

Draft (14/3/21) Minutes of the North West Federation of Croquet Clubs AGM

Saturday 6th March 2021

Held on Zoom & YouTube

- 1 **The Meeting** was attended by 32 people representing 13 clubs:

Bowdon	David Walters, Ken Cooper
Bury	David Barrett, Jean Hargreaves, Barbara Young*, Francois Garcia*, Graham & Jack Good*
Chester	John Dawson, Jayne Taylor
Craig-y-Don	John Hannah
Crake Valley	David Cornes, Simon Robins*
Criccieth	
Culcheth	Alan Wright, Keith Woodward
Ellesmere	
Flixton	
Fylde	Liz Wilson, Peter Wilson, Betty Marshall, Catherine & Philip Bass*, Barbara & Ted Walker*
Keswick	
Llanfairfechan	Sarah Andrew
Pendle & Craven:	Paul Rigge, Roger Schofield*
Penrith & North Lakes	Ian Tupling, Howard Bowron*
Southport & Birkdale	Don Williamson, Tony Thomas
Stonyhurst	
Tattenhall	Nigel Worthington
Westmorland	Ivan Wheatley, Sue Pritchard

* Attended via YouTube

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked Eugene Chang & the CA for their support in hosting the meeting virtually.

- 2 **Apologies for Absence.** Clubs: Ellesmere, Flixton, Keswick, Stonyhurst.

3. **The minutes** of the SGM & AGM held on 14th November 2020 were approved as a correct record Nem Con.

4. **Matters Arising – None.** Post meeting note: Graham Good observed that there had been a number of changes to the list of events due to happen in 2021 included in the Minutes of the AGM. Can all Clubs that have cancelled or rescheduled events please let Tony Thomas know so that the Calendar on the website can be updated.

5. **Officers and Committee Members Reports since the previous meeting.**

A **Chairman – Paul Rigge**

Well I and, I'm guessing, most of us have received our first Jab and should also have received the top-up booster by the season start.

With Easter being so soon this year some Tournaments have already been pulled from the CA fixture list – Pendle have dropped the John Beech for the second time due, to travellers not being able to find accommodation, but hope to host two single day Tournaments, detail under club announcements later.

Whilst we still don't know if the Boris Timetable will be kept as the country opens, the league fixtures are quite volatile – pay attention when Ivan talks.

Over winter the Federation amused ourselves and I hope you, by seeking a logo design to represent us and what we stand for.. pleased to see so many entries...

And finally, the 7th Edition of the AC rules are, or will be the adopted version up here, before we strike a ball competitively. There are some differences and knowing how many pedants play this game, could I request that peace & understanding be displayed by them “in the know” when a transgression is made from an ‘old’ habit – unless the match outcome depends upon, in that case shoot the criminal there and then....after all “a win is a win” and put their points on your card.

B Secretary - David Walters

Received advice from CA Task Force regarding the interpretation of COVID announcements re Croquet Clubs - currently essential maintenance is permitted & play can resume from 29th March with some restrictions. Hopefully on 17th May, most restrictions affecting playing, coaching & tournaments will be lifted. NB An announcement re lifting the lockdown in Wales is expected later in the week. There is now a monthly Zoom meeting of representatives from all the Federations hosted by Paul Brown, to share information & ideas. The CA have adopted a new Child Safeguarding Policy, which Federations & Clubs have been requested to adopt. A revised Adult Safeguarding Policy will follow in due course. Clubs have been requested to perform Risk Assessments to support the centrally provided Insurance cover before 1/5/21. CA Tournament Regulations have been updated for 2021- see February Gazette for details. Feedback has been requested re Club Matters toolkit by 31/3/21. Millennium Competition Entry Forms will be issued them to Club Secretaries soon after the schedule is confirmed.

C Treasurer – Liz Wilson

The following 17 Clubs are paid up members of the North West Federation

Stonyhurst have promised to join but you can imagine it is pretty hard coping with school and Covid at the moment. I do not expect any others to join this year.

There is £6571.66 in the bank – this includes a payment to our website provider and a late payment of £20 from an outstanding club sub neither of which are recorded in the statement issued.

The Independent Examiner this year will be Robert Essler and not as stated on the bottom of the Financial Summary circulated before the meeting.

