

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE HOYLAKE GOLF CLUB HELD AT THE CLUB AT 7.30PM ON MONDAY, 10th FEBRUARY 2014

Present

T. Coleman – President

D. Lloyd – Captain 2013

S. Bagley – Captain 2014

T. Brown, K. Bruffell, A. B'Simon, J. Callan, I. Chantler, C. Coleman, A. Cotter, D.M. Cowley, C. Davies, P.G. Davies, C. Deboe, D. Denton, M.E. Down, G.R. Edwards, F.R. Gilmore, D. Grime, H. Grimshaw, J. Hart, P. Hegarty, G. Hicks, G.C. Hogg, T.A. Hughes, J. Humphreys, M. Jones, A.G. Kearney, L. Kelley, J.F. Kennedy, R. Lally, J. Lawrence, C. Lloyd, P. Martin, M. McCabe, M. McMahan, T. A. McNamara, D. Murray, J. Nolan, P. O'Hanlon, P. Qualtrough, F. Reid, W. Rogers, J. Ross, M. Salter, A. Shepherd, D. Sefton, D. Smith, S. Smith, G.B. Watson, D. White, J.H. Williams, R. Winstanley and K. Wylde.

1. Deceased Members

At the request of the President members stood to applaud the memory of colleagues who had passed away during the year: Alan Button, Joe Cavanagh, Fred Gee, Fred Roberts and Ted Tester.

2. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted in writing to the Council Secretary from A. Bagley, C. Boulton, J. Chesters, S. Clark, K. Culligan, M. De Matas, I. Dixon, N. Down, N. Ellis, R. Evans, B. Gardner, A. Greenland, P. Greenland, G. Handley, J. Hay, J. Horobin, H. Large, M. Lloyd, P. Mobbs, G. Popper, D. Ryan and S. Walton.

3. Minutes of the Annual General Meeting 2013

Members noted that the minutes for the Annual General Meeting held on 18th February 2013 had been posted on the notice board immediately after their approval at the next following Council meeting; and resolved unanimously that they be accepted as a true record of proceedings without discussion.

4. Club Position Statement and Treasurer's Report (Dave Denton)

The Club Treasurer informed the meeting that the Club Secretary, Mike Down, had recently resigned for personal reasons and, accordingly, he would combine information on some important organisational issues with his own report on the Annual Financial Statement. The members applauded the contribution Mike Down had made to the management and administration of the Club. The members recognised similarly the innovative work of Phil Mobbs who, whilst remaining on the Council, was relinquishing the role of Handicap Secretary.

For a number of years the Club had fought to retain sufficient tee times to support its membership level. However, it was increasingly harder to justify the expenditure involved. In the summer season the Club held 28 tee times that would accommodate 112 competitors and the charge for this from Wirral Borough Council was £1062. The average number of competitors was 70. In the winter season there were 23 tee times for a maximum of 92 competitors but the average turn out was 50. In addition to pressure from the Club Professional to surrender some times there would be budgetary considerations to do so next year.

Members were informed that the course would be closed from 12th to 25th July to facilitate The Open Championship but that it was planned to stage two additional Tuesday 18 hole competitions, before and after The Open, to compensate members for the lost weekends. The Club was also to host the Merseyside Municipal Championships on Sunday, 1st June; and, accordingly, in advance would also host the annual general meeting of the Association of Merseyside Municipal Golf Clubs on Monday, 24th February.

The current supply of competition scorecards would be exhausted by mid-May and the Club Council had taken the opportunity of the next bulk order to review the stroke indices. It had done so by examining a computer analysis of the performance of members in competitions totalling some 375,000 holes and the resultant computer generated ordering of the holes ranked by degree of difficulty for competitors. The Club Council had then considered the advice of CONGU which essentially offers two directions: either a distribution of stroke indices that is primarily designed for matchplay events or, where the majority of competitions are other than matchplay, a distribution based on degree of difficulty. The Club Council has chosen the latter route and the new scorecard will reflect exactly the electronic analysis.

The Club Treasurer introduced his Annual Financial Statement for the year ending 31st December 2013 and thanked Mike Baker and George Edwards, the Club's auditors, for their diligent work in certifying the accounts. The statement of account showed a deficit of £668.63 on the year and that the Club's overall reserves had dipped below £5,000 for the first time since the late 1990s and now stood at £4,593.94. The Club Treasurer explained the circumstances behind each heading of income and expenditure and two were particularly noticeable, one item each of income and expenditure, which were in fact the only ones where the variance between this year and 2012 exceeded £500. The income from membership subscriptions had dropped by £1700, a reduction of just over 20% and clearly this was due to the fall in membership. On the expenditure side, the cost of competition prizes had risen by some £600 or again just over 20%. In part this was because there were

three extra summer competitions and therefore more prizes but, largely, it was due to the fact that retail prices in this area had risen and the Club Council wished to maintain the quality of its prizes.

This trend of fewer members supporting increasing prices was one that was apparent elsewhere and reference at this point was made to the difficulties faced by the "98 Club", whose precept income from Hoylake had fallen by £340, and the English Golf Union and Cheshire Union of Golf Clubs whose combined income from Hoylake membership fees had fallen by £300, both reflecting the 20% reduction or thereabouts in Club memberships. It was likely that the "98 Club" would raise the per capita precept on the component clubs from £10 to £13 because its costs in terms of rent and utilities were increasing but its income had reduced and its reserves had also fallen. The Cheshire Union of Golf Clubs was again raising its per capita charge, on this occasion by £1. The Club Treasurer explained that the Club did not intend to pass on these increases to members but to meet them in 2014 from reserves.

