

Minutes of the North West Federation of Croquet Clubs Spring Meeting
Saturday 18th March 2023 (Draft v1 issued to Clubs on 19/4)
Held on Zoom & YouTube

- 1 **The Meeting** was attended by 17 people representing 11 clubs:
- | | |
|-----------------------|--|
| Bowdon | Angharrad Walters, Ken Cooper |
| Bury | Roy Spencer, Jean Hargreaves, David Barrett* |
| Chester | Tom Grievson |
| Craig-y-Don | Jack Pattenden |
| Crake Valley | Simon Robins, David Cornes |
| Culcheth | Alan Wright |
| Ellesmere | |
| Flixton | |
| Fylde | Liz Wilson, Peter Wilson, Phil Snowden |
| Keswick | |
| Llanfairfechan | Sarah Andrew |
| Pendle & Craven: | Paul Rigge |
| Penrith & North Lakes | |
| Southport & Birkdale | Esther Jubb, John Haslam |
| Stonyhurst | |
| Tattenhall | |
| Westmorland | Sue Pritchard |

* Attended via YouTube

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

- 2 **Apologies for Absence.** Clubs: Keswick, Penrith & North Lakes, Stonyhurst. Individuals: Chris Alvey, John Hannah, Steve Skelton, Robin Tasker, Howard Bowron, Ian Tupling
3. **The minutes** of the AGM held on 12th November 2022 were approved, subject to an amendment to the List of Tournaments, as a correct record Nem Con.
4. **Matters Arising** – None.
5. **Officers and Committee Members Reports since the previous meeting.**

A **Chairman – John Haslam**

Congratulations to Liz Wilson on the award of Coach of the Year. Thanks to Phil Snowden for taking on the challenge of organising the League Fixtures. Also thanks to David Cornes & Tom Grievson for their work in trying to ensure that there is a good understanding of how to use the Advantage scoring system in advance of the new season. Any votes will be by a roll call of Club Representatives and Fed Officers.

B **Secretary - Angharrad Walters**

We have received notification of several initiatives from the CA trying to increase participation: Making Croquet More Welcoming, Next Generation Pilots with schools & Proposals to trial “new” variants - Short, Quick (Sequence) and Modified 14pt (Starting from in front of Hoop 1) Croquet. Please let me know if your club is interested in pursuing any of these further. Clubs have been invited to participate in a European GC Club League. CA Quinquennial survey results have been published. Concern has been expressed at the low number of examining coaches nationally (as well as referees) - again would anyone interested in obtaining either qualification please let me know & we will see if we can arrange an appropriate course locally. Millennium Competition Entry Forms will be issued to Club Secretaries as soon as the details are confirmed. A late proposal to amend the League Rules re the test for an unplayable lawn was submitted, which can be discussed later.

C **Treasurer – Liz Wilson**

Subs have been received from 17 Clubs - Bury, Bowdon, Chester, Craig-y-Don, Crake, Culcheth, Ellesmere, Flixton, Fylde, Keswick, Llanfairfechan, Pendle, Penrith, Southport, Stonyhurst, Tattenhall and Westmorland
The only outgoings since the AGM are £136.50 for bases and engraving for the two Millennium Golf Trophies which have never had the names of winners added and a domain renewal fee of £9.54.
The interest on the deposit account has risen from approximately 50p per month to over £2 per month in 2023!
The funds stand at £6,941.64

D League Manager – Phil Snowden

Small increase in the number of teams playing across the various leagues. Welcome Craig-y-Don to the Handicap Golf League for what I understand is their first time entering the leagues.

There have been some other additions such as Fylde entering the Mid-Week league, also some reductions in clubs being able to enter second teams in 2022 but only being able to enter 1 team this year.

Overall the number of teams entered across the various leagues, prior to fixtures being issued stands at 52.

The draft fixture list containing 162 matches was issued on the 31st January 2023. There have been a number of amendments requested and these have been agreed between the respective clubs and captured in the formal issue of the fixtures on the 7th March 2023.

