

**Minutes of the AGM of the Welsh Croquet Association held via Video Conference at 9.30am on Sunday 1st December 2024**

**Present**

Rich Waterman (Chairman), Chris Williams (Secretary), Sarah Andrew (Llanfairfechan), Ian Burrige (Committee), Dave Evans, John Evans (Llandovery), Davyth Fear, Kevin Ham, Sue Mackay, Sarah Melvin, Paul Pristavec (GLTCC), Chris Roberts, Arthur Rowe, Paul Thomas (Mumbles) Angharrad Walters (Committee)

**Item 1. Apologies**

Pre meeting: Jim Beach, Brenda Mead (Aberystwyth), Mike Parry, Giles Pepperell, Chris Tuthill

Post meeting: Dayal Gunasekera, Rick Harding, Kathleen Martin (Cardigan), Garry McElwain (Treasurer)

**Item 2. Minutes of the previous meeting on 26<sup>th</sup> November 2023.**

The minutes of the meeting of 26th November 2023 were not read to the meeting but taken as read. S Mackay proposed and C Roberts seconded that they be accepted as a true record and the meeting approved.

**Item 3. Matters Arising.**

None.

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

The Chairman reported that the Welsh CA appears to have 11 clubs as members and 31 individual members, which is the lowest since 2021.

On the team front Wales were fourth in the AC Home Internationals at Southport in June. The team was Ian Burrige, Rick Harding, Garry McElwain, Angharrad Walters and Chris Williams. Wales were second in the GC Home Internationals at Nailsea in July. The team was Ian Burrige, Garry McElwain, Chris Roberts and Angharrad Walters.

On the individual front Ian Burrige won the Welsh AC Championship for the eighteenth time beating Rick Harding in the final. Richard H Smith won the Plate.

Angharrad Walters won the Welsh GC Championship for the second time beating Garry McElwain in the final. Sarah Melvin won the plate

Individuals competing in notable competitions included:

Rick Harding won the Spencer Ell Cup (AC – 3<sup>rd</sup> eight)

Rick Harding won the Swiss AC Open and competed in the European AC Championship in Carrickmines, Ireland in August.

Ian Burrige and Angharrad Walters played in the GC World Championships in Chesapeake Bay in October.

Ian Burrige, Tudor Jenkins, Cliff Jones and Chris Roberts played in the European GC Championship at Southwick in May. Chris Roberts won the Bowl.

Ian Burrige played in the GC First Eight, whilst Chris Roberts played in the GC Second Eight.

The GC Inter-Club competition for the John Evans Trophy was won for the third time by Llanfairfechan who beat Mumbles in the final at Llanidloes.

Glamorgan finished second in the second division in the AC Inter County Championship at Southwick in May, and hence will be promoted to the first division for 2025. Glamorgan re-entered the GC Inter County Championship in the second division after one years absence.

The Chairman thanked Dave Evans for running the Welsh CA's Facebook page, and Kevin Ham for organising the Welsh GC Teams.

On a sad note 2024 saw the deaths of three long-serving Welsh CA members: Quiller Barrett, Brian Shorney and Colin Prichard.

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

In the absence of the Treasurer the Secretary (Chris Williams) presented the Accounts for 2024.

The 2024 accounts showed a surplus for the year of £220.07 and a balance of £2422.68. Income was £1745.67 and expenditure £1526.60.

The accounts show a liability of £15 from Cliff Jones, who represented Wales at the 2024 European GC Championship, but had not paid his membership for 2024. Under the constitution Cliff will not be eligible to represent Wales in future until this debt is cleared.

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

On 1 January 2024 Wales became full members of the WCF, which meant an increase of our annual membership fee from £107 to £214. The membership fee is based on the number of votes a country has, which in Wales's case is now two. This is going to increase to £120 per vote in 2025 and the WCF are also introducing a fee for membership of the European Regional Committee (ERC) of £20 per vote. As a result, our membership fee in 2025 will be £280.

The acceptance of the 2024 accounts were proposed by Kevin Ham and seconded by Paul Pristavec.

Garry McElwain had said last year that he will be standing down as Treasurer (after 20 years) at the end of his current three-year term, which ended at the 2024 AGM and Chris Tuthill has agreed to stand.

#### **Item 6. Proposal by committee to introduce a £20 charge for players who play in international singles or team events**

In light of the increased WCF membership fees the committee had discussed various ways of increasing income. Since the change to WCF membership affects mainly the players who play internationally it was felt that the increase should be borne by them. The committee therefore proposed that there will be an annual charge of £20 for any player who represents Wales in an International singles or team event. An individual player will only pay the charge once per year. It is expected that most years this will raise of the order of £200.