The Club Treasurer announced that in view of all these matters the Club Council would review income and expenditure very closely during the course of the year and probably would need to recommend a subscription increase to the Annual General Meeting in 2015. Some good news, however, was that the Cheshire Union card would this year be available free of charge to all members and would entitle members to discounted green fees at not just Cheshire courses but those in all English counties as well. Members applauded the Club Treasurer for his valuable work.

6. Captain's Report (Dave Lloyd)

The Captain was very happy to report that he had enjoyed a fantastic year and in great part that was due to the tremendous support he had received from members; and he wanted to acknowledge particularly the generosity of their contributions to the Club's charities. The Captain was sure that his successor, Steve Bagley, would receive the same magnificent support and wished him an enjoyable and successful year.

The Captain was grateful to the Council for the work they did and highlighted the weekly efforts of the Competitions and Handicap Secretaries; the work of the Club Secretary and Webmaster behind the scenes; the skill of the Club Photographer in recording the major events; the care with the Club's finances taken by the Club Treasurer; and the great support of Des and Sandra with the bar and catering. The Captain wished to end his year by thanking all members for the part they too had played in making his year as Captain one he will remember with pride. It had been an honour and a privilege for him to serve as Captain and he was grateful for the support he had received and the respect that had been shown to him.

The Captain closed by announcing the appointment of Norman Ellis as a Life Member of the Club.

7. Election of President

Tom Coleman was unanimously elected to serve as President for a fifth year.

8. Election of Officers

The following members were unanimously elected to serve the Club in the positions indicated – Dave Denton (Club Secretary); John Lawrence (Club Treasurer); Billy Rogers (Competitions Secretary); Dave Sefton (Handicap Secretary); Tom McNamara (Council Secretary) and Tom Brown, Charlie Coleman, Frank Gilmore, Geoff Hicks and Jimmy Humphreys (Ordinary Members). The Council Secretary confirmed that the Council would again seek to co-opt additional members at the start of the season and already had invited Phil Mobbs and Ron Winstanley to serve in this capacity.

10. Welcome to the Captain for 2014 (Steve Bagley)

The new Captain was welcomed in the traditional manner and took the Chair. He thanked members for their reception and said he was both honoured and delighted by his appointment. The Captain thanked Geoff Hicks for nominating him and Dave Lloyd for his excellent leadership during the past year. The Captain was committed to working with his Vice-Captain, Pat Martin, and members of the Council to ensure the new season was a memorable one and he was looking forward especially to the main events.

The Captain hoped as many members as possible would attend the Captain's Drive-In on 22nd March to observe the traditional start to the season at 6.40am and again at 9.40am and Captain's Day would be held on 21st June. Both events would see drinks and snacks available to fortify members. The Club Day Out would be on 27th June at Antrobus Golf Club, where members would be able to enjoy 27 holes as well as refreshments on arrival and lunch for the competitive price of £35. President's Day would be held on 2nd August, the Club Championship on 9th August with Finals Day on 27th September and the Ryder Cup match against West Hoyle Golf Club on 27th and 28th September. The Annual Dinner and Prize Presentation would again be held at the Royal Liverpool Golf Club on Friday, 7th November. The Captain ended by wishing all members a very enjoyable and successful season.

11. Rule Change

The Club Treasurer explained the difficulty the Club faced with external bodies who billed per capita charges based on the membership level in mid-season when, because Club rules permitted members who had not paid their annual subscription to remain in membership until 31st December. The Club Council wished to bring forward the date at which membership would end under such circumstances to 30th June, thereby enabling the Club properly to avoid registering them with the external bodies. The meeting agreed, therefore, to amend Rule 14 to read "If a member fails to pay his subscription by the due date (*that is 31st March*) his membership will automatically be suspended and, as a consequence, he will be disqualified from entering any competition. If payment remains outstanding at 30th June membership will lapse automatically."

12. Election of Auditors

Mike Baker and George Edwards were unanimously appointed to serve as the Club's auditors for the ensuing year.

13. Honoraria for Officers

Members accepted the Council's proposal that there should be no change to the existing level of honoraria for Officers and noted those circumstances when the Council had granted concessions to members for their "significant and on-going contribution to the management of the Club".

14. Clubroom Facilities

The meeting, having earlier noted the intention of the "98 Club" to raise the precept by £3 to cover its financial commitments, discussed two amenities that were at risk and the cost of which was borne from the precept paid by component clubs. The first related to the clubroom bar and the need to ensure that on a Saturday it was open by the time the first group was finishing its round. Members were assured that this would be the case.

The second related to the television and arose because the Performing Rights Society had notified the "98 Club" Committee that its licence fee was to go up from £180 to £587. The "98 Club" Committee had asked each component club to express a view on whether or not, faced with this unavoidable cost, the television should be removed. It was known that the Irby and West Hoyle Clubs had responded in favour of its removal. After much discussion a very clear steer was given by the membership that the television, like the bar, was an amenity that members of any golf club would expect in the category of basic minimum provision. The removal of the television would be seen as the action of a club in decline and the Council was urged to do all it could to convince the "98 Club" that it should retain it.

15. Texas Scrambles

The meeting discussed the possibility of varying the handicap adjustments for future Texas Scramble competitions and an assurance was given that the Competitions Secretary and Council would consider the matter during the course of the season.