

Minutes of the North West Federation of Croquet Clubs AGM

Saturday 18th November 2017

- 1 The Meeting was attended by 28 people representing:
- | | |
|------------------|---|
| Bowdon: | Ken Cooper, Francois Garcia, Graham Good, Steve Reynolds, Sylvia Steer, David Walters |
| Bury: | David Barrett, Ken Eccles, Margaret Eccles, Jean Hargreaves, Barbara Young. |
| Chester: | Sarah Andrew, John Dawson |
| Craig-y-Don: | Jack Pattenden |
| Crake: | |
| Culcheth: | Alan Wright, Di Mitchell, Eileen Lloyd |
| Ellesmere: | |
| Flixton: | |
| Fylde: | Peter Wilson, Liz Wilson. |
| Keswick: | |
| Liverpool: | James Hawkins, Paul Rigge. |
| Llanfairfechan: | Richard Hollas, Georgina Llewellyn. |
| Pendle & Craven: | Kathryn Schofield, Roger Schofield, Garry Wilson |
| Penrith: | |
| Salford: | |
| Southport: | Don Williamson. |
| Tattenhall: | |
| Westmorland: | Ivan Wheatley |

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. **Apologies for Absence.** Jim Alcock (Crake), Bob Connop (Culcheth), John Hannah (Craig-y-Don), Howard Bowron (Penrith), John Shakespeare, (Westmorland), Tony Thomas (Southport), Andrew Webb (Pendle)
3. The minutes of the Spring Meeting held on 4th March 2017 were confirmed as a correct record.
Proposed – Ivan Wheatley, Seconded – Don Williamson
4. Matters Arising – Allocation of CA Eights & GC tournaments to be discussed under AOB.

5. Reports on the Past Year

A Chairman – Garry Wilson

This year has been about making sure that this Federation and the CA understand our stance on governance. Refreshingly a suggestion I made, resulted in a Federations Conference during the summer. The outcome is that Federations are now working together to resolve problems and share best practice. It does appear that our lobbying and our papers to the CA from the Fed and from individuals have made a difference and much has been taken on board by the Governance Working Group. What the future holds I do not know, but I believe that if we want a more democratic CA, which is true to the entire membership, then we must keep up the pressure to achieve governance which is acceptable to our members.

As you are undoubtedly aware, this is my final report to the Federation, having served for the maximum term of three years. The last three years have been eventful and it has been a pleasure, a privilege and so frustrating to have been chairman. A pleasure because of the friendship afforded me, a privilege because even as a croquet novice, my comments were always given serious consideration and so frustrating in dealing with head office which seems to be struggling to get into the 20th century. So as a final statement from this Chairman, may I thank all of the officers present and past and those who have helped and assisted the Federation during my term of office. Thank you.

B Secretary – David Walters

Co-ordinated response to Dave Gunn's request for information to be posted on Get Inspired & HerMoJo websites
Attended part of the Federations Conference run by Dave Gunn.

C Treasurer - Bob Connop – deferred until after Item 12.

D CA Representative - John Dawson

In the last 6 months I have had 2 major tasks. I directed the All England AC handicap event i.e. the corralling of the entries into 4 regional events (of which Fylde managed the North) and the process for the final at Wrest Park (where Phil Nutall and Libby Dixon distinguished themselves by finishing 1 and 2.) I had been somewhat surprised at the absence of major national publicity activities by the CA so, supported by a team of 40+ volunteers, I set up and managed a croquet event within the 4 day CountryfileLive show at Blenheim Palace in August. (800 people had a go and 120,000 attended the event)
<http://www.croquetnw.co.uk/?s=countryfileLive>

The 2 significant CA initiatives are the appointment of a Development Officer and the continuing debate on the future governance of the CA. Garry, David and I attended a seminar of regional reps aimed at improving/ developing networking. A draft note on governance was put to the October council & is currently being revised. I ceased to be a member of the AC Tournament Committee & now chair the Publishing Committee.

