

Dear Club Member,

I am taking this opportunity, with the AGM notice, of mailing you personally on two important matters.

The first strictly speaking only relates to Playing Members of all club membership categories but may relate to non- playing members if they wish to start playing at the club.

As some of you will have already seen, the Croquet Association (CA), with whom the Club is an affiliated member, last year started a series of reforms to widen its membership to include all playing members of affiliated clubs automatically, instead of those that personally had become CA members to facilitate play in CA Calendar events.

This reform, once complete, will increase the membership of the CA from about 1700 to over 6000. It is not a money making exercise by way of subscription but seen as a truer reflection of the popularity of this very minor sport and hence more likely to attract sponsorships and grants in the future.

Some confusion appears to have arisen regarding the current state of membership and I hope to clarify things now.

**First:** Playing members of Affiliated Clubs like Bowdon are NOT automatically members of the CA **at present**. Tournament members of the CA are, as are some other categories, but that has been up to now a personal choice.

All playing members of the club **WILL** become members of the CA once a suitable electronic database has been built and initiated and populated. That is expected now to be 2019 not 2017 as published recently. Yes, I know, HS2, London Airport expansion and Hinkley Point might be built quicker.

**Second:** Notwithstanding the above, **ALL** playing members of affiliated clubs like Bowdon (whether already a CA member or not) will be eligible to play in all CA Tournaments from 2017 onwards.

**Third:** Costs. At present the Club, as a CA affiliate, pay a per capita sum to the CA each year based upon its playing membership numbers. This will continue and at the time of writing is set as £10.50 per head for 2017 for each Bowdon playing member. This is an expense borne directly by the club but obviously comes to the club by way of your annual subscription or other income stream. In essence this arrangement will continue so that apart from "inflation" increases, no further charge will be made, year on year. Whilst it can hardly be classed as free membership of the CA, it does not require any further thought from the member.

**Fourth:** Every member of the Bowdon Club has, since 1993, been asked to sign or tick a box on their membership application form agreeing that the club could share information about them with the CA. The club intends to use this as Data Protection Act approval for the sharing of information with outside bodies, like the CA.

Importantly those members joining before 1993 will not have had the opportunity to give such approval.

Even more importantly, **EVERY** club member can still change their mind and decide that they do not wish to be a member of the CA, despite these arrangements.

So, if any playing member of Bowdon Croquet Club wishes to withdraw from this scheme of enlarged CA membership, particularly pre 1993 joiners, then please let me know. I hope you will all approve of changes as described above and join in.

Should you withdraw from the process you can of course re-join it at a later stage.

**Fifth:** This news item is not intended to form part of the 2016 AGM but if you intend to ask any questions on this matter at the AGM, let me know by email in advance so that I can adequately research the answer.

**Sixth:** For my pains I have been co-opted onto a CA Working Party examining the current role of the CA, its successes and failures, current governance, relationship with Federations, relationship between CA Council and the CA Management and Executive Committees etc.

The Working Party hope to have an interim report in 2017 with a final report in 2018. This is, in part, driven by the Department of Culture, Media and Sport who are expected, shortly, to issue guidelines for National Governing Bodies about their Governance processes and structure.

I need your help.

What do you think of the CA? Is it good or bad at what it tries to do? Do you know what it does? Could it do more? Should it do less?

Let me know by email: [bjstorey@btinternet.com](mailto:bjstorey@btinternet.com)

Brian Storey  
Hon. Secretary  
Bowdon Croquet Club