

Ludlow Castle Croquet Club – Chairman’s Report For 2022 Season

Overall, 2022 has been a successful year for the club. Membership now stands at 53 and is relatively steady, with subscription costing £60 in 2022, but with a slight increase to £65 for 2023.

The club plays Association Croquet on Tuesday and Friday and Golf Croquet on Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Sunday, with all sessions well attended. Additionally, this season coaching has been provided by Brian Christmas from the Church Stretton club. The club played one friendly competition match during the season against Himley Hall, at Himley.

Highlights of the social calendar included the Platinum Jubilee celebration alongside the tennis and bowls players, welcoming the Ludlow Twinning guests from Le Ferte Mace, France, and hosting the Rotary Club. We also host the Working Together, Ludlow group and their carers each year for an evening always thoroughly enjoyed by both them and us.

The main setback for the club was the break in at the storage shed in the early hours of Tuesday 31st May. The thieves made entry from the field behind the club (rugby overflow parking area) and took a Honda rotary mower valued at £1,320 and did damage to the metal shed that required replacement parts valued at £788.51. Additionally labour costs for repair totalled £260. A claim was made to NFU Mutual Insurance which has been paid in full, except for a £250 excess. The Joint Club agreed to cover the excess, as they provide our insurance.

The shed has been moved to a more prominent and less accessible location where CCTV can reach in future, and all equipment marked forensically with Smart Water. We are considering what additional improvements can be made to secure the shed and equipment further.

Fortuitously the thieves did not take the more valuable Dennis mower and verticutter – perhaps because of its specialist nature. This mower, purchased with the help of a grant and loan from the Tennis Club, has made a significant positive impact on the quality of the Croquet courts. It has been well utilized by our small group of volunteers who diligently mow both courts at least twice per week over the summer season. While the damaged metal shed was unavailable the mower was stored in the Bowls shed and was utilized

occasionally and with success on the bowling lawns as well, although the Bowls club has recently purchased a new mower.

The Croquet club was able to repay 50% of the Tennis Club loan this year, an amount of £1,250, and plans to pay the remaining £1,250 in 2023, well within the 3-year term of the agreement. This will leave the club debt free.

Additionally, the club was able to source an additional set of lightly used croquet balls and hoops (new value £820) from the Croquet Association club in Cheltenham, making a significant saving.

For 2023 the main objective of the club will be 1) to maintain or increase membership, 2) to increase our presence in the West Midlands Federation through additional friendly matches with the more local clubs, 3) complete repayment of the mower loan, and 4) to continue to improve the quality of the courts, equipment, and facilities for croquet players. In particular we need to purchase a new line marking machine to make the task of marking the courts much easier.

I would like to thank all Croquet members for there ongoing support of the club, but particularly the Committee for the time and effort they put in to keep the club running smoothly, and the volunteers who tend the lawns to keep them playing so well. Also I would like to thank Diana Marten, who is stepping down as secretary, but remaining as a committee member, and Nick Holcombe who is stepping down from the committee for their valuable help and input.

David White

Croquet Chair