

**Minutes of the North West Federation of Croquet Clubs AGM**  
**Saturday 12th November 2022 (Draft v1.2 Issued for comments 14/11/22)**  
**Held on Zoom & YouTube**

- 1 **The Meeting** was attended by 24 people representing 13 clubs:
- |                       |                                                                            |
|-----------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Bowdon                | Angharrad Walters, Ken Cooper                                              |
| Bury                  | David Barrett, Jean Hargreaves, Roy Spencer*, Gail Burnett* Barbara Young* |
| Chester               | Tom Grievson, Robin Tasker                                                 |
| Craig-y-Don           | John Hannah,                                                               |
| Crake Valley          | Simon Robins, David Cornes                                                 |
| Culcheth              | Alan Wright                                                                |
| Ellesmere             |                                                                            |
| Fylde                 | Catherine Bass, Liz Wilson, Peter Wilson*                                  |
| Keswick               | Steve Skelton                                                              |
| Llanfairfechan        | Rod Bowden                                                                 |
| Pendle & Craven:      | Paul Rigge                                                                 |
| Penrith & North Lakes | Howard Bowron                                                              |
| Southport & Birkdale  | Esther Jubb, John Haslam,                                                  |
| Stonyhurst            |                                                                            |
| Tattenhall            |                                                                            |
| Westmorland           | Mike Hodgson, John Shakespeare                                             |

\* Attended via YouTube

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked Alison Maugham & the CA for their support in hosting the meeting virtually. A couple of reasons for this, that need mentioning and hopefully will lead to a discussion as to where & how the Spring meeting will be held next year.

The first is that Culcheth Facility Management now charge a commercial rate for room hire. Should we (as an organisation) pay up for the venue or is it easier to find another venue (ie Bowdon or Whitehead Park). I'm sure you'll all have opinions – voice them!

Secondly; simply, we get more members joining us on Zoom/YouTube, than ever did physically, so we have a 'better' democracy this way.

But, on Zoom, I will again miss handing out League Trophies to our champions.(sigh), the Federation's Web Archive needs those Photographs for posterity.

- 2 **Apologies for Absence.** Clubs: Stonyhurst, Tattenhall. Individuals: Graham Good, Jack Good, Don Williamson
3. **The minutes** of the Spring Meeting held on 5th March 2022 were approved as a correct record Nem Con.
4. **Matters Arising** – None.
5. **Officers and Committee Members Reports since the previous meeting.**

A **Chairman – Paul Rigge**

This is my last meeting as your chairman, (ok, I'll wait for the cheers to abate).

You'd expect me to say, that it's been a Joy, Honour & Privilege to serve, so I won't disappoint, it has.. in the main... but it's also been frustrating and at times infuriating when dealing with the ever changing CA and the WCF as they introduced new rules onto our codes of play. Fortunately our views were heard and adopted.

I leave with our Leagues being well supported, our premier event, 'The Festival' healthier and more fun than ever, and am also encouraged that our other unique concept – The Millennium Tournaments for each playing discipline find both hosts and players to contest in, each year.

My only regret, my 'asset sharing' scheme didn't gain any traction with clubs.

So, with many sincere thanks to each committee member that I've worked with these past years, without you, the gig would've been, if not impossible, difficult. I pass the fiscally stable 'baton' onto Chair Number 12 to take us into our fiftieth year.

B **Secretary - Angharrad Walters**

Looking back over my emails since the Spring Meeting, it's been a relatively quiet summer on the administration front! I have been participating in the monthly Zoom calls with representatives of the other Federations and it is interesting to see how diverse their activities & approaches have become. One item to note from the last meeting was that the deadline for the nominations for CA Club Awards has been pushed back until 31/12. Reminder of the need to register Trustees with HMRC if your Club has them, for example as the named individuals on a lease. And a heads up that Hope Bourton, the CA's Next Generation Development Officer, is looking for Clubs to volunteer to pilot the new schools initiative in 2023.

## **Treasurer – Nigel Worthington**

The accounts were circulated with the agenda. It was noted that the cost of the gazebo, which is being spread over a number of years, has been charged against the Festival, but it is available for other Clubs to use, for example at Open days.

The Accounts were accepted nem con.

## **D League Manager – David Cornes**

The delayed 2021 Short Lawn play-off final was held in April 2022 with Chester defeating Westmorland.

Both the 2022 Draft & Final League Fixtures were produced on time (1st February & 14th March 2022). Late withdrawals were, subsequently, received in the B level Advanced League (Group A), the Weekend Handicap AC and the Short Lawn AC resulting in 51 teams playing across the 6 different league formats.

The B level Advanced AC League was played in 2 geographical groups of 3 teams playing each other home and away. The Play-off Final was hosted by Fylde (at no cost to the Clubs or the Federation) for which we offer our thanks and appreciation.

The GC Handicap League had 14 entries, so was divided geographically, with the play-off final venue determined by a new “Lottery” method (adding up all the drawn numbers and bonus ball from a pre-agreed date with odd being one club venue and even the other).

The remaining leagues Weekend Handicap AC, Midweek Handicap AC, Short Lawn and Level play Golf were all played to the normal format of “all play all”.