As Chairman Rich Waterman proposed, and Chris Roberts seconded the proposal. All were in favour and the proposal was passed.

#### **Item 7. Reports from clubs**

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

Rich Waterman reported that the Cambrian Coast Club are mainly social. He also thanked John Evans for the huge amount of work he has done in supporting several clubs such as Llandovery, Mumbles and Cardigan.

Paul Thomas of Mumbles pointed out that in the report from the Llanidloes club that it was Mumbles who had played in the GC Teams final at Llanidloes and not Glamorgan.

There was a discussion on grants that have been made to several clubs by Sport Wales. John Evans pointed out that he had heard that Sport Wales have millions of pounds to give out in grants – the money is there. It was pointed out that the grants awarded to Aberystwyth appeared to bring some conditions, such as achieving Disability Sport Wales Insport Ribbon Status and that may have been caused by receiving more than £5000. No other clubs have had these conditions attached.

Paul Thomas (Mumbles) asked if anyone knew anything about artificial surfaces since Mumbles are considering installing one at their venue in Swansea. It was pointed out the Kenilworth had installed one a few years ago and had since removed it. Bury St Edmonds installed one about twenty years ago and had a lot of unexpected problems, such as slopes and problems with the nap of the grass. It was suggested that they could contact Alison Maugham since she is involved with the Indoor Court in Essex. They have recently moved the Indoor court from Soham to Brentwood and welcome clubs who wish to play over the winter.

#### **Item 8. Fixtures and Events.**

The Secretary reported that it is getting more and more difficult to find weekends to hold the two Welsh Championships, because of the increase in GC events.

The Secretary reported that in 2025 there will be the following events

May 3-4 Welsh GC Championship

Aug 29-31 Welsh AC Championship

June 7-8 AC Home Internationals in Budleigh

July 19-20 GC Home Internationals in Balgreen, Edinburgh

August 5-10 WCF GC Teams Tier 2 in Southwick

On the individual front there will be

May 15-18 European GC Championship at Budleigh

October 18-26 World AC Championships at West Palm Beach, Florida – Wales will have 2 member places

The next World AC Team Championship Tier 2 will be on 25-30 July 2026 – in Nottingham.

#### **GC Teams**

It is planned that the event will be run again in 2025 with the heats at Merthyr Mawr and Llanfairfechan at the end of July (26 July probably) followed by the final again at Llanidloes in September.

#### **Item 9. WCF and ERC news**

As was mentioned earlier Wales has upgraded to full membership of the WCF and so now has two votes. From 2025 all European countries will now pay a membership fee to the ERC of £20 per vote.

Ian Burrridge pointed out that details on the 2025 European Croquet League have just come out and it would be a suitable event for Welsh clubs and in particular Glamorgan to enter.

#### **Item 10. 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 2023.

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

Treasurer	GJ McElwain (retires 2024)
Committee	IJ Burrige, AR Walters

Rich Waterman suggested that we take the election of a new Treasurer and two committee members as one motion.

Chris Williams proposed and Sue Mackay seconded Chris Tuthill for Treasurer and Ian Burrige and Angharrad Walters for the Committee. All were in favour.

The following new committee was elected for 2024-2025

Chairman	R Waterman (retires 2026)
Secretary	CN Williams (retires 2025)
Treasurer	CJ Tuthill (retires 2027)
Committee	IJ Burrige, AR Walters

Rich Waterman thanked Garry McElwain for all his work as Treasurer over the last twenty years.

#### **Item 11. Election of Selection Committee**

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

Proposed by Dave Evans, seconded by Chris Roberts.

#### **Item 12. Any Other Business.**

None.

#### **Date of next meeting**

The 2025 AGM will be held by video conference at a date after the end of the 2025 season. Probably in late November or early December. Probably 30 November.

The meeting closed at 10.24

## **Aberystwyth Croquet Club**

### **Report to WCA December 2024**

What a difference a year makes! Since our December 2023 report, club development has moved on apace. Shortly after submitting last year's report we heard that our application to Croquet England for start-up equipment had been approved, then in the New Year we were finally able to submit our application to Sport Wales for a grant of nearly £6,000 to cover the cost of further equipment, a proper storage unit for it, training and publicity, as well as help with first-year venue hire costs. News that this had been approved came through just before the start of the season and meant that everything was just about in place before play actually got underway. Further work was needed later in the season to develop a Safeguarding Policy and to achieve the Disability Sport Wales Insport Ribbon Status, which had been a condition of us getting the Sport Wales grant.

In April immediately ahead of the season, five of our members attended a CE Chiltern Academy Firm Foundations course and were lucky enough to find themselves playing on the main competition lawn at the Cheltenham club, after the course was moved there from elsewhere because of flooding at the original venue.

