

Minutes of the North West Federation of Croquet Clubs AGM Saturday 16th November 2019 (v2 issued 18 Nov 2019)

- 1 The Meeting was attended by 32 people representing:
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| Bowdon: | Ken Cooper, Graham Good, Steve Reynolds, Sylvia Steer, David Walters |
| Bury: | David Barrett, Francois Garcia, Jean Hargreaves, Vi Richards, Peter Richards, Janet Wood |
| Chester: | John Dawson, James Thomas, Alan Clare, Pat Clare, |
| Craig-y-Don: | |
| Crake: | Jim Allcock, David Cornes |
| Criccieth: | |
| Culcheth: | Di Mitchell, Keith Woodward, Alan Wright, |
| Ellesmere: | |
| Flixton: | |
| Fylde: | Peter Wilson, Liz Wilson. |
| Keswick: | |
| Liverpool: | |
| Llanfairfechan: | Sarah Andrew, Richard Hollas |
| Pendle & Craven: | Paul Rigge |
| Penrith: | |
| Salford: | |
| Southport: | Di Williamson, Kath Thomas, Tony Thomas |
| Stonyhurst: | |
| Tattenhall: | David Boyd (& Chester), Sheila Marsland |
| Westmorland: | Ivan Wheatley, |

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and noted with regret the passing of Bob Connop shortly after the Spring meeting. He also drew members' attention to the opportunity to see the England Golf Croquet Team in action at Bowdon over the weekend of 23/24 November, when they will be playing a warm up match before they travel to New Zealand to contest the Openshaw Shield.

2. **Apologies for Absence:** Jack Pattenden, John Hannah (Craig-y-Don), Benedict O'Connor (Stonyhurst), , Barbara Young (Bury), Don Williamson (Southport), James Hawkins (Liverpool)
3. The **minutes of the Spring Meeting** held on 2nd March 2019 were confirmed as a correct record.
Proposed – David Barrett, Seconded – Jean Hargreaves
4. **Matters Arising** – None.
5. **Reports on the Past Year**
A **Chairman – Paul Rigge**

We now have a whole new administration structure above us, with the CA's new 'sugar-free' 'slim-lined' Council and governance changes now in place. We'll see if those do make any significant differences to us up here....
It is worth pointing out however, that our former **VP Colin Irwin**, after many, many years service decided to stand down from CA council – my, and I'm sure our thanks are due to him for his long service to the cause.

You may be aware of the International Laws Committee working on AC Rulebook V7... (Currently available as an informal draft from the WCF website). Your executive have exchanged a few emails about our concerns over this document which *would* have directly affected us, and we've been assured that our points have been heard (and acted upon) – We will review again, when the Formal (two month) Consultation Process begins on December 1st.
The CA has decreed that National Croquet Day next year will be a week.... (11-17th May)..

Finally, At our Festival, I asked for any feedback about the changes that were made to the weekend.. I got some, in the week after, but, are there any more before planning next year's gets under way? – yes I **will** be wearing the same jacket....the extra loos stay & Golf won't be triple banked next time.. anything else?

- B **Secretary – David Walters**

Millennium Entry Forms were issued. Purchase of Shield for LPG section of Festival was approved. Nomination of Tony for Diploma agreed & submitted. Agreed to purchase set of Tertiary balls to support expansion of Festival. Agreed to fund the hire of "Event Style Toilet Units" for the Festival. Requested not to use the word "Portaloo" on website. Received CA Policy on Safeguarding during Competitions. Responded to CA AC Tournament Committee's Review of National Short Croquet Inter-Club competition, the semis-finals & finals of which will be played at Bowdon in September 2020.

- C **Treasurer – Liz Wilson**

Looking at the comparatives with last year you will see

Income

Affiliation fees are as last year

Festival Event came in with a loss of £20 despite an increase in entry fees. This was due to the provision of toilets on site – so pennies well spent I think.

Millennium Events levy is slightly up

Expenditure

Engraving cost due to a new trophy for the Festival LPG.

A set of tertiary balls were bought for the use on any member club who need to triple bank. They were used in the LPG at the Festival. Probably better suited to Association play.

Chris Slater has agreed to examine next year's accounts and so I propose that he do this job.

There is plenty of money in the bank so I further propose that the fees stay at £20

D CA Representative - John Dawson

Until the Governance Changes took effect, I chaired the Management Committee. Since then I have been monitoring the changes within the CA. Clubs should have recently received a request to complete a survey on club size & capacity for growth, to assist in Development Planning. I continued to lead the Croquet input to Countryfile Live events. This year, for the first time a Countryfile North was held at Castle Howard. Thanks to those who helped with the event, which generated a number of potential members for clubs in the NW.