A concern is the number of postponed / re-arranged matches throughout the summer which led to tight timescales at the back end of the season with several “walkovers” being conceded. To ensure the integrity of each League remains intact Clubs are encouraged to make fixture changes, wherever possible, when the DRAFT fixtures are in circulation (February to mid-March) and to ensure they fulfil all fixtures in 2023.

The outcome of the various leagues is as follows –

B level Advanced AC: Winner – Crake Lakes Runner-up - Bowdon

Handicap AC: Winner – Bury Caesars, Runner-up – Bowdon

Midweek Handicap AC; Winner – Westmorland, Runner-up – Bury

Short Lawn AC; Winner – Westmorland, Runner-up – Pendle & Craven

Level Play GC; Winner – Bowdon, Runner-up – Crake Valley

Handicap GC; Winner – Southport, Runner-up – Fylde

I would like to thank Chris Alvey (Bury) for his support throughout the 2022 season. Due to ongoing heart health issues, I am unable to continue as League Manager but wish my successor every success.

Clubs must debate and decide in respect of 2023 -

The preferred structure of B level Advanced AC League (2 groups with a play-off or 1 league)

What is the number of entries needed for the League Manager to split a league (e.g. Handicap GC 2022) into 2 groups AND should that split be geographical or based on previous performance?

All other proposals for 2023 as received by the Secretary and listed in Agenda Item 6 – League Rules.

My personal view is that Handicap GC should move to the Advantage scoring system for 2023. The system has been trialled elsewhere in the UK and, from anecdotal evidence, is proving, generally, more popular than “extra turns”.

Any agreed changes must be written into the League Rules and confirmed at the Spring 2023 meeting.

## **E Coaching Officer – Paul Rigge**

What a season, as a Coach I held season long weekly clinics at both Pendle & Fylde, on Wednesdays & Thursdays respectively. Good to see attendees again continuing to play better Croquet, with a couple being nominated for CA’s most improved player and weekend tournaments being deprived of their silverware.

The Flying Circus was called upon by Westmorland and Chester. Not sure if it had any impact but Westmoreland did go on to win in two of our Leagues, coincidentally from Chester.

## **F Development Officer – David Cornes**

The CA has appointed Hope Bourton as Next Generation Development Officer (NGDO) who has been working on a Plan of Action for 2023 to attract more youngsters to the game.

In the North West –

CA Funding – I supported Crag-y-Don in an unsuccessful bid towards the cost of Foxy Hoops. Llanfairfechan made a general enquiry about funding applications.

CA Awards - Bury Croquet Club has made an application to be the most improved club with 5 or more lawns (Millennium Award). As FDO I fully supported their application with a decision due around the time of the Fed AGM.

Infrastructure – Crickieth Croquet Club has returned “on loan” NW federation and CA “start-up” equipment. Despite several attempts to engage with Club representatives, no reason has been given why they no longer share the Tennis Club’s facilities. East Pennine U3A based at Withnell Fold, near Chorley, benefitted from a coaching session from Don and Diana Williamson at the start of the 2022 season and would appreciate a further session in April / May 2023.

At the 2022 NW Fed Spring Meeting a “free” roadshow by Dennis Mowers in respect of Lawn maintenance was offered but there was, sadly, no interest forthcoming from Clubs.

Croquet Matters – the CA are encouraging Clubs to self-review and improve through Croquet Matters. In the last 12-18 months only Crake Valley (to my knowledge) has undertaken this exercise. FDO’s across the country recommend action and an introduction to Croquet Matters by Dave Gunn is available on You Tube. It is a matter for each Club to decide whether self-review is relevant.

Active Partnerships – attempts to get Croquet into schools via Active Cumbria and Active Cheshire have, to date, not materialised. It is hoped that some communication and guidance from the new NGDO may progress this over the next 12-24 months.

Club Awareness of Legal Obligations – A Club that is a registered as a Community Amateur Sports Club (CASC) are advised to review the HMRC CASC – detailed guidance notes (updated September 2021) available on the Gov.uk web pages.

A club that has a “trustee” (committee member) that holds assets (physical or cash) on behalf of / for the benefit of others (members) are advised to review the Trust Registration Scheme (TRS) effective from 1st September 2022.

Other Business – It seems logical that several Clubs are doing good work, in particular, around Membership drives. Any ideas or case studies that you are willing to share please send via the incoming NW FDO.

Thanks to those who have supported me in my time as FDO. Due to ongoing health issues, I have had to resign from the position.

## **G NW Festival – David Cornes**

The 2022 Festival returned to tradition being played over the last weekend of June and was an overwhelming success. The turnout was good with 33 teams (from 10 clubs) taking part with all sections well supported. Over 225 games took place with the emphasis of the weekend being on competitive play but in a fun environment. The timed games (shotgun start and finish) along with the assurances that no games were to be registered on a player’s handicap card enhanced the Festival atmosphere. Bowdon won the Overall Tournament Champion Club due to being successful in Advanced AC, Handicap AC, Short AC and Level play golf. Fylde won the Handicap GC.

Thanks to everyone involved with the preparation and delivery of the weekend, in particular the members of the Festival Committee and Southport Croquet Club.

