

**Minutes of the AGM of the Welsh Croquet Association held via Video Conference at 9.30am on Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> November 2023**

**Present**

Rich Waterman (Chairman), Chris Williams (Secretary), Garry McElwain (Treasurer), Sarah Andrew (Llanfairfechan), Jim Beach, Ian Burrridge (Committee), Dave Evans, John Evans (Llandovery), Dayal Gunasekera, Kevin Ham, Rick Harding, Tudor Jenkins, Sue Mackay, Giles Pepperell, Paul Pristavec (GLTCC), Chris Roberts, Arthur Rowe, Brian Shorney, Angharrad Walters (Committee)

**Item 1. Apologies**

Quiller Barrett, David Harding, Mike Parry, Richard Smith

**Item 2. Minutes of the previous meeting on 6<sup>th</sup> November 2022.**

It was pointed out that the winners of the 2022 Welsh Championships were not listed in the minutes and should have been.

The minutes of the meeting of 6th November 2022 were not read to the meeting, but taken as read. S Mackay proposed and R Harding seconded that they be accepted as a true record (with the above additions) and the meeting approved.

**Item 3. Matters Arising.**

None.

**Item 4. Chairman's Report.**

The Chairman reported that the Welsh CA appears to have 10 clubs as members and 36 individual members, which is the most ever individual members we have had.

On the team front Wales were second in the AC Home Internationals at Pendle in May. The team was Ian Burrridge, Rick Harding, Rich Waterman, Angharrad Walters and Chris Williams. Wales were third in the GC Home Internationals at Carrickmines, Ireland in June. The team was Jim Beach, Ian Burrridge, Dave Evans and Angharrad Walters.

Wales were second in the European Team Championship at Cheltenham in August, losing to England in the final. Each match consisted of three players, with one playing a single game of AC and two playing a best of three GC match. Ian Burrridge, Garry McElwain, Chris Roberts and Chris Williams took part.

The Chairman said that he felt that Wales punched above our weight on the International scene.

On the individual front

Tudor Jenkins won the Welsh AC Championship for the first-time defeating Garry McElwain in the final. Tudor has now won both the AC and GC Championships. Chris Williams won the plate. Ian Burrridge won the Welsh GC Championship defeating Tim Crowdy in the final and Jim Beach won the plate.

Individuals competing in notable competitions included.

Ian Burrridge won Kate Jones Memorial (GC – 2nd eight)

Giles Pepperell (Llanfairfechan) won the CA's A Series GC final.

Giles Pepperell competed in the Suzanne Roberts Memorial (GC – 3rd eight)

Ian Burrridge and Rick Harding played in the AC World Championships in London.

Ian Burrridge, Peter Balchin and Chris Roberts – played in the European GC Championship at Budleigh in May.

All England GC Handicap – Nigel Balchin (Glamorgan) was Runner Up

All England AC Finals – Clive Moncrieff (Glamorgan) played

Chairmans Salver (AC Second Eight) – Rick Harding played

The GC Inter-Club competition for the John Evans Trophy was won for the first time by Glamorgan who beat Craig Y Don in the final at Llanidloes.

Glamorgan topped the second division in the AC Inter County Championship at Southwick in May, but cannot be promoted, because they had to field three unqualified players.

The Chairman thanked Dave Evans for setting up and running the Welsh CA's Facebook page, and Kevin Ham for organising the Welsh GC Teams event and Rick Harding for providing numbered caps for players who have represented Wales.

#### **Item 5. Accounts.**

The 2023 accounts showed a surplus for the year of £117.77 and a balance of £2292.61. Income was £1389.05 and expenditure £1271.28.

Currently the Welsh CA operates on a small profit each year and pays all of the entry fees for the two Home Internationals and half the entry fee for WCF/ERC team events.

From 1 January 2024 Wales will become full members of the WCF, which will mean an increase of our annual membership fee from £107 to £214. As a result we need to increase our income slightly. Garry proposed that we increase the annual individual playing membership from £10 to £15. It was pointed out that it has been £10 for over 20 years (since 2000). It had not been increased in that time, because we cannot offer much to playing members apart from the ability to play in Welsh CA events and to represent Wales in international ones. The meeting appeared to be happy with an increase to £15.

The acceptance of the 2023 accounts were proposed by Sarah Andrew and seconded by Dayal Gunasekera.

Garry said that he will be standing down as Treasurer (after 20 years) at the end of his current three-year term, which ends at the 2024 AGM and so we will need to find a new Treasurer in a years time.