E **League Manager – Ivan Wheatley**

We set out last Easter with 46 teams representing 10 clubs spread over 6 leagues aiming to complete a total of 157 matches over the course of the season. Of these only 5 matches (3.2%) had to be declared void, all due to lawn conditions in September, 11 matches (7%) were decided by the award of a walkover and the remaining 141 matches (89.2%) were played to a result. Of the 141 matches where a result was achieved it was necessary to reschedule 31 (20.4%) largely due, again, to weather conditions. By the end of the season all the leagues had clear winners on points and it was not necessary to resort to tie-break mechanisms to determine any of the league titles. The individual winners of the various league trophies will be announced later in the meeting. There are two lessons learned in last six months that I can take into next season.

- The first is the importance of getting matches played as early as possible in the season. Here in the North West the weather starts to turn around the end of August and any match that has to be postponed due to weather conditions in September has a significantly reducing chance of being played as the month progresses. For that reason I will try to schedule the leagues in 2018 to be completed by the end of August or as early in September as possible.

- Secondly it became clear at an early stage that team captains were not as familiar with the league rules as I had assumed particularly what to do if a match was called off for one reason or another. For the 2018 season I will therefore produce and issue to all team captains at the start of the season an essential guide to the league rules, in addition to a full copy of the league rules, covering the main points of which they should be aware.

Towards the end of the season I sought comments from each club in the Federation on a number of suggestions or ideas picked up over the course of the summer. I circulated a number of these ideas and the responses I received and my proposed follow up are as follows:

- The first suggestion was to redefine the short league as a midweek league with a number of clubs saying that they would prefer this arrangement as it would ease the pressure on lawn availability at the weekend and make team selection easier. This idea was rejected by all respondents on a number of grounds, principally that it would restrict access to those players still in full time employment, and hence will not be progressed.

- The second idea was to standardise the time limit for handicap AC games at 3 hours. Currently midweek league matches have a 3 hour time limit and the weekend league 3¼ hours. Again this idea received virtually no support and hence will not be progressed.

- The third idea was to move away from playing handicap AC games with a base handicap and instead adopt the CA format of playing with net bisques. This was firmly rejected by all except one respondent and hence again will not be progressed.

- The idea which received the most support however with the widest range of possible solutions was that of increasing the AdvB minimum individual handicap to 3 (currently 1) and reintroducing an AdvA league with no minimum handicap. Whilst the principle of providing a competitive offering for A class players was generally accepted and more so the need to provide an environment where B class players can reasonably compete there was no consensus on the way forward. A number of clubs reported that they would not be able to form an AdvB team if the minimum eligible handicap was increased to 3 whereas others felt that a minimum handicap of 1 prevented them entering a competitive team in the AdvB league. The comment was made that the current arrangement was a hindrance to encouraging more players to take up advanced level AC play which in turn would result in a continuing decline in the numbers of A class and B class players in the region with the inevitable consequences. There is clearly an issue to be addressed in both the short and the longer term and rather than risk proposing a course of action which may make matters worse it is suggested that a group of interested players be identified to look at the various options with a view to bringing a proposal to the Spring Meeting for discussion. Whilst I am happy to take the lead on this I will willingly defer to someone who feels more able and/or better qualified to undertake the project. (**Volunteers invited to help develop a proposal**).

- In addition to commenting on the above ideas two additional proposals were raised namely to revisit the discussion at the last AGM to change the arrangements for catering at league matches and to allow teams to wear team colours at league matches, both of which are on the agenda for discussion later in the meeting.

Finally I can confirm that the arrangements for the 2018 league season will be as follows:

- The AdvB AC league in its current form, the handicap weekend and midweek AC leagues, the handicap and level play GC leagues and the short league will run again in 2018.

- Registration forms will be issued to club secretaries immediately after this meeting.

- The deadline for the registration of teams for the 2018 season will be the 31st December 2017.

- Provisional fixture lists will be circulated to nominated team captains and club and fixture secretaries no later than the end of January 2018.

- Any agreed changes to be notified to the League Manager and the publication of the final fixture list will be by end of February 2018.

- The season will commence on Tuesday 3rd April (immediately after Easter) and the deadline for completion of all matches will be Sunday the 30th September.

At the moment no significant changes to the league rules are anticipated for 2018 although any changes proposed by the CA over the closed season will be considered and if thought appropriate will be incorporated into a revised set of league rules to be presented to the Federation Spring Meeting in March next year.

