

Minutes of the North West Federation of Croquet Clubs Special General Meeting
Saturday 18th November 2023 (Draft v2.0 To Clubs)
Held at Bury Croquet Club, Whitehead Park

- 1 **The Meeting** was attended by 20 people representing 11 clubs:
- | | |
|-----------------------|--|
| Bowdon | Angharrad Walters |
| Bury | Roy Spencer, Anne Alvey, Chris Alvey, David Barrett, Peter Duncan, Ken Eccles, Roger Schofield |
| Chester | Tom Grievson, Robin Tasker |
| Craig-y-Don | |
| Crake Valley | Gill Uglow |
| Culcheth | Alan Wright |
| Ellesmere | |
| Flixton | |
| Fylde | Phil Snowden, Liz Wilson |
| Keswick | |
| Llanfairfechan | Sarah Andrew |
| Patterdale | |
| Pendle & Craven: | Sharon de Maine |
| Penrith & North Lakes | Howard Bowron |
| Southport & Birkdale | John Haslam, Peter Williams |
| Stonyhurst | |
| Tattenhall | |
| Westmorland | Mike Hodgson, Sue Pritchard |

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked Bury Croquet Club for hosting the meeting.

- 2 **Apologies for Absence.** Clubs: Craig-y-Don, IOM, Stonyhurst, Tattenhall. Individuals: Richard Bellwood, David Cornes , John Hannah, Nigel Matthews, Jack Pattenden, Simon Robins, Peter Wilson, Steve Skelton
3. **The proposed amendments to the Constitution** as specified in the meeting notice to create a new class of associate membership, to clarify the voting rights of clubs and to replace references to the Croquet Association were all approved Nem Con.
4. **Meeting Closed at 10:10am**

Minutes of the North West Federation of Croquet Clubs AGM
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The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked Bury Croquet Club for hosting the meeting. He also thanked those present for travelling to the meeting and identified several benefits of in-person meetings.

The Chairman's proposal to approve Patterdale Tennis & Croquet Club's application for membership of the Federation was seconded by Mike Hodgson and approved unanimously.

- 2 **Apologies for Absence.** Clubs: Craig-y-Don, IOM, Stonyhurst, Tattenhall. Individuals: Richard Bellwood, David Cornes , John Hannah, Nigel Matthews, Jack Pattenden, Simon Robins, Peter Wilson, Steve Skelton
3. **The minutes** of the Spring Meeting held on 18th March 2023 were approved as a correct record Nem Con. Proposed by Liz Wilson, seconded by Sarah Andrew.
4. **Matters Arising** – None.
5. **Officers and Committee Members Reports since the previous meeting.**
- A **Chairman – John Haslam**

The Chairman thanked the Federation Officers & Committee members for successfully steering the Federation through another year. He congratulated Phil on surviving his first year as League Manager and also complimented David Cornes & the organising team for a successful Festival.

Notable achievements during the year included: Fylde winning the Longman Cup, Anne Alvey triumphing in the All England AC Handicap and the award of CA Diplomas to John Hannah & Peter Wilson.

The good news of the formation of the Patterdale Croquet Club is tempered by the cessation of croquet at Culcheth.

Clubs need to recognise that there are many changes afoot:

- Tournament entries are down - contributory factors include higher travel costs & the increasing average age of new members seen in the CA survey. There is a need to create pathways for those interested in competitive, rather than purely social, croquet, e.g. Short & 14point croquet. Southport had held a number of one day events this year to attract visitors & the chairman encouraged other clubs to do the same next year.
- Next year Croquet England will be subject to Charity Commission requirements, including more emphasis on the welfare of volunteers and the need to review risk assessments & procedures.

Consideration should be given over the winter to a change in the form & location of the AGM. Potentially a longer meeting, with refreshments, to be held near to the M6 to facilitate attendance by more clubs. An item for the Spring Agenda.

B Secretary - Angharrad Walters

One other notable achievement this year was the celebration of the 150th anniversary of the founding of a croquet club in Bowdon.

Thanks to Jean & Paul who are standing down from their roles at this meeting. I hope that we can find volunteers to step into their roles plus the Development Officer role, which has been vacant this year, either during the meeting or soon thereafter.

Congratulations to Fylde for winning the Longman Cup and thanks & commiserations to those who flew the flag for the NW in the national knockout competitions but were unsuccessful in their quest.

Despite gloom regarding the state of AC in the NW, our clubs hosted the Home Internationals, the McWeeney and 3 of the 4 Eights. It was also good to see multiple nominations for AC MIP from the NW.

We'll hear more from Robin later about the transition from the CA to CqE, but one idea that was floated during the year was that the Federations should change their names to, for example, Croquet North West. At least for now, we believe that it's best to stick with our self-explanatory name.

Look forward to learning more about Bury's experience of the new schools initiative pilot programme.

C Treasurer – Liz Wilson

The accounts were circulated with the agenda. It was noted that the Festival runs at a slight loss due to the costs of providing portable toilets. The residual cost of the gazebo has been written off & the engraving costs were boosted by the one-off costs of adding previous winners to a trophy.

The Accounts were accepted nem con.

D **League Manager – Phil Snowden**

2023 fixtures formally issued on the 7th March 2023.

Final league positions

Advanced B-Level, The North League was won by Crake Lakes with the South League being won by Bowdon. The play-off between the 2 regional winners was played with Crake Lakes winning this match 3-2. Congratulations to the Crake Lakes team.

Handicap Golf, The North League was won by Fylde Falcons for a second year running with the South League being won by Chester Senators. Unfortunately, due to weather the play-off has been postponed twice and will now be played at the beginning of 2024 season.

