

Minutes of the North West Federation of Croquet Clubs Spring Meeting
Saturday 7th March 2026 (Draft 1.3 issued to Clubs 31/3/26)
Held on Teams

1 **The Meeting** was attended by 11 people representing 10 clubs:

Bowdon	Angharrad Walters,
Bury	Ian Saunders, Roger Schofield
Chester	Robin Tasker
Craig-y-Don	John Hannah
Crake Valley	Liz Mallinson
Ellesmere	Alan Wright
Flixton	
Fylde	Liz Wilson
Keswick	
Llanfairfechan	Sarah Andrew
Pendle & Craven	Ian Longstaff
Penrith & North Lakes	
Southport & Birkdale	Peter Williams
Tattenhall	
Westmorland	
Wilmslow	

Liz Wilson had been asked to chair the meeting, as Paul Rigge was unable to attend due to travel. The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked Alison Maugham & CqE for their support in hosting the meeting virtually.

2 **Apologies for Absence.** Clubs: Keswick, Penrith & North Lakes Individuals: Chris Alvey, Howard Bowron,, Nigel Matthews, Steve Skelton, David Cornes Chris Williamson, Phil Snowden, Ian Tupling, Ruth Wrigley, Paul Rigge.

3. **The minutes** of the AGM & SGM held on 22nd November 2025 were approved as a correct record Nem Con. Proposed by Robin Tasker, seconded by Alan Wright.

4. **Matters Arising** – None.

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

A **Chairman** –

No report received.

B **Secretary - Angharrad Walters**

Happy to report that Chris Williamson has agreed to become our Chairman and that David Cornes has volunteered to be our Development Officer.

We still need to find someone to take over the secretarial role from me in the Autumn. It was agreed that a notice should be placed on the Fed website advertising the vacancy.

I'd like to highlight that Bowdon will be hosting the England v Spain GC Test Match in June (19-21). Spectators are welcome and anyone willing & able to volunteer as Referee, Scorer or Commentator please let me know.

C **Treasurer – Peter Williams**

I'm pleased to report that all clubs have paid their subs for the coming year. There has been very little other financial activity. We currently have a total of £6528.06 at Santander.

On a negative note, Santander have started charging us £4.99 per month to maintain the current account. The interest earned on the deposit account is currently and approximately the same amount each month.

It was noted that Stonyhurst have not renewed their membership pending identification of a successor to Benedict O'Connor.

D League Manager – Phil Snowden

There have been a few date changes from draft fixtures which all clubs involved know about, but these haven't been captured yet for a full re-issue. This will take a bit longer than usual.

Westmorland have been added to LPG with one date change. These are now on the website.
Tattenhall have withdrawn from Short AC. Reflected on website.

A few captain changes / corrections to my initial list
Bowdon Weekdayers Short Ac now Nigel Matthews
Southport Short AC corrected spelling
Bowdon 1 ball, should be Garth not Gareth

The draft rules issued so far will have a further update, I think the 1 ball game time shows 45mins and should be 40mins. The change to the GC Advantage hoop scoring to start from 0:0 is being processed and the automatic score sheet is being updated and will be issued.

The other CqE change relating to handicaps I am expecting will be picked up by clubs and handicap changes made as necessary.

Let me know if there are any queries raised about the fixtures and as I continue to improve over the coming days/ week I will answer as required.

The question was asked why have a time limit on 1-ball matches, given that the games are often completed quickly? It was noted that if this was always the case, the time limit would be irrelevant, if not, it would ensure that days would not be extended. **Action:** Agreed to review after the end of the season.

E Coaching Officer – Chris Williamson

CqE coaching material:

Currently working through material for validation purposes.

There do not appear to be any links to visual material which coaches could use in their coaching sessions, or send to students before any session as a preview.

This is something I will look at in due course.

Coaching:

I am the only provisional coach in the NWF at this time, I have one session left to complete for my Club Level Coach award. Some clubs in the NWF have qualified coaches, could I ask clubs to identify potential provisional coaches for AC or GC.

I would be grateful if the clubs would let me know of any coaching plans or initiatives, for new players, and for bringing more players into AC, at their club for 2026.

One Ball is a great way for introducing players to AC and improving all round skills.

There has also been a request made online for Coaches willing to help remotely e.g. to help new AC players where there isn't an experienced AC Coach at their club. **Action:** Please let Chris know if this is something that would interest you - either as recipient or as a giver of the advice.

F Development Officer – David Cornes

During 2026 I hope to review the current "Equipment" list for each Club to ensure all Federation equipment is accounted for correctly. I would also aim to make contact with the lesser known Clubs and croquet playing groups. I trust that, if required, any reasonable request for funds to help any new / emerging Club / groups would be available. A further task would be to identify potential income / grant streams for our member Clubs.

Action: Angharrad to provide Club contact details.

