

Minutes of the AGM of the Welsh Croquet Association held via Video Conference at 10am on Sunday 7th November 2021

Present

Rich Waterman (Chairman), Chris Williams (Secretary), Garry McElwain (Treasurer), Sarah Andrew (Llanfairfechan), Ian Burrige (Committee), John Evans (Llandoverly), Kevin Ham, John Hannah (Craig Y Don), Tudor Jenkins, Sue Mackay, Adrian Morris, Chris Roberts, Arthur Rowe, Brian Shorney, Angharrad Walters (Committee), Richard Wood (Mumbles)

Item 1. Apologies

Quiller Barrett, Dave Evans, Dayal Gunasekera, Cliff Jones, Kathleen Martin (Cardigan), Mike Parry, Colin Prichard, Paul Pristavec, Richard Smith

Item 2. Minutes of the previous meeting on 1st November 2020.

The minutes of the meeting of 1st November 2020 were not read to the meeting, but taken as read. C Roberts proposed and S Andrew seconded that they be accepted as a true record and the meeting approved.

Item 3. Matters Arising.

None, but the Secretary reported that John Morgan of Cheltenham had died in July, aged 88. John had been a long-time member and supporter of the Welsh CA and had continued to pay his membership fee even after he could no longer play. John had played at Dyffryn a number of times and had won the Welsh CA's handicap weekend for the Trickey Trophy.

Item 4. Chairman's Report.

The Chairman reported that the Welsh CA appears to have 12 clubs as members and 31 individual members (if they all pay – a couple had promised to pay). The most ever individual members we have had was 35.

The new GC inter-club competition for the John Evans Trophy was a great success. Llanfairfechan Seagulls beat Glamorgan Red 8-6 in a close final held at Llanidloes. Everyone had said it was a great occasion with a good crowd that even included the local mayor.

The Chairman thanked John Evans for all his works and effort around Wales supporting all the new clubs.

On the individual front Robert Upton of Glamorgan reached the final of the Selectors' Weekend. The Welsh Championships were held over 3 days in September at Glamorgan Croquet Club. John Evans won the GC Championship for the fifth time and Ian Burrige won the AC Championship for the 17th time beating John in the final. Also it was good to see new member Dave Evans playing well in the AC Championship and achieving a well-deserved handicap cut.

In the Home Internationals Wales were second in both the AC event at East Dorset (team was Ian Burrige, Tudor Jenkins, Angharrad Walters, Rich Waterman and Chris Williams) and the GC event at Nailsea (team was Ian Burrige, Sarah Melvin, Mike Parry and Chris Roberts).

In the WCF GC Teams tier 2 event held in Spain in October 2021 Wales (Ian Burrige, Angharrad Walters, Arthur Rowe and Mike Parry) had finished a creditable second behind a very strong Spanish team, having won the group beating Scotland and Latvia, and the semi-final against a strong Swiss side. Angharrad Walters had been named the events Most Valuable Player.

The Chairman finished his report by mentioning ideas/developments. It would be nice to continue the successful GC inter-club event and to look at a match versus the CA as well as holding some form of AC inter-club event – possibly Short Croquet.

Item 5. Accounts.

The accounts for 2020 were presented to the meeting and they showed a surplus for the year to 31st December 2019 of £305.74 and a balance of £3305.81. Income was £616.74 and expenditure £311.00.

Expenditure in 2020 was low because there were no team event entry fees due to the cancellation of most events during the pandemic. In a normal year the base expenditure for the WCF affiliation fee and team entry fees would be expected to be over £300. The Welsh CA pays all of the entry fees for the Home Internationals and half the entry fee for WCF team events.

The 2019 AGM had agreed to give £2000 to the Glamorgan Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club for their lawn improvement fund and this was finally paid in 2021 and so will appear in the 2021 accounts.

There was a short discussion on whether we should introduce a life membership, because it was felt a number of members would like to pay in this way. The Secretary reported that three members had paid significant amounts in recent years to cover at least ten years of membership fees. It was pointed out that one of the problems with life membership is that there is then no regular annual income from the life members.