F **Coaching Officer – Paul Rigge**

A strange year Croquet-wise for the Federation. Clubs getting to National Finals and winning, Club members also reaching National Finals, and also winning. Various individuals lifting local, regional and national tournament trophies aloft and all achieved with minimal input from me! Well done to all those involved in successful silverware pursuit this year, maybe it will be our turn next season.

If I was asked to mark my performance as Coaching Officer this year, I would grade myself no better than 4/10. Sorry to you all. I haven't been as focused on the job as I intended since the last AGM, and by the time I could 'climb back into the saddle', the season was all but over – so my report card is stamped in Red; "Must Try Harder".

Ok, what did we do?

- Referee's Course at Bowdon Croquet Club on 25/26 February 2017.
- Handicapping Symposium at Bury Croquet Club, on Saturday 25 March 2017.
- Bowdon 8th April, Revision Course.
- Bowdon 9th April, Women's Group Coaching Day.
- AC Pod at Bury 11th July - Leaves.
- Bronze AC Course at Liverpool. 21st August.
- GC Coaching 21st Sept Craig Y Don.

In addition, Club coaches have been hard at it every week through the season trying to raise standards, and I thank each and every one of them for their efforts – even I managed to get on a lawn with that aim from 20th July onwards.

We are in interesting times with plenty of good coaching being available to us all;

- CA now directly invites 'promising' players onto 'elite' programs e.g. 'women', 'young people' or GC players.
- The Northern Coaching Academy is now up and running in York, so we don't have to visit Brighton to access the CA courses.
- Don't overlook 'Youtube', there are a lot of videos now available to utilize as learning aids at all levels – indeed the new CA's Golf Pods are based around such video sources.

As always, please consider your clubs' coaching needs and let me know about any requirements you may have or if you would like a Flying Circus next season. The earlier we can arrange these, the more successful they are. Given the mild winters we've had recently – if we have another we might even get some early courses in before the season starts.....
Winter Well.

G Development Officer – James Hawkins

Dave Gunn, the National Development Officer, has set up five working parties to discuss future initiatives. I'm involved in the Marketing Group, and Tony Thomas is helping with Communications. There's some overlap between discussions, but we hope to produce some initiatives in the next few months. That may include - for example - recruiting people with specific expertise at federation level.

We face some challenges in the North West, because of the distribution of clubs within the CA. All of our neighbours are struggling -

Croquet North has seven clubs, only two of which play AC. Membership numbers are low, and the Fed is struggling to maintain a critical mass for competitive play.

Yorkshire has eleven clubs. Beverley's key member, Derek Knight, has a health problem which may leave the club vulnerable over the coming season; Huddersfield have been evicted and have no lawns; Sheffield have recently had an arson attack and lost all their equipment; only York seems to be healthy. It's too soon to see what will happen next.

West Midlands is struggling, and can no longer fill the federation committee.

The impact of this is that the NW Fed can't rely on its neighbours to offer support, and must look inwards to our own members to help with our future progress. We're also likely to see our borders becoming more fluid, and we should be ready to support distant clubs. That may need extra personnel within the Fed. The SW fed already has two development officers, so we may want to split responsibilities for this, or coaching, or looking at ways the CA can support our work.

We've been contacted by a new club in Criccieth, south of Llanfairfechan and on our border with the West Midlands. They've 30 interested members, and want to join both the Fed and the CA. I'll invite them to our Spring Meeting.

Tattenhall are looking for funding opportunities, and I'm consulting with them about local grants.

Crake are planning to apply for a CA development grant, and I'm liaising with Jim Allcock about this.

Southport have been granted CA money for a new equipment shed.

There's a chance of a new club in the Wirral. It's at an early stage, but I've spoken to interested people and looked at a site in West Kirby.

H NW Festival of Croquet – James Hawkins

Event ran smoothly – Congratulations to all the winners & thanks to those who had to accept the downside of the Manager's discretion. A new manager will be required for next year's event.

