

**Minutes of the North West Federation of Croquet Clubs Special General Meeting  
Saturday 23rd November 2024 (For approval at Spring Meeting) - 2nd draft  
Held on Zoom / YouTube due to Storm Bert**

- 1 **The Meeting** was attended by 20 people representing 12 clubs:
- |                       |  |
|-----------------------|--|
| Bowdon                | Angharrad Walters                                    |
| Bury                  | Roy Spencer, Roger Schofield                         |
| Chester               | Tom Grievson, Robin Tasker                           |
| Craig-y-Don           | David Cartlidge                                      |
| Crake Valley          | David Cornes   |
| Ellesmere             | Alan Wright  |
| Flixton               |  |
| Fylde                 | Phil Snowden, Liz Wilson, Peter Wilson*              |
| Keswick               |  |
| Llanfairfechan        | Sarah Andrew   |
| Patterdale            |  |
| Pendle & Craven:      | Sharon de Maine                                      |
| Penrith & North Lakes | Chris Williamson*                                    |
| Southport & Birkdale  | John Haslam, Peter Williams, Paul Rigge, Esther Jubb |
| Stonyhurst            |  |
| Tattenhall            |  |
| Westmorland           | Sue Pritchard, David Massey*                         |

\* denotes attended via YouTube

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting, apologised for the late change of plan due to Storm Bert, and thanked Alison Maugham for her help in hosting the meeting.

- 2 **Apologies for Absence.** Clubs: N/A. Individuals: Chris Alvey, Howard Bowron, Steve Skelton
3. **The proposed amendments to the Constitution** as specified in the meeting notice to amend the voting structure regarding the Committee and to rename the Annual General Meeting as the Autumn General Meeting were all approved Nem Con.
4. **Meeting Closed at 10:39 am**

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3. **The minutes** of the Spring Meeting held on 2nd March 2024 were approved as a correct record Nem Con. Proposed by Sarah Andrew, seconded by Roy Spencer.
4. **Matters Arising** – None.
5. **Officers and Committee Members Reports since the previous meeting.**
- A **Chairman – John Haslam**

[Outstanding]

B **Secretary - Angharrad Walters**

The Committee debated the pros & cons of various alternative voting structures and eventually agreed on the proposal made to the EGM. Regarding meeting format, Officers were encouraged to issue their reports in advance of the meeting, so that more time could be spent on discussion of matters arising. A later start time is being trialled & unfortunately the weather did not permit the meeting to be followed by an introduction to a GC Skills Assessment tool. The search for an alternative low cost venue has not yet delivered a viable option.

Andrew Winn wrote to the Committee highlighting his concerns about the slow decline of AC and questioned what might be done before the critical mass of AC knowledge & skills was lost.

Congratulations to Jack Good for winning two of the Most Improved Player Awards (AC - Male & GC - Male) after narrowly missing out last year.

**C Treasurer – Peter Williams**

Many thanks are due to Liz Wilson for her long stint as treasurer, and also for her efforts in arranging a very smooth handover of responsibilities 12 months ago. Thanks also to Paul Rigge for a thorough examination of the books and also for agreeing to continue as examiner for the coming year.

An apology is needed for the fact that I remained blissfully in a state of ignorance through the year to the fact that the Fed were due 25% of fees collected for Millennium events. Having said that, I did then consider the matter, and came to the conclusion that we should discontinue the arrangement. A motion to this effect appears later on the agenda.

The year-end cash reserve was £6017, which I consider to be ample for our requirements and known liabilities.

The deficit for the Festival increased to £529. Whilst the number of clubs entering was broadly in line with previous years, clubs entered six fewer events than 2023. At £40 per event, this accounted for £240 of the deficit. A number of factors could influence the number of players attending the festival such as travel and accommodation costs, club entry fees and lack of player availability. Was this year a 'one-off' or the beginning of a trend? If fewer players, do we need fewer toilets? All to be discussed at the Spring meeting.

The overall deficit for the year was £341. Subscriptions to remain at current levels.

The Accounts were accepted nem con.

**D League Manager – Phil Snowden**

2024 fixtures issued as planned covering a total of 193 fixtures across the 6 leagues. Due to the wet weather experienced by many clubs at the start of the season, a backlog of fixtures started to develop earlier than normal. Thanks to the teams for their efforts in getting the fixtures re-arranged and completed in a timely manner. Part way through the season we had the unfortunate communication from Ellesmere that they would need to withdraw from both Handicap and Level Play Golf leagues due to player shortages. Hopefully this can be rectified for 2025 and they will return to the fixture lists.