A total of 22 changes have been captured, a large proportion due to the allocation of HGC South matches being Mid-week for most teams and allocating some league matches over the Coronation weekend, which was an oversight on my part.

Due to the Geographical spread of the Level Play Golf – League A (Premiership) it is with regret that Pendle have informed and confirmed they will be withdrawing their entry for 2023. Subject to the League format of this competition in 2024, any movement between the leagues is likely to be limited to promotion only from League B to A.

Handicap Golf league will utilise the Advantage scoring during 2023. All League teams have been invited to a coaching session on Advantage Scoring. Each club has been allocated "guidance" documentation to help their members. The score sheet has a small amendment regarding capturing the start and end time of the match day to help inform future reviews of utilising the Advantage scoring system.

All score sheets are being reviewed to ensure they capture all recent changes and following confirmation of any final amendments during the spring meeting will be issued to all club captains and updated on the website.

When submitting scores, can the submitting team captain please clearly identify the team names and the score and the winning team. E.G. Blackpool 10 vs Blackpool 6 causes problems and added time in finding the relevant fixtures. If you could be specific in terms of Blackpool Rovers 10 vs Blackpool United 6, this would be extremely helpful in recording the scores when received and ensuring the correct points are allocated.

Have an enjoyable season.

E Coaching Officer – Paul Rigge

It's spring ; Heard nowt - Anyone want owt? Let me know...
(intend to personally play more this season, so my weekends are filling up)

F Development Officer – Vacancy

Role remains vacant.

Paul Francis (Chair of CA Sports Development Committee) has invited anyone potentially interested in the role to listen in to the next Zoom meeting due 7pm on Thursday 14th April.

G NW Festival – David Cornes

Calling notice due to be issued in May with an anticipated closing date of end of May.

Festival dates 24th & 25th June at Southport.

Planning meeting due to be held via Zoom in April.

Would like some volunteers to come forward to help ensure the smooth running of the weekend. Please contact me for further details in you are interested

H Safeguarding Officer – Jean Hargreaves

Not a great deal of activity to report over the winter months. A request from Bowdon will be referred to the national Safeguarding team for comment / approval. A new Safeguarding Officer will be needed by the AGM as Jean will not be seeking re-election.

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

www.croquet.org.uk/?p=ca/schemes/SafeguardingAdults and

www.croquet.org.uk/?p=ca/schemes/ChildSafeguarding.

Every club member is advised to read these policies.

I Pennine Cup Captain - Liz Wilson

The match will be held on August 13th at Pendle. Anyone interested in playing should let Liz know.

J Federation Handicappers – Liz Wilson & Tom Grievson

Concern expressed that there is no “northern” rep on the CA Handicapping Committee.

Action: JH/AW to raise at next Federations Forum.

K Website Manager – Chris Alvey

Nothing to report

L CA Council Member (NW) - Robin Tasker

It has been 3 years since the formation of the new Croquet Association Council and Executive Board structure, with Council taking responsibility for the strategy, direction and scrutiny over CA operations, and giving the Executive Board clearer responsibilities for the day-to-day business of the CA.

And high on the new Council’s priorities were to look at our overall legal structure as it was clear that, as had been identified as far back as 2010, the existing Unincorporated Association status was no longer fit for the modern world. Consideration of the options, along with numerous associated details, has been the major focus for Council over the last year. This led to a Special General Meeting on 18 July where CA members voted in favour of conversion to a Charitable Incorporated Organisation. This move to a more robust legal structure will allow the organisation, which will be called Croquet England (CqE), to act in its own name.

The formal application to the Charity Commission (CC) was submitted in August 2022, and although we have responded to a set of queries from the CC, we still await their final approval. And on this basis, for the coming 2023 season. we will continue to operate as the CA.

As CqE we will be more easily recognised by third parties, and together with charitable status, will open more avenues for improved commercial deals, sponsorship, and fund-raising.

