

DONNINGTON GROVE GOLF AND COUNTRY CLUB

Minutes of Committee Meeting; Tuesday 5th May 2009

Present; Geoff Kells, Lynn Turner, Ann MacDonald, Richard Lomax, John Rance, Brenda Agutter, Tim Brunsdon, Sean Sargeant, Chris Strong, Gareth Williams.

Apologies; None.

The Captain took the chair

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

Matters Arising

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

0710/3 – Gareth stated that the new format for invoicing and payment has been drafted and awaited typing. It was agreed by all present that Ali should be the point of contact.

0710/9 – Geoff reported that the ‘Elfed’ Trophy cabinet is now in situ and has been completed to a high standard, although it still awaits a plaque. There was a discussion as to the location of a plaque. Geoff stated that it would be too high on the top. Tim suggested that it could go on an oak stand and be placed on a shelf at eye level. Then Sean came up with the idea that the glass doors be inscribed or etched – this seemed to appeal to most and Richard was to contact the engravers to see if it was possible.

1301/3 – Richard reported back from his meeting with the web-site designers. There were 2 alternatives to move the members’ site forward; use the existing Donnington Grove site, or use a new Content management system (CMS) which would be used solely for the members’ site.

The advantage of using the existing site is that there would be no cost to the Committee. The disadvantages being that it would use the same template as the main site, including the main navigation menu and that the Committee would not be able to input anything themselves, as the site would be owned by Sandtrend – all items would have to be submitted through Gareth.

The advantage of using a new CMS is that the site would be solely under the control of the Committee who would ‘own’ it. This would allow items to be updated immediately by the Committee. It would be able to reflect the wishes of the membership without having to go through Sandtrend.

The disadvantage of the CMS is that there would be a one-off payment of £1,000 + VAT. This has been partly offset by Chris Strong’s generous offer to fund £400 + VAT of this, leaving the Committee to finance £690.

Brenda voiced some concerns over the matter of regular updating of the site and who would be responsible for this in years to come. After some discussion it was agreed that good communication with the members was vital and that future Committees would be judged on their ability to do this.

Brenda also asked whether the system would be tested before ‘going live’. Geoff and Richard assured her that it would.

Everyone agreed that the CMS system, if properly maintained, would benefit the members most.

Richard Lomax proposed that the Committee go ahead with the CMS version and fund the website for £690.

Geoff Kells seconded this.

It was put to the vote and carried unanimously.

0604/1 – Gareth and Sean are working together, with Sean taking more responsibility for the competitions and handicaps, so Gareth can concentrate more on the pro shop.

0604/3 – Sean is to put up a notice informing members about inactive handicaps. This has been taken from the English Golf Union and will come into effect in 2010. It was agreed that it was important that the members were aware of the ramifications as early as possible, in order to have time to complete the 3 qualifying rounds required.

Sean also asked that a central computer, which could be used by Committee members, be set up at some location. This would standardise items and format and members would have access to all items, rather than just those held on their own computers. Chris stated that he would look into this.

0604/9 – Tim and Chris have agreed a date for a New Members Evening. This will be held in the bar at 7pm on Tuesday 16th June 2009. Chris will contact all new members and inform them of the occasion.

1604/10 – Lynn asked that the bar time be extended for members attending functions. Chris stated that this could not be done on a frequent basis, but would be considered given sufficient notice. Tim said he would ask Ali for an extended period when booking late night functions.

0604/11 – John Rance has produced a notice informing members that they need to cash in any expired prize vouchers by 1st June 2009 as **expired** vouchers will not be accepted after this date. This will go on the notice board this evening.

0604/12 – Richard stated that the ‘Most Improved Junior’ Trophy, which had been wrongly presented, was now ready for collection with the correct recipient Austin Stone now engraved on it.

Juniors – matter arising from AGM

Richard stated that the question was raised at the AGM from the floor regarding a Junior Section.

Chris stated that we had lost 17 juniors during the year and that the current number was 15. It was agreed that the committee needed to act in order to keep those 15 and to attempt to enrol others.

Chris stated that he was aware of the drop in numbers and was concerned. Ali Mitchell is currently ringing all those who have left to ascertain their reasons for doing so.

Gareth said that the group lessons he and Matt Woods were running for juniors were going well – they have up to 36 non-members attending at present.

Sean asked that a letter be sent to the current 15 junior members asking them what the Club could do for them. It was hoped that this might also get some parents involved in

the Club and a junior section. It was agreed to see what the response to these letters was, before looking at an official junior section and officers to run it.

Sean stated that anyone running the section would need to be vetted by the council/police. Apparently Jon Millar had looked into this before and would be approached to see his views on the matter.

Sean also raised the point that a consent form needed to be signed by the parents of U14's to allow them to remain at the club alone. Chris stated that he would consult the Golf Managers' Association regarding this.

Management report

Chris strong stated that the membership had fallen from a high of 357 last year to a current total of 237 (excluding juniors). Although this was of concern, it appeared to be similar to the majority of Clubs. Rag Barn had lost 60 members and Donnington Valley had lost over 100. He was hopeful that membership would pick up in the summer.

