

Minutes from meeting between Cricket and Croquet club held Wednesday 17th August 2022.

Present: Craig Wells, Tim Ives, Angela Woods, Natasha Norman, Greg Vaughn, Simon Parvin and Tony Green.

Key Points:

- **Price of playing**

At present each year the Croquet Club pay membership, a third of the Cricket Club insurance and contribute £500 to fuel and machine maintenance. This came to just under £3000 in the year 2022-23. If the Croquet Club have a surplus they spend it on improving the outfield as this was agreed with Ron Barker, when Chairman, as best use of money to mutual benefit. (Over the last few years this resulted in a £1000 annual spend on outfield improvement). The actual membership per Croquet Club player is £53 of which £25 is Social Membership of the Cricket Club. The Social Membership fee is set annually by the Cricket Club.

For this, the croquet club has 2 Playing Days from 10 – 4 on Tuesday and Wednesday, and Friday until 1pm. There are also some pre -greed match days (five this year) usually on Thursdays and Fridays. Ignoring the matches, a possible 16 hours per week are available for play. Greg pointed out only a few members came for more than a few hours a week and about half the membership only came a few times a year.

An adult Cricket member pays £45 a year to join the club which allows them 1.5 hours of practise a week and matches for which they pay £5 per match (excluding teas). Playing one match and practising each week for 15 weeks costs £120. It was accepted that the match fees cover the cost of paying an umpire and buying match balls. Craig did say he had secured a sponsor for the match balls so that was currently not a cost. Angie felt there is a huge disparity between the memberships which needs to be addressed. Greg argued that after excluding umpire fees and extra costs re showers etc there was very little disparity between the fees for each club.

For this amount of playing time, the croquet members need to pay considerably more. The cricket club committee believes that the croquet club have some of the best facilities of any club in the country and need to pay accordingly. Greg responded by explaining the lawns were currently in poor condition and would benefit from a lot of levelling, but little could be done about the slopes. Craig said there may be a possibility for the Croquet club to seed the playing area with the same quality grass as on the square rather than the meadow grass as present.

Greg argued that once the Umpires fees were excluded and the match fee contributions to showers etc was excluded the fees charged to members of both clubs were much more in line. He accepted the fees hadn't risen last year and that an increase on 2023, as long as fair, was reasonable.

It was felt that the Croquet Club may lose players if they increase their membership however have asked for the Cricket Club to make a decision on price. They asked the Cricket Club be sensitive to the fact the Croquet Club intentionally tries to keep fees low to allow all to participate even if on very low incomes. Angela feels there is a lack of contribution to the whole club for example helping behind the bar, attending social events etc. Greg explained this wasn't because the Croquet Club was unwilling to help but simply because until this meeting the Croquet Committee Club were under the impression that they were not allowed to use the bar or facilities. Greg also pointed out the average age of Croquet members was nearly 80 and that most croquet club members would struggle running a bar. It was accepted that the Cricket Club have never defined what Social Membership allows or doesn't allow. Tash said she would correct that by defining Social membership more clearly. Greg said he will appoint a Social/ Event organiser within his committee. He was delighted the Cricket Club would like the Croquet Club to more active on the social side. This wasn't done previously as the Croquet team felt they couldn't have access to the bar. They don't know the key code, don't have access to safe, how to work the till etc.

Playing Days and Matches

Ideally all matches to be played on Tuesdays and Wednesdays – this will avoid the problem this year when extra days were wanted for friendlies and then refused. Greg added that the reason why these days got extended was due to having to shorten their session by an hour each day (previously 10-5) due to youth cricket, so Fridays started to make up for lost hours. They asked the Groundsman and previous chairman at that point and thought they were doing the right thing as this was agreed assuming this had been discussed with the Cricket Club Committee.

Moving forward It was agreed matches will be played on 'play days' (Tues/Wed) and any special requests to be taken to subcommittee. Craig explained they discuss decisions at their committee before final decision is made.

The Croquet Club are looking at the possibility of splitting their membership to 'league and non-league players'. If possible, this might free up some funds to help offset any increase in membership fees.

Membership contact details

The Croquet members are Social Members of the Cricket Club. Therefore, the Cricket Club should have all the membership details of the Croquet members so they can contact them directly as they can with all Cricket Club members. The membership form will need to be amended to state 'Croquet social membership' with new agreed price including a note with what this includes. Simon will send Tash a list of players names and emails so they can receive Cricket Club Newsletters and other communications to Social members.

Beginning and end of the season

To allow the necessary winter work the cricket and croquet seasons need to coincide. The season dates need to be agreed in advance. The end of the cricket season this year is Sunday 18th September. It was agreed that both clubs would like to play to the end of September so this will be considered for next year.

Development Discussions and Ground Committee

In recent years several decisions around the croquet club's playing arrangements and work on the outfield/lawns have been made by Ron Barker without wider discussion. It would be in both club's interest to have a joint committee to continue moving things forward rather than a representative on the cricket club committee. This will include a more formal discussion re: ground works too. Greg, Simon and Tony all felt this was a good idea and agreed to having a subcommittee. This should improve relationships and keep everyone up to date and open up communication. Simon and Craig have agreed to work together re: ground maintenance.

Cricket Club Playing Development

With the increased numbers of players both at adult and junior level the club needs to expand. This has already happened with the pavilion extension and will continue with the new nets hoping to be installed in spring 2023

The juniors need additional tracks to play matches on at the bottom end of the square and adult and junior members need grass practise nets on the other side of the artificial wicket. Whilst the new nets will only have a limited impact on the lawns the area where the players start their run would likely cause damage to the lawns.

Robin's letter and the attitude of some members

Whilst an apology was received, the letter was seen and therefore endorsed by the croquet club's committee and clearly shows the Croquet Club's attitude towards the Cricket Club. Greg acknowledges using term 'when Cricket Club was bankrupt' is not correct and what he meant was they would assist financially if they can. Craig wanted to make it clear that he wasn't using Tim to 'screw more cash out of the club'. Tony, Greg and Simon acknowledge this wasn't the case and all agreed not to dwell on the past.

Defib

Greg and Tash both explained how they came to their decision re the defib. Greg was told by a member of the cricket club that a donation of £200 would be satisfactory as it only cost £400. This information was incorrect as it cost £1200.

Both sides felt it was a very positive meeting and look forward to the next subcommittee proposed for the 20th Sept 19:00.