th June. James Hawkins to manage and Liz Wilson to be secretary.

12 **Coordination of dates for CA or other tournaments in the NW**

8 April	Crake Alternate Shot Doubles AC
14-17 April	Pendle & Craven John Beech Memorial Easter Tournament
22-23 April	Southport Advanced Weekend
29-30 April	Pendle Lancashire Open Golf
29 April -1 May	Bowdon May Handicap Weekend
13-14 May	Pendle & Craven B-Level Advanced Weekend
20 May	Pendle & Craven B-Level Golf
20 -21 May	Southport Handicap Weekend
3-4 June	Bowdon Advanced Weekend
4 June	National Croquet Day
10-11 June	Pendle & Craven Advanced Weekend
17-18 June	Pendle and Craven Open Golf
17-18 June	Crake Advanced
24-25 June	Festival
4-7 July	Pendle & Craven Midweek Tournament
8 July	Bury National B Level Golf
7-9 July	Bowdon Northern Week (Advanced and Level)
10-12 July	Bowdon Northern Week (Handicap)
22-23 July	Southport Super B and B-Level Advanced Weekend
29-30 July	Fylde Handicap Weekend
5-6 August	Chester GC Oplus Cross Over Tournament
5-6 August	Bury Handicap Weekend
11-13 August	Pendle Handicap Weekend
19-20 August	Crake Advanced
25-28 August	Bowdon North of England Championship
2 – 3 September	All England Area Final Venue TBC
16 -17 September	Southport Advanced Weekend
16-17 September	Bowdon B-Level Advanced Weekend

Bowdon:- Bowdon Croquet Club continues to go from strength to strength, largely due to the ever-continuing conveyor belt of recruits to the club. This year was no exception and we had a very successful recruitment drive, taking on a record 22 new members, mainly through our Taster Days and Beginners' Course. By the end of the year we had a total of 110 Full Playing members, plus another 19 Country, Far-Country, etc. The club held one of the most prestigious events in the C.A. calendar when we hosted the bi-annual Solomon Trophy. Bowdon also held the usual array of C.A. Events: the May Handicap Weekend, the June Advanced Weekend, Northern Week, the North of England Championship and the B-Level Weekend. In the Inter-Club national tournaments, Bowdon reached the Finals Weekend of the Longman Cup, a semi-final place was achieved by the Inter-Club A.C. team, while a quarter-final place was reached by the Mary Rose and Inter-Club G.C teams. The club had success in the North-West Federation leagues, winning the Advanced, B-Level, Short and Level-Play Golf Croquet Leagues. Many internal club competition matches were played in the summer and it was good to see some of the newer players winning games. The famous weekly Wednesday Competition still proved very popular with 66 different players taking some part in it throughout the year. We have seen no action yet from the Council regarding their plans for the car park but we aim to hold discussions with them over the coming months. This year's coaching course was a newly-written course aimed at fast improvers to help them with their break play. It was run as part of the North-West Federation Flying Circus series of courses and we aim to run a different course next year, so please look out for it on the NW Federation website.

Bury:- I would divide my report into Bury facilities, Recruitment and Lawns. Our facilities continue to expand and improve. Most of you will be aware that we have our existing facility at Coronation Park and we have expanded with the acquisition of what was previously a bowling club at Whitehead Park. Whitehead Park is a massive achievement. With an equipment room and garage with our ride on mower housed within. New toilet and changing facilities. A large and impressive kitchen. The last piece of the jigsaw has been the completion of the Function Room that allowed us to hold a 70 person afternoon buffet event. We intend to utilise this facility fully within the community as well as for croquet club events. Further to this we also now have croquet hoops installed in the floor allowing play on the carpet. Whitehead Park has great potential that requires us to expand our membership. So far we have been successful in recruiting a small number of new members all of which have proved to also be very valuable members. This year we used a contract company to distribute 10 thousand leaflets inviting people to try croquet as part of National Croquet day. We entertained around 30 people from this and gained around 6 permanent members. Not a big % of 10,000! We will have a new Chairman in 2017 and I know he has some good ideas to continue the recruitment drive. Lawns have proved much more troublesome. In particular drainage. I would like to apologise to any clubs who have had matches on our lawns postponed or had to play on less than desirable lawn conditions. I can assure everyone that we have always tried our utmost to prevent disruption and disappointment. Also that a lot of effort (and money) has gone into attempts to improve the drainage. Whitehead Park lawn has had further deep holes with seaweed injection completed in October and we are hopeful that 2017 will see improvements. I would just like to add a personal note that I enjoy the lunches at league matches as much as I enjoy the croquet and I hope the majority wish them to continue.