The golf members were to be encouraged to use the car park by the pro shop in order to leave the front of the hotel for hotel guests. Spaces would be reserved at the rear of the old pro shop (now the new bridal suites) for those staying in the apartments.

Captain's report

Geoff Kells stated that the 'Elfed' cabinet is now finished with locks and glass shelves, and fits in very well. All the trophies have fitted in, bar a few lids for the larger trophies. All that remains is for a plaque to be made with an inscription to Elfed.

Most players have their team shirts by now – only 4 remain.

There were 28 past captains and their partners for the Captains Dinner, with 15 playing in the Captains Plate earlier in the day. It was a fabulous, well-attended day, with good weather. Chris Strong won the Captains' Plate with 35 pts and Clive Saunders, with his team of Chris strong and Brenda Agutter won the better ball competition. Geoff reiterated his thanks to Richard and Fiona Lomax for organising a very well run day and evening.

The Elfed Memorial Day went very well, although it would have been nice to have more people play. There were 28 players, but the event clashed with practice rounds, a BB&O match and a seniors match at West Berks. A team of our ladies won the day.

The Club matches are now well under way and we fielded 3 teams on Sunday. It is pleasing to report that we are getting great support from the members.

The Hillman Team won their first away match – a really good result, as they were knocked out last year in their first away match.

The Scratch Team remains undefeated and is top of their league.

The Concorde League Team suffered an away defeat last Sunday, but is still joint league leaders.

Lastly a letter/poster will be approved by the Committee and posted next week regarding the CONGU ruling on maintaining handicaps for 2010.

Lady Captains' Report

Lynn reported that the ladies section had been very busy since the last meeting.

The last ladies supper was well attended, as it also celebrated the launch of Ann McDonald's autobiography in England. As usual the food and service was excellent.

Jan King won the Japan Cup with a net 73. Lynn and Ann won their 2nd round match in the Daily Mail Foursomes, beating 2 ladies from Donnington Valley, allowing them to hold their heads high around the Newbury courses. The first ladies friendly match was played against The Springs on 21st April, which we won 4&2. The first mixed match was played last Sunday against Newbury and Crookham with us winning 5½ to 1½. Thanks must go to the men who partnered us in a very enjoyable day.

The Captain's Plate held on 18th April was a very enjoyable day for everyone concerned and the team game was good fun, being won by Brenda Agutter, Clive Sanders and Chris Strong. The individual winner being Chris Strong. Well done everyone! It is always nice to meet up again with the past captains.

On Friday 24th April we hosted the Tegner Trophy Competition, organised by the Berkshire County Ladies Golf Association, of which the top 16 players qualified to the ¼ and semi finals, which carried on through Saturday and Sunday. The outright winner was Gillian Brooks from Mill Ride.

Matt Woods has arranged a golf clinic for the ladies on Monday 27th April, but again the weather was not kind to us, so it will be re-arranged.

On Wednesday 29th April, Lynn organised a coffee morning, inviting ladies from other clubs to play our course and enjoy homemade cakes. 40 ladies attended a most successful day, which raised £160 for Lynn's Charity – The Air Ambulance. Many thanks go to all our ladies who helped make it so successful.

Treasurer's report

Brenda stated that our net assets currently stood at a healthy £4,500. She was awaiting reports from the various sections to enable her to compose a projected income and expenditure account for this year.

Social report

Tim reported that the Donnington Diners was going from strength to strength with 23 attending the last dinner on 17th April. He has been approached by several new members regarding the evenings and reminded the committee that they were open to guests as well as members. The next date is Friday 22nd May.

There were 7 teams entered so far for the Quiz night on Friday 8th May, although he expected the numbers to increase on the night. Tim expressed concern whether the bar area is suitable for functions of this type as we have no control over hotel guests, golf breaks also using the bar. The rooms upstairs lack atmosphere and are far from the bar.

There have been a couple of date changes. Matt Woods apologised, asking to change the date of his Academy Workshop and competition in June. It has now been swapped with the Donnington Diners and the new dates are Golf Academy Workshop – Friday 12th June. Donnington Diners – 19th June. Tim will replace the current notices with an amended version.

The Barn Dance is progressing well – The ladies seem to have the scarecrow building well in hand. And a farm has been identified to supply us with straw bales. We still await food and drink costs from Ali and Nico. Tickets for this will go on sale after the Quiz night this Friday. The bar till will be set up to accept payment by the member's cards, similar to the race night. The Barn Dance will be open to guests and Tim hopes to attract 100+.

Seniors' report

John reported that there had only been 2 nominations for the new post of Senior's Captain and Vice-Captain – namely John Rance and Mike Williams respectively.

Richard Lomax then proposed that John Rance be elected Seniors' Captain and Mike Williams be elected as Senior's Vice-Captain. This was seconded by Geoff Kells and was carried unanimously.

Senior Captains' report

The new captain reported that the seniors played a pathfinder at South Winchester in howling wind and rain and won 3 – 0. They then played Goring at home and won 4 ½ - 1 ½ so that gives them a record so far this year of played 5 won 5.