I Safeguarding Officer – Jean Hargreaves

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

J Pennine Cup Captain - Liz Wilson

Happy to report a victory! North West Represented by Chester (Mark Lloyd), Crake (David Lloyd), Fylde (Peter Wilson, Liz

K Federation Handicapper – Don Williamson

In the spring we held our second handicappers meeting to which other interested parties were invited. This was held at Bury's Whitehead Park club house, there was lively discussion and both Golf and Association were covered as were the duties and limitations of club handicappers and when they need to refer to a CA handicapper. The importance of players being tested before they play in their first competitive game was emphasised.

I attended one handicap golf league match when I checked all the players cards and found they were all correct. Following another match I recommended a players handicap be reduced.

L Webmaster – Tony Thomas

The website continues to do the job it was designed for - provide a platform for disseminating latest croquet news and successes, inform clubs about current league status and provide a historical record of North West Croquet. During the last twelve months, we have received a surprising 258,000 hits to the website (according to Google Analytics), the front page being the most visited (about 100,000 hits) followed by the League Pages, Who's Who and Honours Board. I would assume many of these are "web trawlers" rather than Croquet aficionados, however more realistic figures are from the News Posts where we can expect anything between 50 and 200 hits for each News item posted, except for the Festival which usually generates about 300 hits.

The main concern at the moment is viewing the website - the research indicates most people view a website on a phone or tablet, yet very often they are designed for computer screen viewing. I am still experimenting with designs to find the best compromise, I was informed at a croquet working party meeting last week that our site is better than most in this regard. However, any ideas would be welcomed.

I am a member of a CA Working Party looking at Communications within the national Croquet structure and at our meeting last week an important outcome focussed on Communication between Federations - this hardly exists and needs to be addressed in time for the new governance arrangements. Two areas we are looking at are On-Line Forums and Websites. We are hoping an On-Line forum can be established fairly quickly to act as a facility for advice, help and general discussion on Federation Croquet matters - initially, the forum will be only open to Federation Committee members i.e. about 90 people nationwide. We are also looking at a standard website template that can be administered and hosted centrally but allowing each Federation to have similar designed websites but obviously access and control their own content, eventually this would be rolled out to all clubs. It is a system used in many sporting organisations such as the the Football League and English Cricket Board.

The Working Group is aiming to come up with an "Ideas Exchange Forum" to share effective practices, resources and coaching events, in addition to organising an Inter Federation Conference sometime next year.

Sport England have an impressive website and it contains an invaluable section on resources for use by clubs and Federations - (www.sportenglandclubmatters.com) - this is well worth a look.

6 Provision of Meals at NWFCC League Matches (Proposed by Fylde)

That, as standard, players provide their own lunch at League matches. Host Clubs would continue to provide tea, coffee, water and soft drinks for visitors. It is hoped that players will sit together to eat lunch.

After a brief debate, the motion was carried by 7 votes to 5.

7 Wearing of Team Colours in League Matches (Proposed by Fylde)

That playing members in League matches have the option to wear matching coloured shirts rather than all white. There will be exceptions where a host club is obliged to wear all white and visiting teams are consequently also obligated to do so.

Following confirmation that the CA Tournament Regulations (P4.d.2 "In team events, such as the Inter-County Championships and Inter-Club events, teams may, subject to any dress code of the host club, elect to wear other colours of clothing, provided all team members (other than those wearing white) are wearing the same design.") already allow teams to play in team colours, the motion was withdrawn.

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

- | | |
|-------------|---------------------------------------|
| a) Advanced | Bowdon – 14-15 April |
| b) Handicap | Pendle – 21-22 July |
| c) Short | Chester Saturday 12 th May |
| d) Hcp Golf | Bury TBC |
| e) Lvl Golf | Liverpool TBC |

9 Arrangements for Festival of Croquet – 23th and 24th June. A Volunteer is needed to manage the overall event (Jean Hargreaves will assist with GC schedule & James Hawkins is willing to offer advice beforehand) and Liz Wilson to be secretary.