E League Manager – Ivan Wheatley

The 2019 season was the busiest season in recent years with a total of 48 teams (initially 49) competing in the 6 leagues over a total of 183 matches, an increase of some 12% over 2018. As the season progressed the strain of supporting so many teams started to take its toll with clubs struggling to fulfil their fixtures. Over the course of the season 37 (20%) matches had to be rearranged for a variety of reasons, which resulted in September being a much busier month than originally planned and the last match of the season not taking place until the 9th October.

The new format B level advanced AC league saw 6 teams taking part, one more than in 2018. Although no club took up the option of merging with another club in order to increase numbers of eligible players, this option remains available for the 2020 season.

All leagues were eventually decided on the lawns and not on paper, as was a possibility at one point, with several of leagues being open right to the last matches. The winners of the various leagues will be announced and the trophies awarded towards the end of this meeting.

No significant changes are proposed for 2020 with all 6 leagues again being supported. A draft set of amended laws for AC (7th Edition) has been published and is currently out for consultation. At this time I am not aware of a timetable for their introduction so propose no change to the league rules in this respect until the timetable for their implementation is agreed however if they are adopted before our Spring meeting I will update the league rules accordingly.

Part way through the season an incident occurred during a match when a player was taken ill and unable to continue. The league rules were not explicit on how to treat the incomplete and unplayed games and so an interim ruling was issued. Later on in this meeting I will be proposing a change to the league rules for 2020 to make the treatment of such a situation clear and unambiguous.

In the next week I will be issuing an invitation to clubs to register teams for the 2020 season. The closing date for entry will be the 31st December and in return I will issue draft fixture lists no later than the end of January and hopefully earlier. Clubs will then have until the end of February to negotiate any changes they would like to make before I issue the final fixture list in the middle of March. Concern was expressed at the number of requests for fixture changes that were made at the early part of the season. After a brief discussion during which it was confirmed that once the final fixture list was issued, changes could only take place with the agreement of both team captains, it was agreed to delay the issue of the final fixture list until after the federation Spring meeting to give team captains a better chance to finalise their team sheets.

Easter weekend in 2020 is the 11th and 12th April so the new season will start on Sunday 19th April and will run through to Sunday 11th October. As in previous years I will front end load the programme as much as possible to enable September/October to be used for completing matches that have to be delayed for whatever reason.

It was confirmed that Midweek League matches can be played at the weekend by mutual agreement between the clubs concerned and vice versa.

It was also clarified that the sequence of games within a LPG match can be varied with the consent of both captains. If either side dissents, then the default order should be followed. A guidance note will be issued before the start of next season.

F Coaching Officer – Paul Rigge

First Booking of the year was NW Flying Circus Course at Keswick CC for AC Bronze course 13th March

(too B___dy early that far north!)

Days Golf training shots/tactics/odd hoops & even hoops 16th March Pendle CC

Coach The Coaches (Club Coaches Award) 13th April & 13th May at Bury CC Whitehead Park. A total of 24 attendees, of whom 7 have already gone on to achieve their Club Coach badge before the end of the season.

Pendle CC Regular Wednesday GC Clinic from 13:30-16:00 1st May – 2nd Oct.

Fylde CC irregular Thursday AC Clinic from 14:00 16th May, 23rd May etc

Southport CC Introductory CA Six week Course to 28 newbies Monday 3rd June.

Pendle CC AC Flying Circus Silver level 17th July.

In addition, facilitated a GC player to become a GC referee. Graham Good noted that GC Examining Referees are still awaiting new exam questions to be issued.

G **Development Officer** – Sarah Andrew

Croquet in the NW has strong leadership from its Federation which engages in very active e-mail debate. The playing of GC by the older age profile is solidly established and increasing. The game of AC appears to be more precarious. I would welcome news from any club who has found a good way to engage AC beginners.

I would like to see an increase in the sport for disabled players. I was approached in the year by the Outdoor Activities Co-ordinator of Age UK Cheshire, who had some funds to develop croquet for people with dementia and their carers. In spite of a very positive response from me and interest from Chester CC, there was a failure to recruit interested people to try croquet. I have not given up and I have requested further contact details to progress the initiative. I also intend to establish contact with the community of partially sighted veterans at the care home run for them in Llandudno where they have a croquet lawn. The progress to these initiatives is slow, but I am determined to make some progress.

I have visited the new group at Wilmslow and loaned them equipment, initially from Chester CC (many thanks) and subsequently from the NWFCC. This is currently a U3A group, the leader, Peter Highfield, plays AC and the group is enjoying learning that code of the game. I am hopeful they will develop into a full CA affiliated club in the next 2 years. I have also visited Criccieth Croquet Club who are continuing to make progress and small gains in membership.

Additionally I attended the Northern Countryfile Live event at Castle Howard in Yorkshire. I passed details of a number of visitors from the North West to their respective nearest club. I have discovered that the winter is probably the best time to actually do croquet development. In summer clubs are too busy running the sport to think about developing initiatives! I hope to contact more clubs over the next few weeks.