G NW Festival – Robin Tasker

Planning meeting for the 2026 Festival will be held later this month. Hoping to include a 1ball event to mirror the leagues. Festival to be held Saturday 27th & Sunday 28th June 2026.

Southport have proposed charging a flat rate fee of £1200, rather than a flexible fee based on the number of lawns used & the CqE Lawn & Ball Hire rate. **Action:** To be discussed by the working group and referred back to the Committee for decision.

H Safeguarding Officer – Roger Schofield

One issue was reported to Roger which, hopefully, has now been resolved.

I Pennine Cup Captain - Chris Williamson

No substantive update, awaiting the finalisation of NWF league fixtures before asking NWF clubs of any interested players.

J Federation Handicappers – Liz Wilson & Tom Grievson

AC - No issues

GC: The reminder from the CqE Handicap Committee to ensure GC handicaps were aligned with DG data has been put on hold. As noted above, the starting scores for Advantage GC have been revised to remove the negative starting points. Revised guidance on how to complete GC Handicap cards has been issued.

K Website Manager – Chris Alvey

No report received.

It was noted that McAfee was suggesting that the website was “not secure”. Action: Alan Wright to send Chris Alvey a screenshot of the message. Chris to investigate further.

L CqE Board Member (NW) - Robin Tasker

CqE Trustees & Executive are holding a F2F meeting in March to progress the Strategy delivery plan.

As previously noted, Robin’s term of office will end later this year, so we need to find candidate(s) willing to stand for election.

Action: Please let Robin or Angharrad know if you would like to be considered for this role.

Otherwise if there are any croquet issues you wish to raise then please do contact me directly.

6 Millennium Competitions

Chester had volunteered to host the Handicap AC on July 25/26.

Fylde were unable to host due to the uncertainty re the proposed Padel court development.

Southport initially offered to host the Short, but are willing to host another event if a smaller club would like to host the Short.

Bury will consider hosting the Advanced AC

Pendle will consider hosting at their next Committee meeting on 25/3.

Action: Clubs to inform Angharrad asap of their intentions. Angharrad to co-ordinate & issue Entry Forms asap.

7 Motions:

No motions had been received from Clubs.

As noted above, the League Rules are still being finalised and will be approved by the Fed Committee asap.

Action: Phil to finalise document & Angharrad to co-ordinate approval.

Chris Williamson was elected Chairman nem con.

David Cornes was elected Development Officer nem con.

8 Club Announcements:

Bowdon (Nigel Matthews)

Bowdon has continued playing croquet over the winter months, using $\frac{3}{4}$ size lawns to allow some areas rest.

Club roll-ups have been well attended and we ran 3 winter knockouts. The popular box leagues in AC, GC and One-ball also continued over the winter.

Taster sessions have now been set for April, with the plan to introduce beginners to the basics of croquet. We shall teach One-ball during these sessions. This format is easy to learn and introduces the strokes required for both AC and GC.

We are also planning for the England v Spain GC Test Match on the weekend of 19-21 June. The England team has been confirmed and includes JP Moberly (captain) and Euan Burrige – former and current Bowdon players, respectively. The clubhouse and grounds are being given a bit of a makeover for this event.

Bury (Ian Saunders)

Will host a new Short tournament this year as a memorial to Barbara Young.

Chester (-)

No report received

Craig Y Don (John Hannah)

Craig Y Don Croquet club's playing membership hit 70 as we entered our winter shutdown at the start of last October, but club activity carried on. We have had the use of a member's lawn for winter croquet, which although small, is great fun allowing 30 members playing each week. On one day a group of up to 8 members, playing singly, one ball with both primary and secondary colours in normal sequence. Unfortunately the wet weather has meant no play since mid-December but we are attempting to start again this week for the five weeks before we can start on our club lawn alongside British Summer Time on the 29th March! (Nearly 1/2 the club members had booked a session each week on the small winter lawn)

We held an Autumn lunch in October and a Christmas party in December with forty+ club attendees at each and a twice weekly board and card game group playing in our current small clubhouse has kept another dozen or so in constant touch throughout the winter.

Llandudno u3a is one of the largest u3a's in the country, with 1000 members, and we have run a very successful croquet interest group from the start of April till end of September for 10 years. This brings us most of our new club members. Right now, we have a huge opportunity with them as we address their March 3rd Monthly meeting on the topic of 'Croquet and our planned new clubhouse'. We already have a list of 40 u3a members wanting to join the new group in April, all croquet novices!

After three years of really hard and often frustrating work, we are about to go to tender on our new clubhouse project, a small bungalow type construction, having raised £155,000 from membership fundraising and grants during that period. We have been awarded an £85,000 from the National Lottery Community fund which is a big achievement as they do not fund Sports projects. We have convinced them Croquet is not just a competitive sport it has added a lot to community wellbeing.