Level Play Golf, this league for the first time was split into 2 divisions with promotion and relegation between the leagues. Due to a withdrawal due to travelling distances, the relegation from league A will be removed for this season. The final league results are, League A was won by Bowdon, with League B being won by Chester Centurions who will be promoted to league if the same format is retained for the 2024 season.

Mid Week AC, congratulations to Bowdon who won this league.

Weekend AC, congratulations to Bury Caesars who had the nervous wait after finishing their fixtures mid August waiting for the other fixtures to be completed.

Short AC, congratulations to Southport on winning this league.

Handicap Golf league utilised the Advantage scoring during 2023 with all teams been invited to a coaching session on Advantage Scoring. Each club was allocated "guidance" documentation to help their members. The match times were recorded throughout the season with match times ranging from 4 hours 25 mins to 7 hours 30 mins.

Bury provided an excel sheet to aid with the scoring and handicap allocation for handicap golf. This is being reviewed and if the advantage scoring continues for the 2024 season it is proposed this will be provided to aid clubs.

Unfortunately, there were a number of fixture changes throughout the season, some of which were due to unforeseen circumstances for individual clubs whilst others were due to teams struggling to form teams. I would like to thank the teams affected by these and their consideration in seeking alternative dates and not just defaulting to the league rules and claiming a walkover. I personally feel that the main aim of the league is to encourage play, with this being my priority thorough the year. As a result of this, some fixtures within the AC leagues which were played with a team of 3 instead of 4. There were a few instances as the season came to a close which needed to be concluded by walk overs. Hopefully next season we can have few walkovers and increased level of play.

In my first season as a league manager I would like to thank all the teams for their support and patience at times. I am aware there were a few teething issues and hopefully these were all resolved to everyone's satisfaction.

Looking forward to continuing in the role in 2024, unless someone else wishes to pick up the responsibility. Following the AGM, I will then issue the league application for to the relevant club secretaries.

E **Coaching Officer – Paul Rigge**

Apart from Weekly Coaching sessions at Pendle, I've not visited any other clubs this year.

On a wider front, the Croquet Association's (now Croquet England) Coaching Committee has introduced new procedures around Safeguarding. Coaches *must* not only be Certified from a recognised body but licensed, if they are dealing with minors (under 18's), and the scope will be expanded 'soon' to include All Safeguarding groups.

The change from Assistant Coach to Instructor Coach status also reflects which groups these coaches can and can't assist with.

And finally any new Coaching or Merit Award badges earned will carry Croquet England 'branding' (as a guess - after current stocks are used).

Details of all the above on CE's website.

Cheers, it's been fun, good luck to my successor (I will, of course support any way I can).

NB the Fed Coaching role comes with membership of the Croquet England coaching committee. The next meeting is on Saturday week, 25 November, 10-1

There are three meetings a year, all by Zoom, the 2024 dates being Sat 3 Feb 10-1. Weds 15 May 7-9pm, Sat 30 Nov 10-1.

F Development Officer – Vacancy / John Haslam

In the absence of any volunteers for this role, a watching brief has been maintained by the Chairman. Nothing to report.

G NW Festival – David Cornes

The 2023 Festival was held at Southport on 24th & 25th June. 10 clubs, 39 teams across the 5 strands. 201 games played on the ever improving North and South Lawns. Thank you to all players who took part.

The Festival Winners are listed:

Handicap Golf = Fylde

Level Play = Bowdon

Short Association = Fylde

Handicap Association = Bowdon

Advanced AC = Pendle

Festival Champion Club = Pendle

Follow up survey undertaken with over 20 responses. Summary of responses to be reviewed at next Festival meeting due in the Spring and shared with the Federation key officers. If anyone wants to get involved with the 2024 Festival please contact me.

For 2023, the biggest success was the longer timed games in golf croquet strands. Out of 108 golf games there was only 1 timed out game in handicap play and 5 in level play. Room for improvement includes warning users of the potential splash back from flushing the loos and enhanced recording of scores to enable prompt presentation in 2024.

Thanks to everyone involved in the preparation and delivery of the weekend, in particular the members of the Festival Committee and Southport Croquet Club. It is very sad news that Margaret Flemington has recently passed away after a short illness. She will be missed.

Finally, the Financial summary = Income from entries £1520

Expenditure - lawn hire £962 / Toilets - £755

Loss of £197

H Safeguarding Officer – Jean Hargreaves

Nothing to report

I Pennine Cup Captain - Liz Wilson

Two teams of 6 players from Croquet North and The North West Federation met at Pendle for this annual competition. The two Captains did their best to match handicaps to enable the format of 3 Level Play Doubles in the morning and 6 games of singles in the afternoon.

The morning doubles finished 2 -1 in favour of Croquet North with two of the games going to exciting “time turn” finishes in which Croquet North showed great resilience and determination. The afternoon singles were 4 Advanced games and 2 handicap games matching the handicaps as best as could be done. As results filtered in the score became 2 – 2 and then 3 – 2 to Croquet North. The next match to finish made the result 4 – 2 to the visitors. The home team’s players Steve Skelton and Phil Snowden pulled the score back to 4–4 and it took Brian Medley to finalise the score at 5-4 to The North West Federation.

Neil Adams and Phil Snowden lost to Phil Errington and Nigel Durie (-1 on time)

Brian Medley and Betty Bates beat Terry Vernazza and David Millener (+10)

Steve Skelton and Garry Wilson lost to Derek Watts and Nigel Roberts (-1 on time)

Neil Adams beat Phil Errington (26TP – 1)

Garry Wilson lost to David Millener (12 – 26)

Betty Bates lost to Nigel Durie (14 – 21)

Steve Skelton beat Terry Vernazza (26 -12)

Phil Snowden beat Nigel Roberts (26 – 16)

Brian Medley beat Derek Watts (26 – 14).