I was pleased to lend support to clubs for grants and awards. Tattenhall Club received the CA Townsend Award for exceptional progress in providing a good playing environment. They have made remarkable advancement thanks to the hard work of their Committee. Crake Valley were successful in obtaining further grant funding at the CA Development Committee Spring Meeting. Craig y Don have a funding request being considered at the next Development Committee meeting on 30th November 2019.

The CA used to have laser measuring equipment to establish level lawns. This has been out of action for a while. A new system has been implemented. It was agreed at the Development Committee that the CA should advise clubs on the equipment to hire and where it could be found. The club would hire the equipment and the CA would reimburse the club by a set amount of £75. The CA has a computer program which will convert the raw data into a map of the site showing the low spots requiring remedial action.

H **NW Festival of Croquet** – Ivan Wheatley

The 2019 Festival of Croquet was held over the last weekend of June courtesy of Southport & Birkdale Croquet Club. The major change for 2019 was the introduction of a level play GC section, which comprised singles play on the Saturday followed by doubles play on the Sunday. The introduction of level play GC and the increase in the number of clubs taking part meant that both the handicap AC and GC sections both had to be played as discrete blocks on day 1 to be followed by block play-offs on day 2 to determine an overall winner as opposed to the usual all-play-all competition. Throughout the weekend the mood was good and the feedback received was generally positive although the final proof will be the level of entry in 2020.

The winners in the various sections were: level play GC – Southport, handicap GC – Llanfairfechan, handicap AC and advanced AC – Pendle and short lawn – Chester. Overall winners of the tournament were Pendle and Craven.

On reflection the use of tertiary colours for triple banking of level play GC was not a good idea resulting as it did in considerable congestion and in some cases total confusion. Similarly the idea of playing Advanced AC without a time limit was less than ideal. It is recommended that both of these issues are addressed for 2020.

Finally the decision to introduce portable loos on both the South and North lawns was received with unanimous approval

and should be included in future years.

I **Safeguarding Officer – Jean Hargreaves**

All member clubs have received a communication regarding ‘Safeguarding during Croquet Competitions’. Would Club Secretaries please ensure that this is shared with their Club Safeguarding Officer.

I have had several clubs contact me regarding this including 2 from our Federation.

The document and our website have a link to the current guidelines on the CA website for Safeguarding. I am aiming to update these by early January 2020. I am assuming the CA will notify clubs when they are on the CA website.

Other committees are looking at the documentation for entering tournaments. These should be ready for next season.

J **Pennine Cup Captain - Liz Wilson**

The Pennine Cup took place at Pendle on 1st June 2019. The North West Team won 6–3. It was nice to see a few new faces offering to play

Teams and results:

NW		NE	
Robert Essler (1)		Phil Errington (0.5)	
Roger Scofield (3)		Callum Johnson (2)	
Andrew Webb (4)		Derek Knight (2)	
Paul Dowdall (6)		David Millener (7)	
David Williamson (20)		John Fitzpatrick (16)	
Ivan Wheatley (6)		Nigel Durie (16)	

Morning (Advanced Doubles)

RE & DW	vs	PE & JF	+1t
RS & PD	vs	CJ & ND	+10
AW & IW	vs	DK & DM	-12

Afternoon (3A + 3 HC Singles)

RE vs PE	+7
RS vs CJ	+14
AW vs DK	-9
IW vs DM	-8
PD vs ND	+2
DW vs JF	+11t

K **Federation Handicapper – Don Williamson**

This has been a quiet year - we have not held a meeting but will do so next year if there is a need.

The CA Handicap Committee is discussing Short Croquet handicaps and how to ensure more consistency between areas in setting handicaps in all versions. It is also looking at advice for new club handicappers and how to deal with rapid improvers.

I am not present as I am in London at the CA Handicap Committee.

L **Webmaster – Tony Thomas**

The Federation website continues to be very popular with over 4200 regular visitors, who viewed over 27,000 pages.

6 **Changes to League Rule 6(a) (Proposed by League Manager, Ivan Wheatley)**

Early in the season during a match one of the players was taken ill and was unable to continue. The match, which comprised 5 games in total, was ended with 2 games completed and the remaining 3 games abandoned. A decision was sought on the treatment of the result of the match.

After due consideration, guided largely by League Rule 6(a) which states that if a player fails to complete a game then it is forfeited and Tournament Regulation F8 which differentiates between games that have started and then one player is unable or unwilling to continue and those games which have not been started. Specifically Tournament Regulation F8 states the principle that games which have not been started should not be counted for handicap or ranking purposes, clause F8(b), and

their treatment should give neither an advantage nor a disadvantage to either player, clauses F8(c) and F8(d). In my capacity as League Manager I consequently issued a guidance note to clubs to ensure consistent treatment for the remainder of the season which stated that games which had started but subsequently abandoned should be conceded however games which had not begun should be considered void.