Richard Wood of Mumbles pointed out that the Mumbles club had received money from the Welsh Sports Council and that was a possible source of income for the Welsh CA. The Secretary said that he and John Grimshaw had met with the Welsh Sports Council about 20 years ago and that they only appeared to be interested in sports that could show youth development and so we had never pursued the matter.

Arthur Rowe asked whether it would make sense to move the accounting year to earlier in the year from the current 31 December, now that we have moved the AGM to November. It was agreed that this would make sense, with 30 September, or 31 October being a sensible date, and that we would look at bringing a proposal to change the constitution to next year's AGM.

The acceptance of the accounts was proposed by Kevin Ham and seconded by Tudor Jenkins.

Item 6. Constitutional Amendment

The committee proposed that section 7 Meeting and Voting Rights be amended to allow Annual and Special General Meetings to be held by video conference. The amended version is attached to these minutes.

The amendments were proposed by Brian Shorney and seconded by Sue Mackay. All present agreed to the amendments and so they were passed nem con.

Item 7. 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.

John Hannah (Craig Y Don) reported that they lay their lawn out as two long thin lawns and that they were a very active club, but not very competitive. Their members play against other local clubs such as Llanfairfechan, which is 25 minutes away, Chester and Tatton Hall. Their season lasts from 1 April to the end of September. The club is now a CASC and has done well with grants from bodies such as the People's Lottery and Sport Wales.

Garry McElwain reported that he is working on getting electricity connected into the club house in Merthyr Mawr. Adrian Morris reported that Kenilworth had done something similar and it had cost about £10,000 to connect over a distance of about 120 yards. Garry said that the digging would be done by the local estate and that the main cost would be the final connection. One of the reasons given for having electricity in the club house was to allow for the installation of a defibrillator, which is likely to be a requirement in the future for the tennis section.

John Evans reported that Llandovery had got a grant of about £5000 a number of years ago. Richard Wood reported that Mumbles only play two days a week. Brian Shorney reported that Llanidloes had got a £5000 grant and that they had a few people who were converting from GC to AC; in particular short croquet.

Item 8. Fixtures and Events.

The Secretary reported that in 2022 there will be the following events

May 14-15 Welsh GC Championship
Sep 2-4 Welsh AC Championship
June 11-12 AC Home Internationals in Carrickmines
July 16-17 GC Home Internationals in Nottingham
Aug 9-14 WCF AC Teams in Budleigh Salterton

The intention is to switch back to having separate AC and GC Welsh Championships as we used to do at Dyffryn with the GC being over two days and the AC over three.

There was a long discussion on the Welsh merit table and the GC Teams event. Points which came out in the discussion included

Merit Table

So far there have been no real rules as to which matches count in the merit table.

Kevin had done a rough estimate from the matches he knew about and he thought that in 2021 there was a tie between Llandovery and Llanfairfechan.

We need to decide on the rules of the competition and then inform the clubs as to which matches count. If two clubs play twice will both matches count or only the latest one.

In North Wales a number of clubs play in the Snowdonia Cup. We need to look at getting these results. Brian Shorney asked whether the border clubs such as Eardisley, Shrewsbury and Ludlow could be included. The meeting felt that clubs with two or fewer lawns should be included. We would not like large clubs like Cheltenham to be included.

GC Teams

Kevin Ham thanked Llanidloes for putting on a really good day for the final. It was very enjoyable for all.

Kevin feels that each heat should have five teams rather than the six in 2021.

Clubs were asked whether they would prefer the heats to be on a Saturday or Sunday. Both Mumbles and Llanfairfechan expressed a preference for a Saturday.

There was a discussion on where to hold the final in future. John Evans said we should stick with Llanidloes. Llanfairfechan said they were happy with Llanidloes as well. It was felt that sticking with Llanidloes will encourage them. Another option is to rotate between the north, the south and Llanidloes.

There was a long discussion over the makeup of the teams in the final. One problem was that teams in the heats were 3 players from squads of 4, whilst the final was 4 players from a squad of 6, with a ruling that a player could not switch teams between the heats and the final. This could lead to a team being unable to get a fourth player for the final, because the suitable candidates could be 'cup-tied' having played for a different team from the same club in the heat. Most felt that a team in the final should be picked from all players in that club.