J Federation Handicapper – Tom Grievson / Liz Wilson

LW: The CA Handicap Committee have been approached more than once and by more than one person about the fact that there was no-one from North of Northampton on the committee. Apparently David Cornes has now been invited to join. Personally I have only, on request of a club, reviewed one handicap this year. Everything else quiet.

TG: Some confusion on the GC side from some players using Dynamic Grade (DG) rather than handicap index to derive their handicaps. Further clarification is being sought.

K Website Manager – Chris Alvey

Apart from a brief hiatus, the website continues to function well. Team captains are asked to send their results to Results@croquetnw.co.uk. Photos are also welcome. but please include a caption with the names of those pictured.

L CA Council Member (NW) - Robin Tasker

The approval for the formation of Croquet England was received from the Charity Commission on 22 March 2023, and consequentially the Croquet England CIO came into existence (as Charity Number 1202444). Since that date, the Council has undertaken a large volume of work in preparation for Croquet England to be ready to take over all day-to-day activities from 1 January 2024. Over this period I have acted as the project manager of the Implementation Group charged with ensuring Croquet England is ready to operate as the NGB and I am pleased (and somewhat relieved!) to say that everything is currently on track...

As we approach the year end, the schedule for the transfer from the CA to Croquet England is as follows:

November 2023: Clubs and Federations have been invited to join Croquet England as Affiliates, and members of affiliated clubs will become Standard Associates of Croquet England from 1 January 2024.

December 2023: All categories of individual subscription will become available for individuals to become Associates of Croquet England from 1 January 2024.

January 2024: All Associates of Croquet England will be invited to become Members of Croquet England and as such gain voting right of the organisation. And I very much encourage you all to do so to ensure your voice is heard.

February 2024: The Croquet England Tournament Entry System will open for the 2024 playing season.

March 2024: The first Croquet England AGM will be held.

The benefits of becoming Croquet England include moving to a more robust legal structure that will allow the organisation to act in its own name, and as such it will be more easily recognised by third parties. The addition of charitable status will open more avenues for improved commercial deals, sponsorship, and fundraising.

As a continuing part of this transition it is intended that further changes will be made, largely based on Sport England's Code of Governance, to incorporate established practices and research findings from across the sporting world. The majority of these changes are small, but collectively they will improve how Croquet England is governed, how our sport operates, and open opportunities for other forms of support from Sport England.

The one major area of change that is starting to be addressed is the requirement of the Charity Commission (and reflected in Sports England) to the structure of the Board of Trustees. This to include the elected playing representatives, those appointed to cover required skill sets, and those elected to bring an independent perspective; and all while operating with a Board of Trustees of around twelve individuals.

The choice of name was initially controversial for some, but, whilst 'The' Croquet Association was the first such association when it was formed in 1896, 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. Northern Ireland is covered by the Croquet Association of Ireland, as the governing body for croquet across the island of Ireland.

The new name reflects the reality that we are the Governing Body for Croquet in England.

However 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 continue to be welcome to join Croquet England, in the same way that they are now members of the Croquet Association.

The growth in the number of croquet players across the country has continued with an 8% increase in individual membership. A significant investment was made into the recruitment of the next generation of players, with the establishment of the Next Generation pilot. There were positive results from the eight pilot clubs, and Council was also encouraged to see similar initiatives being independently established at several clubs across the country.

The CA also introduced two new membership classes to bring more people playing more croquet in more places into our community. Hospitality Partnership is open to corporate entities providing facilities for croquet, such as hotels. Garden Membership is designed to attract some of the many thousands who play in domestic gardens and potentially attract them to join a club.

The CA continues to strive to improve diversity and inclusivity with the full report of the 2022 survey published in December 2022. Subsequently clubs from the North West have successfully showcased their contributions in this area featuring regularly in the Croquet Gazette.

Safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults has continued to receive much attention, and there are now safeguarding officers for almost every club and federation. Free training is also available and clubs and members are encouraged to contact the CA National Safeguarding Officer for more information.

As ever I am happy to discuss any matter relating to Croquet England or to answer any 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:

6.1 Time limits for Weekend Handicap AC League

To change rule 13a, to reduce the match times for the Weekend AC Handicap league from 3hours 15mins to 3 hours, this will bring the weekend AC match times in line with the Mid week league based on the current format.

Approved - 11 (BUR, CHE, CRA, CUL, FYL, LLA, SOU, WES, SEC, LEA, WEB) in Favour, 1 (PEN) Against, 0 Abstentions

6.2 Establishment of an AC 14pt Handicap League

To replace the AC Handicap Midweek by a new AC 14 Point Handicap League.

Approved - 8 (CHE, CRA, FYL, LLA, PEN, SOU, SEC, LEA) in Favour, 0 Against, 4 (BUR, CUL, WES, WEB) Abstentions

6.3 Removal of Geographical divisions within Leagues

6.3.1 Remove geographical divisions within Leagues except for Handicap Golf (due to large number of teams.)

Approved - 11 (BUR, CHE, CRA, CUL, FYL, LLA, SOU, WES, SEC, LEA, WEB) in Favour, 0 Against, 1 (PEN) Abstention

6.3.2 (a) Remove Geographical divisions in Advanced B-Class League,

Not voted upon as already agreed by 6.3.1

6.3.2 (b) Right to require & provide an alternative venue to avoid excessive travel.

