

**DONNINGTON GROVE GOLF AND COUNTRY CLUB**

**Minutes of Committee Meeting; Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> August 2009**

**Present:** Geoff Kells, Lynn Turner, Richard Lomax, Tim Brunsdon, Brenda Agutter, Steve Marshall, John Rance, Chris Strong.

**Apologies:** Sean Sargeant, Ann MacDonald, Gareth Williams.

The Captain took the chair

July Minutes were approved as correct and signed off by Geoff Kells.

**Matters Arising**

The Committee reviewed the Actions List carried forward from July as shown below.

**1111/2** – Richard stated that the photos and frames of the past captains were ready to be erected by Barry this week.

- **Chris, Geoff and Richard would decide upon the exact location for them.**

**0302/5** – Geoff reported that he had the outstanding payment from the Christmas Party and would give it to Brenda. This matter is now complete.

**0303/1** – Chris had now spoken to the owners regarding moving the boards from the ‘toilet’ corridor into the bar besides the new trophy cabinet. This has been agreed and Chris stated that Barry was due to put them up tomorrow.

**0604/7** – Tim stated that he and Richard had met to discuss the possible variations on presenting the Medal Winners prizes. It was thought that the Presentation Evening would be more manageable and compact if only the Board Winners were presented with their trophies. Now that the website was up and running, the medal winners can be shown on it. One of the Committee would then contact them to see whether they wished to receive a trophy (whiskey glass) or voucher. The trophy would be given to them at the end of the year when all the engraving could be done at a reduced price. After discussion it was agreed that this seemed to be the way forward and that in addition, the details of the winners are to be placed in a frame and situated above the computer terminal.

- **Tim to buy suitable frame and collate details of Medal winners from April 09 and enter winners on website.**

**0505/01** – Chris reported that no further progress had been made regarding a Committee Office, as he was awaiting the major renovations to commence around the hotel sometime in October.

**0606/02** – Tim stated that due to the cancellation of the Barn Dance, there had been no possibility of presenting the Winter Knockout Winners their trophy. It was decided that the trophy be presented at the next major event: The Charity Day.

**0206/3** – With Sean temporarily unavailable, Tim stated that he had made a template for the Shotoku Cup that showed a picture of the cup, the rules of entry, format of play and a picture of the last years winners together with their score.

- **Tim to liaise with Gareth and Sean to provide similar templates for all the Board Competitions, which could then be placed onto the website for referral when necessary.**

**0607/2** – Richard said that Gareth was still loathe to publish the competition start times on Wednesday evening due to the number of alterations that needed to be made on a regular basis on the Thursday and Friday.

- **Tim and Richard to speak to Gareth and attempt to come to a compromise.**

**0607/3** – Tim reported that the Club was not eligible for a Sports Council Grant for the juniors.

**0607/5** – Geoff stated that he had written to Paul Bailes and his business partner Gary Bowlar to thank them for their kind generosity in donating the Trophy Cabinet to the Club.

**0607/6** – Gareth had not spoken to Dave Knight regarding the introduction of a system for repairing divots (bag on rails that members take with them).

- **Tim and Geoff to speak to Dave Knight.**

**0607/7** – Chris stated that he was seeing the sales rep tomorrow with regard to purchasing 2 new benches, which would be suitable for the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> tees.

- **Chris to report back with progress.**

**0607/8** – Chris stated that at present the Club only employed a Starter and no Marshalls. He said we were one of the few clubs that had ever employed Marshalls. Lynn stated that many members have complained about the lack of Marshalls, which led to slow play and abuses of the dress code and course etiquette.

Chris replied that there was a cost implication as the buggy petrol costs had to be included.

There then followed a ‘lively’ discussion regarding the authority of the Starter or Marshall and whether they would receive any back up from the Pro Shop and Management.

Tim asked whether the competition entry fees could be increased to cover the cost of employing a Marshall from 11am – 4pm on selected weekends. This would depend on an agreement between the Management and Committee as to the Marshall’s terms of reference.

Richard stated that a survey question could be placed on the website asking members whether they would approve of an increase in competition fees to employ a Marshall.