Item 9. 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 2020

Chairman	R Waterman (retires 2023)
Secretary	CN Williams (retires 2022)
Treasurer	GJ McElwain (retires 2021)
Committee	MJ Evans, AR Walters

The following new committee was elected for 2021-2022

Chairman	R Waterman (retires 2023)
Secretary	CN Williams (retires 2022)
Treasurer	GJ McElwain (retires 2024)
Committee	IJ Burrridge, AR Walters

Item 10. Election of Selection Committee

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

Item 11. Any Other Business.

Rich Waterman said he would like to start a forum that would allow clubs to advise other clubs on best practice.

Garry McElwain suggested that we should write to all club secretaries to ask members if they would like to support the Welsh CA by becoming individual members.

Chris Roberts mentioned the problems with promotion/relegation, because the WCF Team events are four years apart, which can lead to countries having a very long wait between getting a team strong enough to be promoted and then actually playing in the higher division. In particular he noted the length of time it has taken for Spain to reach tier 1 of the GC Team Championship. Arthur Rowe suggested that it may be better if there were 2 up/ 2 down rather than the current 1up 1 down.

Date of next meeting

The 2022 AGM will be held by video conference at a date after the end of the 2022 season. Probably in early November (Sunday 6 November possibly).

The meeting closed at 12.23

Proposed Amendment to Constitution

7. Meetings and Voting Rights

- (a) The Annual General Meeting and Special General Meetings shall be held by video conference.
- (b) Meetings of the Executive Committee may be held by video conference or by email discussion.
- (c) The quorum of the Executive Committee shall be three, in the case of an email discussion three members contributing with 14 days of the start of the discussion.
- (d) The Annual General Meeting shall be held between 1st October and 31st December. The secretary of each Affiliated Club and each Associate Member shall receive 21 days notice of the meeting and a copy of the agenda.
- (e) Special General Meetings of the WCA may be called by the Executive Committee or by ten Associate Members applying in writing to the Executive Committee. The secretary of each Affiliated Club and each Associate Member shall receive 21 days notice of any Special General Meeting called and a copy of the agenda.
- (f) The Constitution may be altered at the Annual General Meeting or a Special General Meeting if the alteration is supported by two-thirds of those present and eligible to vote.
- (g) A proposal to alter the Constitution must be on the written Agenda and must stand in the names of at least four Associate Members.
- (h) Those eligible to vote at Annual General Meetings and Special General Meetings shall be Associate Members (including members of the Executive Committee) over the age of 18 and each Affiliated Club. Affiliated Clubs must give 7 days written notice to the Secretary of their nominated voting representative at a meeting. Any member Associate Member (including members of the Executive Committee) who is also the nominated voting representative of an Affiliated Club shall have a vote in each capacity.
- (i) The quorum at any Annual or Special General Meeting shall consist of at least 15% of the Associate Members. Failing a quorum the meeting shall be reconvened within 28 days by written notice to the secretary of each Affiliated Club and each Associate Member. A second failure to obtain a quorum shall automatically entitle the Executive Committee to take such action as they think appropriate regarding the Agenda.
- (j) At any meeting the Chairman shall have a casting as well as a deliberative vote.

Reports from clubs for 2021

Cardigan Croquet Club

Little to report from Cardigan - we lost the use of the lawns at the Cliff Hotel for the whole season due to building works - and it took until mid - August to find a new playing area. This we found, an area of the minimum size in a corner of the King George V Playing Fields

Until half term when our season ended, 10 of our 15 members played Tuesday - Thursday afternoons. Though the lawn is of minimum size, it is possibly better in the centre of town and with more of community feel, beside the football and rugby pitches and near the children's play area

Next season starts 1 April 2022 and we will possibly return to the Cliff one day a week. We will certainly join in whatever competitions WCA has organised.

Kathleen Martin
Sec Cardigan Croquet Club

Glamorgan LT&CC – report for the WCA AGM.

Where do we start? Since the shortened season that we played last year in 2020, due to the lawns being re-laid, the club has flourished. The work to relay the lawns started in September 2020 and was completed in a couple of weeks. Members had to assist Mother Nature for the first couple of weeks by watering each evening. Finally, the rains came!