Following the Festival an Evaluation was undertaken with feedback received from 23 individuals. The Committee met in August and reviewed the findings which were hugely positive. It was agreed to build on this year’s success and try to make further improvements for the 2023 Festival with the next planning meeting due in the Spring.

## **H Safeguarding Officer – Jean Hargreaves**

No incidents have been reported to me.

I have have had one request for clarification on the Child Safeguarding Policy.

Below are the links for the Child and Adult Safeguarding Policies -

[www.croquet.org.uk/?p=ca/schemes/SafeguardingAdults](http://www.croquet.org.uk/?p=ca/schemes/SafeguardingAdults) and  
[www.croquet.org.uk/?p=ca/schemes/ChildSafeguarding](http://www.croquet.org.uk/?p=ca/schemes/ChildSafeguarding).

Every club member is advised to read these policies.

**I Pennine Cup Captain - Liz Wilson**

The format was the usual Doubles in the morning (played advanced rules but with bisque difference (bisques not to be used on lift shots). In the afternoon 3 games of Advanced and 3 handicaps

The North West Fed Team of : Steve Skelton (2½), Neil Adams (2½), Jim Allcock (4), John Henderson (4½), Phil Snowden (12) and Betty Bates (16) were weaker for the Advanced players. Two one up at lunch, our team then lost all three advanced games to the better Croquet North players. The handicap players came good however and won all 3 handicap games. So score 5-4 to the good guys.

Middlesbrough are having trouble with their lawns and so I expect it will be arranged at Pendle again next season. I will arrange a date to suit once I know Pendle's commitments. Anyone wishing to play should let me know.

**J Federation Handicapper – Don Williamson**

I have little to report as Fed Handicapper, there have been no controversies this year.

I hope another CA Handicapper will take on the role of Fed Handicapper, I think it is probably time for another meeting of Handicappers from NW Clubs to be held early next season.

I have also resigned from the CA Handicap Committee.

**K Website Manager – Chris Alvey**

Nothing to report

**L CA Council Member (NW) - Robin Tasker**

This report covers the first year in my role as CA Council member representing the North West and it coincided with a time when considerable changes to the legal structure of the CA were underway. This presented both a challenge to catch up with the detail of what was going on, but also an opportunity to become thoroughly involved in the process and, as importantly, to develop close working relationships with Council members.

This year has seen the publication of the CA Child Safeguarding Policy as a major piece of work with the development of the equivalent Adult Safeguarding Policy now in progress as a part of the overarching Welfare Policy being developed by the CA.

In this year the latest Quinquennial Survey successfully took place with the initial findings reported; the deeper analysis underway; and already the results are being used to guide and direct areas of both policy and operation. The appointment of a Next Generations Development Officer is one such example where the outcome of the survey gave strong support for the establishment of this post.

There has been significant activity in the area of Inclusivity and Diversity (I&D) – and renamed to “Opening Doors on Croquet”. This includes the publication of the “10 Easy Questions” that encourages Clubs to critically review their existing structures and approaches to recruitment and retention of their members; the “Opening Doors on Croquet” competition which invited clubs to submit proposals that encouraged community engagement and improved I&D; and taking over the Spring CA Gazette to publish and promote the successes of Clubs in this vital area. I was particularly impressed with the competition submission from Bury CC which highlighted the outstanding community engagement work they undertake.

Following my first Council meeting I agreed to become a member of the Legal Status Working Group (LSWG) that was charged with developing the CA's position as it moved from the existing unincorporated association of members. It was clear that, as had been identified as far back as 2010, this unincorporated association status was no longer fit for the modern world.

Firstly the (very many) responses to the consultation exercise from last summer were developed and published in three tranches covering the areas of Charitable Status, “Charitable Incorporated Organisation v Charitable Company Limited by Guarantee”, and Voting Membership; and secondly the document pack in preparation for the SGM that was held in July and which used input from both the Charity Commission and Sports England was produced.

At the SGM, CA members voted in favour of conversion to a Charitable Incorporated Organisation which provides a more robust legal structure to allow the organisation, which will be called Croquet England (CqE), to act in its own name; to be more easily recognised by third parties; and together with charitable status allows more avenues for improved commercial deals, sponsorship, and fundraising.

The LSWG is now focused on the preparation needed to move the existing CA operation across to CqE once approval has been gained from the Charity Commission. For this activity I have agreed to act as the Project Manager. The transition is likely to take place over an 18-month period to ensure there is no disruption to the normal CA calendar and to fit in with FY-year end constraints when transferring CA staff to the new organisation.

As always I am very pleased to discuss CA matters with you and of course to answer your questions.

## 6 Motions re League Rules

There was a wide ranging debate about the various proposals that had been tabled, with votes finally being taken as follows:

### 5.D League manager's report

a): In 2023 the B level Advanced AC League should revert to one league (all play all once).

**Rejected - 3 in Favour, 5 Against, 6 Abstentions**

b): A League should be split into two geographical groups if there are 12 entries or more.