Final league positions

Advanced B-Level, following a return to a single league of all play all, after having to wait for a postponed match to be played and the potential of some closely bitten fingernails, Chester were confirmed as league winners.

Handicap Golf, The North League was won by Crake Valley with the South League being won by Llanfairfechan Pioneers. Due to a slow start to the season and late finish to the league matches, both teams have been declared Joint winners for 2024.

Level Play Golf, congratulations to Bowdon Bombers on winning the league

14 Point Handicap AC, congratulations to Llanfairfechan winning the league on hoop difference over Westmorland.

26 Point Ac, congratulations to Southport on winning the league, completing the season unbeaten.

Short AC, congratulations to Bowdon Blanks on winning this league. Narrowly beating their fellow club team Bowdon Bullets on hoop difference.

The Handicap Golf Advantage scoring sheet developed by Bury has continued to be used and has been a great aid in the allocation of hoops etc against the handicaps.

The League application form will be issued shortly after the AGM to the relevant club secretaries.

**E Coaching Officer – Vacant**

No report.

**F Development Officer – Vacancy / John Haslam**

In the absence of any volunteers for this role, a watching brief has been maintained by the Chairman. Two applications were made from Federation Clubs for grants from CqE. Pendle were seeking support for improvements to the car parking & Craig Y Don are raising funds for a new clubhouse. Pendle have been asked to provide further clarification. Craig Y Don had a £1000 grant approved.

## **G NW Festival – David Cornes**

The 2024 Festival was held at Southport on 29th & 30th June. 9 clubs, 32 teams across the 5 strands.

Costs = Lawns = £1040. Toilet Hire £760 = £1,800. Income £1,280 so loss of £520 expected.

Congratulations to all who took part including the respective Festival Winners = Handicap Golf - Crake Valley / Level Play Golf - Pendle / Short Lawn - Llanfairfechan / Handicap AC - Fylde / Advanced AC - Bowdon and the Festival Champion Club = Fylde (2nd Crake Valley and 3rd Bury)

Follow up survey was undertaken with 18 replies. Summary of comments for consideration by 2025 Committee include various suggestions regarding catering arrangements.

This is my third and final annual report as Festival Manager. Key thing to remember is that the Festival is run by the NW Federation. Southport & Birkdale, in addition to being excellent hosts, provide massive practical support throughout the planning and delivery of the Festival but cannot be expected to also run the whole event. I am pleased to note that Robin Tasker has agreed to take on the role of Festival Manager, and that Liz Wilson is going to stay on as Festival Secretary for another year. I'd like to encourage all clubs to assist in the search for more volunteers to help with the event's organisation.

The Chairman asked that the Federation's thanks to David for a successful three year term as Festival Manager be formally recorded in the minutes.

## **H Safeguarding Officer – Roger Schofield**

Nothing to report. Would all clubs please let Roger know who is their Safeguarding Officer.

## **I Pennine Cup Captain - Liz Wilson**

Pennine Cup (Which is still lost!)

Teams of 6 from Croquet North and The North West Fed met at Pendle for the annual contest.

North – Andrew Killick (- 1 ½), Terry Vernazza (3), David Millener (6), Julian Gibson (c)(8), Nigel Durie (10) and Derek Johnson (12)

North West – Lee Hartley (-1), John Henderson (5), Chris Alvey (8), Betty Bates (8), Anne Alvey (10) and Libby Dixon (12) (Non-playing Captain Liz Wilson)

The three morning advanced doubles paired 1 with 6, 2 with 5 and 3 with 4. John and Anne saw off Terry and Nigel in record time winning 26 – 0 and Chris and Betty did pretty much the same thing against David and Julian 26 – 3. The other game featuring the minus players was far more tactical with Lee and Libby beating Andrew and Derek 26 – 9. So 3 nil to the North West at lunch.

In the afternoon the first 4 pairings played level advanced with the final two pairings playing handicap. First to finish was Lee vs Andrew 26 – 9. The next to finish was Terry vs John which went to the North East 26 – 9. Chris Alvey then produced the match deciding win against David Millener again winning 26 – 9. The other three games all went to time and were very close and exciting. Libby beat Derek 26 – 21 in the time turn. Julian beat Betty 20 – 18 and Anne beat Nigel 18 – 16. The final score 7 – 2 to The North West but it could easily have been 5 – 4!

I am sorry to report that Terry Vernazza (who moved from Fylde to the North East) died unexpectedly of a massive heart attack at the beginning of November.

**J Federation Handicapper – Tom Grievson / Liz Wilson**

TG: During this season I have been involved in four GC handicap interventions within three clubs. One of the four involved a returning AC player following a very long absence but who wished to play GC. His club was not aware of the rules covering returnees.