The choice of name has been controversial to some, but whilst “The Croquet Association” was the first such association when it was formed in 1897, the intervening years have seen the formation of numerous Associations around the world, and most importantly covering other parts of Great Britain, such as the Scottish and Welsh Croquet Associations (And note that Northern Ireland is covered by the Croquet Association of Ireland as the governing body for Croquet across the island of Ireland). The name CqE more transparently reflects the realities that we are the Governing Body for Croquet in England.

Clubs in the Home Area (England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland, the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man) and players from around the world will of course be welcomed as members of CqE, in the same way that they are members of the CA.

Croquet has prided itself on being an inclusive sport for many years - “played by men and women on equal terms” is a regular phrase in CA marketing and recruitment material. The recent survey of croquet players shows we are approximately 60% male, and if we look deeper at, say, low handicap players or volunteers on CA committees we find greater disparity. Considering other aspects of diversity also tells us that there is more to be done. There will be many benefits and of course it’s simply the right thing to do.

The final report of the Quinquennial Survey has been published and provides a wealth of information about our sport and will be used to inform CA policy across the range of our activities.

The establishment of CqE has of course been the focus, and whilst the intent is to keep as much as possible “business as usual”, there will be some changes required. This has involved the review and update of many of the existing governance and management policies and procedures. And as well as incorporating CC requirements, we are using the opportunity to incorporate some of the requirements codified in Sport England’s Code of Governance. As well as improving how we govern and operate our sport, these changes will help mitigate a number of risks and also open opportunities for other forms of support from Sport England.

As ever if you have any questions on any topic, or wish clarifications of this report, then I will be very pleased to hear from you and will respond as best I can.

6 Millennium Competitions

Dates were proposed / confirmed as follows:

AC Advanced - Pendle - 19/20 August
GC Level Play - Crake Valley - 24 August
AC Handicap -
GC Handicap - Crake Valley - 23 July
Short Croquet - Fylde - 16 July

It was understood that Chester are seeing to identify a suitable date for the AC Handicap event.

Action: TG/RT to confirm date asap

7 Motions:

Following a brief discussion regarding the merits of changing the number of games played in the Handicap GC League, it was agreed to withdraw the motion and reconsider the proposal at the AGM, based on the experience of playing Advantage GC this season.

8 Club Announcements:

Bowdon (Ken Cooper)

Over the winter, we have turned our lawns round, making them $\frac{3}{4}$ -sized and our members have been able to enjoy various 14pt and 26pt competitions, plus the continuing Box Leagues. Every Saturday, we have been running a very popular one-ball handicap competition, followed by an organised tea once a month. We've also held a popular quiz night about once a month. This year's Beginners' Coaching Course will be run on the same basis as last year, done in small groups, each with a dedicated coach, over 3 weeks, before culminating in a 1-day Refresher Course for those who join the club. The club will celebrate its 150th anniversary in April with a grand opening of a new summer house by a TV celebrity. 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.

Besides the usual CA tournaments, we are also running extra tournaments this year put on especially to attract more people from the North West 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)

We have remained fairly active at Bury over the closed season.

Our twice weekly Winter Social afternoons at Whitehead park have been well attended by members with both indoor and outdoor play possible (for the hardier members!).

The club took part in a community event at Radcliffe Market in January with 10 registrations for taster sessions. This was also featured on a YouTube video.

We also had stalls at two other events, including an Over 50's Fair in Bury organised by the local MP.

In January we received a visit from CA NGDO Hope Bourton to discuss the National Junior Croquet Club, as a result of which we are in the process of becoming involved with a couple of local primary schools hopefully to take this forward.

This year we are celebrating the club's 35th Anniversary, we held a celebratory dinner on 10th March, and hope to have a summer event later in the year.

We will be holding our open day event for Bury Hospice on 22nd April at Coronation Park, and National Croquet Day on 27th May at Whitehead Park.

Finally we were delighted to have been successful in receiving The CA Millennium Award, for clubs with 5 or more lawns. Thanks to David Cornes as DO for his support with this.