10 Coordination of dates for CA or other tournaments in the NW

30 Mar -2 April	Pendle & Craven John Beech Memorial Easter Tournament
7 April	Crake Alternate Shot Doubles AC
7-8 April	Lancashire Open Golf * Subject to confirmation
14-15 April	Bowdon Millennium Advanced
21-22 April	Southport Advanced Weekend
5-7 May	Bowdon May Handicap Weekend
12-13 May	Pendle & Craven B & C-Level Advanced Weekend
19 May	Pendle & Craven B-Level Golf
19 -20 May	Southport Handicap Weekend
2-3 June	Bowdon Advanced Weekend
13 May	National Croquet Day
9-10 June	Home Internationals (Bowdon)
9-10 June	Pendle & Craven Advanced Weekend
16-17 June	Pendle and Craven Open Golf
16-17 June	Crake Advanced
23-24 June	Festival
3-6 July	Pendle & Craven Midweek Tournament
7 July	Bury National B Level Golf
6-8 July	Bowdon Northern Week (Advanced and Level)
9-11 July	Bowdon Northern Week (Handicap)
21-22 July	Southport Super B and B-Level Advanced Weekend
21-22 July	Pendle Millennium Handicap
25 July	Bury National C Level Golf
4-5 August	Chester GC 0plus Cross Over Tournament
4-5 August	Bury Handicap Weekend
10 August	Southport National C Level Golf
11-12 August	Pendle Handicap Weekend
18-19 August	Crake Advanced
24-27 August	Bowdon North of England Championship
1 – 2 September	All England Area Final Venue TBC
6-9 September	Chairman's Salver (Southport)
15-16 September	Southport Advanced Weekend
15-16 September	Bowdon B-Level Advanced Weekend

The events listed above will be included in the calendar on the NW Fed website shortly & Clubs are requested to check that the calendar has been updated correctly.

11 Club Reports and Announcements

Bowdon:- We had a set back with regard to membership this year, with only 1 new member joining and many retiring, leaving us with a total of 100 playing members, plus 16 Country, Far-Country, etc.

We held 4 of the usual CA events: the May Handicap Weekend, the June Advanced Weekend, the North of England Championship in August and the B-Level Advanced Weekend in September; sadly, the North of England Week in July had to be cancelled when a burst water main flooded our lawns. Next year, we are honoured to be hosting the Home Internationals in June. In the NW Federation leagues, we won the Short and the Level-Play Golf Leagues.

Over the year, the club held 13 internal knock-out competitions and a total of 77 club members took part. We also held 2 charity events in aid of Parkinson's Disease and the British Legion Poppy Appeal, raising nearly £600 in the process. Our usual weekly Wednesday Competition was as popular as ever with 65 different people taking part. Regular winter competitions kept everyone's hand in and a new weekly evening event was introduced on a friendly basis, an Alternate Shot Doubles, whereby newish players benefitted from being paired with more experienced players. An Improvers' Course was run for those new members who showed some promise in order to fast-track them.

Two of our student members were invited to a CA Summer School with the intention of bringing them on to World Championship Under-21 level ... so the other clubs in the region should be aware of meeting some new Bowdon stars in the future!

Bury :- Despite the need to continue working on the lawns, the club has had a successful year, with good quality croquet played at home, away and overseas.

High spots of the year were:

- The club winning the golf competition at the Southport Festival and the overall trophy.
- Peelers Winning the A/C Handicap League
- Phil winning the All England A/C competition

- The club taking part in the Coppa del Serchio international GC competition in Italy

We should all thank those members who successfully represented the Club in the leagues and other activities

There are a number of issues we need to bear in mind looking forward to 2018 and beyond.

Lawns - We have spent time and effort on both lawns, particularly at WP, and are still looking to make further improvements.

Whitehead Park - We have now arranged to carry out further work at WP, to reduce the risk of flooding after heavy rain.

Coronation Park - These lawns are now settling down nicely after previous work, but there are still areas where the grass is too sparse, and further work on seeding and other activities is needed. We hope to do this work using our own members. A recent work day was successful in clearing away again grass from the gutters above the lawns, which should reduce the flow of water to the lawns in heavy rain

Membership - We now have around 50 members and are actively looking to recruit more with beginners and improvers coaching, open days, sessions for groups from the community and representation at various functions around the town.

In short, we need new members and more active members, so that our income can rise and we can continue to provide good playing surfaces.