The other three were all concerned with fast improving high handicappers.

All of these issues were resolved by discussion between the Club handicappers and me and resulted in adjustments of the players handicaps by the clubs.

There is evidence of lack of awareness of the rules and guidance covering handicapping (including me at the outset) by Club handicappers. During this winter I will prepare an extract from the available resources for circulation to handicappers.

LW:A major issue regarding experienced Short A/C players (handicaps approx 7) entering the 14 point Full Lawn League and playing off 24 was dealt with by generating a table to convert initial handicaps from Short to Full. This is a NorthWest Federation Document and is not approved by CqE. This was issued to clubs at the end of April

From the Federation AC Handicapper

With immediate effect

Please use the following table to generate handicaps for players in the 14 point competition, who already have a short lawn handicap but have never played the full lawn 26 point game. This does not impact players who already have a full lawn handicap card. In the case of proficient golfers who know their way around a 12 hoop break a further reduction might be considered.

Short	Full lawn 26pt	Full Lawn 14pt
10	24	13
9	22	12
8	20	11
7	18	9.5
6	16	8.5
5	14	7.5
4	12	6.5
3.5	10	5.5
3	8	4.5
2.5	7	4
2	6	3
1.5	5	2.5

I visited the club concerned to play in the 14 point league and all seems to be sorted now. I also manually adjusted the handicaps of 2 players which seemed to be wrong, one at the request of the club who had no official Club Handicapper

**K Website Manager – Chris Alvey**

Nothing to Report

## L CqE Trustee (NW) - Robin Tasker

### Introduction

Croquet England is reaching the end of its first full year of operation, and it is good to report that the transition from the Croquet Association to Croquet England has been entirely successful with the first substantive AGM of Croquet England taking place on 12 October 2024.

The Secretary of Croquet England is now Gabrielle Higgins who took over from John Reddish in the summer.

From a Trustee perspective the year split into two distinct parts.

The first part ran to March and included the preparatory work for the first operational year of Croquet England, and the first actually General Meeting on the 16 March which was set to meet the requirements of the Charity Commission but aside from the necessary formalities transacted little business.

The second part of the year resulted in the publication of the Croquet England Volunteer's Charter, and ahead of the October AGM the publication of the Croquet England Strategy for the period 2024-29.

### Volunteer's Charter

The Volunteer's Charter can be found at

Volunteer Charter v1.3 ([croquetengland.org.uk](https://croquetengland.org.uk))

which was produced to reflect the fact that Croquet England was a volunteer organisation that relied upon the commitment and dedication of its volunteers who are essential to the smooth running of Croquet England with the aim to work together to give all croquet players, from beginners to internationals, the framework in which the sport can be enjoyed.

It describes what all volunteers can expect from Croquet England and, in turn, what Croquet England asks of volunteers. These shared commitments sit alongside Croquet England's aspirations of being open and welcoming to all; of acting with integrity; of being supportive and inclusive, and being respectful for the wellbeing of others.

### Croquet England Strategy

The Croquet England Strategy has been developed over the last 12 months in tandem with the transition from the Croquet Association to Croquet England and reflects the values and aspirations of the organisation. The Strategy can be found at

More people playing more croquet in more places ([croquetengland.org.uk](https://croquetengland.org.uk))

with the intent of inspiring a new generation of players in a safe, inclusive and diverse community. To that end seven strategic themes have been identified, namely those of Play; Coaching and Tournament Officials; Safety; Inclusion; Wellbeing; Funding Growth; and Sustainability, all with the intent of welcoming More People, Playing More Croquet in More Places.

The next stage of this process is to develop the plans for the delivery of this strategy and to that end working groups are being set up to cover each of the areas covered by the strategic themes each led by a Trustee. Membership of the working groups is open to anyone who wants to contribute, and in the forthcoming Gazette that invitation will be published. Our aim is to have these delivery plans completed in 2025, and certainly well before the 2025 AGM.

### Trustee Planning for 2024/25

At the last Trustee meeting we agreed the following objectives for the coming year over and above the business as usual activities:

1. Developing the detail of the strategy delivery through the working groups including measures of success and relative priorities;
2. Establishing Trustee elections as a part of our business-as-usual including Representative, Independent and Appointed Trustees through an Electoral Commission / Nominations Committee which act independently from the Trustees;
3. Succession planning, in particular for the Chair who is required to step down at the next AGM and contingency planning for other key roles; and finally
4. Making progress towards Tier 3 of the Code for Sports Governance of Sports England.