The season itself began with an Open Day and Taster Session, which unfortunately had to be postponed due to adverse weather and was not therefore as well attended as we had hoped. Nevertheless, the event resulted in our acquiring about ten new members, taking total membership up to nearly thirty. The first half of the season was dedicated to bedding in the arrangements for use of the new equipment and storage, and to getting everyone up to speed. This included an excellent coaching day run at our venue by coaches from West Midlands Federation, for which we only had to pay travelling expenses – this financial concession was a huge help to us, given all the other start-up expenses we were having to meet.

As regards finances, there were elements of our SW grant application that were not agreed (mainly the cost of having our storage unit erected and the vital work to enable it to be raised off the ground to protect against flooding) and these have had to be met from funds. This has required some fund raising including the seeking out of some one-off sponsorship from local businesses. However, this fundraising has not been enough to cover all the expenditure, and the club will carry forward a loan into 2025, but with no further capital expenditure anticipated in 2025, the Club Committee is confident the loan will be manageable and should be cleared well before the end of the upcoming season.

In the latter part of the 2024 season the club dipped its toe into the realm of friendly matches and was pleased to host Llanidloes club in Aberystwyth and to make a return visit to them. We were also made very welcome at the Llandovery Club where each of our inexperienced players was paired up with one of their players for a very enjoyable and instructive day playing on their excellent lawns. We also had home and away matches with the club in Aberdovey which is not affiliated to Croquet England.

Given that we play on a cricket outfield, I think our visitors have been agreeably surprised how well our lawns play. Said lawns have certainly improved over the year, as Cricket Club ground staff have used their wicket maintenance skills to work on the area we use, so that the grass is somewhat finer and the surface generally smoother. Hopefully, these improvements will continue, and there is talk of the two clubs eventually seeking a joint grant to undertake more radical work to upgrade their outfield and our croquet area. Meanwhile we look forward to a season of less work and more play, plus the welcoming of further recruits and a larger programme of friendly matches.

Brenda Mead

Chair

Aberystwyth Croquet Club

## **Cambrian Coast Croquet Club**

Last heard from in January 2022

I have to tell you that the Cambrian Coast Croquet Club is no longer a member of the Croquet Association. Four or five of us still keep the club alive socially but financially we cannot afford membership. We hope that in the future if we can attract new members and find a new ground the club will become a member again.

Keith Barber,

Still but only just Secretary/Treasurer Cambrian Coast Croquet Club

## **Cardigan Croquet Club report 2024**

We had changed our venue at the end of 2023 to Llechrhyd Sports Club but unfortunately, though excellent long term, the whole of the grass area, for football cricket and croquet clubs, was re-seeded at the start of the year.

This meant that we have been unable to play there at all this season and had great difficulty finding a temporary venue.

Eventually, from June, through the kindness of the owner Glen Peters, we have been playing in the grounds of Rhosygilwen Mansion, a concert hall venue 3 miles south of Cardigan

We are hoping that we can return to Llechrhyd Sports Club for the 2025 season 1 April - 31 October when we will have 2 full size lawns, and we will be able to entertain other clubs in vastly improved grant - funded club facilities

Cofion

Kathleen Martin

## **Craig Y Don Croquet Club**

No report

## **Glamorgan LT&CC – report for the WCA AGM 2024.**

The club is maintaining levels of membership. We lost some members earlier this year, but over the season, an equal number of members have joined the club. Tapping into the population of Bridgend is still proving difficult.

Our league performances this year has had its ups and downs. Only the Advanced league team had any success, with promotion to the top division. We found the Federation handicap league difficult this year, giving away bisques in every game of every match.

We applied for a grant from the Welsh Sports Council for funding for two new sets of Ultra hoops. We received monies for these sets and have been using them for most of the season. The longer carrots hold the hoops more firmly. A small sum remains from the grant, and this will replace some of the older clips we use.

As a club, we helped Southerndown CC - a club formed for social play on a local cricket outfield – in setting up. A competitive, but very friendly match, was played at the end of the season.

Our lawns maintenance team will be losing Jim Beach from the regular cutting team. He will be missed. Thankfully, Jim will still look after the mowing kit!

Paul Pristavec

Secretary, GLTCC

## **Llandaff Croquet Club**

No report

## **Llandovery Croquet Club**

### **Llandovery Annual report 2024**

2024 was our 11th season at Llandovery. Membership has increased to 34 members, mostly playing GC. Next season we plan to start playing AC as we have some new members who have played this format previously. 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 have enjoyed matches with Llanidloes, both home and away, and with Mumbles at home. We entered two teams in the Welsh Inter Club, but let's just say "we hope to do better next year"! We also entertained a group from the new Aberystwyth club; games were organised with mixed pairings so that they could play with our more experienced players. During the season we had visits from a number of groups, principally ladies from local WI groups. We charge £5 per head, so it is a useful fund-raiser for the club as well as being a way of introducing new people to the game.