Chester:- With another vigorous recruitment process our numbers have remained over 100 and our beginners' courses went well. The weekly club sessions and internal competitions have continued to thrive. This year the club has played in six of the seven Federation leagues with a single trophy in the weekend AC competition and a second in the GC level play. In 2017 we plan to enter a second GC level play team. We again entered the Mary Rose and Longman competitions ; we exited early in the former to Nottingham but later in the Longman at the hands of Bowdon . We were well represented in the NW regional events (hosting the Short Millennium which was won by Brian Walton) but holidays gave us a diminished attendance at the Southport Festival.. An inaugural national GC cross over tournament went well with Gary Greenwood finishing second. Our social and community events have all been successful with good turnouts, both promoting our profile in the local community and making a useful contribution to club funds. We are pleased that our lawns have continued to be maintained in excellent condition. The council maintenance staff can not alter the slopes of the lawns but otherwise have done a great job. We continue to debate the wisdom of attempting some levelling and are currently seeking professional advice. Chester moved onto the international stage in 2016 when we hosted matches against Zurich and Carrickmines and we hope to make return visit to Dublin in 2017. We are also in the process of upgrading our club website. As always, our thanks go to the Federation officials for providing a very effective and efficient structure for our competitive play and particularly to Tony in his valedictory year as the maestro of the league calendars/rules. Finally the only shock of the year happened when a "hoodie" hopped over the fence and made off with the black ball. A 3 ball ending took on a new meaning!

Crake Valley:- After several years as chairman Tom Griffiths stood down in September with Jim Allcock taking on the position. We all grateful to Tom and know that he will still be involved in helping and playing at the club. This has been a difficult year at Crake; the club had to withdraw from the Advanced League due lack of players through injuries and other commitments. The handicap team did complete all fixtures, even though some were delayed due to the weather. We intend to enter teams in the A Level, handicap and B level leagues in 2017. The weather has made life very difficult with three tournaments cancelled due to flooded lawns. We have only had two lawns available during the year, even in good weather. At the end of the season drainage work was undertaken to try and mitigate the effects of the weather next year. The existing clay drains were no longer working and could not be cleared therefore a new ditch was excavated around the lawns with two new land drains being installed to help to drain the two good lawns. We wait to see how effective these measures are during the winter and if any further work is needed.

Craig-y-Don:- Craig Y Don have had good 2016 playing season which ended at the end of September with social activities continuing throughout the winter which includes winter croquet on a Member's purpose built small scale lawn. The modest clubhouse development mentioned in our Spring report was operational for the start of the season April 1st and has been an excellent addition to the club now and future. Grants, donations (gift Aided) and events allowed us to spend nearly £15,000 developing a concrete store 10ft x 8ft into a clubhouse with water and electricity sized 28ft x 8ft which is big enough to entertain 24 for refreshments and 20 to sit down and play regular weekly card and board games. The major grant from the People's Health Trust (circa £8,500) required us to start a social membership who can play a game of croquet for the appropriate lawn fee.