We look forward to the forthcoming season.

Chester (Tom Grievson)

The Chester lawns are recovering rather patchily after the late summer drought. The patches will be reseeded as the weather warms but may be adversely affected by the start of the playing season.

Membership numbers are currently 109 with about a dozen people signed up for the Taster day on 24 April but players of AC and its derivatives continue to decline slowly. We are making a concerted effort to push Short croquet this year.

Tom Grievson held two sessions on the new Advantage handicap system which were well attended. Early views of the new system are mixed.

Chester lawns reopen for play on 26th March..

At our recent AGM Robin Tasker (acting Secretary) was elected Secretary replacing John Dawson who is unwell. Tom Grievson was elected Chair replacing Jayne Taylor who has completed three very successful years in the role.

Craig-y-Don (John Hannah)

Firstly, my apologies for non-attendance but I will be away in Spain! Some CYD members may be following the meeting on YouTube but we are unlikely to have a Zoom voting representative.

CYD Croquet Club gets our lawn back from the Bowling Club on 24th March. We are looking forward to preparing it and laying out our planned two, ¾ scale-sized long lawns (with an overlap), in anticipation for us playing in the southern section of the NW Fed Handicapped Golf league for the first time since the club was formed 10 years ago.

We expect to get 60-70 fee-paying, playing members quite quickly with our season starting on April 1st. Our fee is rising to £75 this year.

We have had a quiet winter, with card and board games offered on a Wednesday afternoon poorly supported. However, we are in the middle of three two-hour afternoon defibrillator awareness and training sessions with a total of 50 booked attendees which is great. The first, held last Wednesday was excellent. We crowd funded and erected a defibrillator outside our clubhouse last winter which is listed on both the National Circuit and Good Sam databases. Our biggest perceived H&S risk at Craig Y Don was/is the deep gutter surrounding the crown green lawn. We had in previous year placed a number of bridges for members and visitors to safely use, but in addition this winter we have filled the gutter with chipped rubber from car tyres, which will soften any trips or falls which might occur playing near the lawn edges and retrieving guttered balls, hopefully making any accidents far less serious than they might have been.

We have operated the club to date without any defined 'Rules and Regulations' which caused some problems with the acceptance of new members last year. We have sought guidance from ACASC, the Association of Community Amateur Sports Clubs and they are currently looking at our proposed R&Rs and newly revised draft Constitution to guide us on their suitability within the CASC Regulations. We have taken the opportunity as suggested to change out Sports Governing Body to Croquet England, though we may have some fierce comment at the AGM in April which will be asked to approve the draft Constitution after any ACASC proposed amendments! (WE ARE IN WALES)

Crake Valley (Simon Robins)

The season's start has been overshadowed by the sad news of David Nicholson's passing. A past Chairman of the Club, Dave Nick's exceptional abilities as an AC croquet player were recognized both throughout the region and nationally. Dave was an inspiration for aspiring players and his instigation of the Cavendish Clock Trophy is just one of his lasting legacies to the Club.

Pre-season treatments of the lawns have begun with spraying moss killer and application of fertilizer scheduled for later in the season. We attempted to avoid some of the anticipated increases in cost by purchasing the Duncan Hector package at the end of last year.

Crake is running seven tournaments this season, starting with an AC Alternate Strokes Handicap Doubles which we have not been able to run since 2019. Advanced AC Tournaments, the Cumbria Cup and Cavendish Clock will be held in June and August, respectively, and in June the Club will host the GC C-, B-, and A-level Series National Qualifiers. The final Tournament in September is a 2-day GC Ladies Open which continues to be a popular event. Registration for all Tournaments is through TES and bookings are going well.

Finally, congratulations to David Cornes who has been invited to join the GC International Player Development Squad for 2023 and 2024. His first session with the squad is at Wrest Park next month.