Approved - 6 (BUR, CHE, CRA, LLA, PEN, WES) in Favour, 4 (FYL, SOU, SEC, LEA), Against, 2 (CUL, WEB) Abstentions

6.4 Penalties for failure to fulfil fixtures

Bury CC Propose that penalties are imposed on clubs not fulfilling fixture dates

6.4.1 A team cancelling a fixture within 7 days of the agreed date receive a 1 point penalty

Rejected - 2 (BUR,WEB) in Favour, 9 (CHE, CUL, FYL, LLA, PEN, SOU, WES, SEC, LEA) Against, 1 (CRA) Abstention

6.4.2 If a team concedes more than 2 walkovers in a season, that team is removed from the league for the season & any completed matches are declared null & void.

Rejected - 5 (BUR, FYL, SEC, LEA, WEB) in Favour, 7 (CHE, CRA, CUL, LLA, PEN, SOU, WES) Against, 0 Abstentions

6.5 GC Handicap League

6.5.1 Continuation of Advantage System for 2024

To retain the Advantage System for the HGC league in 2024.

Approved nem con

6.5.2 Restriction on Handicaps

Teams playing in the Handicap GC League, using advantage system, to consist of players with a handicap of 4 or above

Rejected - 2 (BUR, CHE) in Favour, 6 (FYL, LLA, PEN, SOU, WES, SEC) Against, 4 (CRA, CUL, LEA, WEB) Abstentions

6.5.3 Adopt a Simplified Scoring System for Advantage GC

Approved nem con

Motions re League Rules - continued

6.5.4 An automated scoresheet to be produced & teams exchanged 48 hours in advance

Bury CC propose that if Advantage Golf Croquet is adopted then, a newly created automated score sheet to be offered for use by participating teams. This allows team details to be exchanged up to 48 hours before a match in order to produce a complete order of play along with detailed 'peg' requirements.

Approved - 7 (BUR, CHE, FYL, PEN, SEC, LEA, WEB) in Favour, 1 (SOU) Against, 4 (CRA, CUL, LLA, WES) Abstentions

6.6 GC Level Play League to be a single all play all division

Approved - 9 (BUR, CHE, CRA, CUL, LLA, SOU, WES, LEA, WEB) in Favour, 1 (SEC) Against, 2 (PEN, FYL) Abstentions

6.7 Combination of AC Full Lawn Handicap Leagues

Not voted upon as following approval of 6.2, there is only one 26pt AC Handicap League.

6.8 Substitutions to be allowed during league matches

Rejected - 2 (CHE, LLA) in Favour, 8 (BUR, CRA, CUL, FYL, PEN, SOU, WES, LEA) Against, 2 (SEC, WEB) Abstentions

7 Subscriptions - Liz Wilson

Subscriptions to remain unchanged at £20, proposed by Liz Wilson, seconded by David Barrett, approved nem con.

8 Millennium Competitions

Hosts were identified as follows:

AC Advanced - Pendle
GC Level Play - Bury
AC Handicap - Chester
GC Handicap - Crake
Short Croquet - Pendle

Please propose dates asap for confirmation at the Spring Meeting.

9 Arrangements for NW Festival of Croquet - David Cornes

The Festival will be held at Southport on 29-30 June. David Cornes is leading the organising team.

10 Co-ordination of Dates for Tournaments & Events

29 Mar - 1 Apr	Pendle & Craven John Beech Memorial Easter Tournament
13-14 Apr	Lancashire GC Open at Pendle
18 Apr	Crake Alternate Shot Doubles AC
20-21 Apr	Southport Advanced Weekend
4-6 May	Bowdon May Handicap Weekend
4-5 May	Pendle & Craven B & C Level AC Advanced Weekend
11 May	Pendle & Craven B-Level (3+) Golf
11-12 May	Bury A Level (0+) GC
11-12 May	Southport Carol Lewis Memorial Handicap AC
18 May	Chester C level GC
18-26 May	National Croquet Week
1 June	Chester B level GC
1-2 June	Bowdon Advanced Weekend
8-9 June	Pendle & Craven Open Golf
8-9 June	Crake Advanced AC - Cumbria Cup
8-9 June	Home Internationals AC - Southport
13 June	Crake C level (7+) GC Series National Qualifier
14 June	Crake B level (3+) GC Series National Qualifier
15-16 June	Crake A Level (0+) GC Open
15-16 June	Pendle & Craven Advanced Weekend
18-19 June	AC Midweek B level at Bowdon
29-30 June	Festival at Southport
29 June	Bury National B Level Golf
6-7 July	Cheshire GC Open at Bowdon
9-12 July	Pendle Midweek Tournament
17 July	Bury National C Level Golf
20-21 July	Southport Super B and B-Level Advanced Weekend
27-28 July	Pendle & Craven A Level (0+) GC
27-28 July	Pendle & Craven AC Handicap Weekend
3-4 August	Chester A level GC 0+ Cross Over Tournament
3-4 August	Bury AC Handicap Weekend
3-4 August	Crake Advanced AC - Cavendish Clock
24-26 August	Bowdon North of England Championship
24-26 Aug	GC Eights
24-26 Aug	Crake August Invitation (Friends of Portugal 2023)
5-9 Sept	Spencer Ell at Pendle
14-15 Sept	Southport AC Advanced Weekend
14-15 Sept	Crake GC Ladies Open

The above dates have been added to the calendar on the website. Please send any amendments to results@croquetnw.co.uk so that it can be updated accordingly.

8 **Club Announcements:**

Bowdon (Nigel Matthews)

Bowdon had a good season this year with several new members quickly getting to grips with the basic skills and tactics of AC, as well as established players such as Jack Good, making a hugely impressive transition from GC to AC.