### Issues

As noted above, Croquet England is a volunteer run organisation that relies on the commitment and dedication of its members. There are currently nearly 130 roles occupied by volunteers throughout the organisation however of these only 9 are occupied by members from the northern federations. Some recent events have raised concerns within the Executive about the imbalance in representation and the perceived consequences of this imbalance.

I have very recently discussed this matter with Beatrice McGlen (the CEO) and we would welcome the opportunity to discuss this matter with a wider audience to see whether there is the appetite to consider how matters may be better arranged to deliver a more balanced representation within Croquet England. To that end we would be interested in convening a meeting in the New Year with Clubs and the Federation members to see how this might be progressed.

And Finally

As always I am very pleased to hear from any member to discuss any matter that relates to the operation and running of Croquet England. Please do contact me directly or by email and I will get back to you.

## 6 Motions re League Rules

### 6.1.1 14 point AC Handicap League Format

Proposal for a Round of 2 doubles matches with pairings of player 1 and 4, 2 and 3 playing each other. Help support new people with partnering with a more experienced person. Then 2 rounds of singles with the following matches first round of singles 1v2, 2v1, 3v4, 4v3. Second round of singles 1v1, 2v2, 3v3, 4v4.

**Approved - 6 (BOW, BUR, CHE, CRA, FYL, COM) in Favour, 3 (LLA, SOU, WES) Against, 3 (CYD, ELL, PEN) Abstentions**

### 6.1.2 14 point AC Handicap League Time Limits

Proposal is to extend the playing time by 20 minutes.

**Approved - 6 (BOW, BUR, CRA, FYL, WES, COM) in Favour, 3 (CHE, LLA, SOU) Against, 3 (CYD, ELL, PEN) Abstentions**

### 6.2.1 Introduction of Geographical divisions within Leagues - Proposed by Westmorland Croquet Club

**Rejected - 1 (WES) in Favour, 9 (BOW, BUR, CHE, CRA, FYL, LLA, PEN, SOU, COM) Against, 2 (CYD, ELL) Abstention**

Following a suggestion from the League Manager, it was decided to also vote on this proposal on a League by League basis

#### 6.2.1.1 B Level AC

**Rejected - 0 in Favour, 8 (BOW, BUR, CHE, CRA, FYL, PEN, SOU, COM) Against, 4 (CYD, ELL, LLA, WES) Abstention**

#### 6.2.1.2 Level Play GC

**Rejected - 0 in Favour, 8 (BOW, BUR, CHE, CRA, ELL, LLA, SOU, COM) Against, 2 (CYD, FYL, PEN, WES) Abstention**

#### 6.2.1.3 Handicap GC

**Rejected - 4 (CYD, FYL, LLA, PEN) in Favour, 7 (BOW, BUR, CHE, CRA, ELL, SOU, COM) Against, 1 (WES) Abstention**

#### 6.2.1.4 26pt AC Handicap

**Rejected - 1 (WES) in Favour, 9 (BOW, BUR, CHE, CRA, CYD, FYL, PEN, SOU, COM) Against, 2 (ELL, LLA) Abstention**

#### 6.2.1.5 14pt AC Handicap

**Rejected - 2 (CYD, WES) in Favour, 7 (BOW, BUR, CHE, FYL, LLA, SOU, COM) Against, 3 (CRA, ELL, PEN) Abstention**

#### 6.2.1.6 Short Croquet

**Rejected - 2 (CYD, WES) in Favour, 8 (BOW, BUR, CHE, FYL, LLA, PEN, SOU, COM) Against, 2 (CRA, ELL) Abstention**

### 6.2.2 Handicap Golf League - Remove Geographical Split - Proposed by Crake Valley Croquet Club

The handicap Golf League to be a single all play all league. If there are more than 10 teams wishing to enter then Clubs are limited to one team. Consideration to also run a 2nd division if enough Clubs want to enter 2 teams

**Rejected - 5 (CHE, CRA, ELL, SOU, COM) in Favour, 6 (BUR, CYD, FYL, LLA, PEN, WES) Against, 1 (BOW) Abstention**

### 6.2.3 Handicap Golf Croquet - Predefined Coin Toss (addition to Rule 27) - Proposed by Crake Valley Croquet Club.

Toss of Coin - to help prepare the number of clips needed in advance of each game there will be no toss of coin. If the 2 doubles games are played, then Blue and Black are played by the home team in Game 1 and by the away team in Game 2. Thereafter the first 2 rounds of singles (normally games 3-10) Blue and Black will be played by the away team. The final 2 rounds (normally Games 11-18) Blue and Black will be played by the home Team.