Craig-y-Don continued

This has allowed a number of previously playing members who had decided not to continue to remain within and indeed expand their friendship groups. We realized toward the end of the project that the internal ceiling and walls should be lined with insulation and plasterboard to make the clubhouse useable all through the year. The cost of £2000 had been unbudgeted but from membership donations and a £600 grant from the Croquet Association (supported by our NW Federation Development representative), lining was completed at the end of October. An article has been submitted to the 'Croquet Gazette' which if printed, will give more information. By altering dimensions we managed to lay 3 "half lawns" on our single crown green bowling green which has enabled 24 players to play croquet on our competition and social occasions and we have entertained successful visits from Chester, Llanfairfechan and Tattenhall with return days on their own lawns. This extra lawn allows us to be able to play long lawn whilst up to 8 members can still be playing short. We changed our own Challenge Golf cup this year from level play short to long lawn handicapped and most members found it to be much fairer and more enjoyable. At the same time the experience of long lawn has allowed some of our members to play more competitively in the league with dual membership of Llanfairfechan and at the Southport Festival as Craig Y Don. The age profile of our membership does make the distances involved in playing in the North West League a real barrier for inclusion. We have a number of players who would welcome playing with likeminded competitive individuals both Association and Golf within a much tighter playing radial! We tried getting local schools involved with success with one primary school, but no success with our local secondary as the PE person responsible was... "too busy". We will try again next year!

Culcheth The club has had a pleasant year and morale is high. This year we have increased our membership to 29, which is our highest ever total. Our team entered in the Golf League as usual and also the Golf Level play league. We also took part in the Festival of Croquet at Southport winning the Golf Trophy. Several of our members have taken part in external competitions and we have several internal competitions for our members, Golf singles and doubles and short croquet are run on handicap lines and we also organised an open competition. Because of our small membership we have to seek methods other than subscriptions to augment our income. Our lawns are regularly used by U3A, the University of the Third Age and several corporate events have been organised as well as the annual Croquet competition held between the Lions and the Rotary Club. We have also organised sessions for community groups. This year we have had several Fun-themed Away days at Ellesmere and Flixton Croquet Clubs and they came to us as well. Successful social events were our Quizzes and Annual Dinner- more about those later. We are fortunate that we have members who are prepared to work hard, selling tickets and organising these events. During the winter we play on our indoor mat and welcome members from other clubs to spend the day with us. This year we will be continuing the indoor competitions for Golf Singles and Doubles. Several of our members also regularly meet together during the winter to play cards and indoor games. Our Annual Dinner is on Friday 3rd February 2017 and will cost £20.

Ellesmere:- We have had a good year with friendly visits from Flixton and Culcheth Croquet Clubs plus local brownie and club groups. Increase of club golf croquet playing membership. A grant of £1000 to renovate our 150 year old croquet hut that was given to the club by the Earl of Bridgewater.

Flixton:- As Flixton 'Crocs' Social Croquet Group we have played twice a week throughout the season. We have had visits from some local clubs. We have provided lunch, had conversation and played croquet informally. Some members play in the winter when the weather is suitable and really enjoy the continuation of play. At the moment this is how we, as a club, wish to continue. However this may well change if new members wish it too.

Fylde :- Have had a year of consolidation. Membership now at 39. Mainly golf players. We were delighted to win the Festival of Croquet.

Isle of Man:- The IOM report is the same - no access to any court but still trying. Sorry we didn't make the Jubilee this year but Patrons, Grandchildren etc. got in the way. Will try harder for next year

Keswick:- Keswick is a small club with only six playing members, but those six are very keen and improving quite quickly. Current handicaps are 4,6, 9,10,14 and 20. Our main lawn in Fitz Park was devastated by the Keswick floods of Dec 5th 2015 and is still undergoing major surgery, but we have been fortunate to have been able to amalgamate with Braithwaite Bowling Club, a nearby village, and have one full lawn there of excellent character. The link, our secretary Brian Jones, has run golf croquet classes there all summer and has accumulated half a dozen possible players, two of whom are interested in AC. For variety of opponent all six of us play in the nearby Penrith league, Tom Ryan winning their full-lawn trophy this year, and Jim Wilson the short lawn trophy. We are too small and probably too far North to enter Federation leagues at present, but we are nevertheless very keen players, able and happy to play all winter on the splendidly drained lawn at Braithwaite.

Liverpool:-

2016 has seen mixed fortunes for the club. A fungal infection of the grass curtailed recruitment in the second half of the season, and several members and potential recruits have dropped out through births, marriages and work relocations. This is to be expected in an area with a younger demographic than most clubs, but it forces next year's strategy for recruitment towards building a base of less transient (i.e. older) members. News isn't 100% gloomy. I've started running corporate events, and am hopeful that this will shore up finances as well as spreading the word about the club. There's been a lot of success in getting children (aged 6 and up) involved in the game, and it'll be interesting to see if that can develop further over the next few years. When this project started, I was struggling to get people to come down to the club to play. I estimate the number of visits to the club over the course of the season now to be somewhere in the region of 400-500. This is a tiny amount compared to our larger clubs, but it's something to build on for 2017.