The team shirts are a great success and they are now looking at short sleeve jumpers as well – what a smart body of men!

Several new names have appeared on the list of seniors, so we will have even more to choose from for our matches.

Lots of folks have enquired about the Seniors Open, so it is expected to be a winner again.

Competitions and Handicaps report

Sean stated that the notice was now ready for publication regarding Supplementary Scores and Active/Inactive handicaps.

Sean has looked into the Course stroke indexes, together with the CONGU guidelines and has passed a new version to Gareth and Chris for their perusal for consideration for 2010 when they will be looked at again.

The summer league will probably be a 9-hole qualifying competition to be held on a weekday through July, August and September. This will help members who need to play in 3 qualifying events to maintain an active handicap for 2010. This will be published by Sean once finalised.

Sean will publish a notice informing members about the CONGU Stapleford/Nett Double Bogey adjustments.

He is looking into the purchase of a stamp machine for competition entries. This would negate the need for the Pro shop to collect money on the day of the competitions. In order to pay for this the medals would stay at a £3 entry fee, but the board competitions would need to be raised to £6.

Sean mentioned that some members had asked for competitions to be played on Sundays. This led to much discussion and a decision was made to experiment with the July and August medals to be held over **both** Saturday and Sunday. It was stressed that this was an experiment and would be re-assessed after the August medal.

Professional/Course report

Gareth was pleased to report that the greens were back to a good condition and are of a considerably better calibre than the surrounding courses.

Dave Knight is continuing to drag the bunkers for stones. A question was raised as to whether any bunkers awaiting repair/dragging, or in poor condition, could be marked as GUR. Gareth agreed to speak to Dave regarding this.

Dave Knight is concerned that many members/guests are not aware of how to rake a bunker correctly. This is leading to most of the sand ending up near one edge, leaving the opposite edge and centre devoid of the correct level of sand. Gareth will produce a series of photos, to be placed in the Pro Shop showing the correct method to be used.

More signs are due to arrive shortly for directions, parking etc.

A new procedure to dress the greens every 2 weeks has been agreed. This will not affect play and will keep the thatch under control. It will also keep any hollow coring to a minimum.

The irrigation system has been upgraded, with 2 new pumps being bought. This should ensure the tees and greens do not suffer during the summer.

The Pro Shop has just signed up with Cobra, who are the market leaders for ladies, juniors and seniors.

Finally Gareth thanked all those who sponsored him in the reading half marathon, which he completed within his target time.

Any other business

Richard said that the additional washers and towels were a welcome addition, but wished they could be regularly filled.

Gareth said this would be mentioned to Dave Knight.

Richard also brought attention to walkers on the pathways alongside the course and was there any signage ordered to inform walkers of the correct pathways.

Gareth and Chris replied that they were aware of the problem and indeed the requisite signs were on order.

Richard mentioned some recent breeches of the dress code, with one golfer on the tee in jeans!

Gareth said that when he was made aware of this he followed the group in question and having watched them play a hole or two asked them to leave the course – which they did.

Geoff asked if there were any plans to construct a practice ground bunker for the members to use.

Gareth replied that there were plans for a new bunker and chipping area currently with the owners awaiting a decision.

John stated that the tee collectors were working well, however the big wheelie bins outside the Pro Shop and the mattresses and other rubbish dumped at the rear of the 10th tee were a sight.

Chris agreed with this and said matters were in hand to rectify matters.

Geoff said the £100 had been taken out of the entry fee on the Elfed Memorial Day to go to a charity of Elfed wife's choice.

John said that the Pro Shop was disregarding the roll-up times on occasion, with double bookings.

Chris said that this was an unusual event and he couldn't guarantee the tee times 100%, although as much effort as possible is made to ensure the roll-up is not interfered with.

Lynn also mentioned the rubbish at the rear of the 10th tee and asked Gareth whether the ladies shirt order had been despatched to Nike.

Gareth said the order would be sent the next day.

Tim asked whether a date had been set for the New Members Evening.

Chris agreed a date with the Committee of Tuesday 16th June 2009 at 7pm in the bar.

Ali and Chris would contact all the relevant members informing them of the date.

Sean asked Gareth to thank Mark Rollins for all his efforts while Gareth was away.

Richard asked that a blackboard/notice board showing members the current weeks activities be considered.

Chris agreed that this was a good idea and would go ahead with it.

Richard stated that the Pro Shop needed to ensure any midweek prize vouchers handed out did not exceed the entry fees.

Gareth stated that the shop went by a matrix introduced by Gill Lane. John said he would look into it.

Richard asked that consideration be given to training Mark and Rudy to publish competition results and that there had been a golf break booked in at 10.10am – in the middle of the Japan Cup!

Richard said it may be a good idea to have hard and soft copies of the Club rules in the shop which the staff could refer to should there be a repeat of the confusion of a competition's format, as occurred in the Japan Cup.

There being no further business the meeting was closed at 9.50 pm

Next Meeting – Tuesday 2nd June 2009 7.30pm

Tim Brunsdon
7th May 2009