

Soham 2024 Report

Publicity

Soham was publicised in the Croquet Gazette and E-news plus the Notts list and Croquet England social media channels, as well as by email direct to all those who have played in the past five years three times.

Costs

The cost for playing at Soham was £20 per session. We required a minimum of 14 teams (28 entries) across the weekend to break even as the centre was charging £550 per event.

2023/24 Winter Programme cost EACF **£260** in 2023

January 2024

17 players across the weekend income £340 so loss of **£210**

Saturday 13th January 2024 Belgian Cup, alternative shot doubles. Winners Adrian Kirby and Stephen Cornelius

Sunday 14th January 2024 The Soham Trophy, normal speed doubles. Winners David and Alison Maugham

February 2024

22 players across the weekend income £440 so loss of **£110**

Saturday 10th February 2024 Albert Lawrence Trophy, alternate shot speed doubles. Winners Gabrielle Higgins and Anable McDiarmid

Sunday 11th February 2024 The Martins Trophies, progressive doubles. Winners David Maugham and Ken Knock

March 2024

22 players across the weekend income so loss of **£110**

Saturday 9th March 2024 The Cornelius Cup, alternate shot speed doubles. Winners Ian Lines and Adrian Kirby

Sunday 10th March 2023 The Millennium Cup, speed doubles. Winners Annabel McDiarmid and Gabrielle Higgins

Attendance

Most of those who would have been considered Soham regulars in the past have dropped out or reduced attendance primarily due to age and ailments and increasingly we are having to pull in entries from further afield. Despite Soham railway station now being open again it is proving difficult to recruit attendees. Also generally milder winters mean increasingly clubs keep at least one lawn

open over winter whilst many other smaller scale indoor set-ups now prevail in the region again all factors in reducing attendance.

Rules

Golf Croquet has been tried in the past but was found not a viable option on the indoor carpet so all games run to a slightly modified version of the Short Croquet Association rules.

The Future

It was agreed that the EACF could no longer sustain the expense of running Soham as fewer and fewer people from the Federation were benefitting and the monies could be better spent helping new clubs to establish or existing ones improve their facilities. To this end it was agreed that the EACF would initially loan for free the indoor kit to a newly formed All Seasons Croquet Club on condition that it affiliates to both the Federation and Croquet England. The new club was promised some corporate sponsorship that failed to materialise whilst Soham Sports Centre increased the hire costs to £650 per weekend and several more local stalwarts indicated they would no longer be participating. The All Seasons Club managed to tie up with the new Old Brentwoods Club and source an alternative venue in Brentwood for the 2024 -25 winter sessions. These have been well attended as able to pull in players from a much larger area whilst the costs have been reduced enabling winter indoor croquet to continue in a barn. Attendances have been greatly improved with on several occasions a full house of 16, there have also been a few Golf Croquet sessions run in addition to the standard Association Croquet competitions. The new Club has as well as being joined by many existing players from across the country has also already recruited a number of new to croquet individuals and will soon be adding some outdoor courts meaning 'more people playing more croquet in more places'. To date the transfer of responsibility for the equipment and events has been a success with both the new club starting to thrive and the EACF being rid of the financial burden.