Internal competitions continue to thrive, with summer and winter knockouts as well as the popular box leagues in both AC and GC. These ensure regular competitive games for members throughout the year, alongside regular roll-ups for AC on both full and short lawns Mondays, Wednesdays and Saturdays. Over the winter, the lawns are reduced to $\frac{3}{4}$ size to protect the grass, playing 18 point games and the very popular Saturday one-ball competition. Whilst Bowdon members mainly play AC, there is increased opportunity for GC with introductory courses and the box league.

Bowdon hosted several tournaments over the summer -

The May AC hcp won by Jack Good

The May 14pt hcp won by Alan Mayne

The June advanced weekend won by Angharrad Walters

The midweek B level advanced won by Neil Adams

The midweek Short croquet won by Andrew Jackson

The Cheshire Open GC Championship won by Jack Good

The North of England AC championship won by Ian Lines

The Presidents Cup won by Stephen Mulliner

Away from the club, Bowdon members David Maugham, Alain Giraud, Euan Burr ridge and Alison Maugham took part in the AC World Championships.

John-Paul Moberly captained England and Angharrad Walters captained Wales in GC international matches.

In the Northwest federation events, Nigel Matthews won both the level play AC and GC tournaments.

We feel very positive about the future of Bowdon Croquet Club. As well as having some top international players, we have had a good influx of new players who are demonstrating natural flair for the game. We aim to gain more new members next season and ensure we provide plenty of coaching and playing opportunities to keep them interested.

Bury (Roy Spencer)

Another busy season for Bury Croquet Club both on and off lawns.

We have been celebrating our 35th Anniversary this year and events included a dinner and a Summer picnic (which had to be held indoors due to inclement weather). The celebrations were added to with the club receiving the Millennium award from the CA, and we thank David Cornes for his support in this.

We continue to play all formats of croquet with coaching. Thanks are due to our coaches for their time and commitment. Our membership stands at 85 across all categories, approximately a third are GC social players. We continue to recruit new members and have held regular taster sessions.

As usual we held our two annual public events at the beginning of the season, Bury Hospice Day in April which raised over £700 and NCD in May raising over £300 for MND Association. Both events created good PR and attended by Mayor of Bury, and local MP. Both events were filmed and can be seen on YouTube Today in Radcliffe channel.

A highlight in June was a visit to the club by former international footballers and now TV pundits Gary Neville, Roy Keane & Jamie Carragher to film an episode of The Overlap on Tour, which was aired on 4th July on Sky. It can still be found on Sky On Demand & Now TV. A YouTube trailer filmed at Bury and referring to the club has had over 264,00 views. The programme also created a lot of social media and press attention.

In September 10 club members visited Malta as guests of Malta Croquet Club. A very enjoyable trip and we were made most welcome.

This season we were selected to be one of three clubs nationally to take part in the pilot of The Next Generation project introducing croquet to primary schools. We have so far approached 3 local schools, one taking up the opportunity to be involved and has sent two groups of 30 year 5 students with very satisfactory results. The children really enjoyed participating, and the school featured the activity on their social media platforms. We hope to take this forward with them next season and involve two other schools.

We offer congratulations to club members, Anne Alvey on winning CA All England AC Handicap Championship 2023, and Gediminas Smolskas, winner of Greta Stringer Cup 2023, and to Jack Good for very successful season winning numerous trophies and awards. Also, to Bury Caesars on winning AC Handicap W/end league.

We continue to be able to play on our winter lawns at Whitehead park, and our Winter afternoon socials are now taking place using the indoor lawns. The lawns at both venues have had their Autumn remedial programme undertaken.

Chester (Tom Grievson)

Chester has had a good season with 107 members virtually all of whom are active to some extent playing AC, SL, and GC. An increasing number of GC players are wishing to compete both internally and externally but most still play socially. Short Lawn numbers have increased but it would be useful if we could persuade more of them to compete. AC numbers remain stubbornly low but nearly all of them are avid competitors.

Weekday lawn usage has been fairly high until tea-time and around 30 to 35 players regularly attend the weekly Tuesday morning progressive doubles roll-up. Weekend play is lower apart, from competitions and tournaments, although league matches tended to get increasingly squeezed as weather disruptions took their toll.

We instituted a weekly training session for GC competitors which has been successful and well attended. Also a weekly Improvers session which will be enhanced next season.

Next year we will be expanding both internal and external competitions for both GC and SL. AC players are already heavily involved in external tournaments. We will also offer more social play roll-ups.

A rainy season has its disadvantages but it is really a great blessing. Our lawns are in good condition particularly compared to last year when, in August 2022, they were virtually unplayable.

Craig Y Don (John Hannah)

Firstly, our apologies for non-attendance at the meeting. We simply weren't able to get a willing member to travel that far and back in the same day and write off a whole Saturday. However, we would have attended a Zoom and U-Tube meeting had it been on offer as we have done since the start of The Corona Virus Pandemic.

As for the Agenda, we support all the proposals regarding 6.5 The handicapped Golf League using the Advantage system though we had a small minority of experienced players wishing to revert to bisques. The past season has been CYD's first entry into a NW Fed league (Advantage handicapped golf) which we have enjoyed and intend continuing whilst this league remains geographically split, (North and South). The lawn layout on our single large crown green to allow our entry into the Handicapped golf league was on the creation of two 80% scale full sized lawns with an overlapping rectangle which contained no hoops. This worked really well with no reported delays because of the overlap, and as far as we know all visiting clubs were happy to play at/on our facilities.