- **Richard to place survey question on website and report back to Committee.**
- **Chris to report back with exact costing for Marshall from 11 am – 4pm on a weekend.**

**0607/9** – Gareth has yet to prepare a statement regarding ongoing work on the bunkers for the website.

Brenda asked that the green keepers be reminded that the rakes should be placed in the bunkers pointing towards the hole.

Tim stated that he and Richard had spoken to Dave Knight and that between the 3 of them, would produce a monthly green keepers report. This would cover items such as the rakes and indeed how to rake a bunker correctly.

- **Tim and Richard to produce a monthly green keepers report.**

**0607/11** – Chris reported he had spoken to the Pro Shop regarding societies starting on the 10<sup>th</sup> at weekends, and doesn't foresee any more problems.

**0607/12** – Chris has reminded Barry and Ali over the importance of sending out the dress code to societies when confirming bookings.

**0607/13** – Chris stated that the new tee on the 9<sup>th</sup> needed to be measured before being brought into general play.

- **Gareth to speak to Dave Knight re measuring hole and to advertise when ready for play.**

**0607/14** – Chris stated that he had replied to Tom Reseigh's letter of complaint and the matter is now dealt with.

Richard asked if the Committee could have a copy of the letter.

- **Chris to provide a copy of the letter.**

### **Juniors – matter arising from AGM**

Geoff reported that there had been no replies to his letter, asking for support from the parents of the juniors. It seems unlikely that any will be forthcoming before the appointment of a Junior Organiser.

Geoff has spoken to Matt Bland informing him of the process in regard to advertising for a Junior Organiser and is keen for Richard to meet with Matt in parallel to any advert replies, in order to be able to follow up any appointments ASAP.

- **Richard and Geoff to meet with Matt.**

After discussion it was agreed that the post of Junior Organiser be formally advertised within the membership by Monday 10<sup>th</sup> August. The closing date for applications would be Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> September.

- **Richard to advertise post on website and on notice board.**
- **Gareth to include advert in next newsletter.**

### **Captain's report**

Geoff started by congratulating Richard and his team for getting the website up and running. After a few technical hitches (on the website designers side!), it is proving to be very successful. Clearly Richard has missed his vocation and should have been a sports reporter.

It was a great pleasure to present John Rance with the Club's first Senior Captains Jacket at the dinner following the seniors v ladies match.

Unfortunately there has been no response regarding the letter requesting a Junior Organiser. Geoff has spoken to Matt Bland to set up a meeting, in view of discussing him running the juniors.

The Scratch Foursomes won their first match of the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the season, beating the Racecourse in all 3 games. They are now 7 points clear in the league.

The Club Championship was played in true summer conditions over the 2 days, with Nick Woodage winning the Gross Competition with a 73+75. Mark Brown won the Nett Competition with 69+69, and Lynn Turner won the Ladies Gross and Nett with 92+96 and 73+77 respectively. Next year it would be beneficial to have some Marshalls as the final round were taking up to 6 hours. More ball spotters might help with this.

Earlier in the month Geoff stood in for Richard and took a team to The Lambourne. He was under considerable pressure as the men's team were unbeaten. Geoff was pleased to report that they remained so, as they halved the match.

We are struggling with numbers for the Invitation Day with only 8-10 pairs. A decision needs to be made whether to cancel it altogether.

Geoff was very sad to have to report that Terry Riordan passed away last week. Terry was a member and Marshall for some time at Donnington Grove. He was a kind and gentle man and was held in high regard. All those who knew him will be very sad at the loss.

- **John will contact Terry's family to enquire re flowers/donation.**

Geoff has priced benches in memory of Elfed. £200 for a 2-seater. £400 for a 3-seater. Geoff will liaise with Dave Knight regarding its position.

- **The Committee agreed that a 3-seater was the most appropriate.**

Geoff concluded by thanking Dave Knight and his team on the standard of the greens and course over the past month.

### **Professional/Course report**

Nothing to report.