Paid up so far

Bowdon
Bury
Chester
Craig-y-don
Crake
Criccieth
Culcheth
Ellesmere
Flixton
Fylde
Keswick
Llanfairfechan
Pendle
Penrith
Southport
Tattenhall
Westmorland

D League Manager – Ivan Wheatley

The entries for the 2021 federation leagues were received and in total we again have 49 teams entered. The changes from 2020 include Pendle and Craven re-joining the short lawn AC league, Bury entering only one team in the handicap GC league, Crake Valley dropping out of the B-level AC league offset by Fylde joining and Bury not entering a second team in the level-play GC league offset by Llanfairfechan joining for the first time.

The draft league fixtures were circulated in January in anticipation of being able to start the season as planned on the 10th April however in view of the continuing national restrictions on social mixing and travelling imposed at the end of 2020, the prospect of a timely start has progressively diminished. The announcement by the Government on the 22nd February of their planned 4 stage relaxation in the restrictions in England now means that, no earlier than the 29th March (stage 1(b)) clubs may open for play subject to certain restrictions including being for local players only due to the continuing travel restrictions. No earlier than the 12th April (stage 2) travel restrictions will be eased but should still be kept to a minimum and it's not until stage 3, which is due no earlier than the 17th May, that most restrictions are expected to be lifted to enable league play to begin. For Wales the easing of restrictions has no specific dates attached and it has therefore been assumed that they will, in principle, align with the English rules.

In recognition of this possibility earlier in the year we undertook a modelling exercise to look at the latest possible start dates for a number of possible alternative arrangements. In the light of the 22nd February announcement we are proposing to start the league season no earlier than the 17th May (stage 3). The modelling suggests that the level-play GC, B level and midweek AC leagues can still be completed in their current form if we can start play by that date however the handicap GC, weekend handicap and short-lawn AC leagues, with their larger number of teams, cannot be completed given such a late start. We are therefore proposing to split these three leagues into two mini leagues each, based on a north/south grouping to minimise transport, and with intergroup playoffs at the end of the season to determine the overall league winners. On the assumption that all teams currently registered for the leagues will continue to take part, the proposed groupings for these three leagues are:

Weekend handicap AC (north): Bury 1, Bury 2, Crake Valley, Pendle, Fylde
Weekend handicap AC (south): Bowdon 1, Bowdon 2, Chester, Southport

Handicap GC (north): Bury, Crake Valley, Fylde 1, Fylde 2, Westmorland
Handicap GC (south): Bowdon, Chester, Culcheth, Llanfairfechan, Southport

Short lawn AC (north): Bury 1, Bury 2, Fylde, Pendle, Westmorland
Short lawn AC (south): Bowdon 1, Bowdon 2, Chester, Llanfairfechan, Southport

The revised league fixtures will be drawn up on the basis that the play commences once stage 3 has been reached i.e. no earlier than the 17th May, however, where the groupings show teams from a single club play in the same league, it will be acceptable for such pairings to be played before Stage 3 is reached providing the regulations in earlier stages 1(b) or 2 can be satisfied.

Despite this reduction in games played, weekend lawn time will be at a premium at several of our busier clubs it may still be necessary to schedule some of the designated weekend league matches to be played midweek. I therefore ask all clubs to show maximum flexibility to enable these revised arrangements to be put in place.

For the 2021 season the interpretation of Rule 2(b) for what constitutes an emergency will include any short notice cancellation of a match due to a member of either team being diagnosed positive with Covid-19 or being required to self-isolate or required to support a close family relative due to Covid-19 .

Finally will all clubs that originally registered for the 2021 leagues let me know as soon as possible, and no later than the 21st March, if they wish to continue to take part in the reformatted leagues or whether they wish to withdraw for this season.

E Coaching Officer – Paul Rigge

Heard nowt - Anyone want owt? Would Clubs please let Paul know if any support in Coaching is required.

F Development Officer – Sarah Andrew

The CA Committees have been reorganised so that the Development Committee has a slightly new focus on Development of Croquet in all its forms. This includes encouraging more members, improved facilities and a more diverse and inclusive membership of croquet clubs. Additionally, the CA Development Committee will identify funding opportunities from Government and non-Governmental bodies. It will develop relations with schools, universities and local authorities. The Committee is no longer involved in the assessment of applications for CA grants and loans. This will be the role of the newly created Funding Committee. I will be a member of the Funding Committee and, as a result, I am standing down as North West FDO from this meeting.