We have a relatively small number of Association players, but we are trying to encourage more to play. We held our own One ball competition this past season which was a great success and hope to do likewise next year whilst taking part in the recently advertised National event supporting the British Heart Foundation.

Being a Welsh Club, we are disappointed that the Federation adopted Croquet England and not perhaps Croquet UK, but nevertheless, our Affiliation to the Federation will continue.

CYD has a playing membership in excess of sixty and likely to grow with a strong weekly U3a Group throughout our six month season from the local Llandudno U3a (membership in excess of 900!)

Our current clubhouse which is basically a double length garage construction containing a kitchenette in addition to our playing equipment, is too small to offer cover from inclement weather to local clubs and societies (which could include youth and the disabled). Consequently, the club has put forward a scheme for a new bungalow type clubhouse to Conwy Council for Planning and Building Regs approval which is expected shortly. Once approved, the club will be seeking grant funding. Our registered Governance is a CASC but we are also part of the Craig Y Don Sports and Community Centre Charity.

Crake Valley (Simon Robins)

The Club has had another busy and eventful year and has maintained over 50 members despite some increases in fees dictated by the financial sustainability plan put in place last year.

Internal AC and GC competitions were completed successfully, although the Committee is considering measures to increase participation in the AC events. The Club fulfilled fixtures in NW Leagues finishing in 2nd place in the handicap GC but 3rd in a truncated Level Play Group. 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 again hosted several tournaments during the season including two advanced AC, the Cumbria Cup and The Cavendish Clock. The latter was especially notable as, in the 3rd and 4th play off, Rick Harding from Southport achieved a sextuplet peel, a feat which he later commented was, in part, a tribute to the quality of the lawns at Crake Valley: the tournament was won by Neil Adams (Westmorland and a Crake Valley Country Member). The Club also ran national C-, B-, and A-level GC qualifiers during the season which ended with a 2-day Ladies GC Open Tournament.

Among many notable individual successes, Paul Galley won the Millennium Advantage Golf held at Crake Valley, part of a very successful year for Paul whose handicap decreased from 12 to 6, meriting his nomination by the Club for the Croquet Association award of Most Improved Male GC Player 2023. David Cornes has had another successful year with the pinnacle of his achievements being selected to participate in the GC Over 50's World Championships in Bunbury, Western Australia where he performed well above his grading in a very strong field.

The Club has continued to invest in maintaining lawn quality through over-seeding and application of top dressing as well as levelling some areas with topsoil. These areas are taking longer than expected to recover owing to the effects of extremely heavy rainstorms that occurred after the treatments.

In October, members of Crake Valley with croquet friends from the Northwest enjoyed a 3-day tournament against an Algarve Croquet Club team in Benamor Golf Club, an event with its accompanying social activities that is to be reciprocated next year at Crake Valley.

Culcheth (Alan Wright)

It is with sadness and regret that Culcheth Croquet Club will be wound up and cease to exist at the end of the year. The current management of the Club where we play has made our position here at Culcheth untenable. Our members made the decision to finish at an Extraordinary General Meeting earlier this month. We plan however to continue playing croquet at Ellesmere and the Croquet Club there has welcomed our members. We plan to be entering teams in the League next year. It is the end of an era but we our members are looking forward to a new beginning at Ellesmere.

Ellesmere – Nothing to Report

Flixton – Nothing to Report

Fylde (Peter Wilson)

Fylde were proud to win the Longman Cup this year for the 3rd time in the history of the Club. It is worth noting that Betty Bates has played in all 3 winning teams!. Fylde was also proud that Peter Wilson was awarded the CA Diploma for his work in the croquet world for Fylde, The Federation and the CA. The golf team are very disappointed that the cross division final could not be played due to the late finish of the season by the Southern Division and hope for a good conclusion of this league early next season.

Keswick (Steve Skelton)

Nothing to report from Keswick CC – apart from the fact we are just surviving and keeping our heads above water!

Llanfairfechan– (Sarah Andrew)

This year we welcomed 16 new members including two juniors. We have a buoyant membership with many members playing in teams as part of the NW Federation, everyone joining in with internal competitions and events and several members taking part in National level Competitions. We have had notable successes this year which are celebrated at our annual Presentation Lunch. We have sufficient volunteers for jobs around the Club although it is always the few who take on the major part of the burden. We are most grateful to those members.

We featured in the Croquet Gazette section on Opening Doors to Croquet and we are an important part of the life of the community around our little part of North Wales. The Club has a winter social programme and we hope everyone enjoys membership of the Club.

Patterdale

Pendle & Craven (Sharon de Maine)

Pendle and Craven Croquet Club had slightly fewer tournaments this year, and suffered from problems with mowing equipment on several occasions, however we did manage to host some big tournaments. The club also had a good year at the Southport Festival winning the overall trophy. Our league teams very much enjoyed their matches and results reflected some better and some worse final positions.

This coming year brings some changes for Pendle and Craven, not only in committee personnel, but in new lawn care and equipment maintenance programmes, which should result in greatly improved playing surfaces. Members are also looking forward this next year to the 40th Anniversary of the Croquet Club.

Penrith & North Lakes – (Ian Tupling)

The club has had a good year. Work through last winter both physical and applying selected treatments resulted in better grass growth and thus playing surface. Club competitions were well supported in Short, Full lawn and Advanced AC, two divisions of GC and a full day's pairs GC comp. We competed in the Longman Cup along with the Cumbrian Tankard for clubs based in the county. We also had visits from Middlesborough and Beverley clubs

Southport - (Peter Williams)

Nothing to Report

Stonyhurst – Nothing to Report

Tattenhall – Nothing to Report

Westmorland - Mike Hodgson

No inter-club trophies won this year but another enjoyable season on the lawns both home and away.