**Approved - 12 in Favour, 0 Against, 1 Abstention**

### 6 League Rules

6.1.1 That AC teams comprise of teams of 3 players rather than 4.

**Rejected - 1 in Favour, 10 Against, 4 Abstentions**

6.1.2 That Short Lawn teams comprise of teams of 3 players rather than 4.

**Rejected - 1 in Favour, 6 Against, 6 Abstentions**

6.2.1 To reduce the B League lower handicap limit from 1 to zero, in line with CA events.

**Approved - 8 in Favour, 1 Against, 5 Abstentions**

6.2.2 To replace the B level Advanced League with teams of three that may include no more than one minus player and aggregate handicap shall be not less than 5

**Rejected - 1 in Favour, 7 Against, 6 Abstentions**

6.3.1 That GC handicap league should use the Advantage scoring system

**Approved - 10 in Favour, 1 Against, 3 Abstentions**

6.3.2 a That there should be an end of season review

**Withdrawn following the approval of 6.3.1**

6.3.2 b That the format of the GC Handicap League is teams of three, all play all twice, without time limits.

**Withdrawn following the approval of 6.3.1**

6.4.1 That the LPG League should have two divisions based on performance, with promotion & relegation between the divisions.

**Approved - 5 in Favour, 4 Against, 4 Abstentions**

6.4.2 That the LPG League remains as a single division, with an upper handicap limit of 6.

**Rejected - 1 in Favour, 8 Against, 5 Abstentions**

## 7 Subscriptions - Nigel Worthington

Subscriptions to remain unchanged

## 8 Millennium Competitions

Dates were proposed as follows:

AC Advanced - *Pendle - 10/11 June or 17/18 June or 19/20 Aug*

GC Level Play - *Crake Valley 28/5 or Pendle on 10/11 June or 17/18 June*

AC Handicap -

GC Handicap - **Crake - 22 July**

Short Croquet - **Fylde - 23 July**

Offers to host are invited & will be confirmed at the Spring Meeting.

## 9 Arrangements for NW Festival of Croquet - David Cornes

The Festival will be held at Southport on 25-25 June. David Cornes is leading the organising team.

10 **Co-ordination of Dates for Tournaments & Events**

25 March	Bowdon Charity 1-ball
7-10 April	Pendle & Craven John Beech Memorial Easter Tournament
20 Apr	Crake Alternate Shot Doubles AC
15-16 Apr	Lancashire GC Open at Pendle
22-23 Apr	Southport Advanced Weekend
6-7 May	Pendle & Craven B & C Level AC Advanced Weekend
7-8 May	Bowdon May Handicap Weekend
8-14 May	National Croquet Week (TBC)
13 May	Pendle & Craven B level (3+) GC Series National Qualifier
13-14 May	Bury A Level (0+) GC Series National Qualifier
13-14 May	Southport Handicap Weekend (Carol Lewis Memorial)
20-21 May	AC Home Internationals at Pendle
20-21 May	14pt Handicap tournament at Bowdon
3-4 June	Bowdon Advanced Weekend
6-9 June	Pendle Midweek Tournament
10-11 June	Pendle & Craven Open Series Golf
10-11 June	Crake Advanced AC - Cumbria Cup
15 June	Crake C level (7+) GC Series National Qualifier
16 June	Crake B level (3+) GC Series National Qualifier
17-18 June	Crake A Level (0+) GC Series National Qualifier
17-18 June	Pendle & Craven Advanced Weekend
20-21 June	AC Midweek B level at Bowdon
24-25 June	Festival at Southport
1 July	Bury B level (3+) GC Series National Qualifier
8-9 July	Cheshire GC Open at Bowdon
15-16 July	McWeeney Trophy (CA v ICA) at Southport
19 July	Bury C level (7+) GC Series National Qualifier
22-23 July	Southport Super B and B-Level Advanced Weekend
22 July	Millennium Short at Fylde
23 July	Millennium Handicap GC at Crake
23 July 29-30 July	Pendle & Craven AC Handicap Weekend
1-2 August	Bowdon Short Croquet Tournament
5-6 August	Chester A level GC 0+ Cross Over Tournament
5-6 August	Bury Handicap Weekend
5-6 August	Crake Advanced AC - Cavendish Clock
19-20 Aug	The AC All England Handicap Area Final - Bury
19-20 Aug	Millennium Advanced AC at Pendle
26-28 August	Bowdon North of England Championship
26-28 Aug	GC Eights
7-10 Sept	President's Cup at Bowdon
7-11 Sept	Treasurer's Tankard at Pendle
7-11 Sept	AC Eights
16-17 Sept	Southport AC Weekend
16-17 Sept	Crake GC Ladies Open

**Bowdon (Ken Cooper)**

This year, the club finally got back on its feet again, when a full programme of events was run. All of the normal club's CA events were held, including a home win for one of our members when David Maugham the North of England Championship. The club also had very good CA Inter-Club results:

The AC Level Play team reached the final where they lost to a very strong Roehampton side

The Mary Rose team also did well to reach their final where they played Hurlingham in a match that went down to the wire and could have gone either way, but lost

The GC Level-Play team unfortunately went out in the semi-final to Roehampton.