Since the AGM I have supported a grant to Fylde CC which was one of the last awarded by the old-style Development Committee. Crake Valley was in receipt of the Apps Healey award. Congratulations to them for their excellent work over the last two years.

A new U3A group, from West Pennine Villages U3A, has contacted me to re-establish play as soon as this is possible. I am liaising with Sally Slater from Chester CC who is National U3A lead on croquet.

I wish every success to the new FDO

G NW Festival – Ivan Wheatley

After the enforced cancellation of the Festival of Croquet last year hopes were high that we would be through the pandemic by this Summer to enable the Festival to go ahead on the 26th/27th June as planned. The four stage programme announcement on February 22nd restricts gatherings of more than 30 people until stage 4 which is set for June 21st at the earliest. With the Festival planned for 5 days after the earliest possible date for stage 4, there remains considerable uncertainty about the possibility of it being permitted to go ahead as planned. Note that during the later discussion regarding the Millennium events, it was suggested that the Festival be held on 14/15 August, but this is subject to confirmation by Southport.

H Safeguarding Officer – Jean Hargreaves

Most of you will now know that the new Safeguarding Documentation is on the CA Website. I am pleased to say that all parts can be accessed from the one page at last instead of being spread around the website. I understand it comes into effect on 1st May. As some tournaments may take place in April I am not sure why not then!

I have finished as the CA Safeguarding Officer and Dr. Ron Carter has taken over.

Every club is expected to elect a Local Safeguarding Officer or Welfare Officer.

Both I and John Dawson (John led the working party to produce the new document) are happy to help clubs and local Safeguarding Officers.

Currently the documentation relates to children i.e. those under 18 years of age.

There is another group now set up to look at Adult Safeguarding. They will report back in due course.

It would help me as Fed Officer if clubs could give me the names of their Safeguarding Officers. I know of some but not all of them.

I Pennine Cup Captain - Liz Wilson

No attempt has been made to arrange anything yet.

J Federation Handicapper – Don Williamson

A trial is being held in the Southern Federation of a new form of Handicap GC, known as Advantage Croquet. Rather than giving the weaker player extra turns, the handicaps are used to set an initial starting score. The hope is that the playing tactics will be the same as in level play GC. Feedback will be reviewed

K Website Manager – Tony Thomas

Website continues to get 3-400 hits/month. Tony would welcome more news items to share. In an attempt to improve security, fewer personal details will be shared & only mobile, rather than home, telephone numbers displayed. The CA template solution continues to be kept under review but the general feeling is that our current format serves our needs. Please submit any photos of the resumption of play at your club asap.

L CA Council Member (NW) - John Dawson

Following the issue of the Child Safeguarding Policy noted above, the CA is now moving to address the Safeguarding of Adults. Whilst the principles are very similar the legal requirement are different. There is also a group looking at Diversity & Inclusivity.

6 Millennium Competitions

Dates were proposed as follows:

AC Advanced - Bury - 4 & 5 September

GC Level Play - Bury - 7 September (NB this was changed from 21/8 at Crake following the meeting)

AC Handicap - Pendle - 10 & 11 July

GC Handicap - Crake Valley - 22 August

Short Croquet - Chester - 25 July (agreed after the meeting)

7 Motions:

Item 6 (b) Proposal to adopt the draft league rules as circulated for the 2021 season.

The draft League Rules were circulated with the agenda for the meeting and among the changes proposed was the adoption of the 7th Edition of the Laws of AC which were agreed by the CA at the January Council Meeting. Other changes proposed for the League Rules included the citing of specific references to the Tournament Regulations for the procedure in the event of the expiry of time in time limited games and the additional laws for alternate stroke AC doubles play.

The 7th Edition of the Laws of AC now incorporates the laws of alternate stroke doubles (D48, 49 and 50) and procedure to be followed in the event of the expiry of time limited AC games (B61) and the relevant sections of the Tournament Regulations have been deleted. Consequently, with the inclusion of the laws covering alternate stroke doubles in the 7th Edition I propose to withdraw the draft amendment to League Rule 11(a).