Our membership has been maintained at 38 - mainly golfers, some of whom we hope to introduce to AC this year with the help of Ricochet competitions as a half way step.

This year we have spent a lot of time and money on improving our lawns and we are confident that we will reap the rewards next season.

We play in the grounds of Levens Hall, so until this year we have been restricted to the times that the garden is open, which has excluded Fridays and Saturdays.

This year however they have opened on Fridays as well, which has meant an extra day's Croquet.

12 Federation Equipment Assets

See Appendix. Please confirm any amendments to the Hon. Secretary

13 County Captains

The following were confirmed:

Cheshire AC: Simon Jenkins (Captain & Organiser)

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

Cheshire GC: Tom Grievson

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

Congratulations to John Hannah & Peter Wilson. Their citations on the CA website are re-produced here.

Our Chairman, **John** Hannah, retires at our AGM after seven years in office.

Over those years he has been instrumental in increasing our club membership by almost 100% largely through his cultivation of the local U3A running weekly drop in sessions for those interested and instruction groups for those who join.

Throughout his seven years he has been active in raising grants for the club which have enabled us to build a new clubhouse with running water and electricity, toilets and more recently the installation of a defibrillator on our club house to be used if necessary by members and the general public. The total he has been instrumental in raising is well in excess of £40,000.

We had a rather run down garden area adjacent to our lawns intended for use by the local play school which had become neglected and overgrown. John obtained funds and secured labour to turn this into an attractive garden area with seating to provide a picnic area for members, visiting clubs and spectators and for enjoyment of children from the play school.

This season he has achieved a long held ambition of the club to enter a North West Federation Golf league which has involved the rearrangement of our court set up to provide court sizes suitable to Federation requirements.

John has given tremendous service to the club and continues to work tirelessly for the benefit of club members. His enthusiasm for croquet generally and this club in particular has ensured that croquet is now very much an integral part of the local sports scene.

Peter entered the croquet community in 1989 and has been involved at Club, Federation and CA level for over 30 years in administration and in competition.

CA Roles:

Past Member of the CA Tournament Committee

Tournament Director All-England Association Croquet competition over many years.

As a member of the working party responsible, he helped to specify and oversee implementation and delivery of the CA's custom-built membership database system.

CA Referee (Association)

Peter is a firm advocate of correct behaviour and etiquette in competitions. He always has the Law Book in his back pocket. Wife Liz is relieved that the book is no longer Red - a colour that does not go well with rain and running dye.

Peter Wilson

North West Federation Roles:

CA Federation Representative 2013-2016

Treasurer 2009-2012

Tournament Manager - since the 1990s. He has managed many Tournaments at Fylde (1st Club), Pendle (2nd Club) and at other Clubs in the Northwest Federation.

Fylde Croquet Club Roles

Match Captain 1996 to 2003 - keen to emphasise the importance of correct behaviour. Wrote the Club Code of Conduct still in use today.

Treasurer and Membership Secretary- since 2003. Supporting the Club through many developments, building and equipment purchases and membership growth.

Established detailed Club website in 2001 and posts News and Updates promptly.

During Covid, established an online Court Reservation Calendar, (still in use) enabling play to continue with correct 'distancing'.

Playing Career - Peter achieved the Gold Merit Award in 2005 and promotes Association Croquet by example and passing on tips and techniques to other players and learners. Successes:

CA winning team vs Ireland in the Vera McWeeney Trophy 2011, retained 2013.

CA team vs Scottish CA 2016

Mary Rose - Runners-up 2001, 2008 and Winning Team 2007

15 Election of Officers

The following were elected nem con.

- i) Chairman; John Haslam – (2nd Year)
- ii) Secretary; Angharrad Walters (8th Year)
- iii) Treasurer; Peter Williams - Nominated by Liz Wilson
- iv) League Manager; Phil Snowdon - (2nd Year)
- v) Coaching Officer; Vacancy - Post meeting note - Liz Wilson agreed to take on this role.
- vi) Development Officer; Vacancy - John Haslam to continue pro tem.
- vii) Safeguarding Officer; Roger Schofield - nominated by Liz Wilson
- viii) NW Festival of Croquet Manager; David Cornes (3rd year)
- ix) Pennine Cup Manager; Liz Wilson (7th Year)
- x) Federation Handicappers; AC: Liz Wilson, GC Tom Grievson - (2nd year)
- xi) Website Manager; Chris Alvey - (3rd year)

16 Election of Independent Examiner

Paul Rigge, nominated by Liz Wilson

17 Any other business

For discussion at the Spring Meeting - should the constitution be changed to either remove the votes for officers or replace their individual votes with a single committee vote?

For consideration by the Festival organising committee - should the Advanced AC event be 1-ball?

18 League Trophies

The 2023 Winners are as follows:

AC B Level League	Crake Lakes
AC Midweek Handicap	Bowdon
GC Level	Bowdon
GC Handicap	Fylde Falcons or Chester Senators
AC Handicap	Bury Caesars
Short	Southport

19 Date of Next Meeting

Spring Meeting 2th March 2024, by Zoom & YouTube. AGM 16th November 2024 (TBC)

20 Meeting Closed at 1138.

Immediately following the meeting, Peter Duncan gave a brief presentation on the automated scoresheet spreadsheet to be offered to facilitate the calculation of starting scores in Advantage matches.

