

# Chester Croquet Club

20 January 2023

Dear All,

As you know our annual planning meeting will be held on the 3rd February from 7.00pm at the Westminster Park Community Centre. I have had some requests for curry, but I would welcome more as soon as possible (preferably before Monday 23rd) so that we can order sufficient food.

As for the meeting itself, I would emphasise it is an informal discussion, but experience has shown that it is wise to have some form of "structure" to the discussion. Last year we identified a number of "topics" in order to provide a focus for your comments and suggestions, and it seems logical to do the same this year. There is always an opportunity for additional items to be added. Just let me know your suggestions. If you cannot get to the meeting your comments would be welcome via email and I will ensure they are included in the discussions.

The topic list will run something like the following:

- **Club Organisation.**

Management of the club is in the hands of the Committee, with identified Officers including Chairperson, Secretary, and Treasurer supported by other members with specified roles, such as for Membership, Communications, Publicity and Recruitment, Equipment, Catering, Grounds and Maintenance, Liaison with the Council, Lawn setting out and adjustments, Maintaining the web site, booking system and the calendar, and Liaison with the CA and NW Federation. In addition there are volunteers who do not necessarily sit on the Committee, such as the Safeguarding Officer, members of the Social Committee, and those people who assist with the maintenance of the grounds, catering and cleaning and help to run events. New committee members are always welcome, and indeed a number of existing committee members will be leaving soon. So we need new ones! But if joining the committee does not appeal, at the beginning of the season we circulate a list of " Volunteer Groups" so that members can identify which elements of club organisation they would like to help with..

- **Weekly Playing Arrangements**

There are a number of specific sessions for playing either AC or GC during the week, either on a "roll up" basis or for match practice and coaching. The periods set aside for this activity may vary from year to year in order to ensure the opportunity to join in is made as wide as possible. The choice of days and times depends of course on the degree to which the sessions have to be organised and the availability of coaches / team captains and other organizers. League Matches and tournaments also have to be accommodated. The committee will be making changes to the weekly playing schedule this year, and the Planning Meeting is an opportunity for views to be expressed on potential changes. At other times the lawns are available for open play between members through the booking system on the website.

- **Matches, Tournaments and Events**

As a member of the NW Federation of Croquet Clubs and its parent National Body, members of the club have an opportunity to play in a variety of competitions, at different levels, either as part of a club team or individually, both within the region or nationally. The club also holds a variety of internal competitions, which may vary from year to year depending on the availability of organizers and, of course, participants. These are publicised through emails, the website and by notices in the pavilion. Ideas for new competitions or variations to existing ones are always welcome, as are offers of assistance in their organization and running. Taking part in competitions is not a requirement of club membership, but it is encouraged as a good way of improving your play and getting to know other members in the club. It is also good fun. The club also hosts events for the local community and for charities.

- **Recruitment**

Whilst our membership was at a reasonable level at the end of 2022, there is always a need to recruit new members to replace those who leave, and also to provide an opportunity to increase the overall participation in croquet. This is done predominantly at the beginning of the season through Taster Sessions and a Beginners Course, though new members are also welcomed individually at other times during the year. Ideas on how we can attract potential new members, or introduce the game of croquet to our local community are always welcome. As are views on how we retain our new members and help them to improve their standard of play. Gaining new players for AC continues to be a problem, but hopefully more of our existing GC players will start to learn the additional skills that AC offers and we hope to provide a number of opportunities for that to happen

- **Club Facilities**

Our grounds are rented from the local Council, which maintains the lawns, hedges and fences (with assistance from club volunteers). We hold the pavilion under licence from the Council and share it with the bowlers on the adjacent greens. We have a duty to maintain and care for the inside of the pavilion, whilst the Council is responsible for the maintenance of its overall fabric and the provision of services. Therefore we are very dependent on the Council, which can be frustrating given the funding restraints that often apply, and we have to operate within the terms of our agreement with the Council. Nevertheless, the club undertakes as much as it is able through its own volunteers. Thus we set out the lawns, install the hoops, and monitor the need for lawn repair (undertaking minor repairs where necessary). The club provides and maintains all the equipment for play, though members are encouraged to buy their own mallets if they play regularly. We also (when the Council provided system works) try to water the lawns in prolonged dry periods, and undertake the tidying up of the lawn surrounds. The more members who can help with these activities the less of a burden it is for individuals. If you have any ideas for the improvement of club facilities please let us know.

- **Club Funding**

The club is funded primarily by member subscriptions, though a number of events for the wider community also provide a very useful additional income from the participants. The overall annual income has to cover necessary expenses, such as lawn rental, affiliation to the national and regional croquet bodies, insurance, maintenance of equipment, catering and cleaning items, trophies, running tournaments, publicity, website development and supporting our teams on the national stage. Our fees are relatively modest because we do not have to pay for the maintenance of the lawns, and we have some reserve funds for meeting periods when expenses exceed income, or for some specific purchases or projects that might arise. If you have any thoughts on what the priorities for the use of club funds should be, please let us know.

- **Social Activities**

Hopefully this year will be totally free of the restrictions that have hampered social activities in the last two years. Indeed in November we managed to get together for our annual end of season dinner. It would be good to resume other events (not necessarily of a croquet nature), demonstrating what a sociable bunch of folk we are! The social sub committee would welcome helpers and crucially ideas for activities. In the past we have visited places of interest, held quizzes, bridge nights, skittle evenings etc. We also hold croquet events within the club for groups in the local community, or for raising funds for charities.

- **Any Other Topics/Issues Suggestions very welcome.**

I look forward to seeing those of you who are able to come along and join us on Friday 3rd February, but if you are not able to attend please do let me have any views on the topics listed above by email direct to me on [jaytay20ch@aol.com](mailto:jaytay20ch@aol.com)

And do not forget to let me know if you want food!

Regards

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