Llanfairfechan :- Georgina reported that she was resigning as Club Secretary after over 25 years at our next AGM and, because of a recurring back problem will not be playing croquet again. She took the opportunity to say Goodbye to all her friends in the North West Federation - especially DAVID BARRETT.

We started the season off, as usual, with hot-cross-buns on Easter Sunday. Near the end of April we held a Taster Weekend which proved to be a success beyond our wildest dreams and had 46 adults and 12 children come to sample the delights of croquet. Five eventually joined and a few others came on a pay to play basis. National Croquet Day was deemed a failure at our Club most probably due to the lack of publicity on our part (my part - injured my back at the crucial time for informing newspapers etc). Our Golf Team (our only team now) did surprisingly well considering the problems our Captain Janet had in fielding a team for each match AND the ceiling of her kitchen falling down on her! We held various fund raising events - Captain's Day, President's Day etc which were enjoyed by all. However, the season ended in a catastrophe as our mower died. Fortunately we had a "reserve fund" especially for events such as this and a reconditioned mower was purchased without delay so that we could carry on playing until the very end of October. Our financial state has improved slightly because we dispensed with the services of a lawn maintenance company two years ago. Whether we can recommence with their services next season is a matter which will have to wait until we know how many members re-join next Easter.

Pendle and Craven:- The new big thing at Pendle is our John Deere mower. We are very grateful to our development officer James Hawkins and the CA for the grant he acquired from them for us. The quality of our sward has improved and we put this down to the mower as much as the advice and fertiliser we receive from Duncan Hector. We have now got a Bowdry which is very effective at removing surface water but does nothing to overcome our problem that the water remains too long on the surface rather than sinking into the drains. We are advised that water is unable to easily penetrate the surface because we are not getting enough air into the sward for the bacteria to be effective. Pendle, it seems, is in desperate need of an aerator so we will now be seeking to fund the purchase of a suitable device. We entered the Murphy Shield for the first time last year and are pleased to announce the return to Pendle of the Lancashire Open Golf Tournament on the 29 & 30 April along with all our usual calendar.

Penrith and North Lakes:- We reported at the Spring meeting the severe flooding to our grounds and pavilion. We then applied for, and were awarded, a CA grant to help purchase a box trailer to store and transport our lawn maintenance and croquet equipment off site over winter. Unfortunately the flood left silt and debris on our lawns which has had far reaching consequences. The Sports ground Trustees obtained grants to recover the grounds, (which include football and cricket pitches), and were advised that the silt had to be removed. In April the whole field was 'verticut' which left our lawns looking like corduroy. There was no rain in Cumbria during May, the grass became very dry and the grooves in our lawn did not 'heal'. They still haven't, - in fact large areas of grass on one lawn are virtually dead. Lawn expert Duncan Hector came to assess the damage in July. He reported that a condition called 'dry patch' was preventing water penetrating the soil and causing the grass to die. On his advice we have since treated the lawn with Aquaduct but to date it hasn't worked. Not sure what to do next. Maybe prolonged rain over winter will saturate the soil and we can re-seed in the Spring. Otherwise we're doing okay.

Salford:- The group has enjoyed a good year. Although we gained new members we lost a similar number so our membership stayed virtually the same. These players attended regularly and our play has improved over the year. We enjoyed playing round robin at Urmston. Once again the group has appeared on TV. On Thursday 29th September 2016 we were filmed as background for the Tonight programme. Members talked about how to avoid scams. We thought that showing fold playing croquet would at the very least help in promoting the game in a small way.

Southport and Birkdale:- The exceedingly wet winter meant that no winter work could be done and spring work started mid-March, despite the setback the lawns recovered more quickly than expected. This year's winter work has been successfully completed. We have had a good season with our usual tournaments and participation in leagues. Our come and try weekend was well attended and 20 came to beginners coaching yielding 10 new members, we now have 111 members.