After further consideration and discussion I have concluded that a fairer outcome for all concerned and one that is less open to potential abuse and consequently is easier to apply uniformly is that for all games where one player fails to complete or play to the agreed time limit, for whatever reason, shall be conceded.

To reflect this I propose that league Rule 6(a) of the current league rules be amended by the insertion of the words “for whatever reason” to read “If a member of a team fails to play a game or fails to play to the agreed time limit for whatever reason, the game shall be conceded” and for clarification and for consistency with Tournament Regulations to add a second sentence stating that “The result of any such game shall not however be included on handicap cards or score sheets for ranking purposes”.

After a brief discussion, which highlighted concerns that the League Rules were expanding to repeat contents of Laws, Rules & Tournament Regulations which were already applicable, the proposal was withdrawn and will be revised and represented at the Spring meeting.

7 **Changes to Constitution (Proposed by Hon. Secretary, David Walters)**

Following the changes earlier this year to the CA Governance and, in particular, the direct election of a Council member to represent the NW Federation Constituency, three changes are necessary to the Constitution, to remove the election of a CA Representative at the Spring Meeting, to update the definition of the Executive Officers and to add the directly elected CA Council Member to the Committee. The latter is intended to ensure that the close working relationship between the NWFed & the Council Member continues in future.

6(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.

7(a) The Executive Officers of the Federation shall be the Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer. All posts are held until the next Annual General Meeting.

8(a) The affairs of the Federation shall be managed by a Committee consisting of the Executive Officers, other Officers and the CA Council Member representing the North West Federation.

The changes were seconded by Tony Thomas & approved nem con.

8 **Subscriptions (Proposed by Treasurer, Liz Wilson)**

Agreed that Subscriptions should remain unchanged.

9 **Arrangements (dates and locations) for NW Federation Millennium Competitions**

The Chairman introduced the item by reminding the meeting that the purpose of these events is to provide a stepping stone for new players from Club or League play to Tournament play and urged Clubs to encourage their members to participate.

- a) Advanced Fylde 18 – 19 April
- b) Handicap Pendle TBC July
- c) Short Chester TBC May
- d) Hcp Golf Crake TBC
- e) Lvl Golf Bury TBC

Would the Clubs please confirm dates to the Secretary asap.

10 **Arrangements for Festival of Croquet**

– 27th and 28th June. Ivan Wheatley agreed to be Manager (for one more year!) and Liz Wilson to be Secretary. As noted above, changes to format will be made based on feedback from this year’s event & the “Event Style Toilets” will be provided again.

11 **Coordination of dates for CA or other tournaments in the NW**

25 March	Bowdon Charity 1-ball
6 April	Crake Alternate Shot Doubles AC
10-13 April	Pendle & Craven John Beech Memorial Easter Tournament
25 April	Crake GC C-Level
25-26 April	Southport Advanced Weekend
8-10 May	Bowdon May Handicap Weekend
9-10 May	Pendle & Craven B & C Level Advanced Weekend
11-17 May	National Croquet Week
16 May	Pendle & Craven B-Level Golf
16-17 May	Southport May Handicap Weekend (Carol Lewis Memorial)
30-31 May	Bowdon Advanced Weekend
6-7 June	Pendle & Craven Advanced Weekend
13-14 June	Pendle & Craven Open Golf
13-14 June	Crake Advanced
27-28 June	Festival
4 July	Bury National B Level Golf
4-5 July	Bowdon B-Level Advanced Weekend
7-10 July	Pendle & Craven Midweek Tournament (Handicap AC)
14-15 July	Bowdon Midweek Short (Handicap AC)
18-19 July	Southport Super B and B-Level Advanced Weekend
18-19 July	Pendle & Craven - Lancashire Open Golf
22 July	Bury National C Level Golf
25-26 July	Fylde AC – Handicap Weekend
8-9 August	Chester GC Oplus Cross Over Tournament
8-9 August	Bury Handicap Weekend
15-16 August	Crake Advanced
22-23 Aug	The AC All England Handicap Area Final - Bury
28-31 August	Bowdon North of England Championship
5–6 Sept	The AC All England Handicap Final - Chester
10-14 Sept	Southport – Treasurer’s Tankard
12-13 Sept	Bowdon – Short Croquet Inter-Club Finals
19-20 Sept	Southport – Ascot Cup GC
28-29 Sept	Pendle & Craven – Midweek GC A, B & CA

The events listed above will be included in the calendar on the NW Fed website shortly & Clubs are requested to check that the calendar has been updated correctly.

12 Club Reports and Announcements

Bowdon:-

The club reached 2 of the 5 big national AC Inter-Club finals and won them both: the Short Croquet Competition team won the trophy for the first time when they beat Bury and the Mary Rose Trophy team won the trophy for the seventh time when they beat High Wycombe in the final.