Appendix 1

North West Federation Equipment November 2023

Club	Equipment
Bowdon	None
Bury	Projector
Chester	None
Crake Valley	None
Craig-y-Don	CA start up Set
Culcheth	None
Ellesmere	3 Mallets
Fylde	None
Keswick	None
Llanfairfechan	Gazebo
Patterdale	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
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)
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	With BuryCC: 1 set of Dawson primary balls, 2 centre pegs, 1 set of primary clips, flags, markers and assortment of balls 3 Barlow balls (white, pink and green), 1 Dawson (black), 7 assorted poor condition balls (3 green, 2 white, 2 yellow) (All ex Liverpool) CA Start Up Set (6 Hoops, 1 set primary Barlows, & Peg), 4 CA George Wood Mallets, 1 set of hoops (ex Criccieth) 1 set of Foxy hoops (CA)

North West Federation of Croquet Clubs – Constitution

1 Name

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

2 Area of Influence

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

3 Aims

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

4 Membership

4.1 Every croquet club or croquet section of a larger club in the Area of Influence, that is affiliated to Croquet England, shall be eligible for full membership of the Federation. Membership shall be by application to the Secretary of the Federation, payment of the current subscription and ratification, by majority vote at the next General Meeting, that the applicant club be admitted as a member. Full member clubs may participate in the Leagues and Tournaments, play in the Festival, & participate in the administration of the Federation.

4.2 Any croquet club or croquet section of a larger club in the Area of Influence, that is not affiliated to Croquet England, shall be eligible for associate membership of the Federation. Membership shall be by application to the Secretary of the Federation, payment of the current subscription and ratification, by majority vote at the next General Meeting, that the applicant club be admitted as a member. Associate member clubs may receive development & coaching support from the Federation, but may not participate in the Leagues and Tournaments, play in the Festival, or participate in the administration of the Federation. They may attend Federation meetings as observers only.

5 Membership Fees

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

General Meetings

- a) The Annual General Meeting shall be held in the Autumn, no earlier than October, to elect officers, approve the accounts, appoint an independent examiner, fix the membership fees and conduct business for which notice has been given. Other business may be conducted at the discretion of the Chairman.
- b) A further General Meeting shall be held in the Spring to conduct business for which notice has been given. Other business may be conducted at the discretion of the Chairman.
- c) A Special General Meeting may be called by the Committee, or at the written request of at least three member clubs. On receipt of such a request by the Federation Secretary, the committee must arrange the meeting within two months. A Special General Meeting may not conduct any business, save for that for which it has been convened.
- d) At least 21 days' notice of General Meetings and the business to be conducted at them shall be given to all member clubs, this may be provided electronically. Notice of motions must be given to the Secretary at least 28 days before the meeting at which they are to be considered.
- e) All club members of this Federation's clubs shall be entitled to attend General Meetings. Each full member club shall be entitled to send one representative to the meetings, who together with the Officers and Executive Officers may speak and vote. Other interested persons may attend and speak but not vote. Six members entitled to vote shall form a quorum.
- f) Motions (except for those covered in paragraphs 10 and 11 below), shall be carried by a simple majority of the votes cast by those present and entitled to vote. In the case of a tie the Chairman shall have an additional casting vote.
- g) Nominations for election as Officers shall be made in writing or by email to the Secretary at least 14 days before the Annual General Meeting, proposed and seconded by any club member with the consent of the person nominated. If there is more than one candidate for any post a ballot shall be held, otherwise the persons nominated shall be declared elected. If any post remains unfilled, nominations, duly proposed and seconded, shall be accepted from the meeting and a ballot held if necessary.
- h) If the Chairman is unable to attend a General Meeting, those members present at the General Meeting shall elect a Chairman for that meeting who shall have an additional casting vote in the event of any tied vote.

Officers

- a) The Executive Officers of the Federation shall be the Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer. All posts are held until the next Annual General Meeting.
- b) Should the Chairman for the time being be re-elected for five consecutive terms, they must retire after their fifth term and become ineligible for election to the office of Chairman until a further term has elapsed.
- c) The Chairman shall normally chair the General and Committee Meetings and act as directed by the committee.
- d) The Secretary shall keep minutes of General and Committee Meetings, maintain a register of member clubs and act as directed by the committee.
- e) The Treasurer shall keep the accounts of the Federation and transact its financial business. They shall lay before the Annual General Meeting examined accounts for the year ending 30 September and act as directed by the committee.
- f) Other officers of the Federation shall be the Safeguarding Officer, Development Officer, Coaching Officer, League Manager, Web Manager and the North West Federation Championships Manager (Festival Manager) and shall act as directed by the committee.
- g) All offices in the Federation shall be voluntary.
- h) Any two offices, other than two of the Executive Offices, may be represented by the same person. Any Officer undertaking two Offices will only be entitled to one vote at both General Meetings and Committee Meetings.

8 **Committee**

- a) The affairs of the Federation shall be managed by a Committee consisting of the Executive Officers, other Officers and the CqE Board of Trustees Member representing the North West Federation.
- b) The Committee may fill casual vacancies until the next Annual General Meeting.
- c) The Committee shall fix the dates of the General Meetings.
- d) The Committee shall meet as necessary either in person or by electronic means. A simple majority of those voting shall decide any question, and in the case of a tie the Chairman shall have an additional casting vote. Three members shall form a quorum.
- e) Notice of Committee Meetings shall be given to all Committee Members.
- f) If the Chairman is unable to attend a Committee Meeting, those members present at the Committee Meeting shall elect a Chairman for that meeting who shall have an additional casting vote in the event of any tied vote.

9 **Banking**

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

10 **Amendments to the Constitution**

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

11 **Dissolution**

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

Approved 18 November 2023