Bowdon had a winner in the North West Federation Millennium B-Class AC Advanced tournament, held at Pendle, when Nigel Matthews won the event. Bowdon entered one team in each of the NWF leagues and had success in the Level-Play GC league, going undefeated throughout the season.

The club ran a full programme of internal competitions, including a new Box League, which provides an ongoing competition throughout the year in both AC & GC, whereby short monthly rounds are held with continual promotion and relegation. Regular weekly events restarted: Monday's Short Croquet and 14pt. competitions, Tuesday's Solomon Grundy, the Wednesday Competition and Friendly Friday.

We have turned our lawns around for the winter season and have made them  $\frac{3}{4}$  sized. Our members will be able to enjoy a schedule which will consist of various 14pt and 26pt competitions, the continuing Box Leagues, plus a new 14pt knockout competition. Every Saturday, we will be running a very popular event, a one-ball handicap competition, and it is hoped that most people will stay on to enjoy an organised tea once a month. We will also be holding a quiz night about once a month.

This year's Beginners' Coaching Course resulted in 14 new members joining the club and 2023 promises to be another good year when the club will celebrate its 150th anniversary. To honour this event, we have successfully managed to get the top-ranked Eights Week tournament, the President's Cup, held at the club in September.

We are also running extra tournaments next year in the hope of attracting more people to play, widening the choice of croquet disciplines; some of these events may interest your club members:

a weekend 14pt Handicap tournament (May 20-21)

a midweek B-Level tournament (June 20-21)

a midweek Short Croquet tournament (August 1-2)

and, especially for the golf croquet players, the Cheshire Open GC Championship, which will act as an Ascot Cup qualifier (July 15-16).

So, get these dates in your diaries and come to Bowdon and enjoy some fun events!

**Bury (Roy Spencer)**

It has been a very busy season for Bury Croquet Club- both on and off the lawns.

We have been able to fully utilise both our facilities over the season, the lawns have stood up well to extensive use and fortunately did not suffer too much burning during the sunny periods. Over 30 players attending one of our open club sessions recently.

We continue to play AC Advanced, Full Lawn & Short Lawn, 1 Ball, Level play & Handicap GC, with coaching in all disciplines.

Our Membership has now increased to 88.

We feel that much of this increase has been due to the added awareness of the Club through and as a result of our 'Diversity, Inclusivity & Social Cohesion programme' -- " Opening Doors on Croquet "-- which has resulted in extensive Media and Social media coverage.

The Club was filmed & featured on BBC National News at Six and News at 10 in April.

The annual Charity 'Hospice Day' was very well attended and raised over £700 , it was featured on 'That's TV Manchester, both before and after the event and was the lead feature on the news bulletin the following Monday.

Our National Croquet day took place on May 21st At Whitehead Park, supported by local councillors, and received complimentary posts on social media over the following days.

We held several successful group events during the season, church, rotary, uniformed youth groups.

These bring income to the club and have created new membership interest, again introducing croquet to new players.

The season got off to a good start over Easter with Gedimias Smolskas winning the John Beech trophy at Pendle & Craven.

Chris Alvey won the AC Millenium Handicap Trophy at Chester.

We successfully retained the National Inter-Club Short Lawn Trophy beating Nottingham at York in September.

Our Longman cup Team claimed third place Tankard in September at Surbiton. (The only time they lost throughout all the stages of the Tournament.)

## **Chester (Robin Tasker)**

The 2022 season saw a gradual return to a more “normal” season following the various Covid restrictions of the previous years, and this was very welcome although we continue to be vigilant. Following a Taster Day and subsequent Beginners Day we recruited well and our membership stands at 110 although we have some concerns over the level of the annual turnover of members. After two seasons of Covid-induced absence, the Club is once again holding an end of season celebration in a Chester restaurant which will mark the end of an enjoyable season.

Chester faced particular problems this year as a result of the drought conditions. Difficulties with the Council's maintenance schedules; a lack of a functioning watering system; and continuous close mowing resulted in burnt and compacted lawns. This made playing conditions at times extremely challenging for both Chester and visiting players. The lawns are now recovering, and we continue to negotiate with the council to try and avoid a recurrence of a similar situation next season.

Chester entered and competed all the available NW Fed leagues, and although not as successful as we might have wished the external competition was very much enjoyed. Certainly the pool of AC players is of concern as is the number of players starting AC and making the transition from Short Lawn to Full Lawn. We ran a number of AC/GC events to encourage experienced GC player to try out AC but only with limited success. Increasingly we have seen difficulties in getting players for some of the matches which is disappointing but can hopefully be addressed.

As a consequence of the issues that have arisen from this season's league fixtures and wishing to encourage more, and more competitive, play Chester has tabled a number of proposals for consideration at the AGM.

For the first time Chester entered a team into a national GC Murphy Shield competition which reflected the increased wishes of the GC players for wider competitive play. The two matches played were very much enjoyed and Chester look forward to entering again next season. In the AC Secretary's Shield competition Chester reached the final against Newport (and played at Nottingham) which was unfortunately washed out at lunchtime. The match will now be replayed on 29 April 2023 and is to be hosted at Chester.