Bowdon held 5 C.A. tournaments during the year: the May Handicap Weekend, the June Advanced Weekend and the B-Level Advanced Weekend taking the normal Northern Week slot in July, which was dropped from our itinerary; a Short Croquet Tournament was held for the first time, also in July. The main event of the year was the North of England Championship in August.

Two Taster Days were again held and interested attendees were given a new temporary membership in an attempt to keep them interested before a one-day Beginners’ Course was held in June. Thanks to a number of club members, special beginners’ sessions were run and, as a result of all everyone’s efforts, 13 joined the club. We are very hopeful of further success in the future, especially as 2 of our new members have had their handicaps reduced to 16 already!

Ken Cooper

Bury :-

I am delighted to report a record-breaking year in terms of the number of new members which I have counted up as 15. Some of these first came to the National Croquet Day at Whitehead Park, which had an excellent attendance of over 40 visitors. NCD was followed by beginners' courses run by Chris Alvey and David Barrett, which were very successful and most students subsequently joined the club.

This year we added two more teams to our entries to the NW Leagues so that more members got a chance to play competitive croquet. Congratulations to one of our Short Lawn teams, Bury Crusaders, who won their league. Some teams

struggled to get enough players for some matches because of the number of members on the sick list either having operations or with other medical problems but we still managed to fulfill our fixtures.

The lawns this year were in splendid condition until the monsoon set in towards the end of the season. Our continued success as a club depends on the participation of as many volunteers as possible for a wide variety of jobs. It was pleasing to see the good turnouts at recent workdays at both sites.

Barbara Young

Chester :-

Our numbers have remained around 100 with our usual successful taster days and beginners courses offsetting leavers and retirements. The weekly club sessions and internal competitions have continued to thrive. This year the club has played in all Federation leagues winning 3 trophies (Advanced and Weekend AC and GC level leagues). The short AC team won their section at the Southport festival. We again entered the Mary Rose but exited to Nottingham. In the Longman we reached the semi final but made no further progress against Letchworth (whose team contained a GC -2 playing off AC 10 and hitting everything in sight). We also reached the final of the Secretary Shield but lost to St Albans who played very well on the day. However the bright spot of the day was Brian Walton winning the AC silver award. We had individuals in all the Millennium events and hosted GC handicap event.

Several individual Chester members had good seasons; Sally Slater won the Cheltenham high bisquers, John Dawson won the national Vets AC handicap title; Richard Smith won the Southport tankard, the Cheltenham A Class title (beating Jenny Clarke in the final) and reached the semi final of the prestigious Southern tournament. However they were outshone by James Thomas who scooped 4 major titles (the Millennium Short, Fylde, Bury and York). Keeping his handicap up to date was a major problem. Few people start the season on AC 22 and end on AC 5. Not surprisingly he is a candidate for the CA most improved player award.

Our social and community events have all been successful with good turnouts, both promoting our profile in the local community and making a useful contribution to club funds. Our lawns have had a reasonable year and we remain grateful to the efforts of the local Council staff (even though David Guyton has a full time role chasing them). Our club website is now in excellent shape with regular postings of match results and key information.

Our thanks go to the Federation officials for providing a very effective and efficient structure for our competitive play and particularly to Ivan for managing the leagues so well and to Tony for the keeping the website full of interesting material.

Please contact John if your Club would be interested in a visit to the Airbus Factory.

John Dawson.

Crake Valley:-

It has been a busy year; our golf teams have again performed well, with the Handicap Team coming second in their league and the Level Play Team topping their League. Our AC team did not do so well, partly due to having to rearrange games at the start of the season (at the request of other clubs), within weeks of the league dates being fixed. This has disrupted team selection severely.

Two years ago I reported that we were hoping to raise funds to replace our existing clubhouse. Since then, David Cornes joined Crake and used his talents towards achieving that aim. Once backing from the CA, in the form of grant approvals, and our landlord signing a 21 year lease, the project started. We were told that we were being very ambitious, we hoped to complete before the start of the 2019 season. Taking this as a word of caution we then aimed for the end of the season. Therefore on the day after the last match of the season the old clubhouse was demolished. I can report that a new clubhouse will be completed by the end of this month and the official opening will take place before the start of next season. I would like to thank those from the Federation who have supported us in this project.

During the year we have also worked on the reestablishment of another one and half courts. These will be ready for next season and we are now hosting a C level preliminary for the National C levels on April 25th as well as our two AC tournaments, we can now accept up to 12 players for these.

The Alternate Stroke Doubles will again be held at the start of April having proved very popular for the last two years.

Jim Allcock

Craig-y-Don:-

Neither John Hannah (Club Chairman) nor Jack Pattenden (Club President) are able to make the meeting on 16th November, and send their apologies, but hope to attend the Spring meeting in 2020.

Craig Y Don Croquet club has had another excellent season with the main successes being the launch of an internal Short Association league for club members and a combined 'Golf' and 'Short' competition for clubs within a 1 & 1/2 hour drive which includes Craig Y Don, Chester, Tattenhall and Llanfairfechan clubs. This went down to the wire with Llanfairfechan taking the Snowdonia cup by winning the very last match of the competition against Tattenhall. (Hopefully Criccieth may

wish to join in next year as well.)