#### **Lawn Fees**

The Secretary mentioned that in the last few years we had paid a lawn hire rate of £40 per lawn per day, which was the CA's 2019-2021 Tournament Rate. The CA had increased it to £44 in 2022, but we had stayed at £40. The CA were considering increasing the Tournament Rate in 2024 to £50 and perhaps we should match it. Llanfairfechan said that they were happy to remain at £40. Raising it to £50 would increase our lawn hire fees (15 lawn days play) from £600 per year to £750 per year, which we could probably cover by increasing entry fees.

During the discussion on the accounts Chris Roberts asked whether there were any three lawn venues in Wales, because if there were it would be possible to hold one of the CA's C Series GC events. Unfortunately there aren't. He also pointed out that if there are two clubs within an hour of each other it should be possible to hold a B Series event.

#### **Item 6. Reports from clubs**

Written reports from a number of clubs had been received and are attached to these minutes. A few further verbal reports were given to the meeting.

Paul Pristavec reported that he had been contacted by a lady who was looking to set up a social croquet club at Southerndown starting next March.

Llanfairfechan reported that they had been awarded a grant of £18,000 from the levelling up fund.

John Evans reported that Llandovery and Mumbles had both had a few small grants from Sports Wales for equipment, such as a new set of hoops for Llandovery. Generally the Sports Council will give grants under £1000 for items such as equipment.

It was mentioned that a new club has been formed in Aberystwyth and they will be getting support from the CA's West Midlands Federation. Unfortunately the Welsh CA is unable to offer the same level of support to clubs as that given by the CA's Federations.

#### **Item 7. Fixtures and Events.**

The Secretary reported that in 2024 there will be the following events

April 27-28 Welsh GC Championship

Aug 30-September 1 Welsh AC Championship

June 8-9 AC Home Internationals in Southport

July 20-21 GC Home Internationals in Nailsea (hosted by Wales)

On the individual front there will be

Aug 15-18 European AC Championship at Carrickmines, Ireland

May 16-19 European GC Championship at Southwick

Aug 1-4 European Women's GC Championship at Compton

19-27 October World GC Championships at West Palm Beach, Florida – Wales will have 2 member places

2025 will see the WCF GC Teams Tier 2 - 5-10 August Southwick

There will be a World AC Championship in Florida in October 2025

The next World AC Team Championship will be in July/August 2026 – somewhere in England.

#### **GC Teams**

It is planned that the event will be run again in 2024 with the heats at Merthyr Mawr and Llanfairfechan at the end of July (27 July probably) followed by the final again at Llanidloes in September.

#### **Item 8. Election of Officers and Committee.**

Under the constitution the three Officer bearers are elected for three-year terms whilst the two ordinary members are elected annually. The following committee had been elected in 2022.

|           |                            |
|-----------|----------------------------|
| Chairman  | R Waterman (retires 2023)  |
| Secretary | CN Williams (retires 2025) |
| Treasurer | GJ McElwain (retires 2024) |
| Committee | IJ Burridge, AR Walters    |

The following new committee was elected for 2023-2024

|           |                            |
|-----------|----------------------------|
| Chairman  | R Waterman (retires 2026)  |
| Secretary | CN Williams (retires 2025) |

Treasurer        GJ McElwain (retires 2024)

Committee        IJ Burrridge, AR Walters

Rich Waterman thanked the Secretary for all his hard work over the year.

**Item 9. Election of Selection Committee**

The following were elected to the Selection Committee. IJ Burrridge, AR Walters, CN Williams.

**Item 10. Any Other Business.**

John Evans mentioned that since Llandovery had bought a new set of Ultra hoops that they were in a position to lend/give/sell their old ones to another club.

**Date of next meeting**

The 2024 AGM will be held by video conference at a date after the end of the 2024 season. Probably in late November (Sunday 24 November possibly).

The meeting closed at 10.40

## **Aberystwyth Croquet Club - Report to WCA December 2023**

We are delighted to have become the newest croquet club in Wales and look forward to interacting with the rest of the Welsh clubs as we grow and become established.

### Our Story So Far

The Club started out as an informal group of seven or eight people who came together in late summer 2021 to begin playing croquet on the at The Geufron ground of Aberystwyth Cricket Club, using a small borrowed croquet set. In spring 2022 group members clubbed together and bought a brand-new full-size garden croquet set, and the number of players grew over the season to around 10 or 11. The arrangements for using the Aberystwyth Cricket Club ground had been approved by their committee, but were up to this point verbal. The Cricket Club has been unable to give us our own space, but we play on an area of the outfield that hopefully can be improved over time. We are not the first club to have this kind of arrangement and are confident that we can make it work.