## **Craig-Y-Don (John Hannah)**

Craig Y Don Croquet Club celebrated its' 10th Anniversary this past season ending with 70 Playing Members on our single Crown Green bowling Lawn laid out with four non-regulation, (smaller and wrong ratio), croquet courts. The club gained CASC Governance approval just before lockdown and has since had interesting debates regarding membership criteria as CASC HMRC approved Constitutions demand membership basically offered to anyone who wishes, with no approval procedure.

Approximately 2/3 of the membership enjoy social croquet but are not particularly interested in competitive play. Nevertheless we successfully run club competitions in long and short lawn Golf and fielded a team in the Snowdonia Cup, a mixed Association and Golf competition with adjusted scores, between CYD, Llanfairfechan, Chester and Tattenhall started by our CYD President Jack Pattenden just before the Pandemic started.

However with the Handicap Golf league likely to remain geographically split, (and confirmed at the AGM) we will be entering a team for the first time ever in a NW Fed league for the 2023 season.

This follows an inspection of our lawn in late summer with the recommendation from David Cornes, then league manager, that we provide two acceptable long lawns to the correct dimension ratio but at 80% scale measurement. This will give us two acceptable lawns to use for league games but with an overlapping rectangle which will need to be treated like primary V secondary balls converging on the same hoop.

These 80% scale long lawns were intended to be ‘pop-ups’ for the day utilising Foxy hoops but the grant application, supported by David, to the CA was refused.

Consequently, we have decided to lay those scale lawns permanently for the 2023 season which we hope will encourage more members to use these larger lawns (than our normal), requesting them all to be handicapped and to use the advantage system whenever they play a game.

We also intend bringing a Golf team to the Southport Festival in 2023, though we were unable to do so in 2022.



### **Crake Valley (Simon Robins)**

In a busy and successful year, the Club celebrated its 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary with publication of a booklet charting its history and a fun event in June. Membership has increased by 20 to over 50 in the year thanks to a higher profile locally and to the improved facilities the Club can now offer.

In addition to holding well-attended internal AC and GC competitions, the Club has fulfilled all fixtures in NW Fed Leagues, with 2<sup>nd</sup> place in both the handicap and level play GC leagues. In their first year, the Crake Lakes team with players who are also members of the Keswick, Penrith and Westmorland clubs won the B-level Advanced AC League, beating Bowdon in the play-off final. Crake Valley hosted several tournaments during the season including two advanced AC (The Cavendish Clock and Cumbria Cup), a 2-day Ladies GC Open as well as national C-, B-, and A-level GC qualifiers. Among notable individual successes this season, Frank Sharps won the Millennium GC handicap and Sandra Cornes has had a distinguished year lowering her GC handicap from 6 to 3 meriting her nomination by the Club for the Croquet Association award of Most Improved Ladies GC Player 2022. David Cornes did well to lose by just one hoop in the National A-level GC Final.

Many visiting players have complimented the Club on the quality of the lawns, and to build on that success, extensive work has been done in recent weeks on aeration, over-seeding, and topsoil dressing, which already seems to be paying dividends.

Finally, the Committee has instigated plans to improve club governance including measures to provide future financial sustainability and administrative changes to ensure CASC compliance by revising the membership structure and clarifying procedures for visitors and guests. The Club remains committed to the Croquet Matters initiative and is currently reviewing annual progress and future targets.

### **Culcheth (Alan Wright)**

This year has been difficult as there have been changes to the management of Culcheth Sports Club. Our lawn has been mown but hasn't received any other treatments or maintenance. In spite of this we still have a reasonable surface on which to play. We entered teams in the Golf Level Play and Golf handicap league and it was good to renew friendships when we played other clubs.

We had problems fulfilling some of our fixtures because of travel and holiday plans and next year we shall only be entering a team in the Golf Handicap League.

We recruited several new players which has helped to keep our numbers steady and we hope that they will play with more confidence and become willing to play against other teams.

We are confident that our funds will be enough to maintain the club next year and we are working on plans to augment our income.

Warrington Ladies Tangent enjoyed a croquet session before their annual dinner in a Culcheth restaurant. U3A have two sessions per month and the Rotary club had an evening of croquet. Our Quiz nights have been well attended and everyone had fun.

We are still playing outside, which most members prefer, but we will probably be resuming our indoor sessions on the mat in the near future.

### **Ellesmere – Nothing to Report**

#### **Fylde (Catherine Bass)**

All England – Phil Snowden successfully defended his 2021 Title at this year's final in Watford.

#### **Keswick (Steve Skelton)**

Only 3 members, but enjoyed playing in the Crake Lakes team. U3A make use of the lawn.

#### **Llanfairfechan– (Sarah Andrew)**

The Club continues to increase its profile and maintain membership numbers above 60. We have individual members who are leaping up the World Rankings and we made two nominations for CA Most Improved Player. Our teams are also strong. We were second time winners of the Welsh Croquet Association (WCA) GC Teams tournament and winners of the Snowdonia Cup, a local competition with both codes of the game.

We again hosted the Northern heat of the WCA Team Golf Croquet Championship. This was a success despite the attempts of the moles to ruin one edge of a lawn. We increased our team players for both GC and AC. Our AC coaching sessions are steady recruiting events and we will continue them next year.