Chester :- Our numbers have remained over 100 with our usual recruitment processes. 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 midweek AC competition and second places in the GC handicap league and the GC level league where we had two teams for the first time. We again entered the Mary Rose and Longman competitions; we exited early in the former to Wrest Park but later in the Longman at the hands of Bowdon both by narrow margins. We represented the NW in the Secretary's Shield ; we reached the Semi Final but were beaten by Sheffield who went on to win the competition. We took part in the NW regional events (hosting the Short Millennium which was won by Sally Slater)and the Southport Festival. The second national GC cross over tournament went well with Gary Greenwood and David Boyd finishing first and second and Jayne Taylor taking the Telfords Plate. In regional individual tournaments David Boyd and John Dawson gained second places at Southport and Bowdon. John Dawson made his debut for Cheshire in the Inter Counties - his unbeaten record is solely attributable to partnering David Maugham. 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. Our lawns were badly affected by a dry spell over the summer but fortunately are recovering well in the wetter Autumn. We have been concerned about the maintenance by the Council and in an attempt to focus their attention we hosted a visit by the Chester MP and a prominent local councillor. We wait to see how the winter and spring work is carried out. Chester undertook its first overseas match with a visit to Carrickmines, Dublin where we enjoyed a weekend of good croquet and Irish hospitality. Our club website has also had a good season with regular postings of match results and key information. As always, our thanks go to the Federation officials for providing a very effective and efficient structure for our competitive play and particularly to Ivan in his first year as the league calendars/rules grandmaster.

Crake Valley:- Promised

Craig-y-Don:- Craig Y Don have had a very good 2017 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, a weekly card and board games afternoon, plus an annual luncheon and Christmas Social. The luncheon held recently in late October was attended by over 50 members and friends of the club.

Following the £600 grant from the Croquet Association (supported by our NW Federation Development representative) given late last year summer, an article was submitted to the 'Croquet Gazette' regarding the completion of our modest clubhouse project and was printed in full. Our membership appreciated both the Grant and reading the acknowledgement of our club's progress, within the Association's own magazine.

By altering dimensions we managed to lay 3 identical 'short lawns' on our single crown green bowling green for the start of the season, which has enabled 24 players to play croquet on our competition days and social occasions and we have entertained successful visits from Chester, Llanfairfechan and Tattenhall with return days on their own lawns.

We introduced our own Challenge Golf Trophy for Short Lawn with a 'local' handicap scheme this year whilst continuing with our Long Lawn Handicapped Golf Challenge Cup.

Most members found it to be much fairer and more enjoyable. We even held a single finals day for both competitions which was watched by almost half the club's playing membership.

We have offered regular 'Association' training to members this year and a small number have started taking lessons which will continue next season.

The revised lawn layout and clubhouse arrangement allowed us to offer the Llandudno U3a a dedicated Croquet Interest Group in 2017 using two of our three short lawns on a Tuesday afternoon/ early evening time slot. This has proved extremely successful in bringing a dozen or so newcomers to try croquet with seven actually joining the club as playing members by the end of the season. Our age profile means that we will always lose a few members each year for whatever reason and the U3a seems a great way of balancing any drop in numbers with a good prospect of actually increasing membership numbers. We intend continuing this initiative with our local U3a in future years.

As mentioned last year, our age profile makes the distances involved in playing in the North West League a real barrier for

inclusion even though we have a number of players who would welcome playing with likeminded competitive individuals both Association and/or Golf, but within a much tighter playing radial!

Nevertheless, our member Roger Edwards was able to travel to Bury representing the club at the North West Croquet Federation's Millenium handicap 'Golf' competition in July coming home the victor. This is the first time a Craig Y Don club representative has won a Croquet Federation event and we hope that we will field more players at future NW Federation festivals and competitions.

Culcheth:- The club has had a pleasant year and morale is high. Our membership is over 20. 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. A new venture was entering The Murphy Cup and another national competition.

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.

Successful social events were our Quizzes and Annual Dinner. 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 19th January, 2018, will be here at Culcheth and will cost £20. Menu and order forms are available for you today!