Tattenhall:- No report

Westmorland:- As with most seasons we have had highs and lows. Our highs have been our Association Team winning the mid-week league and an increase in our membership to a record 42. The other high was being awarded a £4000 grant from the South Lakes Leisure Trust which helped us recover from Storm Despond Flooding and purchase a new mower. Prior to purchasing the mower we have been using second hand machines with attendant problems since we did not afford new and did not qualify for a CA grant on the basis that we already had a mower. This ruling has always seemed unfair since we have never had a grant before and some clubs seem to circumvent this restriction. The only real low was our loss of evening access to our lawns which may make attracting younger members more difficult in the future.

14 NW Federation Equipment Assets – see appendix iii Five mallets and two sets of balls returned from Westmorland

15 The following Captains were elected for the Counties Teams in 2017
Colin Irwin for Cheshire and David Openshaw for Lancashire
Colin Irwin & Paul Rigge will be the organisers for respective counties

Presentation of Trophies

Association		Golf	
Advanced	Bowdon	Level Play	Bowdon Bandits
B Level Advanced	Bowdon	Handicap	Southport
Handicap	Chester		
Mid-week	Westmorland		
Short	Bowdon		

17 **Election of Officers**

Officers were elected as follows

Chairman;	Garry Wilson
Secretary;	David Walters
Treasurer	Bob Connop
Independent Examiner	Chris Slater
League Manager;	Ivan Wheatley
Coaching Officer;	Paul Rigge
Development Officer;	James Hawkins
Safeguarding Officer;	Jean Hargreaves
Website Manager	Tony Thomas
NW Festival of Croquet Manager;	James Hawkins
Pennine Cup Manager;	Liz Wilson

Please note - CA Representative; John Dawson - elected at the Spring Meeting)

6a **Deletion of Clause 7b** – This proposition was defeated.

6 **Adoption of the New Constitution for the North West Federation of Croquet Clubs see appendix iv**
The new constitution was proposed and adopted.

18 **Any Other Business**

Graham Good Proposed the election of all officers under the new constitution including the newly defined role of Website Manager. This was seconded by Garry Wilson. All officers were elected.

19 Next Meetings Spring Meeting on 4th March 2017 at Culcheth, Autumn AGM on 18th November 2017 at Culcheth,

NWFCC

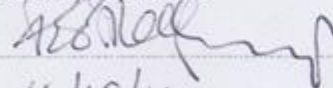
2015-2016 Income & Expenditure Statement

Current Year to 30 Sept 2016

		<u>Amount</u>	<u>Account</u>
Income & Expenditure			
<i>Member Club Affiliation Fees</i>	Affiliation Fees @ £20/Club	£340.00	
			£340.00
<i>Development</i>			
	Income		
	Expenditure	<u>-£69.00</u>	
			-£69.00
<i>Miscellaneous Income</i>			
	Crake Millenium Tournament	£50.00	
	Interest	<u>£18.43</u>	
			£68.43
<i>Festival of Croquet</i>			
	Income	£900.00	
	Expenditure	<u>-£713.00</u>	
			£187.00
<i>Miscellaneous Expenditure</i>			
	Coffee/Tea at AGM/Spring Meeting	-£10.00	
	Website Expenses	<u>-£41.35</u>	
			-£51.35
Nett income (loss) during year			£475.08
Opening Balances			
Cash			£0.00
Current Account			£1,048.78
Deposit Account			£3,304.69
Total Opening Balances			<u>£4,353.47</u>
Total as at 30 Sept 2016			<u>£4,828.55</u>
Bank Balances as at 30 Sept 2016			
Cash			£0.00
Current Account			£1,205.43
Deposit Account			£3,623.12
Total as at 30 Sept 2016			<u>£4,828.55</u>

NWFCC Accounts Oct. 2015 - 2016

Certified as Correct


16/10/16

Bob Connop, Hon. Treas.