Whilst the 7th Edition of the Laws of AC define the procedure to be followed on the expiry of time in time limited AC games, the 5th Edition of the Rules of GC have been amended in Appendix 3 to state that ‘CA Tournament Regulations T3 [*previously T4(b)*] will apply to any event advertised in the CA Fixture Book’ rather than make an explicit statement on the procedure to be followed. Since Federation League Matches are not CA events and are not advertised ion the CA fixture book, I therefore propose to modify the draft new League Rule 3(b) to read “*All time limited GC games will be subject to the procedures set out in Tournament regulations T3 in the event of the expiry of the Time Limit*”.

The only other change proposed for the 2021 League Rules are:

... League Rule 4(a) amended to explicitly state lengths of games; AC 26 point, GC 13 point and short-lawn 14 point.

... new Rule 24(b) specifying that LGC results sheets must report results in the order in which games are played.

Following a discussion about the need to include a link to the Federation Disciplinary Policy in cases of poor behaviour, one further amendment was proposed to remove the words “which affects the outcome of the game” from Rule 10.

The proposal was adopted new con.

8 Election of Development Officer

David Cornes was nominated by Liz Wilson to fill the casual vacancy & was elected new con.

9 Adoption of Child Safeguarding Policy

The new Child Safeguarding Policy formulated by the CA was adopted new con.

10 Review of Logo Suggestions

Thanks to all who submitted their ideas. Thirty seven suggestions had been received and are all displayed on the NWFed website. A shortlist of 4 had been identified by the Committee. It was noted that the creator of one had recently submitted an updated version in response to feedback. To facilitate a “fair comparison” it was agreed that the rough sketches should be “polished” before a decision is taken. Post meeting note - Simon Robins has offered to do this.

10 Club Announcements:

Bowdon (Ken Cooper)

Forced with lockdown at the beginning of the summer season, the club eventually managed to open its lawns for members to play under coronavirus rules. Lawn space was governed by a new online booking system which was widely accepted by members. Ladders competitions were arranged and members played either 18pt or 14pt matches, limited to 2 hours playing slots.

The standard internal club competitions went by the wayside and all CA events due to be held at the club had to be cancelled. Notable personal achievements were:

- John-Paul Moberly won the GC's First Eight at Eights Week, the Ricki Savage Memorial Trophy, he won the NWF Millennium Advanced A-Class competition and he also won the Bowl competition at the GC Open Championship
- Jack Good won the Plate Knockout competition at the GC Open Championship, he won the GC 'B' Level Series final and also played in the Ascot Cup
- David Maugham won the South of England Championship and played in the AC World Championship

Several of the club's younger players are in the CA National Junior Programme which is run with the intent to build up a young players' community with regular meet-ups online and around the country.

Bury (David Barrett)

Sad to report that 2 longstanding members Sheila Bruckshaw & David Leach had recently died. Looking to create a programme of events that will overcome members fears about travelling to play. Working to improve media presence to stimulate interest from potential new members. Tournaments this year include B level Golf on 3/7 & C level Golf on 21/7.

Chester (John Dawson)

Lots of play possible before the weather deteriorated. Planning for normal season activities & recruitment. Have issued a standing invitation to staff from the Countess of Chester Hospital, both as a Thank You & potential stimulus of new interest. Other clubs may wish to consider extending similar invitations.

Craig-y-Don (John Hannah)

Craig Y Don (Llandudno) has managed to get through 2020/21 in the black, just, but during winter, have gained, a new mower and white lining trolley; plus, a ladies and gents twin composting toilet unit, thanks to grants from The National Lottery, The Peoples Postcode Lottery and donations from membership

Crake Valley (David Cornes)

Crake Valley are pleased to be recognised through the CA's Apps Heley Award for the most progressive club nationally over the 2 years to October 2020. Over the winter months members have continued to make improvements both to our drainage system and off lawn landscaping.

The recent passing of David Lloyd was a big shock and he will certainly be missed by the club. David was undergoing surgery for a ruptured aneurysm on Sunday 14th February. His cremation will be held this coming Tuesday.

On the playing front the AC Alternative Strokes tournament that David along with Elaine Newman has organised in recent years is postponed from April to a date later in the season.