The funding for the whole job was made possible by the generous donations of some club members and a donation from the Welsh Croquet Association. These donations have also allowed the club to purchase equipment that it needs to complete the normal work of mowing and upkeep of the lawns and the surrounding area. 3 members have undertaken all the work during this year and again; club members are extremely grateful for all the work done on their behalf.

On the playing side, GLTCC has completed a full season of club events and team matches in the SW Federation leagues. There has been a LOT of croquet of all types played at the club this year! We hosted and won the Southern qualifier for the inaugural WCA golf championship and one that, losing to the Northern winners – Llanfairfechan – in the final held at Llanidloes. This is an event that we think is good for croquet in Wales and hope that it will be run in future years. Maybe an addition of an association version might come along?

The club also hosted the return of the Welsh Championships in both codes this year after the enforced break of playing at Cheltenham for a few years. We hope to do so in 2022 and onwards.

The future? We have seen some former members from Dyffryn CC return to the club this year – which we hope may continue in the future – as well as having members start with us from our beginners’ course. Some of the ‘partially homeless’ Mumbles club members have joined as secondary club members and are very keen attenders at the GC club afternoons that we run. All in all, the future looks bright for the club.

Paul Pristavec
Secretary, GLTCC

Llandovery Croquet and Bowls Club Annual Report 2021

Our 2021 season went well, with 8 new members, taking our total membership to 25. We continued to hold club afternoons on Tuesdays and Thursdays which were often attended by a dozen or so members. We only play GC.

Several matches were arranged with other clubs in South and West Wales. We had 2 visits from members of the Cardigan Club, as they had lost the use of the courts at the Cliff Hotel. Matches were arranged with Llanidloes at home and away, and Mumbles Club at home. We entered 2 teams in the first Welsh inter club competition where we came a close second to the Glamorgan club.

Four different Merched y Wawr (Welsh W.I.) groups visited the club during the year and thoroughly enjoyed their introduction to croquet. Some of the ladies expressed an interest in joining the club, but nothing transpired. We may look into organising a competition between the various groups.

At the end of the season we held a club singles competition which was won by Tim Crowdy. Tim had entered the GC Open Championship earlier in the season which he described as a good learning experience!

We have maintained the bowling green ourselves, using Duncan Hector’s recommended lawn treatments, and with the help of a part time groundsman who has cut the grass twice weekly. This has produced a good fast playing surface which has undoubtedly helped improve the standard of play.

John Evans

LLANIDLOES CROQUET CLUB est.2019 REPORT FOR 2021 SEASON

There was a great sense of anticipation for the forthcoming season. With the 2020 season having been virtually non-existent; very little croquet played by just a small number. The lawn was looking fantastic having been very well tended over the winter. Work carried out by a dedicated groundskeeper over the past three years had converted the weed and moss infested unused tennis courts into a full-size croquet lawn. Many committee members were itching to play. However uncertainty remained as to how many former members would re-affiliate for the coming season. Due to the covid pandemic we had suspended membership for the 2021 season! Many of our members were having to “shield”; many others were understandably very anxious about mixing with others.

Pleased to report that by season’s end, 35 members were signed up with several late

newbies keen to join us next year. We have had a successful season with many notable firsts; games / matches played at home for the first time as well as away. We supported and raised funds For British Heart Foundation during the C.A. BHF National Croquet Week, and have hosted and instructed W.I. groups from several local villages. We entered two teams in the WCGCA comp. travelling to Llanfairfechan, a great learning experience for those involved. We were grateful for a session on Short Croquet, presented to interested members by Brian Shorney. A game to be further explored by some next season.

Our season highlight had to be hosting the final of this event on Saturday September 4th. The final between Glamorgan and Llanfairfechan was a well-matched contest that was eventually won by Llanfairfechan. We felt both proud and honoured as a club; just 3 years after setting up, to be asked and able to host this prestigious event at our club that sits mid-way between the finalists in the “Heart of Wales” and would be willing to do so again if required.