Ellesmere:- No report received

Flixton:- No report received

Fylde :- Compared with many other clubs we are pleased to report little flooding this year. This enabled us to run the Millennium Advanced in early April. This involved triple banking on one lawn which was great fun. Fylde also ran the CA Jubilee Handicap in 2017 but will not run it in 2018 due to a clash with The Lytham Festival and also the Open Golf. Fylde also bid and were successful in running the Regional Final of the All England AC. We have bid to run it again next year. We would like to thank Paul Rigge for his help in coaching beginners during the season

Isle of Man:- No report received.

Keswick:- No report received

Liverpool:- A typical year of 'one step forward and one step back'. The club was featured on the Chris Evans Breakfast Show on Radio 2, and immediately got three new members. It then rained for the rest of the season, so there's pressure next year to reactivate interest. Liverpool hosted a coaching course for players from Chester and Llanfairfechan, and there are plans to host more events in 2018.

Llanfairfechan :- The season opened on Easter Sunday when most of our members turned up - enticed by the hot cross buns!

Around Easter time we heard that Georgina had won a prize of a Defibrillator donated by the "Cariad" Charity in a Welsh Ambulance Service competition. The said defib is now situated at the main gate to the Club within easy reach of the Bowling and Football Clubs and, of course, the general public.

We again held our Taster Weekend instead of "National Croquet Day" and although both days went exceptionally well only two visitors eventually joined us. However, during the summer months we did gain another few but lost eleven.

Our Golf Team did reasonably well in the League and it is hoped that we can field a team next season. After Sarah's Associations coaching sessions throughout the summer we have visions of also entering a short team but it remains to be seen if that will happen next season or 2019.

Once again, about 70 Year 5 & 6 children from our local primary school visited our lawns with their teachers during the last week of term. One group were entertained by a thunder & lightening storm and a convoy of cars had to come to rescue them and return them to the school. Not to miss out, this group of 26 came back the following day. Over the School Summer Holidays we had up to 26 children take part in in golf croquet sessions and we were fortunate enough to have 6 members willing to turn up each Tuesday morning to coach them.

Our many lawn bookings means that we are able to continue to pay a greensman to mow our lawns and we are trying to keep up with the weeding and feeding in-house. However, we are plagued with moles and have tried desperately all season to move them onto pastures new - without success.

Pendle and Craven:- Our membership as always is too small for comfort, despite all of our usual efforts to recruit. We have insufficient playing members and continuing to meet our commitments to the NW leagues has, at times, been difficult. Despite

our lack of numbers we had an excellent season in the national competitions. We won the Longman and were runners up in the Mary Rose and Murphy Shield, and at the individual level, Libby Dixon was runner up in the All England. However, what has really focussed the attention of the club committee has been the decimation of our courts by fusarium. Unlike most of the local golf courses and other clubs in the NW, our fusarium did not go away! With a determination not to let this happen again, and after taking expert advice, we have again sprayed our five courts, re-seeded some areas and are investing heavily in lawn maintenance equipment. This will enable our maintenance tasks to be completed more quickly, and allow us to be less dependent upon long periods of dry weather. Results of our actions are already showing in the improvements to the lawns and we expect to have an excellent surface ready for the new season. The improvements already made will allow us to have a winter court available for members..

Penrith and North Lakes:- At the last AGM we reported the very slow recovery of damage done to our lawns as a result of severe verticutting needed to remove silt deposits left when our sports ground flooded in December 2015. We're very pleased to report that this summer the lawns have fully recovered, helped by plentiful quantities of Cumbrian rain. They now look, and play, better than ever before. As a result we've had another very enjoyable and successful season.

Salford:- No report received

Southport and Birkdale:- On the whole this has been a good year we held our usual tournaments, although the September Advanced had to be cancelled due to the weather, persistent rain throughout September and into October meant the lawns were under water for most of the month. We competed in all the leagues and were successful in the handicap golf.

The fate of the National B level Golf final was touch and go but the loan of 2 Bow Dry water rollers and 4 strong men enabled us to start with 4 lawns, rain mid morning reduce us to one main lawn and three North lawns were brought in to play, on Sunday we were able to use 2 main lawns and 2 North lawns so that the event was completed, the player were very complementary about the lawns and the efforts we put in.

We have bought a soreroller to improve lawn aeration, work is in progress to erect a storage garage on the North lawns.

During the winter we hope to have the grass along the greenhouses lifted and the level raised to match the playing surface, some of the hedges are dying and will be replaced.