Criccieth – Nothing to Report

Culcheth (Alan Wright)

We are looking forward to playing croquet even though the start from April will be subject to Coronavirus restrictions. We were able to play outside until November although we have not been able to use our indoor mat.

At the moment Culcheth Sports and Social Club is re-organising the sections and facilities but the Croquet section will be able to resume play. The groundsman is tending to our lawn.

As for the coming season, we shall be entering teams in the Golf League and the Golf Level play and hope to improve on last year's final positions. We hope to hold our usual club competitions.

Ellesmere – Nothing to Report

Flixton – Nothing to Report

Fylde (Liz Wilson)

Two small CA grants gratefully received to help with costs of levelling the lawns & improving the drainage ditch.

Keswick – Membership remains at a very low level, though we hope to gain members from a U3A starter group.

Llanfairfechan– (Sarah Andrew)

A good season in which the Club doubled its membership as croquet was one of the few activities that was permitted in North Wales during lockdown. A couple of grants have been received to help with challenging finances. Will host the regional finals of the inaugural Welsh CA GC Inter-Club competition.

Pendle & Craven (Paul Rigge)

Pendle held five Covid safe tournaments last year but as already mentioned, the 4day John Beech Easter Tournament has been pulled to be replaced by a couple of single day events, depending upon the interest shown by our member players. It is envisaged that GC will be contested on Sat 3rd April and AC on Easter Sunday (4th). A note to clubs will be issued attempting recruitment to these, but please pass on our intention to host –will be nice to shake off the winter by hitting balls about. Our other annual tournaments are scheduled as normal.

As a club, we continue to invest – over winter we have laid further hard standing around the container at the veranda end and the north gate access has been improved and widened. Internal pipe work and wiring isn't visible to visitors but members continue to do improvements thanklessly.

Penrith & North Lakes – (Ian Tupling)

Good playing season under Covid restrictions. Congratulations to Howard Bowron on being awarded a well deserved CA Diploma. A number of Break-ins have occurred over the winter, but thankfully little taken. Members keen to get started again & lawn preparations have started with a view to resuming play in April & internal competitions from May.

Salford – Nothing to Report

Southport - (Don Williamson)

Sad to report that the club lost its longest standing member Pauline Lewis during the 1st lockdown. Play has been limited. Treasurers Tankard & Ascot Cup were hosted over consecutive weekends, using 200m of drainage pipe as ball guards - available to other clubs! This year is 125th year in Victoria Park so hoping to be able to host a celebration.

Stonyhurst – Nothing to Report

Tattenhall – Nothing to Report

Westmorland - Sue Pritchard

Reseeded last winter - but suffered due to inability to water during dry spell, but eventually came good. Hall extended the playing season. Attracted 10 new members. Looking forward to the new season

11 Federation Equipment Assets

No changes to list circulated

12 Any other business

John Dawson is about to write an article for Pennant - a magazine for Service Pensioners. He requested that anyone who used to be in the Services to make themselves known to him.

13 Date of Next Meeting

AGM 13th November 2021 at Culcheth or via Zoom, Spring Meeting 5th March 2022 (TBC)

14 Meeting Closed at 1152.

Appendix

North West Federation Equipment March 2021

Club	Equipment
Bowdon	None
Bury	Projector
Chester	None
Crake Valley	None
Craig-y-Don	CA Start up Set
Criccieth	6 Hoops & Peg, 5 round headed Mallets, 1 set primary Barlows plus CA Start Up Set
Culcheth	None
Ellesmere	3 Mallets
Flixton	None
Fylde	None
Harlech (?)	None
IOM (?)	None
Keswick	None
Liverpool	None
Llanfairfechan	None
Pendle & Craven	None
Penrith & North Lakes	4 Mallets, 1 set hoops, 1 peg
Salford	CA start up Set
Southport & Birkdale	None
Stonyhurst	None
Tattenhall	CA Start up Set + set of secondary balls
Westmorland	None
Wilmslow (U3A group)	4 George Wood Mallets in carrying case, centre peg, 1 set secondary Barlow balls, 1 set primary Sunshiny balls, 1 set metal primary clips.
Paul Rigge	1 set Tertiary balls (Dawson)

Available None