20/10/16

Chris Slater, Hon. Auditor

Appendix ii

NWFCC LEAGUE MANAGERS REPORT FOR SEASON 2016 – Tony Thomas 23 November 2016

Thank you to all team captains who have kept me updated with scores and information throughout the season. It has been a dramatic season of 177 matches, ranging from a disastrous A League to an exciting finish in other leagues, the number of postponements has reduced and in general the league still remains a vibrant arena for competitive croquet.

A CLASS LEAGUE: This was a 'disaster' area. Only three teams entered (cf 5 in 2015) enabling an 'all play all', home and away format. Then Crake withdrew early in the season, leaving only Bowdon and Pendle, then Bowdon were given a walkover, leaving only one real match – Bowdon 6 Pendle 3. Consequently, Bowdon were crowned champions but a very unsatisfactory situation. We must now assume this league is defunct, with future matches being held under the 'Pop Up' system to be organised by James Hawkins, outside of the league structure.

B LEVEL LEAGUE: We changed the system of Bonus Points so they could only be gained by the losing team – surprisingly, no team was awarded any Bonus Points this season. We also changed the criteria for handicaps (individual min ½ and team min 6) - this has had a mixed response depending on difficulties clubs have in selecting players. There have been a few suggestions for further changes but no overall consensus. The league was very competitive with most matches being won by one game, however Bowdon finished as clear leaders.

WEEKEND HANDICAP: Very close finish to the season, the championship only being decided in the last few weeks. Chester finished level on points with Bowdon St Marys but had a superior game difference.

MIDWEEK HANDICAP: Another close finish with the title being decided in the last week by the results of three matches when Westmorland edged into championship position. This is a very efficient league with no void or walkover matches, only one match being postponed throughout the season.

SHORT CROQUET: Bowdon deservedly won this league but were helped by being awarded a walkover which mathematically (although unlikely) could have effected the final outcome. There has been a growing feeling that the Base could be abandoned in this league to encourage more break building and peg outs – see the Motion later on the Agenda.

GOLF CROQUET: This is another very efficient league with few postponements and no walkovers. Southport led the league for most of season and finished clear champions. The changes to Golf Croquet Handicaps caused consternation at the start of the season, (due to CA late announcements) and this area needs reviewing for next season.

LEVEL PLAY GOLF CROQUET: This league continues to gain in popularity with nine teams involved this year (there were only 4 in 2013) and is set to expand further next year. Bowdon Bandits finished very strongly to take the title in the last month.

POSTPONEMENTS: There was a significant reduction in postponed matches (26, compared to 35 in 2015), 12 occurring in the first month, thereafter we ran at about 2 or 3 postponements per month. Weather was a major factor in the early part of the season but subsequently it was player availability. Perhaps clubs should reconsider how many teams they can practically enter into our leagues.

Since this is my final report may I thank everyone for your continual support over the last eight years. Ivan Wheatley (Westmorland) will be taking over the role and I am sure we all wish him every success.

2016 ADVANCED A CLASS LEAGUE

	P	W	L	D	Games	Pts
Bowdon	2	2	0	0	11-03	4
Pendle	2	0	2	0	03-11	0
Crake Valley	0	0	0	0	00-00	0

2016 ADVANCED B LEVEL LEAGUE

	P	W	L	D	Games	BPts	Pts
Bowdon	5	5	0	0	17-06	0	10
Southport	5	3	2	0	12-11	0	6
Bury	5	3	2	0	10-09	0	6
Fylde	5	2	3	0	12-13	0	4
Pendle	5	1	4	0	08-13	0	2
Chester	5	1	4	0	07-14	0	2

2016 WEEKEND HANDICAP LEAGUE

	P	W	L	D	Games	Pts
Chester	9	7	2	0	40-22	14
Bowdon SM	9	7	2	0	34-24	14
Fylde	9	6	3	0	35-28	12
Crake Valley	9	5	4	0	30-33	10
Southport	9	5	4	0	28-32	10
Pendle	9	4	6	0	34-26	8
Bury Peelers	9	4	5	0	28-24	8
Bury Caesars	9	4	5	0	25-32	8
Bowdon Firs	9	2	7	0	29-34	4
Birkdale	9	1	8	0	16-37	2