**Approved - 11 (BOW, CHE, CYD, CRA, ELL, FYL, LLA, PEN, SOU, WES, COM) in Favour, 1 (BUR) Against, 0 Abstentions**

## **Motions re League Rules - continued**

### **6.2.4 Level Play Golf Croquet - Predefined Coin Toss (additional rule)- Proposed by Crake Valley Croquet Club.**

Toss of Coin - In Rounds 1 to 3 (games 1 to 9) the player to play first is decided by a toss of a coin. In Rounds 4-6 the player blue and black is determined by reversing the toss from the earlier rounds.

**Approved - 10 (BOW, CHE, CYD, CRA, ELL, FYL, LLA, SOU, WES, COM) in Favour, 1 (BUR) Against, 1 (PEN) Abstentions**

### **6.2.5 AC B League - Proposed by Fylde Croquet Club.**

In the B Level league, matches will be played between teams of three, comprising one doubles and four singles games. Players 1 and 2 must have a minimum handicap of zero (0) and player 3 a minimum handicap of three (3). The total team handicap must have be at least 6.

Player 3 must play in the doubles, but each side may choose either player 1 or player 2 to partner with them. Each side may also unilaterally elect to play either conventional doubles or alternate stroke doubles. The singles games in session two should be played in matched handicap order, (i.e. player 1 v player 1 etc.) adjusting the order as necessary (i.e. 1v2, 2v1) so that no two players play each other in singles games in both the first and second sessions.

**Approved - 9 (BOW, BUR, CHE, CYD, CRA, FYL, PEN, WES, COM) in Favour, 0 Against, 3 (ELL, LLA, SOU) Abstentions**

## **7 Subscriptions - Peter Williams**

Subscriptions to remain unchanged at £20, approved nem con.

## **8 Millennium Competitions**

Other than Bowdon offering to “double hat” their Short Croquet Tournament with the Fed event (as had been done in 2024) no other hosts were identified for these events:

AC Advanced  
GC Level Play  
AC Handicap  
GC Handicap  
Short Croquet

Please let Angharrad know if you are interested in hosting - remember that the host club can now retain all the entry fees, as well as any catering / bar income.

Meanwhile the Committee will discuss whether they should be continued, or if there are now sufficient alternative pathways to enable players to be introduced to Tournament Croquet..

## **9 Arrangements for NW Festival of Croquet - Robin Tasker**

The Festival will be held at Southport on 28-29 June. Robin is looking forward to taking over the lead role from David Cornes. Liz Wilson has agreed to do one more year as Festival Secretary to ease the transition.

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

5-6 Apr	Cheshire Open GC at Bowdon
18-21 Apr	Pendle & Craven John Beech Memorial Easter Tournament
24 Apr	Crake Alternate Shot Doubles AC
26-27 Apr	Lancashire GC Open at Pendle
3-5 May	Bowdon May Handicap Weekend
3 May	Pendle & Craven D Level (10+) GC Series National Qualifier
4 May	Pendle & Craven (7+) Advantage GC
7 May	Crake C level (7+) GC Series National Qualifier
10 May	Pendle & Craven B-Level (4+) GC Series National Qualifier
11-12 May	Bury A Level (0+) GC
10-11 May	Southport Carol Lewis Memorial Handicap AC
17-18 May	Pendle & Craven B/C Level Advanced AC Weekend
17 May	Chester National C Level Golf
18 May	Bury National B Level Golf
18 May	Chester National D Level Golf
19-25 May	National Croquet Week
31 May	Chester National B Level Golf
31 May -1 June	Bowdon Advanced Weekend
4 Jun	Crake Advanced AC - Cumbria Cup
5 Jun	Bob Vaughan Trophy - AC Short Lawn Invitation Crake v York
7-8 June	Pendle & Craven A level GC National Qualifier
7-8 June	Home Internationals AC - Budleigh
14-15 June	Pendle & Craven Advanced Weekend
17-18 June	AC Midweek B level at Bowdon
28-29 June	Festival at Southport
2-3 Jul	Crake A Level A level (0+) GC National Qualifier
8-11 July	Pendle Midweek Tournament (AC)
16 July	Bury National C Level Golf
19-20 July	Southport Super B and B-Level Advanced Weekend
23-24 Jul	Bowdon Short Croquet Tournament
27-28 July	Pendle & Craven A Level (0+) GC
2-3 August	Chester A level GC 0+ Series
6-7 Aug	Bowdon 14pt Handicap AC
6-7 August	Crake Advanced AC - Cavendish Clock
23-24 Aug	August Handicap Weekend at Pendle
23-25 August	Bowdon North of England Championship
23-25 Aug	GC Eights
3 Sept	Crake GC Ladies Open
4-8 Sept	Treasurer's Tankard at Southport
14-15 Sept	Southport AC Advanced Weekend

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

## 8 **Club Announcements:**

### **Bowdon (Nigel Matthews)**

Bowdon has had a good season this year with several new members quickly getting to grips with the basic skills and tactics of AC. The One-ball format has proved useful in introducing new players to croquet.

