

LEIGHTON-LINSLADE CROQUET CLUB

GENERAL COMMITTEE MEETING Wednesday 15th June 2016
At 1pm - Page's Park pavilion

Committee Members who attended: -Malcolm Kirby (chairman), Roger Stroud (secretary), John Cundell, John Thorp, Sally Clay, Val Jeffers, Len Buckingham (part).

Draft Minutes

1. Welcome

Malcolm opened meeting early as we were all here and it was raining.

2. Apologies for absence

Apologies received from Sheila Guest, Mary Kemp, Ross Bagni & Len Buckingham (Len did make it to the meeting part way through).

3. Minutes of meeting held on 9th March 2016

The minutes of the previous meeting were accepted and Malcolm signed a copy of the minutes.

4. Matters arising & review of Actions (if not included below)

None.

5. Reports: -

5.1 Secretary's report including correspondence to Club

5.1.1 Website

Roger said that he has been updating our web site generally from various match reports; also, in trying to put a local weather information on the HOME page, has put on the top three news items from the BBC web site. Clicking on one of these items would take the user to the BBC website where their weather information can be accessed.

5.1.2 Sports' Council

Tom Miller (our representative on the Sports Council), sent a note prior to the most recent meeting which noted the five points below: -

a) As there were grant awards to be presented, the new Mayor (Councillor Stephen Cotter) was initially in attendance. Before leaving, he made it clear that sport is one of his passions.

b) In the past, Richard Clarke - he represents the Triathlon Club - and I have been vocally critical of the Town Council's (TC) website in terms of truly "selling" the

sports available in Leighton-Linslade. The Sports Council (SC) have asked us to write a further paper for them to consider, with the aim of then sending it to the TC.

c) Richard Clarke was installed as the new Chairman and John Gallaher (Corinthians Youth Football Club) as new Treasurer.

d) The SC Constitution was updated/rationalised. Few of the changes will have a direct implication for LLCC. The SC's Grant Aid Scheme was also reviewed. It has not been hugely changed. However, as I have previously indicated, a more strict interpretation of the scheme's rules MAY prove more limiting regarding for what we are able to request a grant. For example, to quote: "Expenditure should not normally have been incurred prior to determination of any grant aid application". Once all the changes have been agreed, I will send you a copy of each document but this will not be until after the next SC meeting - namely several months time.

e) To the SC's surprise, Ian Haines delivered hard copies of a "Consultation draft" with the title "Sport and Physical Activity Development Plan 2015 (??) - 2018" (or if you read the main document 2015 - 2019!). It has 23 typed A4 pages. The SC Acting Secretary will be asking when the consultation period ends, with a view to the SC holding a specific meeting at which to formulate a response. I have yet to read much detail but, given the content of paragraph 2 above, it is ironic/disturbing/very annoying that neither croquet nor triathlon (!) feature in the list of sports with which, the report says, the strategy has been aligned!!! Clearly I need to read the whole thing, await information from the SC Acting Secretary and will revert to you in due course.

5.1.3 The 41 Club

John C had received correspondence from the '41 Club' who would like to spend an evening on our lawns to understand croquet. He has agreed that they can use our lawns, with guidance from our members, at a cost of £5 per head on 20th July at 5:30pm. John is collecting names of players who can help with the visit.

5.2 Treasurer's report

Len arrived midway through the meeting, handed out a copy of the latest accounts and asked if there were any questions.

Len confirmed to Roger that the £2,800 that we paid towards the fencing was included in this account and also was aware that he had to make a current provision of approx. £100 for the web site costs.

Len also said that he felt it is important to start the discussions with the Council re. our new licence (effective from April 1st 2017).

Len has also initiated collecting ages of our members, retaining anonymity, which he says may prove useful in assessing the proportion of our members capable of doing any maintenance work.

5.3 Membership Secretary's Report

John Cundell reported that we have 42 members, have lost 7 members from last year and have recently gained a few new members

6. New fence day?

The committee felt that it was not worth it now to have a specific celebratory day marking the erection of the new fence, however, it was felt that we ought to invite the Mayor, Steve Cotter and his wife to present the prizes at our AGM. Action - **RS to contact the Mayor's PA to make the arrangement.**

7. Fixtures: -

7.1 Murphy Shield

John C has carried out discussions with Hunstanton (our next opponents) and the agreed date is Monday 27th June played at Pages Park. Our team will be David & Jean Ball, John Cundell & Judith Pengelly.

7.2 B-Level

John C who is organising the event reported that we are OK for scorers and that we have 12 entries. John also said that we will have gross income of £120 of which our club will have a profit of about £72.

7.3 C-Level

John C reported that so far we have 8 people of which 6 are from our club.

7.4 League Matches

John T reported that the fixtures have been arranged and they just need to be played.

7.5 Friendlies

John T reported that the Buckingham fixture had to be cancelled due to Buckingham not being able to raise a team and that he has arranged a fixture with Little Gaddesden on that date.