2016 MIDWEEK HANDICAP LEAGUE

	P	W	L	D	Games	Pts
Westmorland	7	5	2	0	28-21	10
Chester	7	4	3	0	29-17	8
Bury	7	4	3	0	28-21	8
Southport	7	4	3	0	26-23	8
BowdonGriffins	7	4	3	0	25-24	8
Pendle	7	3	4	0	24-25	6
Bowdon Earls	7	3	4	0	17-30	6
Fylde	7	1	6	0	16-32	2

2016 SHORT CROQUET LEAGUE

	P	W	L	D	Games	Pts
Bowdon	5	4	0	1	48-25	9
Westmorland	5	3	1	1	49-33	7
Bury	5	2	2	1	40-32	5
Southport	5	2	3	0	35-45	4
Chester	5	1	3	1	29-60	3
Pendle	5	1	4	0	25-41	2

2016 GOLF CROQUET LEAGUE

	P	W	L	D	Games w-l-d	Pts
Southport	8	7	1	0	91-47-06	14
Llanfairfechan	8	5	3	0	75-66-03	10
Westmorland	8	4	3	1	73-70-01	9
Culcheth	8	3	3	2	71-72-01	8
Fylde	8	3	3	2	69-72-03	8
Bury South	8	3	3	2	68-71-05	8
Bowdon	8	2	5	1	67-75-02	5
Bury North	8	2	5	1	62-77-05	5
Chester	8	2	5	1	58-84-02	5

2016 LEVEL PLAY GOLF CROQUET LEAGUE

	P	W	L	D	Games	Pts
BowdonBandits	8	7	0	1	96-48	15
Chester	8	5	2	1	82-54	11
Southport	8	5	3	0	76-68	10
Pendle Forresters	8	4	4	0	69-67	8
Bury	8	4	4	0	70-74	8
Pendle Tykes	8	3	4	1	66-78	7
Bowdon Sinners	8	3	5	0	61-76	6
Culcheth	8	2	5	1	59-85	5
Fylde	8	1	7	0	53-83	2

Appendix iii

North West Federation Equipment November 2016

Bowdon	None
Bury	None
Chester	None
Crake	Mower (50%)
Craig-y-Don	CA Start up Set
Culcheth	None
Ellesmere	3 Mallets
Flixton	None
Fylde	None
Harlech	None
IOM	None
Keswick	None
Liverpool	CA Start up Set
Llanfairfechan	None
Nannerch	None
Pendle	None
Penrith	4 Mallets, 1 set hoops, 1 peg
Salford	CA start up Set
Southport	none
Tattenhall	CA Start up Set + set of 2 ^{ndary} balls,
Westmorland	None
Secretary	One projector

North West Federation of Croquet Clubs – Constitution

1 Name

The Federation shall be called “The North West Federation of Croquet Clubs”.

2 Area of Influence

The area of influence of the Federation shall be North Wales, Isle of Man, the counties and metropolitan counties of Cheshire, Greater Manchester, Lancashire, Merseyside and Cumbria. Unitary authorities shall be considered as part of the county within which they are situated.

3 Aims

The aims of the Federation shall be to promote and develop the game of croquet and co-ordinate the activities of croquet clubs in its area, especially in the organisation of leagues, tournaments and other events and by assisting existing clubs in all appropriate ways. The Federation shall be the body responsible for the administration and resolution of all disciplinary matters brought to its attention. The Federation shall be run under the auspices of the Croquet Association and shall be responsible to that body.

4 Membership

Every croquet club or croquet section of a larger club in the Area of Influence shall be eligible for membership of the Federation. Membership shall be by application to the Secretary of the Federation, payment of the current subscription and ratification, by majority vote at the next General Meeting, that the applicant club be admitted as a member. All member clubs must be affiliated to the Croquet Association.

5 Membership Fees

The membership fees for each year shall be determined by the Annual General Meeting. The membership fee will become due at the Annual General Meeting. Any club failing to pay within one calendar month of this meeting shall no longer be deemed a Federation member.