The NW Federation Development Officer, Sarah Andrew, has been heavily involved in our 'Association' initiative for which we thank her.

Craig Y Don Croquet Club for the first time entered a 'Colour Branded' team at the Southport Festival which we hope to regularly repeat in the future.

As we increase our competition play, we continue to foster a strong social and community ethos. We raised nearly £1,500 for St David's Hospice based in Llandudno, but serving most of North Wales, at our summer BBQ and we have just had 55 diners at our Autumn lunch where we presented the Snowdonia Cup to Llanfairfechan's 'Golf', and 'Short' team captains. We also gave our charity sweet jar cash collection from our clubhouse to the 2019 Eisteddfod held in Llanrwst, Conwy County.

There is a strong U3a membership in Llandudno and approximately 50% of our club members are also in the local U3a. We continue to have a very strong U3a interest Group learning and having fun playing croquet. Whilst we have a handful of members who are unable to re-join the club the following season for whatever reason, we find they are replaced by U3a Group players who wish to join the croquet club as 'Playing Members' the following year.

We also have friendly Club days of level play golf with Tattenhall, Chester, Llanfairfechan and this year for the first time, Criccieth which also included Association.

Following the heatwave of 2018 we found we had inadequate watering capacity to deal with such and spent circa £1000 doubling our watering capacity by installing a second water main connection in the Spring of 2019.

We have had some Health and Safety and Safeguarding Issues (protecting the vulnerable elderly) caused by Mountain Bike riders threatening members and riding bikes across the lawns through the playing members and guests. Unfortunately this is linked to drugs and the current 'County Lines' distribution route which includes Llandudno Junction and Llandudno itself. With Police advice we have funded the removal of concrete steps (a launchpad for bikers on to the lawn) and erected barriers and gates to break up groups of disrespectful youths. Along with member's own personal funding, we have also asked the CA to help us provide a new secure metal equipment store which will allow us to minimise trip hazards in our modest clubhouse. We currently keep our four trolleys of hoops, flags and balls plus tables and chairs on the clubhouse floor or hanging off the plasterboard walls, as our current store is full of lawn maintenance equipment. A grant application has been submitted to the CA, supported by our NW Federation Development Officer and is currently under consideration.

John Hannah

Criccieth:- No report received.

Culcheth:-

We have had a mixed year in many ways. We were saddened to lose Bob Connop earlier in the year and the loss of both Anne and Bob was felt keenly by not just members of our club. We held a special evening fun session where we presented the winner with another Alice in Wonderland Trophy donated by one of our members. It was a pleasant evening and Bob and Anne's daughter presented the trophy. We increased our membership this year and have 24 members.

We have had problems with fixtures this year in raising a team and have decided to compete in just one league next year. We hope that our new members will augment our pool of available players.

We managed to finish our internal competitions before the end of September.

Our social activities are well supported and we are able to keep our subscriptions at a reasonable figure. I am very grateful to the practical support our members give, not just attending events but also for their willingness to help organise them and run them.

One problem that may affect the existence of our club is the financial status of Culcheth Sports and Social Club. Staff and opening hours have been cut back and we hope that matters improve and we can continue to play croquet here in Culcheth.

Alan Wright.

Ellesmere:- No report received

Flixton:- No report received

Fylde :-

The new drainage system has worked well with NO flooding this year despite the amount of rain over the year. We have 14

new members and expect to keep over 10 of these next year. The majority have learned only golf but we have 3 promising new AC players. These members have been attracted by a combination of local demonstrations, Facebook and twitter. We ran the Millennium AC Short competition but were disappointed with the number of entries, particularly from "further North". We really thought that it might appeal to the Northern reaches of the Federation but this was not the case. Five of our members attended the Club Coaching Course and three followed this up with practical coaching and have received their Club Coach Awards

Liz Wilson

Isle of Man:- No report received.

Keswick:- No report received.

Liverpool:- No report received.

Llanfairfechan & North Wales:-

The Club has increased in membership during 2019 and now has 56 full members of whom 12 are life or social members. We were very pleased to have a good number of younger members over the last two years including some rapidly improving players of both GC and AC.

The club has a full programme during both summer and winter and the excellent facilities afforded in the clubhouse are used by members and outside groups all year. We entered the NWFCC Handicap Golf league and the Southport Festival with a GC team. Additionally for 2019 we entered GC and short lawn AC teams in the Inaugural North Wales and Cheshire Tournament. This was an initiative of Jack Pattenden and the Craig y Don Croquet Club aimed at encouraging new entries to competition croquet. This was highly successful at Llanfairfechan CC as we were the overall winners of the tournament, winning the Snowdonia Cup. Thanks are due to Jack and his Club for the organisation of this enjoyable event. The result is that Llanfairfechan CC will be entering a team in the NW Federation 2020 Short AC league for the first time in several years.