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

Bowdon hosted six tournaments over the summer -  
The May AC hcp won by Angharrad Walters  
The June advanced weekend won by David Maugham  
The midweek B level advanced won by Charles Harding  
The midweek Short croquet won by Roger Brookes  
The midweek 14pt hcp won by Cas Sinclair  
The North of England AC championship won by David Maugham

In the Northwest Federation millennium events, Bowdon's Angharrad Walters won the GC level play tournament and Cas Sinclair the Short tournament. Bowdon teams won the Short and GC level play leagues.

Away from the club, Bowdon members Angharrad Walters, Jack Good, David Maugham, John-Paul Moberly and Euan Burrige have represented England and Wales in international matches.

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 a 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)**

The club has remained very active this year. We continue to play all formats of croquet with coaching, and thank our coaches for their time and commitment.

Our membership currently stands at 70 across all categories. Unfortunately four of our members have passed away this year, including only recently Barbara Young, an Honorary Vice President and former Chairman of the club, and well known in the federation and beyond.

We have been able to fully utilise both venues and the lawns in both cases have played well and have been complimented by many visiting players. The lawns are currently undergoing the Autumn remedial programmes. The main issue we have had this year is wildlife damage, mainly caused by squirrels enlarging hoop holes - particularly at Whitehead Park. We have overcome this in the main by making protective covers and use of hole plugs. We will continue to utilise the winter lawns at Whitehead and our winter social afternoons are now taking place at Whitehead using the indoor lawn.

We will be hosting National GC Handicap one day qualifiers at Whitehead in 2025, B level (4+) Sunday 18th May, C level (7+) Wednesday.

### **Chester (Tom Grievson)**

Chester was badly affected by the very wet weather this season with much disruption to both internal and external matches and general play. We normally play until the end of the calendar year but the Council who maintain the lawns have announced a major winter maintenance programme and we have therefore closed until next spring. On the other hand the incessant rain has significantly improved the turf density and coverage and it is in good condition.

Membership has increased again and we now total about 130 playing members. To cater for the larger membership we have increased the number of internal activities (roll-ups etc) and training sessions for both AC and GC. In addition we now run, and enter, more national tournaments.

Efforts to stimulate more interest in AC playing are showing signs of early green shoots and we are hopeful that this will continue next year.

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

Despite the club being a CE discounted club with less than two lawns and restricted use, Craig Y Don raised its playing membership fee to £100 and ended the 2024 season with 65 members. The Llandudno U3a remain the major source of new club members graduating from our weekly U3a group 2 hour sessions which are also a good income source @ £5.00 per person per week.

The lawn, a crown green was divided into two 90% sized long overlapping lawns. In competitive play, the overlapping rectangle caused less problems than hoop hold-ups with secondary and primary balls. The lawn surface is pretty consistent but not flat (crown green).

The club has plans approved for a small bungalow clubhouse to replace the double length single garage-type current arrangement which barely holds a dozen folk sheltering from inclement weather. This has the support of CE which has granted £1000 towards the project. This will allow us to target youth organisations and more community organisations. The club is running numerous fund raising activities to support the membership £donations necessary to support/gain external grant funds. Total raised to date is circa £10,000.

The club took part in the handicapped Golf league southern division this past season for only the second time, improving its position, and adding confidence to our members. The club plans to put two teams in the competition this coming season. However, this is dependent on the competition remaining in two sections, North/South. If the NW Fed decide to revert to one geographical area the Craig y Don will not be able to enter any teams next season.

Numbers playing Association have increased and we do play in competition with Llanfairfechan, Tattenhall and Chester clubs but not yet to the standard/numbers needed for the NW Fed league with traveling distances a major issue.

We are disappointed that this NW Federation meeting is physical attendance only. We have a number of members who would have followed proceedings on Zoom or similar. However we are fortunate to have a member attending who will represent the club with delegated voting rights sharing transport with Llanfairfechen representatives.