We were not happy with the rebranding of the Croquet Association to Croquet England. Representation to name the CA Croquet GB or Croquet UK received negative responses written in Legalese.

We continue to work to improve the lawns and we are grateful to the members who toil in their spare time on both the outside and inside spaces.

### **Pendle & Craven (Paul Rigge)**

This is the first year since I became a member, that the club has felt like a club “by & for the members”, we even managed to recruit a member from within Earby – I know, wow, right.

All achievements this year have been ‘off court’, a New Northern Pavilion, with a south facing veranda has been erected & painted in summer pastel colours. The Pavilion that you all are familiar with has also been spruced up, all surplus ‘crap’ has been binned, the place given a complete tidy & paintjob. Outside lights fitted. New soft furnishings. The metal container painted and all storage sheds overhauled – this massive ‘list of work’, all done by the entire membership throughout the season. And the ‘team bonding’ cherry to cap it all off? – a Club Strip... no I mean Pendle Shirts & Caps that members wear with pride when playing in fixtures.

Plans for next season? – the Northern Car Park will be given a hard standing surface inside our compound.

### **Penrith & North Lakes – (Howard Bowron)**

Penrith CC started their ‘opening doors’ campaign at the Dalemain International Marmalade Festival in April. A new category, the ‘triple peel’ gave us a reason to set up a demonstration lawn. We got an article and photo of Paddington Bear in the CA Gazette, and an award from the CA. Through this initiative, and subsequent taster sessions, we gained some promising new recruits.

Alongside a lot of novice coaching the club ran a full suite of competitive internal competitions, retained the Cumbria Tankard Trophy, and as part of the Crake Lakes team, won the Federation Advanced B League.

We played our first inter-club GC match against Crake Valley, losing narrowly, and taking the opportunity to ‘calibrate’ our club GC handicaps against more experienced players. We adopted the Advantage system in our internal GC competition, having no previous experience of the ‘extra turns’ system of handicapping. As such it was easy to learn, although somewhat awkward to put into practice.

The winners of all these competitions will be congratulated at a presentation lunch later in November, which is an excellent way to close the season.

### **Salford – Nothing to Report**

### **Southport - (Esther Jubb)**

In line with the experience of other clubs we have seen uptake of our CA competitions decline, however we still managed to host, with reduced numbers of participants, the Open Advanced in April, the Carol Lewis Memorial Trophy in May and the Super B and B Level Advanced in July. Additionally we saw 5 days of advanced AC play with the Spencer Ell Cup in September. Our Handicap Golf Team also progressed to the Semi-finals of the CA Federation’s Shield; a National Handicap Golf Croquet Competition.

Our Marketing Sub-Committee were again successful in reaching new members. The come and try sessions in early May were oversubscribed; we provided taster sessions to 83 people before we needed to declare the new starter sessions closed due to capacity. As a result of the taster sessions we had almost 50 participants register for our beginners coaching sessions on Monday and Wednesday evenings. Our existing coaching team was again supplemented by experienced club players to enable us to manage the significant numbers. We have seen 26 new members join the club following the completion of the beginners coaching.

Club continues to provide croquet to the wider community through our ‘corporate events’ but have also additionally hosted an afternoon with the local Ukrainian refugee community.

The club is experiencing rising costs and we will need to continue to be mindful of our finances in the coming year; maintenance, utilities, sundries are all costing the club more. The Treasurer has indicated that our costs in 2022 v. our last normal year (2019) are up approx. 15%.

### **Stonyhurst – Nothing to Report**

### **Tattenhall – Ruth Wrigley**

Tattenhall Croquet Club members have enjoyed this season. This year we introduced a ladder league to run alongside our internal knockout GC Tournament. We have continued to play friendly matches and were runners up in the Snowdonia Cup. However, despite hosting open days and corporate events we have failed to increase our membership. Our lawn continues to improve and has been enhanced this year by repair and painting of the surrounding fence – all work carried out by club members.

## **Westmorland - John Shakespeare**

A very successful season on the lawns with Westmorland winning both the NWFED Mid Week AC League and also the NWFED AC Short Lawn League. Unfortunately this year due to the AGM being on Zoom we will not have the pleasure of collecting the trophies in person.

Early this season we held a well attended and much enjoyed Open Day which resulted in a healthy increase in our membership by 7 to 37 – the highest for a number of years.

We play in the grounds of Levens Hall so have been restricted to the times that the garden is open which has excluded Friday and Saturday.

Next year they will be opening on Fridays as well and we are in negotiation to allow Croquet on the extra day.

## **12 Federation Equipment Assets**

See Appendix. The Gazebo is currently at Llanfairfechan, but is likely to be moved to a more central location for storage. A reminder that it is intended to be for all Clubs to use as availability permits.

## **13 County Captains**

The following were confirmed:

Cheshire AC: Simon Jenkins (Captain & Organiser)

Lancashire AC: James Hawkins (Captain) & Paul Rigge (Organiser)

If anyone would like to try raising a team for either Lancashire or Cheshire in the GC Inter-Counties, please let Angharrad know. Eligibility for Counties can be expressed on the CA website.