The Club has multiple internal competitions in both GC and AC. We ran a successful AC coaching course during the year, producing two new AC playing members. We will repeat the formula in 2020.

The lawns have been subjected to intensive treatment in Spring and Autumn 2019 and we hope this will provide a better playing surface for 2020. As in other clubs the members played a large role in the maintenance of the lawns and the surroundings. We will be applying for grants from appropriate organisations including the Local Authority and the hydropower company Dwr Anafon to help with continuous improvement to our facilities and to encourage increased engagement in croquet.

Sarah Andrew

Pendle and Craven:-

Obviously pleased with success at the Festival! Intensive work on the lawns to address disease has paid dividends. The club hosted 3 national events: The Lancashire GC Open regained its status as an Acot Cup qualifier, the Kate Jones (GC 2nd Eight) & the Spencer Ell (AC 3rd Eight).

Also acquired a new equipment shed, opened up another gate to facilitate parking and have plans for a new spectator pavillion.

Paul Rigge

Penrith and North Lakes:-

The work of maintaining and mowing our two lawns was made considerably easier during this season. The club received a grant of £2500 from Eden District Council for the equipment needed to power our ride-on electric mower using solar energy. The mower, purchased on eBay and renovated by a member, has also had new batteries fitted. The donation, by North West Electricity, of a re-cycled kiosk to house the mower, and solar panels, made the project affordable, and truly 'green'.

Howard Bowron

Salford:- No report received

Southport and Birkdale:-

Another good season in spite of heavy rain, the lawns have remained in good condition. We have had teams in the leagues but had to withdraw from the level play golf due to a lack of players. The Festival went off well with 10 full & 6 short lawns laid out each day, a major exercise for our members as well as catering for lunches and teas. This year there were also

“Event style toilets” to be installed and collected (paid for by the Federation).

We had a successful Come & Try weekend followed by a beginners’ coaching course resulting in 17 new members.

Di Williamson

Stonhurst College:- Nothing to report

Benedict O’Connor

Tattenhall:-

We have had a good season albeit slow to start due to weather conditions. Our membership remains static at 32 players. We are proud this year to have been awarded the CA Townsend Trophy for the improvement of Club facilities. This included development of the lawn, erection of permanent fencing and storage shed for equipment. We continue to raise funds through social events and hire of the lawn for corporate events. Currently we are saving up for the purchase of a better quality and less work intensive mower. This year we joined the North Wales and Cheshire Tournament fielding both AC and GC teams. Hopefully the taste of competitive play will eventually lead to our entering the NW Federation League.

Ruth Wrigley

Westmorland:-

Westmorland have had an enjoyable season albeit not as successful as 2018 but are fortunate to have had new players joining the club thus helping to maintain our ability to field AC/Short Lawn and Golf teams in the NW leagues in 2020. The AC team performed particularly well drawing with the eventual league winners Pendle on both points and net games won but with the teams only separated by the result of their head-to-head meeting.

Following the very hot summer of 2018 when we suffered considerable damage to our lawns we have undertaken major work during 2019 to tackle the problem with scarifying/re-seeding/fertilizing and top dressing and hope for good lawn results for the 2020 season.

As winners of the short lawn and handicap GC leagues in 2018 we entered the national GC competition winning at Ashby and then on to High Wycombe where we were well beaten and for the short lawn competition travelling to Penrith where we lost 8-3. Whilst we were unable to bring home any trophies both competitions proved an enjoyable and educational experience.

Ivan Wheatley

13 **NW Federation Equipment Assets** – see Appendix 1

Currently the Federation has no equipment available for loan. The clubs with long-term loaned equipment have been contacted and they are not able to return the equipment. I suggest from now forward we put a time limit, say 5 years, on loaned equipment. If we can afford we should buy a CA starter set of 6 hoops, centre peg, 4 mallets, clips, set of primary balls and set of flags costs £1450. Buying everything separately without flags is £5 cheaper. A set of secondary balls costs £380. George Wood mallets are £170 each.

Following discussion it was agreed to formally request the return of loan equipment from Penrith. Sarah to contact member clubs to see if they have any excess equipment they are prepared to donate or sell at second hand prices to the Federation.

14 **County Captains**

The following Captains were elected for the AC Inter-Counties Teams in 2020:

Colin Irwin for Cheshire and James Hawkins for Lancashire. Paul Rigge to act as Organiser for Lancashire. Please note that Colin has indicated that he wishes to step down after 2020.

If anyone wishes to organise a GC team for either Lancashire or Cheshire, please let the Secretary know.

15 **Presentation of CA Diploma & League Trophies**

Presenting awards is one way that we can recognise the huge amount of voluntary work that goes on at our various clubs (and throughout our region) .

