

THE CROQUET ASSOCIATION

Minutes of the Special General Meeting held at 11.15 am at The Hurlingham Club on Saturday 28th March 2015

Present: Quiller Barrett (President, in the Chair), Tim King (Chairman of Council), Jeff Dawson, Ian Vincent (Hon. Secretary), Elizabeth Larsson (CA Manager) and 41 other Associates. Nine clubs which had not previously voted had authorised representatives.

1. Report from Scrutineers.

David and Eileen Magee, who had been appointed scrutineers for the meeting by the Chairman of Council, reported that they had checked the paper votes from clubs and individual members and the e-mail votes from clubs received at the CA Office before the closing date of 18th March and examined the record of the votes cast by individual members on the CA Website on or before that date.

The President said that proxy voting was not allowed and he explained that because of the prior voting, he would not permit the motions to be amended at this meeting. He had asked Council to consider whether and how amendments could be handled in future.

2. Motion, proposed by the Council:

“That the approval required under clause 11(a)(ii) of the Constitution is given for the per-capita rate of club subscription to be successively raised, by up to £1 above the amount allowed by the rate of inflation, at the start of each of the five years 2016 to 2020, for all Member Clubs that have both a playing area not significantly less than 2 full sized lawns and no significant external restrictions on lawn availability from May to September.”

2.1 Jeff Dawson proposed the motion on behalf of the Council, explaining that there had been a significant change in the balance of play between nationally organised tournaments and those organised by Federations over the twenty years since these issues were last considered, which meant that it would be imprudent for the Association to rely on subscriptions and levies paid by individual tournament members as its main source of income. It was pro-actively seeking to rebalance, rather than increase, its income to ensure that it had a sound base from which to develop the sport. Members should note that the motion was an enabling measure and did not commit Council to impose the maximum increase that it allowed over the five year period.

2.2 Roger Staples (Middlesborough) immediately proposed that the question now be put. Tim King, the Chairman of Council, spoke against that, saying that Council wished to hear any points made by members, which could guide it in implementing the changes if they were approved. The procedural motion was defeated so discussion commenced.

2.3 Raymond Wood (Phyllis Court) asked what future income and expenditure would look like if the changes went through. Jeff Dawson replied that the balance of income would shift so that club players paid relatively more. Mike Lambert (Surbiton & Emsworth) asked what the likely effect on subscriptions of Tournament Members would be, and was told that, if everything went exceedingly well, with very few clubs dropping out, the direct debit rate might come down over time from £43 to about £30. As a minimum, it was expected that tournament subscriptions would be reduced by the amount that the club subscription increased, so that they would not be paying any more overall. Brian Fisk, expressing a personal view, said that he would like to go further and see Tournament Subscriptions abolished.

2.4 Harry Midgley (Phyllis Court, Ealing and Budleigh Salterton) hoped that the levy would be reduced. He felt that, like Churchill in the 1926 general election, voting for the motion would be like voting for the Devil, as it was poorly drafted, ill conceived and 50 years too late, but as it was all that was on the table he would support it.

2.5 Ros Peasdale (Camerton and Peasdown) said that she was against the two-tier system for club subscriptions; wanted any extra income generated to go towards development, rather than reducing subscriptions of Tournament Members; and was concerned about the delay in introducing the benefits.

2.6 Bill Arliss (Sussex County) said he had some evidence that many Tournament Members no longer played outside their Federation, but retained their membership to support the Association.

2.7 David Mooney (Roehampton and Surbiton) told the meeting that Judo's national governing body went bust in 1984 because they did not make a similar change.

2.8 The motion was then voted upon. It was passed with 200 Individual Members in favour and 24 against; and with 80 Member Clubs in favour and 11 against.

3. Motion, proposed by Council and seconded by John Culhane:

“That the CA should expand its membership to include all players for whom a ‘per capita’ fee has been paid by their club, while allowing individuals to opt out of membership (but not the fee) if so desired. Membership to include full voting rights, eligibility to play in tournaments, and direct access to the Gazette in a form to be decided. This requires the constitutional changes in Appendix A of the document attached.”

3.1 The President explained that as this, and the following motion required changes to the constitution, they required a seconder and a majority of 6 to 4 in favour.

3.2 Jeff Dawson said that this motion was proposed to give something back to club members in return for the increase in subscriptions agreed in the first motion. The theoretical shift in power from Tournament Members to club players was not expected to cause difficulties in practice. The reason for the delay in implementation was primarily to give time for the IT systems to be enhanced to accept uploads of membership data from clubs. He emphasised that the motion was an enabling measure, for which the details had yet to be fully worked out, and that both clubs and individual members of them could opt out of membership of the Association if they were not willing to divulge their contact details.

3.3 There being no questions, the President widened the discussion to include distribution of the Croquet Gazette. After that discussion, a straw poll was taken in which there was overwhelming support for providing an option of either paper or electronic distribution.

3.4 The motion was then voted upon. It was passed with 201 Individual Members in favour and 21 against; and with 81 clubs in favour and 8 against.

4 Motion, proposed by the Council and seconded by John Culhane:

“That separate voting rights for clubs be removed. This requires the constitutional changes in Appendix B of the document attached.”

4.1 There being no questions, the motion was voted upon. It was passed with 195 Individual Members in favour and 30 against; and with 79 Member Clubs in favour and 10 against.

5. Statement by Chairman of Council

5.1 Tim King acknowledged Roger Staples concern to expedite the meeting, but felt that the discussion had been useful. He thanked Quiller Barrett for his diligence in chairing it and his concern that members should be able express their views, and Jeff Dawson, for steering the changes through. Council had embarked on a journey which it will now continue, with the support of the Association's membership. He thanked Ian Vincent for drafting the detailed changes and Harry Midgley for his views on them. He noted the comments made about distribution of the Gazette and Tournament Membership. Although this was not the time to report on Council's other activities, he informed the meeting that Samir Patel had been co-opted to the WCF Management Committee.

There being no further business the President closed the SGM at 12.35, thanking David and Eileen Magee, Jeff Dawson and Ian Vincent, and the members who had made the effort to vote and attend.

(President)

(Date)