### **Communications**

Richard gave the following facts from the first few weeks of the website:

#### Survey questions

1. Quiz Night in October? - 2:1 in favour
2. Sunday Competitions? - Majority in favour of spreading competition over the weekend
3. Winter League this year? - Split 50:50
  - **Tim to organise a Quiz Night in October.**
  - **Sean, Gareth and Tim to arrange Sept Medal over Sat 5<sup>th</sup> + Sun 6<sup>th</sup> Sept.**
  - **Sean to monitor Winter League and report back at next meeting.**

Richard then gave the following statistics:

- 163 separate log-ins
- 710 visits (20<sup>th</sup> July – 2<sup>nd</sup> August)
- Average number of pages viewed per visit 5.07
- Average time spent on site 6.27 minutes.
- New visits since 1<sup>st</sup> week – Increase of 18.31%.
- Bounce rate: 21.27%

(This is how the web grades how successful a site is. The lower the percentage, the better. A commercial company with a bounce rate of 45% would be very happy).

Richard then asked for 3 new survey questions to be put on for this month. After discussion the following were decided upon:

1. Presentation Evening. Formal sit down meal?
2. Increase Comp fees to pay for Marshall?
3. Black Tie Xmas Party?

Richard finished by mentioning that John Heath had kindly volunteered to send reports to the Newbury Weekly News. He would glean the information from the website and contact either Richard or Tim regarding any queries.

Tim asked whether the News items could be increased to at least 10 items.

Richard stated that he had just done this.

Tim went through the list of known events between now and the next meeting and allocated the events to members responsible for updating the website.

### **Competitions and Handicaps report**

Nothing to report.

### **Social report**

Tim reported that despite the loss of £400 due to the cancellation of the Barn Dance, the social income and expenditure account was still in profit by £373.04. This figure includes the profit from the Champagne Roll Ups, which will be put back into the final Roll Up on Friday 25<sup>th</sup> September.

The only social event due for August was a meeting of the Donnington Diners. This is due to the holiday season.

Tim has spoken to Dave Bamford re: a quiz night on Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> October. Subject to Management agreement, this will be advertised within the next week.

- **Tim to advertise Quiz night.**

Tim stated that from hard won experience it appears that the best method of attracting members to social functions is to ring them individually, as well as talking to them in the club. He will try this on the upcoming Quiz Night.

Tim then said that he was concerned over the possible attendance at the Final Roll Up on Friday 25<sup>th</sup> Sept, which was being billed as a Spanish Theme Day. This was due to the apparent lack of interest from the members for the Barn Dance. He suggested that it be renamed as Roll Up Party. This would leave our options open as to the form of entertainment.

This was agreed by all present.

- **Tim to edit the website regarding the Final Roll up.**

## Lady Captains' Report

Lynn started by stating on behalf of all the ladies how sad they all are to hear that Terry Riordan's battle against cancer was lost last weekend. He was a very good friend to all, and a conscientious Marshall at Donnington Grove. He will be sadly missed by all.

The Ladies social evenings are still being well attended, despite this busy holiday time.

Lynn has made all the ladies aware of the new website and encouraged them to use it.

Until last week, the ladies held a 100% winning record – the results are on the website. Unfortunately the seniors rained on their parade in retaining the trophy last week. Well done to them.

Only 2 other competitions were played at the Grove this month; the Shotoku Cup, in which the ladies couldn't beat Liam and Austin's great score of Nett 66. The Club Championship was won by Nick Woodage (Gross) Mark Brown (Nett) and Lynn Turner (Gross and Nett).

Jan King won the Millennium Cup on 8<sup>th</sup> July at Blue Mountain.

Lynn has organised an away day for the ladies on Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> August at Weybrook Park. 14 ladies have entered, so a fun day should be on the cards, together with a nice meal and prize giving.

## Treasurer's report

Brenda handed out copies of the following reports:

- Projected Income and Expenditure Account.
- Current Income and Expenditure account.
- Balance Sheet.

She stated that it was difficult to give a precise projected I+E a/c as most of it relied upon the income from competitions. She asked whether it was possible to look back over the years and get an average amount which could be used in the calculations. For this year she took last year's Income of £9,236.90 and rounded it down to £9,000.

- **After discussion it was decided that Sean and Gareth look into the numbers entering the competitions to see whether the figures were compatible or not.**

The report shows a projected loss for the year of £2,855. Brenda explained that this can be attributed to one off payments incurred this year of £1,000 for the new computer terminal. £600 for the design of the new member's website. £414 for the reframing of Past captains photographs. The remaining £800 was taken up with the cost of the various team shirts.