We are awaiting a quote for work to improve one of the North lawns.

Next season we are hosting the CA Chairman's AC and either a B or C level golf qualifier.

Tattenhall:- No report received

Westmorland:- As most of you will be aware our club is based in the grounds of Levens Hall which has always involved some restrictions on access. This season our arrangement to allow play on two evenings during the week has been terminated, so we are now restricted to finishing at 6.00pm. This has not proved to be a major problem for most current members but it may well affect our ability to attract new members especially those in employment. Apart from this change our season has gone well with internal and external competitions enjoyed by all, the highlight being our trophy win at Southport Festival.

12 **NW Federation Equipment Assets** – see Appendix 1

5c **Treasurer's Report**

Due to Bob Connop's indisposition, Liz & Peter Wilson had obtained the accounting records and prepared a set of draft accounts, which were circulated at the meeting, that they believed to be materially correct. The next step would be to review them with the Independent Examiner during which amendments may be identified. A final set of accounts will be circulated as soon as possible. (See Appendix 2)

Acceptance of the provisional accounts was proposed by Don Williamson & seconded by Graham Good. Approved nem con.

The meeting resolved to record thanks & appreciation to Bob Connop for his service to the NW Fed and to wish him well for a rapid recovery.

Thanks were also noted for Garry Wilson at the end of his term as Chairman.

13 **County Captains**

The following Captains were elected for the AC Inter-Counties Teams in 2018:

Colin Irwin for Cheshire and Paul Rigge for Lancashire

There was a brief discussion regarding whether teams should be entered into the GC Inter-counties, but there was no significant interest voiced.

14 Presentation of Trophies

Association Croquet

B level Advanced	Fylde
Weekend Handicap	Bury Peelers
Midweek Handicap	Chester
Short	Bowdon

Golf Croquet

Level Play	Bowdon Bandits
Handicap	Southport

15 Election of Officers

Officers were elected as follows

Chairman:	Paul Rigge
Secretary:	David Walters
Treasurer:	Liz Wilson
League Manager:	Ivan Wheatley
Coaching Officer;	Paul Rigge
Development Officer;	James Hawkins
Safeguarding Officer;	Jean Hargreaves
Website Manager	Tony Thomas

The post of NW Festival of Croquet Manager was unfilled.

Also elected were:

Pennine Cup Manager;	Liz Wilson
Federation Handicapper:	Don Williamson
Independent Examiner:	Chris Slater

Please note - CA Representative, currently John Dawson is elected at the Spring Meeting

16 Dates of Next Meetings

Next Meetings - Spring Meeting on 4th March 2018 at Culcheth, Autumn AGM on 18th November 2018 at Culcheth.

17 Any Other Business

Graham Good noted that the manner in which the Lancashire International Open GC event had lost its status as a qualifier for the Ascot Cup was unsatisfactory. John Dawson was asked to raise the matter with Tim King, with the goal of ensuring that a qualifying event is re-established in the North West by 2019.

Appendix 1

North West Federation Equipment November 2017

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	None
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


Paul Rigge One projector

Available 6 Hoops & Peg, 4 George Wood Mallets in carrying case, 5 other Mallets, 1 set primary and 1 set secondary Barlow balls, 1 set primary Sunshiny balls.

North West Federation of Croquet Clubs

Accounts for the Year Ended 30th September 2017

	£	2017 £	£	2016 £
Income				
Affiliation fees		360.00		340.00
Festival entries	912.00		900.00	
Less expenses	832.00	80.00	713.00	187.00
Millennium events		259.50		50.00
Interest		9.32		18.43
Total Income		<u>708.82</u>		<u>595.43</u>
Bank balances brought forward		4828.55		4353.47
		<u>5537.37</u>		<u>4948.90</u>
Expenditure				
Development		20.75		69.00
Engraving		26.50		-
Website		34.99		41.35
General administration		0.00		10.00
Total Expenditure		<u>82.24</u>		<u>120.35</u>
Bank balances carried forward		5455.13		4828.55
		<u>5537.37</u>		<u>4948.90</u>

E A Wilson - Acting Treasurer C Slater - Auditor 

4/12/17

Appendix 3

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.