Recently, we have been successful in obtaining a grant of £2k from Sport Wales which will enable us to buy a verticutter and back-up mower. We continue to maintain the bowling green ourselves, mostly using Duncan Hector's recommended lawn treatments. With the help of a part time groundsman, who cuts the grass twice weekly at a height of 6mm, we have a decent playing surface.

John Evans

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

### **Report Autumn 2024**

The Club increased membership over the season and now has 66 members. We also increased our numbers playing AC by running evening coaching over the season. Several of our AC players joined enthusiastically into the 14point league.

We had a grant under the Government Shared Prosperity Scheme. We were planning to put a new shed and shelter on the lawns, but planning permission has proved too slow. Instead, we bought a new Dennis mower which has improved the quality of our lawns considerably. We also purchased new equipment with the funds. We had 197 people from various community groups playing on the lawns this year, including one partially sighted 98-year-old in a wheelchair who came with a group from the Blind Veterans respite home in Llandudno. She was in the Operations Rooms for the Air Force in WW2.

We have performed well in the North West Federation Leagues. Winning the new 14-point AC league and being joint winners of the GC Handicap League. We also won the Welsh Team GC tournament.

Sarah Andrew, Secretary

## **Llanidloes Croquet Club Report 2024**

A steady year, with membership holding at 32. Although two members relocated during the season and another two suffered injuries that put them out of action for the majority of the time.

With the addition of the newly formed Aberystwyth Club, we had 5 home and away friendly fixtures. Some cancelled due to poor weather. A mixed bag of results but closing the gap in places.

We have run 3 weekly Club sessions again this year, however attendance has been down, again due to the wet and cold.

On the last Tuesday of each month there has been a Coaching Session for Improvers, average attendance of 10.

Coaching has also been provided for visiting groups. The local Veterinary Practice, Llanidloes Youth Club and up to 120 Junior School pupils.

We did not enter a team in the Welsh Golf Croquet Championship this year, as the date was inconvenient due to players on holiday. However, we were pleased to host the Final in September between Mumbles and the winners Llanfairfechan. It was an extremely wet day, but the players gallantly continued.

A new venture for us this year was to take a small group on a 2-day visit to North Wales where we visited and played some games with both Craig y Don and Llanfairfechan. Thank you to both clubs for making us so welcome, we thoroughly enjoyed the time.

We have continued our Fundraising and profile raising locally by holding a Bingo Night and running Tombola Stalls at the Carnival and a village Agricultural Show. We have also applied for Grant Funding to enable us to make mower repairs and improvements to our playing surface. Grants of up to £3500 have been received.

We took part in the National Croquet Week Fundraiser for Dementia Carers Count, raising £220 with a Come and Try Croquet Coffee Morning.

In house we have been playing Handicapped Doubles and Singles Tournaments, which have been enjoyed but again suffered from poor weather. The end of season President's Shield was played in a day long downpour.

We hope that all Clubs have had a good 2024 Season and wish everyone the best for 2025.

Gill Williams, Chair.

## **Mumbles Croquet Club**

### **Report on the 2024 season**

Mumbles Croquet Club (MCC) continued to thrive in its sixth consecutive season of operation, with 37 active members and play taking place on Sundays and Mondays during the playing season, which this year ran from 21st April to 28th September.

The lawn on which we play, together with the adjacent buildings comprising a pavilion and "pensioners hut" are shared with two bowling clubs. These facilities continue to be subject to a "Community Asset Transfer" process, wherein the City and Council of Swansea will hand them over to Mumbles Community Council under a 25-year lease. Little progress on this has been made in the last 12 months and we have been warned to expect little in the way of progress in the first half of 2025.



Nevertheless, our members continue to be enthusiastic and do their utmost to promote the sport within the wider community. One of our members undertook training and qualified as a coach, hosting beginner training sessions during the season. Others have offered try-out sessions to other community groups such as U3A and Ageing-Well.

We hosted two internal GC doubles tournaments during the season one on 30th June and one on September 28th. Winners of the first were Richard Wood/Ray Kirby and the second one John Sayce/Ray Kirby.

Unfortunately, our planned hosting of a GC doubles match with Llandovery on 25th September was cancelled because of bad weather.

I am pleased to note that during 2024 the general standard of play within the club has continued to improve and our teams were able to win the South Wales GC Interclub heat at Merthyr Mawr on July 27th, meeting Llanfairfechan in the final at Llanidloes on September 8th.

We look forward a successful 2025 season as well as somewhat better weather conditions compared to 2024!

Paul Thomas (Secretary)