Culcheth (Alan Wright)

The winter has seen changes in the management of Culcheth Sports Club which has had implications for us at Culcheth Croquet Club. Our lawn has been mown and we have played outside, weather permitting, throughout the winter. Our Groundsman, Ian, has however retired and we have now to maintain the lawn ourselves. We are hoping that we can do this. This summer we shall only be entering a team in the Golf Handicap League.

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

We had a successful Quiz evening and our Annual Dinner was a success and we were grateful for the support from our friends at Bury Croquet Club. Several of our members attended the Bury 35th Annual Dinner last week.

Ellesmere – Nothing to Report

Fylde (Peter Wilson)

Nothing to report. Will be having a presentation from David Cornes on Wednesday 22nd March at 10.30 am on the Advantage Golf scoring. Anyone welcome – details from Liz

Keswick (Steve Skelton) – Nothing to report.

Llanfairfechan– (Sarah Andrew)

Llanfairfechan lawns were kept open for most of the winter season and maximal use was made of the clubhouse to raise funds. Our membership has held up well although a big drive to increase it will be held over the next two years.

Pendle & Craven (Paul Rigge)

Over Winter, our Deere mover, was given total work-over and gained three new mowing heads, additionally more equipment has been added to our ground keeper's arsenal to ease the fight in playing surface improvement.

This year Pendle will host the 'AC' Home Internationals (20th/21st May), the furthest North it's ever been in this country – all are welcome to visit & support, it's on your doorstep, why not?

The season opener for GC – the 'Lancs Open' is back onto its original weekend (15/16th April) and still has plenty of spaces available – enter and get those limbs moving again.

Penrith & North Lakes – Nothing to Report

Salford – Nothing to Report

Southport - (Esther Jubb)

Nothing to Report.

Stonyhurst – Nothing to Report

Tattenhall – Nothing to Report

Westmorland - Sue Pritchard

Lawns are now open on Fridays.

9 **Federation Equipment Assets**

No amendments to list circulated with agenda.

10 **Any Other Business**

a) Separate Class of Membership. There was a consensus that we should try to keep as many Clubs as possible within the Federation community.

Action: JH/AW/LW to draft a proposal to create a new class of membership for consideration at the AGM.

b) In person meetings. Agreed that there is a benefit in meeting in person at least once a year. AGM to be held in person, enabling the presentation of League trophies, with Spring meeting via Zoom.

Action: Bury to confirm whether we can hold the AGM at their clubhouse on 18th November 2023.

c) Club Constitution changes re CqE. Noted

d) League Rules re unplayable lawns. Following a brief discussion, it was hoped that common sense would prevail between the two captains.

Action: PS to report any disputes to the AGM.

11 **Date of Next Meeting**

AGM 18th November 2023 at Bury, Spring Meeting via Zoom 5th March 2024 (TBC)

12 **Meeting Closed at 1115.**

Appendix 1 Equipment as at March 2023

Bowdon	None
Bury	Projector
Chester	None
Craig-y-Don	CA Start up Set
Crake	2 sets of Jacques Hoops (ex Liverpool)
Culcheth	None
Ellesmere	3 Mallets
Flixton	None
Fylde	None
Keswick	None
Llanfairfechan	Gazebo
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,
Wilmslow (U3A group)	In carrying case 4 mallets, centre peg, 1 set primary Sunshiny balls and 1 set secondary Barlow balls, clips
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, 1 36" metal shaft mallet, 3 mallets (All ex Liverpool) 5 Round head mallets, 1 set Dawson primary balls, centre peg (ex Criccieth)
Westmorland	None
Paul Rigge	1 set Tertiary Balls (Dawson)
Available	With Bury CC - 1 set dawson primary balls, 2 centre pegs, set of clips, flags, markers and assortment of balls (three Barlow - white / pink / green, one Dawson - black, 7 assorted poor condition - 3 green / 2 white / 2 yellow) - (All ex Liverpool). CA start up kit (set of hoops, set of primary balls, centre peg) and 4 CA george wood mallets 1 set hoops (ex Cricceith) 1 set of Foxy hoops (CA) With Liz Wilson: 2 mallets needing repair (ex Liverpool)