However, the finances are still in a healthy situation, with a surplus of £4,789.17.

## Management report

Nothing to report.

### Senior Captains' report

John reported that since the last meeting the seniors have played Caversham Heath (home and away), Newbury & Crookham, Dummer and the ladies – and won most of them. 19 played, 15 won, 1 halved and 3 lost. Not bad for a band of old gits! At the match against the ladies, Geoff arrived and presented John with his Seniors Captains Jacket, which John states he will treasure and probably spill food down at the next match!

All visitors who play at the Grove love the course and the food receives much praise. However lots of visitors remark upon the fact that the club house and particularly the dining room are very noisy, making conversation difficult. There has to be a way of improving the acoustics somehow.

The seniors have just concluded their series of clinics with Matt Woods. This consisted of 5 group lessons, culminating in a 9-hole competition, with Matt walking 3 holes with each group, working on course management. Everyone agreed that the clinic was a great success.

The planning is well under way for the Seniors Open on August 21<sup>st</sup> and so far there are about 76 entrants – more than last year, which is very good considering the economic climate.

As well as the Open they have 5 matches this month and already the teams are full. One of these is at West Berks playing for the Elfed Davies Trophy, which the Grove currently holds.

Now that summer is over, sleeveless team jumpers have arrived, and very nice they are too.

John had to end on a sad note. Terry Riordan, one of the senior players died last weekend. He was a great friend of John's, an excellent golfer and a really good story teller – everything you need on a golf tour. John will miss him very much. John stated that he will inform the Committee of the funeral arrangements as soon as he knows, so we can make a suitable contribution.

### Any other business

Lynn asked how well supported the Mixed Open was.

- Geoff replied that it was almost certain to be cancelled due to the low entrant numbers (12 so far).

**Geoff to make decision on cancellation.**

Lynn asked that curtains be installed in the restaurant and bar, due to the noise levels.

- Chris replied that he would look into this as a matter of urgency.

**Chris to research problem.**

Lynn asked that a sub-committee be appointed to run the Captains Charity Day that was now approaching.

- Geoff replied that if all agreed the sub-committee would consist of himself, Lynn, Richard, Tim and Fiona Lomax.

**Geoff and Lynn to arrange sub-committee meeting.**

Lynn stated that certain members were uncomfortable with the 2 week extension given to a group in the knock-out competition, as previous matches have been conceded for the same reason, earlier in the same competition.

- Geoff replied that a letter had been received by the Committee from 1 of the groups asking for a decision. He convened a Quorum consisting of himself, Richard Lomax, Gareth Williams and Tim Brunsdan to review the matter. After much debate, the Committee came to conclusion that this particular case came under 'exceptional circumstances' as the wording of the competition rules were sufficiently vague for the Committee to see both sides were correct! Geoff reiterated the fact that each 'dispute' was judged on its own merits and that the Committee only become involved when a formal, written protest is made.

**Lynn to disseminate findings to relevant members.**

Brenda brought attention to the problem of buggies using the walkway from the car park to the 1<sup>st</sup> tee. From the 9<sup>th</sup> green across the 1<sup>st</sup> fairway, back to the car park. And from using the short cut through the trees between the 11<sup>th</sup> green and 12<sup>th</sup> tee.

Tim suggested that signs should be placed in these areas directing buggies the correct way.

- Chris said he would speak to Dave Knight to get the appropriate signs made and installed.

**Chris to speak to Dave Knight.**

**Richard and Tim to include this in green keepers report.**

Brenda asked whether any progress had been made in acquiring a whiteboard for the results of the Club Championship.

- Tim replied that he had looked into several ideas including the whiteboard. This was still on-going.

**Tim to continue research into various boards etc for competitions.**

John highlighted problems with the 'herring bone' pattern of car park spaces. He stated that when full, buggies were blocking the through fare while parked by cars.

- **Chris stated he would monitor the situation.**

Lastly a Committee member asked that a formal letter be sent to a certain member who had been seen abusing the use of the buggies on several occasions.

- **Geoff and Richard will write to the member.**

There being no further business the meeting was closed at 10.50pm

**Next Meeting – Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> September 2009**

**7.30pm**

Tim Brunsdan  
6<sup>th</sup> August 2009