### **Crake Valley (Graham Jowett)**

The past year has been a highly productive and eventful one, marked by significant achievements both on and off the field. Members' commitment to improving the club's facilities is clear, with enhanced drainage and a new rock feature that helped us handle one of the wettest summers in recent memory. Despite the challenging conditions, all tournaments were completed on schedule.

The Advanced AC competitions continued to attract top players, highlighted by Omied Hallem's victory over Jack Good in the prestigious Cavendish Clock. We were proud to host the CqE vs. SCA representative match in late August, with strong performances from club players David Cornes and Steve Skelton. AC participation has increased among members, and this year's highlight was our club winning the Cumbria Tankard, a regional AC competition among the four Cumbrian clubs, for the first time.

Neil Adams has had an exceptional season, rising in the rankings, and completing an impressive 16 triple peels. Our GC players also excelled, with the Handicap Golf team securing victory in the North Group of the NW Federation. Karen and John Bowes further distinguished themselves by winning the NW Festival GC Handicap Shield. Several members qualified for National Finals: David Cornes in the A Level and John Bowes in the C Level. Additionally, David and Sandra Cornes reached the Algarve Open semi-finals in October.

Among the rising stars, Paul Galley's victory over James Hopgood in the Scottish Open block stage and Chris Williamson's strong showing against Euan Burridge in the GC Canarias Open exemplify our club's growing talent pool. This year, we also mourned the passing of our dear member, Doreen, whose presence will be missed by all.

Our club's success and camaraderie this season reflect the dedication of our members, and we look forward to building on these achievements in the coming year.

### **Ellesmere (Alan Wright)**

Our membership increased with the addition of most of the members of the former Culcheth Croquet Club joining our ranks. They received an Ellesmere welcome and we have enjoyed their company.

We looked at our courts and by careful measuring and avoiding sinkholes and ancient tennis net supports we were able to mark out two almost full size courts. That was the good news. The bad news is that the Ellesmere Sports Club is going to install Paddle ball courts on the space occupied by our croquet lawns. However they have promised us that two full croquet courts and a practice court will be made on the cricket club outfield.

We are grateful for the help and advice given us by David Barrett on the positioning of the lawns.

We are grateful to Simon, our groundsman, for the way the lawn is maintained and marked out.

We held our competitions in the summer and we entered teams in the Golf Croquet Level play and Handicap leagues. Unfortunately for various reasons we were not able to fulfil our fixtures and sadly had to withdraw. We are trying to drum up support and obtain a squad which is large enough to compete all season in 2025.

We are looking forward to next year and hope our new lawns will bed in successfully.

### **Flixton – Nothing to Report**

### **Fylde (Peter Wilson)**

Planning permission has been granted to turn most of our current Lawns 1 and 2 into an indoor padel tennis facility. It is now at the building regulations stage. We have been offered the 2 grass tennis courts until the work is finished so will retain Lawn 3 and another full lawn (which will be flatter than what we had!). In anticipation we have removed the concrete tennis net posts, filled in the holes and re-grassed the areas. Once work is finished SSLTC want one of the grass courts back but have offered to flatten and relay another area so that we keep two full lawns

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

Nothing new to report from Keswick CC. We have 11 members, of which, 8 are U3A members playing their own form of 'Golf' croquet. We hope to educate them further in the coming season!

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

The Club increased membership over the season and now has 66 members. We also increased our numbers playing AC by running evening coaching over the season. Several of our AC players joined enthusiastically into the 14point league. As explained in the previous report we had a grant under the Government Shared Prosperity Scheme. We were planning to put a new shed and shelter on the lawns, but planning permission has proved too slow. Instead, we bought a new Dennis mower which has improved the quality of our lawns considerably. We also purchased new equipment with the funds. We had 197 people from various community groups playing on the lawns this year, including one partially sighted 98-year-old in a wheel chair who came with a group from the Blind Veterans respite home in Llandudno. She was in the Operations Rooms for the Air Force in WW2.

### **Patterdale - Nothing to Report**

### **Pendle & Craven (Sharon de Maine)**

Members of Pendle and Craven Croquet Club have been determined, this year, to develop the club, by diversifying and taking on new challenges.

We have been recruiting by running Taster sessions, Introduction to Croquet courses, attending U3A open days and promoting Croquet at the local Agricultural Show. We have also hosted the 'Wellbeing Group' the 'U3A group' and 7 Croquet England tournaments. Partly due to increased publicity and increased local visibility, we have managed to increase our membership from 21 at the beginning of the year to currently 45. Additionally, we have plans to upskill our members by hosting a 'Club Coach' coaching course, planned for April. Our club AC Coach is going to run sessions over the quiet season to introduce our GC players to AC. We are hoping to have more members playing both codes next year.