6 General Meetings

a) The Annual General Meeting shall be held in the Autumn, no earlier than October, to elect officers, approve the accounts, appoint an independent examiner, fix the membership fees and conduct business for which notice has been given. Other business may be conducted at the discretion of the Chairman.

b) A further General Meeting shall be held in the Spring to elect the Croquet Association Representative when appropriate and conduct business for which notice has been given. Other business may be conducted at the discretion of the Chairman.

c) A Special General Meeting may be called by the Committee, or at the written request of at least three member clubs. On receipt of such a request by the Federation Secretary, the committee must arrange the meeting within two months. A Special General Meeting may not conduct any business, save for that for which it has been convened.

d) At least 21 days’ notice of General Meetings and the business to be conducted at them shall be given to all member clubs, this may be provided electronically. Notice of motions must be given to the Secretary at least 28 days before the meeting at which they are to be considered.

e) All club members of this Federation’s clubs shall be entitled to attend General Meetings. Each member club shall be entitled to send one representative to the meetings, who together with the Officers and Executive Officers may speak and vote. Other interested persons may attend and speak but not vote. Six members entitled to vote shall form a quorum.

f) Motions (except for those covered in paragraphs 10 and 11 below), shall be carried by a simple majority of the votes cast by those present and entitled to vote. In the case of a tie the Chairman shall have an additional casting vote.

g) Nominations for election as Officers shall be made in writing or by email to the Secretary at least 14 days before the Annual General Meeting, proposed and seconded by any club member with the consent of the person nominated. If there is more than one candidate for any post a ballot shall be held, otherwise the persons nominated shall be declared elected. If any post remains unfilled, nominations, duly proposed and seconded, shall be accepted from the meeting and a ballot held if necessary.

h) If the Chairman is unable to attend a General Meeting, those members present at the General Meeting shall elect a Chairman for that meeting who shall have an additional casting vote in the event of any tied vote.

7 Officers

a) The Executive Officers of the Federation shall be the Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer and Croquet Association Representative. All posts are held until the next Annual General Meeting, save the Croquet Association Representative whose tenure is defined by the Croquet Association Constitution.

b) Should the Chairman for the time being be re-elected for three consecutive terms, he must retire after his third term and becomes ineligible for election to the office of Chairman until a further term has elapsed.

c) The Chairman shall normally chair the General and Committee Meetings and act as directed by the committee.

d) The Secretary shall keep minutes of General and Committee Meetings, maintain a register of member clubs and act as directed by the committee.

e) The Treasurer shall keep the accounts of the Federation and transact its financial business. He shall lay before the Annual General Meeting examined accounts for the year ending 30 September and act as directed by the committee.

f) Other officers of the Federation shall be the Safeguarding Officer, Development Officer, Coaching Officer, League Manager, Web Manager and the North West Federation Championships Manager (Festival Manager) and shall act as directed by the committee.

g) All offices in the Federation shall be voluntary.

h) Any two offices, other than two of the Executive Offices, may be represented by the same person. Any Officer undertaking two Offices will only be entitled to one vote at both General Meetings and Committee Meetings.

8 Committee

a) The affairs of the Federation shall be managed by a Committee consisting of the Executive Officers and other Officers.

b) The Committee may fill casual vacancies until the next Annual General Meeting.

c) The Committee shall fix the dates of the General Meetings.

d) The Committee shall meet as necessary either in person or by electronic means. A simple majority of those voting shall decide any question, and in the case of a tie the Chairman shall have an additional casting vote. Three members shall form a quorum.

e) Notice of Committee Meetings shall be given to all Committee Members.

f) If the Chairman is unable to attend a Committee Meeting, those members present at the Committee Meeting shall elect a Chairman for that meeting who shall have an additional casting vote in the event of any tied vote.

9 Banking

Bank accounts shall be maintained in the name of the Federation.

10 Amendments to the Constitution

Notices of motions to amend the constitution shall be sent to all member clubs at least 21 days before the meeting at which they are to be put. An amendment to the constitution shall be carried if more than two-thirds of the votes are cast in its favour by those present and entitled to vote.

11 Dissolution

Notice of motion to dissolve the Federation must be sent to all member clubs at least 21 days before the meeting at which it is to be put. If approved by at least two thirds of those voting upon it, the Federation shall be formally wound up and the assets transferred to the Croquet Association.