In spring 2023 the group purchased an inexpensive used full-size garden croquet set to enable the setting up of a second croquet court, and more members were recruited without difficulty via a programme of targeted invitations to other groups such as U3A. The group remained informal and continued to operate on the basis of a verbal agreement with the Cricket Club.

By the middle of the 2023 season numbers had grown to over 20 and it was decided to try and become a proper club. A working party was formed and a constitution was put together and adopted 12 September 2023, with interim officers being appointed at the same time. A formal agreement with Aberystwyth Cricket Club for use of their ground was negotiated and signed on 13 October 2023. We then became a member club of the Croquet Association on 20 October 2023.

At the moment with the support of the West Midlands Federation we have applied for New Club Start-up Equipment, and are in the throes of putting in an application to Sport Wales for funding to buy more club-standard equipment and a much needed outside unit to store our kit. Everyone is holding their breath to see if we are successful, but we do have a plan B if it doesn't work out. We should know by the end of January.

There will be much to do in the New Year as we prepare for a major recruitment drive. We are hopeful that this will be successful, in which case we shall be busy during the early part of the season getting the new intake up to speed with the basics of playing of golf croquet.

It is important to acknowledge how much help we have had since early 2022 from Llanidloes Croquet Club, who have lent us mallets, given us coaching and hosted us on their lawns on at least two occasions. Advice and guidance from them on the end of the phone has been invaluable. We look forward to welcoming them, and any other club that wants to make the trip to Aberystwyth, once our 2024 season is underway.

## **Cardigan Croquet Club season 2023**

We had a short season this year due to changing venues twice !

Our lawns at the Cliff Hotel could no longer be used due to building extensions , then we had a short stay at the towns playing fields but found the public access /uneven often waterlogged grass a real trial.

From May , we found a new venue , playing at the Llechryd Sports Club , 10 mins from town with excellent facilities.

However , the club were awarded a grant to improve the sports playing surfaces - mainly a cricket pitch - and so since mid -July we have been unable to play there.

All will happily be sorted for the start of the 2024 season with 2 new full-size lawns available to us.

The sports club has 300 members so we are hoping that our own membership will increase from its current 15.

We continue to have links with the local Parkinson's group and at our AGM last week we unanimously elected Ben Lake MP for Ceredigion a keen croquet player as our President

All looking forward to the start of the new season.

Cofion  
Kathleen Martin

### **Glamorgan LT&CC – report for the WCA AGM 2023.**

The club applied for the CA Townsend Award, for club's with up to 2 lawns earlier this season, and the committee overseeing the award saw fit to award it to us! This was achieved due to the hard work that the club members have put into the club since we re-located to Merthyr Mawr in 2019. Two of the club members who take great care of the lawns, were also awarded the CA diploma for services to the club.

On the playing front, the club won the Welsh CA Team event this season for the first time. We have come close before, but this season we got over the finishing line. As to the rest of the competitive playing season with the SW Fed, that's best left alone! Relegation from the top divisions in both the Advanced League and the Golf Level league. Mid-table in the other two leagues.

Membership has remained steady with a small increase in numbers.

Paul Pristavec  
Secretary, GLTCC

## **Llandovery Croquet Club**

### **Llandovery Annual report 2023**

2023 was our 10<sup>th</sup> season at Llandovery. Membership has increased to 28 members, mostly playing GC. We hold club afternoons on Tuesdays and Thursdays which are regularly attended by a dozen or more members. In order to optimise the use of our bowling green for club afternoons, we set out 2 courts, 35 yards by 20 yards. Members who wish to play on a full-size lawn can do so at other times.

We enjoyed matches with Llanidloes and Mumbles both at home and away. In the Welsh Inter Club GC competition we were close runners up to Glamorgan in the South Wales event. During the season we had visits from a number of groups, such as WI and Loose Ends (a local men's group, one of whom is now a keen member of our club).

Recently, we were successful in obtaining another grant from Sport Wales for a second set of Ultra steel hoops to replace our battered old hoops. So no more hoop painting required! We now have a set of hoops (kindly donated to us 10 years ago by Ian Burridge) which are surplus to our requirements. If any other club could make use of them, please let me know.

We continue to maintain the bowling green ourselves, mostly using Duncan Hector's recommended lawn treatments, and with the help of a part time groundsman who cuts the grass twice weekly. This has produced a good fast playing surface which has undoubtedly helped improve the standard of play.