8. Lawn Maintenance

8.1 Sit-on mower

John T requested that this item be put on the agenda as he feels that we ought to replace our current mower with a 'sit-on mower'. John has had discussions with Duncan Hector, an experienced lawn professional on this point.

There was a lot of discussion, much of which is linked to the lawn maintenance responsibilities of our club within the terms of our future contract with the Council, which commences April 1st 2017. As yet there

has been no discussion between our club and the Council regarding our new contract.

It was agreed that **Roger will contact Mark Saccoccio (Clerk to the Town Council) as soon as possible** to open up discussions for the terms of our new contract.

8.2 Club Sign

There was discussion about having a club sign on or near to the entrance to the lawns. It was decided that we would have on the sign our club name and our web site address. Len has this information and will investigate price and possible locations for the sign.

8.3 Health & Safety

We are reviewing our Health & Safety guidelines, particularly with the access to lawn 3 - especially the steep slope just before lawn 3. We have asked Council employees, who carry out maintenance in Pages Park, for steps and a hand-rail need to be fitted at that point, particularly regarding the ages of many of our members.

It was agreed that Roger would write to the Council on this matter.

9. Fence

Malcolm reported that he wrote to the Council regarding making it more difficult for youths to climb over the gate by fitting a roller device, making it difficult to grip the top of the gate.

The reply from the Council (Ian Haynes): -

Firstly, let me apologise for both the length of my reply and the slightly legalistic nature. As landowner the Town Council has to ensure that it meets all of our statute and common law obligations.

Accidents occurring on property or land owned by someone are very common, and form a major part of the country's personal injury caseload. Lawyers call these cases "occupiers' liability claims". In such cases, the Occupiers Liability Acts 1957 and 1984 will be relevant.

The Town Council currently has a number of these claims open and it is very time consuming for officers to help our insurance company defend them.

The 1957 Act deals with lawful visitors to our assets and places a duty of care on us to ensure the safety of those visitors whilst on our premises. We cannot be charged with any offences under this Act, but it can be used to sue us through the civil courts and the 1984 Act deals with trespassers on our land and in our premises', but only applies to personal injury (unlike the 1957 Act that also includes damage and loss to the visitor's property). A 'trespasser' has a wide meaning and can be a thief about to burgle our assets, or could be a child attempting to retrieve his ball.

As the fine turf lawns are located within a park the incident you described clearly demonstrates the latter.

Also, anti-climb rotating barriers with or without spikes would legally have to have clear signage that is specific to the risk, e.g. 'Danger of Injury Do not climb over rollers/ spikes'.

As we know that children and adults will climb over fences to retrieve lost balls and I don't believe that providing clear signage will be enough to deter them. By its very nature the style and type of fencing isn't that easy to climb.

The original proposal for the fencing of the fine turf lawns was based on welfare grounds, there is every justification to realise that the addition of the perimeter fencing has avoided unnecessary incursions onto the playing surfaces to the benefit of the lawns and players alike. Therefore, this has been achieved and has not been a waste of either public money or the club's contribution.

However, we cannot guarantee the removal of all incursions on to the fine turf lawns. The introduction of any anti-climb rotating barriers will not only negatively affect the aesthetics of the park and detract from the fencing around the fine turf lawns. But will also unnecessarily fortify a Town Council asset.

Therefore, on this occasion I have to decline the club's request.

The feeling of our committee was that the configuration of the fence / gate serves its purpose and let us wait and see if the flat top of the gate does become an issue over time.

10. Wood Planks

John C reported that some of our members did not know how to easily move the new 'ball-stop' boards. John has explained to these members that it is simple to move the boards with a foot and that these boards are typical of ones used at many croquet clubs. It is no longer necessary to take relief and this practise should be deterred.

11. Any other business

11.1 Roger

11.1.1 Benches

Roger said that Sheila Guest had asked if benches could be sited at various points around the lawns. It had been noted that the Council might have some spare benches in one of their yards and it would be a good idea to suggest this to the Council.

11.1.2 Drain Pipe

John C reported that the Council preferred us to connect our sink in the clubroom to the waste outlet in the Referee's Room (through the wall). John added that we would also prefer that option and we are really

awaiting the Council plumber to make the connection. It was agreed that we would mention it again to the Council.

11.2 John Cundell

11.2.1 Swisher

John explained how important it is to use our worm cast swisher before we start playing on lawns 1 & 2 and that not doing this has a long term detrimental effect upon the lawns.

11.2.2 C-Level

John spoke about the need to try to get a few more entrants for our forthcoming C-Level tournament.

11.2.3 Wall Hooks

Malcolm said that it would be preferable to have a couple of wall hooks for the dogs rather than the ground spikes which are creating several holes near to the clubhouse entrance.

Roger agreed to get the necessary hooks and they will be fitted onto the pavilion wall.

Meeting closed 2.40pm