This is great news but will give us a very disruptive season as our old clubhouse forms part of the construction site and will be 'out of bounds'! We will not be able to entertain visiting groups or teams without any cover or electricity, hence we have withdrawn from the NW Federation handicapped Golf league for this one year. The new clubhouse is being called the 'Croquet Community Pavilion' and we will be seeking to offer croquet to more groups in the future including disabled folk in wheelchairs, underprivileged groups and minority groups such as LGBTQ+ who want outside sports to play in safe places which are not gender biased. Most of the major grant funders only make offers to organisations who are community focussed, not those with simply a sporting objective, particularly if the sport involved is considered a minority one! The clubhouse will have two modern disabled toilets, one outward opening, usable by other sports players on our complex and the community at large 24/7 by use of a radar key.

We already host a defibrillator on the outside of our small clubhouse available 24/7 for anyone to use but for our own confidence we invite all our members to an annual refresher training course on the defibrillator which is scheduled for March 4th this year.

We are looking forward to this season and hopefully a very fast-build new clubhouse which we can open before the season finishes

CYD are happy to share their experience & details of the grant applications with other Clubs. It is worth noting that Wind Farm operators have established charitable trusts to support projects in their localities.

Crake Valley (Liz Mallinson / Chris Williamson)

Unlike most croquet clubs we keep our lawns open through the winter. Despite the continual wet weather, we have been able to hold roll up sessions most weeks. These have been well attended with as many as 15 players attending which is nearly 50% of our membership. This year we have also run internal competitions, on half lawns and winter rules, which will conclude in March.

Our membership is a mix of people who enjoy the social play and others who are very competitive. This coming season we have nearly 50 fixtures of interclub competitions which will keep our competitive members very busy. The club will also be concentrating on recruiting new members. The club is having an open day on 3rd May, National Croquet Day, when we hope to be able to find some new people who would enjoy croquet. It will be an opportunity for potential new members to experience the game at no cost to them and enjoy refreshments with our convivial members.

Crake Valley CC has GC players taking up AC SC, they are enjoying learning something new and improving their skills. This has given the club more depth and has encouraged Crake Valley to enter AC SC in the NWF league this year. It also supports the CqE initiative "Action for AC"

Ellesmere (Alan Wright)

Our members have continued playing through the winter when the weather permitted. The groundsman has worked hard and provided a temporary lawn as the two we are using for matches in the summer could have been damaged by too much use.

Our “parent “ club has now changed its name to Worsley Sports Club. The croquet section will still be Ellesmere Croquet Club as the committee can’t face the demands of the Nat West Bank to change account names etc.

Worsley Sports Club have declared their support for the croquet section and by the time the season starts we should have a new storage facility,

We have entered a team in the Handicap Golf League and are looking forward to enjoyable matches with other clubs and our internal club competitions.

Fylde (Liz Wilson)

The Padel Tennis development is still going ahead but not yet finalised. Fylde will still be down to two full lawns but the uncertainty around the building and development means we cannot make firm plans or host events this year

Keswick (-)

No report received

Llanfairfechan– (-)

No report received

Pendle & Craven (-)

No report received

Penrith & North Lakes – (-)

No report received

Southport - (-)

No report received

Stonyhurst – (-)

No report received

Tattenhall – (-)

No report received

Westmorland - (-)

No report received

9 Federation Equipment Assets

The list has been updated to remove the Gazebo & Foxy hoops from Llanfairfechan. As noted above, David Cornes will review the list as part of his initial tasks as Development Officer.

10 **Any Other Business**

a) Training for potential Club Coaches

Southport had been asked to host a training event in April (11th & 12th??) but details are still to be confirmed. Action: Paul Rigge to clarify intentions.

b) Indoor Mat available

Alan Wright noted that following the move of Culcheth Croquet Club, the indoor mat that they had used is now looking for a new home. Ian Longstaff indicated that Pendle may be interested to support their Wellbeing programme.

Action: Ian to discuss at Pendle & confirm whether or not they would like it.

11 **Date of Next Meeting**

AGM 21st November 2026 at Bury, Spring Meeting via Teams 6th or 13th March 2027 (TBC)

12 **Meeting Closed at 11:00.**

Appendix 1 Equipment as at March 2026

Bowdon	None
Bury	Projector
Chester	None
Craig-y-Don	CqE Start up Set
Crake	2 sets of Jacques Hoops (ex Liverpool)
Ellesmere	3 Mallets
Flixton	None
Fylde	None
Keswick	None
Llanfairfechan	1 set Dawson primary balls, 1 centre peg
Pendle	None
Penrith	4 Mallets, 1 set hoops, 1 peg
Salford	CqE start up Set
Southport	1 set Tertiary Balls (Dawson)
Stonyhurst	None
Tattenhall	Set of 2 nd ary balls, 6 Foxy Hoops, CA start up kit (set of hoops, set of primary balls, centre peg) and 4 CA George Wood mallets 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).
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
Available	With Bury CC -1 centre peg (primary colours), 1 set carrot hoops (poor condition) (ex Cricceith)