John Evans.

## **Llanfairfechan and North Wales Croquet Club**

### **Report on 2023 season**

This year we welcomed 16 new members including two juniors. We have a buoyant membership with many members playing in teams as part of the NW Federation, everyone joining in with internal competitions and events and several members taking part in National level Competitions. We have had notable successes this year which are celebrated at our annual Presentation Lunch. Among the winners we celebrated were:

Rick Harding - Winner: low handicap trophy at Pendle Easter weekend; Southport Advanced Tournament; CA platinum award for sextuple peel. Most importantly played for Wales in the Association Croquet World Championships and was runner up in the Austrian Open.

Giles Pepperell – Winner: GC A-Series Final; Nottingham GC B-series Treasurer's Bowl; Chester A series Maggie Cowman Trophy;

David Harding - Winner: Overall Cup at Pendle Easter weekend and fastest game tankard

Liz Jordan - Second in the Crake Valley Ladies Open Tournament

We have sufficient volunteers for jobs around the Club although it is always the few who take on the major part of the burden. We are most grateful to those members.

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

Sarah Andrew, Secretary

## **Llanidloes Croquet Club Report 2023**

Chair: Gill Williams

Secretary: Susan Jarman

Paid up members at the end of the playing season 2023: 32

Llanidloes has had a busy year.

We have played 7 friendly fixtures, H and A against Eardisley, Llandovery and Aberdyfi and an away game against Ludlow which is a new fixture for us. Our matches are getting closer in score, our standard of GC play has definitely improved.

We entered one team in the Welsh GC Championship and competed in the North Wales Round. We then hosted the Final of that competition in Llanidloes in September with Glamorgan winning the Trophy.

Two of our members have completed and passed the Club Coaching Award this season that entailed presenting 8 hours of logged coaching each to our members. Members volunteered willingly and everyone has benefitted. A regular programme of coaching will be put together for next season.

We have entertained and provided social sessions to a collection of groups over the months; Rotary, WI, Brownies and Guides, catchment Junior School Pupils and held 'come and try' coffee mornings and an Open Day, funds raised being donated to the British Heart Foundation.

We have worked with Mid and North Powys MIND as part of their Activity for Well Being Project and held an 8-week course for their service users which was very successful and we hope to continue this work next year.

We are looking forward to the 2024 Season and forging more links with other clubs. We had a visit from members of the Club in Weston Super Mare who have invited us for a return trip. There is also the possibility of a new club in Aberystwyth.

Regards,

Gill Williams (Chair)



## **Mumbles Croquet Club**

### **Report on the 2023 season**

Mumbles Croquet Club (MCC) started in 2019 so this report relates to our fifth season. The club has an arrangement with the Mumbles Bowling Club to use their green on a Monday and Sunday. However, a second club, the Oystermouth Bowls Club made arrangements to play on the green starting during the 2022 season. This new club are very pro-active with respect to improving the condition of the facilities at the green and as a result initiated a couple of meetings between the three clubs using the green and the Mumbles Community Council. Currently progress on the refurbishment of the facilities is stalled awaiting the completion of the Transfer of Asset of the green from the Swansea City Council to the Mumbles Community Council.

This season our membership remained stable at 44 members with an approximately equal split between women and men.

During the season we made an effort to raise our profile in the locality which resulted in the introduction of a logo (see header) enabling us to have club shirts and baseball caps. In addition we had an article about the club in the Bay Magazine which is distributed widely in the Swansea area.

During the season we had two successful doubles internal competitions, on the 27<sup>th</sup> June and 18<sup>th</sup> September won by John Evans & Tony Davies and Michelle Fardy & Tony Davies respectively. On the 10<sup>th</sup> June we played a match at Llandovery using Advantage handicapping, Llandovery being the winners. On the 29<sup>th</sup> July we played in the Welsh inter club match at the Glamorgan Club. The return match with Llandovery, on the 14<sup>th</sup> September was a draw but Mumbles scored more hoops! On the 25<sup>th</sup> August we visited the Llandaff club for a friendly 'match' and on the 15<sup>th</sup> October the Mumbles club 'hired' the Llandovery club for an end of season game as our arrangement with the Mumbles Bowls Club terminates at the end of the bowls season.

The club remains socially very active with a winter walk in Clyne Woods followed by lunch, a Christmas dinner and post internal competition and end of season dinners.

Richard Wood

(Secretary)

26 Oct 2023