One of our greatest successes this year has been the improvement in the condition of our 5 lawns, to championship standard, an improvement we intend to continue into next year. Secondly and by no means least, the Club is much livelier with members playing into the evening and the friendly atmosphere members have worked hard to engender is very apparent.

### **Penrith & North Lakes – Nothing to Report**

### **Southport - Nothing to Report**

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

### **Tattenhall – Nothing to Report**

### **Westmorland - Nothing to Report**

## **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.

## **14 CqE Diplomas**

Congratulations to Catherine Bass (Fylde), Ken Cooper (Bowdon), Kay Martin (Bowdon), Alan Mayne (Bowdon), Linda Pike (Craig Y Don) & Angharrad Walters (Bowdon)

Their citations can be found on the CqE website at: <https://www.croquet.org.uk/?p=tournament/honours/caDiplomas/2024>

## 15 Election of Officers

The following were elected nem con.

- i) Chairman; John Haslam – (3rd Year)
- ii) Secretary; Angharrad Walters (9<sup>th</sup> Year)
- iii) Treasurer; Peter Williams - (2nd Year)
- iv) League Manager; Phil Snowdon - (3rd Year)
- v) Coaching Officer; Vacancy - Post meeting note - Chris Williamson is willing to take on this role.
- vi) Development Officer; Vacancy - John Haslam to continue pro tem.
- vii) Safeguarding Officer; Roger Schofield (2nd Year)
- viii) NW Festival of Croquet Manager; Robin Tasker (1st year)
- ix) Pennine Cup Manager; Liz Wilson (8th Year)
- x) Federation Handicappers; AC: Liz Wilson, GC Tom Grievson - (3rd year)
- xi) Website Manager; Chris Alvey - (4th year)

## 16 Election of Independent Examiner

Paul Rigge, nominated by Liz Wilson, approved nem con.

## 17 Any Other Business

17.1 Millennium Event Entry Fees - Agreed to accept the Treasurer's recommendation that, for the time being, all entry fees can be retained by the host clubs. Other possible uses of the accumulated funds could include "prizes" to support U25s, or grants to clubs.

17.2 Role of Club Handicappers - Clubs to ensure that their Club Handicapper is identified on the Fed website. It was suggested that a session on handicapping might follow the Spring Meeting for those interested.

17.3 Update from CqE Handicap Committee (David Cornes) - Potential changes under consideration include a) exclusion from handicap cards of GC games where jump shots are not allowed (e.g. in winter or on very wet lawns), increasing the number of mandatory peels in Short Croquet for minus players.

17.4 Most Improved Player Awards - Whilst several NW players were nominated for the National awards (Jack, Neil, Ged, Chris), should we have a Federation Award? And do Clubs recognise the MIPs within their Club?

17.5 It was noted that teams of 3 (rather than 4) can be used in the League if necessary to ensure that a fixture goes ahead.

## 18 League Trophies

The 2024 Winners are as follows:

AC B Level League	Chester
AC 26pt Handicap	Southport
AC 14pt Handicap	Llanfairfechan
GC Level	Bowdon Bombers
GC Handicap	Llanfairfechan Pioneers & Crake Valley
Short	Bowdon Blanks

## 19 Date of Next Meeting

Spring Meeting 8th March 2025, by Zoom & YouTube. AGM 22nd November 2025 at Bury

## 20 Meeting Closed at 1225.

## Appendix 1

### North West Federation Equipment November 2024

Bowdon	None
Bury	Projector
Chester	None
Craig-y-Don	CA Start up Set
Crake	2 sets of Jacques Hoops (ex Liverpool)
Ellesmere	3 Mallets
Flixton	None
Fylde	None
Keswick	None
Llanfairfechan	Gazebo, 1 set Dawson primary balls, 1 centre peg, 1 set of Foxy hoops (CA)
Pendle	None
Penrith	4 Mallets, 1 set hoops, 1 peg
Salford	CA start up Set
Southport	None
Stonyhurst	None
Tattenhall	CA Start up Set + set of 2 <sup>nd</sup> ary 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)	In carrying case 4 George Wood mallets, centre peg, 1 set primary Sunshiny balls and 1 set secondary Barlow balls, 1 set metal primary clips
Paul Rigge	1 set Tertiary Balls (Dawson)
Available	With Bury CC -1 centre peg, 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)

**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 Autumn General Meeting. The membership fee will become due at the Autumn 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 Autumn 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 may speak and vote. The Federation Committee, as a whole, also has one 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 Autumn 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 Autumn 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 Autumn 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 Autumn 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 23 November 2024