Our season closed with a very enjoyable, sociable and well catered for inter-club competition on Sunday 3rd October. 2021 was so much better than 2020, and we now look forward to 2022.

Janet Crisp

Mumbles Croquet Club

Report on the 2021 season

Mumbles Croquet Club (MCC) started in 2019 so this report relates to our third season. The club has an arrangement with the Mumbles Bowling Club to use their green on a Monday and Sunday. However, in April 2021, a meeting at the Mumbles Green between Mumbles Croquet Club, Mumbles Bowls Club, Swansea Bowls Association and Swansea Council determined that the green was in such poor condition that it could not be used for the 2021 season. Arrangements were made with the Council for MCC to relocate to a defunct bowling green at Brynmill Park. Insofar as we only play golf croquet the ‘green’ involved mini golf bunkers provided by the local dogs. This together, with an altercation with the local youth, resulted in a meeting with the Council and a subsequent further relocation to Ashleigh Road Playing fields on the Mumbles Road. Here we set up two near full size lawns on the cricket outfield with our equipment stored in a nearby Council shipping container. We played two days a week with two, generally well attended, sessions per day. The Council staff were very accommodating and mowed the lawns. We continued to play until early October although the contours would have provided us with home field advantage had we had a competition with another club! During the season the Council refurbished the Mumbles Green and we hope to return there in the coming April and resume our relationship with the Mumbles Bowls Club.

Covid protocols developed last year were again followed by convenors and players. Despite our nomadic existence we had a membership of thirty-seven which included a couple from America who holiday at Caswell Bay each year. We ran an online booking system using the Google sheets facility.

During the year we obtained a grant from Sports Wales for two sets of secondary balls. On the 30th June sixteen members played in a competition at the Glamorgan club and took the opportunity to obtain handicaps. And on the 18th September eight members joined a competition arranged by the Llandovery club; Llandovery won by nine to seven.

With a return to the Mumbles Green next season we expect membership to increase.

Richard Wood

(Secretary)

18 Oct 2021

mumblescroquet@gmail.com

Craig Y Don Club, Llandudno

CraigY don had a good 2021 season under the circumstances, with 55 playing members by end of September close. We erected a pair of composting toilets last winter which became essential as the only toilets available to us for most of the season. We are currently raising money for an external defibrillator, which we will be erecting early in 2022.

We enjoyed taking part in the Welsh Golf Club Competition losing out at the Northern session at Llanfairfechan. and look forward to more playing contact with more Welsh clubs in the future.

We run an active U3a Group session weekly which provides extra income and a source of new playing members.

We have recently purchased a new set of Secondary balls and two sets of Primaries from the CA from club funds which although depleted are still in good shape.

John Hannah Craig Y Don Club Chairman

Llanfairfechan and North Wales Croquet Club

Report on 2021 season

We have had a full season this year and managed to maintain our membership at 69 in spite of an increase in subscription charge. Most of our group bookings have returned this year. These are the means by which we keep the club financially stable. We have weekly drop-in sessions for the various codes of the game. Regular weekly coaching sessions have increased our AC playing numbers. The Club took three teams to the North West Federation of Croquet Clubs Festival of Croquet (Level Play Golf, Handicap Golf and Short Lawn Association) which was delayed until mid-August.

We hosted the Northern heat of the WCA Team Golf Croquet Championship and had a really good day. We were extremely grateful to David Crawford, former England GC Team member, for excellent Tournament Direction. Llanfairfechan entered two teams and our Seagulls Team won the event. The Llanfairfechan Seagulls went on to win overall in the final at Llanidloes. We felt the Competition was a major success for Welsh Croquet. We had a good amount of publicity and visits from local politicians and the MP. This sort of event is excellent for raising the profile of croquet. We had several internal competitions and successful social events and a fund raiser for the Air Ambulance. We expect a strong season in 2022.

Our lawns could use a major improvement, but the Committee is nervous that the amount of investment and disruption will give us the return we would require. We have been conscientious in treating and fertilizing the lawns this year and we have levelled one area of lawn. Over the winter we will decorate the clubhouse. We look forward to an excellent season in 2022.

Sarah Andrew, Secretary