## **14 CA Diploma**

Congratulations to Ian Theakstone of Fylde Croquet Club. The following citation is copied from the CA website.

Ian Theakstone became a member of Fylde croquet club in 2007 and has been an active member of the club for 15 years. He quickly became a competent player in both Association and Golf Croquet, has always made himself available for the teams and Captains one of our league teams. He has been a valued member of the Committee with particular interest in maintaining the lawns, white lining and making and fixing equipment.

His skills have provided a refurbished kitchen area, electrical facilities, seating, along with ball holders, corner pegs, corner flags and bisques (the design of which has been copied by many North West clubs). Any broken equipment is passed to Ian and fixed. At the end of the season when we all put our feet up Ian renovates the hoops and mallets.

Recently he has been instrumental in planning and developing a wildflower meadow in memory of our founder member Martin Bradshaw. He wrote an informative document to help us recognise and gain knowledge of the flowers that have grown. This has proved to be a delight to all who visit. Fylde does re-wilding! He often commented on the lack of birds, bees and other insects. They have all returned this year.

## **15 Election of Officers**

The following were elected nem con.

- i) Chairman; John Haslam – Nominated by Liz Wilson, Seconded by Paul Rigge
- ii) Secretary; Angharrad Walters (7<sup>th</sup> Year) - Standing for re-election
- iii) Treasurer; 2022 Liz Wilson - Nominated by Angharrad Walters. 2023 Peter Williams - Nominated by Liz Wilson
- iv) League Manager; Phil Snowdon - Nominated by David Cornes
- v) Coaching Officer; Paul Rigge (6th year) - Standing for re-election
- vi) Development Officer; Vacancy
- vii) Safeguarding Officer; Jean Hargreaves (10<sup>h</sup> year) - Standing for re-election
- viii) NW Festival of Croquet Manager; David Cornes (2nd year) - Standing for re-election
- ix) Pennine Cup Manager; Liz Wilson (6th Year) – Standing for re-election
- x) Federation Handicappers; AC: Liz Wilson, GC Tom Grievson - Nominated by Angharrad Walters
- xi) Website Manager; Chris Alvey - (2nd year) - Standing for re-election

Liz Wilson was authorised to update the bank mandate with Santander to add Peter Williams of Southport as an authorised signatory.

16 **Election of Independent Examiner**

Paul Rigge, nominated by Liz Wilson

17 **Any other business**

Format of future meetings - As noted earlier, holding meetings via Zoom & YouTube has allowed greater participation, especially by the more far-flung clubs. A hybrid meeting is more complex to manage & requires a reliable internet connection, the ability to project / see on a large screen the remote participants, plus a camera & good quality microphone to share contributions in the room to those online. Bowdon & probably Bury are the two clubs most likely to be able to host & further investigation will continue over the winter to check the feasibility. Another option to be considered is hiring a suitably equipped meeting room in a central location.

Presentation of trophies - it was agreed that the 2022 League trophies will be formally presented either at the Spring Meeting, if held in person, or at the conclusion of the Southport Festival.

Next year the Federation will celebrate its 50th anniversary, being formed on 31/3/73.

18 **League Trophies**

The 2022 Winners are as follows:

AC B Level League	Crake Lakes*
AC Midweek Handicap	Westmorland
GC Level	Bowdon*
GC Handicap	Southport*
AC Handicap	Bury Caesars*
Short	Westmorland

The four Trophies marked \* are believed to already be with the winning Clubs. The Short is believed to be at Chester & Bowdon have located the AC Midweek Handicap trophy.

19 **Date of Next Meeting**

Spring Meeting 4th March 2023, Format & Venue TBC. AGM 18<sup>th</sup> November 2023 (TBC)

20 **Meeting Closed at 1250.**

## Appendix

### North West Federation Equipment November 2022

Club	Equipment
Bowdon	None
Bury	Projector
Chester	None
Crake Valley	None
Craig-y-Don	None
Criccieth	None
Culcheth	None
Ellesmere	3 Mallets
Fylde	None
Keswick	None
Llanfairfechan	Gazebo
Pendle & Craven	None
Penrith & North Lakes	4 Mallets, 1 set hoops, 1 peg
Salford	CA start up Set
Southport & Birkdale	None
Stonyhurst	None
Tattenhall	Set of secondary balls
Westmorland	None
West Pennine (U3A group)	1 set Jacques Hoops, 1 centre peg, 1 set of flags, 1 set of Dawson first colours, 1 set of Dawson 2nd colours, 1 set of primary clips, 5 George wood mallets, 1 hoop puller (All ex Liverpool)
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	<p>With David Cornes: 2 sets of Jacques hoops, 2 centre pegs, 1 set of Dawson 1st colours, 1 set of primary clips, 1 set of 2nd clips, 4 mallets, 3 barlow balls (white pink and green), 1 dawson (black), 7 assorted poor condition balls (All ex Liverpool)</p> <p>6 Hoops &amp; Peg, 5 round headed Mallets, 1 set primary Barlows plus CA Start Up Set (ex Criccieth)</p> <p>With Liz Wilson: 2 mallets needing repair (ex Liverpool)</p>