CA Townsend Award - Tattenhall (Ruth Wrigley) Awarded every two years to a club with one or two lawns that has, in the opinion of the Development Committee, made exceptional progress in providing a good playing environment over the previous two years – club also gets £250!

CA Diplomas – Tony Thomas (had his), **and Jean Hargreaves** – (worth noting Jean also got her Gold Voyage Badge this year – Trefoil equivalent of Duke of Edinburgh Gold).

CA Club Coaching Badge – Patricia MacGillivay (Crake), **Chris Evans, Mike & Sylvia Steer** (Bowdon) **Janet Smith, Cyndi Harbottle & Philip Bass** (Fylde).

Millennium's;

Advanced Andrew Winn & Paul Kenworthy
AC Hcp Dave Williamson
AC Short James Thomas – (nice to say *his* name aloud here – it won't be for the last time I hope).
LPG - David Walters
Hcp GC Sam Seal of Llanfairfechan and Roger Edwards of Craig-y-Don were winner and runner-up at Chester in July

Festival;

Advanced - Pendle
AC Hcp Pendle
AC Short Chester
LPG - Southport
Hcp GC Llanfairfechan.

Association Croquet

B level Advanced **Chester** (Jerry Guest)
Weekend Handicap **Chester** (David Boyd)
Midweek Handicap **Pendle** (Robin Delves)
Short **Bury Crusaders** (Vi Richards)

Golf Croquet

Level Play **Chester Centurions** (Alan Clare)
Handicap **Crake Valley** (David Cornes)

16 **Election of Officers**

Officers were elected nem con as follows

Chairman: Paul Rigge
Secretary: David Walters
Treasurer: Liz Wilson
League Manager: Ivan Wheatley
Coaching Officer; Paul Rigge
Development Officer; Sarah Andrew
Safeguarding Officer; Jean Hargreaves
Website Manager: Tony Thomas
NW Festival of Croquet Manager Ivan Wheatley

Also elected were:

Pennine Cup Manager; Liz Wilson
Federation Handicapper: Don Williamson

The meeting expressed its thanks to all officers for their work in support of the Federation

17 **Election of Independent Examiner**

Chris Slater was re-elected as Independent Examiner.

18 **Any Other Business**

Graham Good noted that the Tournament Regulations require that the type of balls to be used should be specified. Can clubs please inform opponents in advance if balls other than Dawson balls are to be used.

19 **Dates of Next Meetings**

Next Meetings - Spring Meeting on 7th March 2020 at Culcheth, Autumn AGM on 14th November 2020 at Culcheth.

20 Meeting Closed at 12.25pm

Appendix 1

Bowdon	None
Bury	Projector
Chester	None
Craig-y-Don	CA Start up Set
Crake	Mower (50%)
Criccieth	6 Hoops & Peg, 5 round headed Mallets, 1 set primary Barlows plus CA Start Up Set
Culcheth	None
Ellesmere	3 Mallets
Flixton	None
Fylde	None
Harlech	None
IOM	None
Keswick	None
Liverpool	None
Llanfairfechan	None
Nannerch	None
Pendle	None
Penrith	4 Mallets, 1 set hoops, 1 peg
Salford	CA start up Set
Southport	None
Tattenhall	CA Start up Set + set of 2 ^{ndary} balls,
Wilmslow (U3A group)	In carrying case 4 mallets, centre peg, 1 set primary Sunshiny balls and 1 set secondary Barlow balls, clips
Westmorland	None
Paul Rigge	1 set Tertiary Balls (Dawson)
Available	No equipment available

North West Federation of Croquet Clubs

Accounts for the Year Ended 30th September 2019

	2019		2018	
	£	£	£	£
Income				
Affiliation fees		400.00		400.00
Festival entries	1001.00		888.00	
Festival expenses	1021.00	-20.00	864.32	23.68
Donation				9.00
Millennium events		190.00		165.00
Interest		35.65		22.89
Total Income		<u>605.65</u>		<u>620.57</u>
Bank balances brought forward		5895.91		5455.13
		<u>6501.56</u>		<u>6075.70</u>
Expenditure				
Development		380.00		
Engraving		100.95		43.00
Meeting Tea / coffee		10.00		20.00
Website		41.99		49.99
Coaching		40.20		66.80
Total Expenditure		<u>573.14</u>		<u>179.79</u>
Bank balances carried forward		5928.42		5895.91
		<u>6501.56</u>		<u>6075.70</u>

E A Wilson - Treasurer *E A Wilson*C Slater - Independent Examiner *C Slater* 11/10/19.

Appendix 3

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 the Croquet Association and shall be responsible to that body.

4 Membership

Every croquet club or croquet section of a larger club in the Area of Influence shall be eligible for 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. All member clubs must be affiliated to the Croquet Association.

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.

6 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 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.

7 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 three consecutive terms, he must retire after his third term and becomes 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. He 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 CA Council 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 the Croquet Association.