

# HOYLAKE GOLF CLUB

## AGM MINUTES

### MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE HOYLAKE GOLF CLUB HELD AT 7.30PM ON MONDAY, 20<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY 2023

Present

Mike Down - President  
Dave Smith - Captain 2022  
Phil Qualtrough - Captain 2023

M.A. Baker, P. Bond, K. Bruffell, J.N. Callan, P. Chatterley, T. Coleman, D.M. Cowley, P. Davies, P. Davies Jnr, P.G. Davies, D. Denton N. Down, G.R. Edwards, H. Evans, F.R. Gilmore, R. Goodall, J. Griffin, R. Hancock, K. Hanrahan, G. Hicks, M. Higgins, T.A. Hughes, J. Humphreys, M.L. Jones, L. Kelley, P. Kelly, T. Kerkhofs, R. Koreman, J. Lawrence, M. McCabe, T.A. McNamara, J. Nolan, K.A. O'Neill, R. O'Neill, C. Pugh, F. Reid and S. Talbot.

#### **1. Deceased Members**

At the request of the President Members observed a minute's silence as a mark of respect for Harry Bevan and Graeme Gordon, who had passed away since the last Annual General Meeting.

#### **2. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were submitted in writing from D. Armitage, S. Bagley, D. Baugh, C. Boulton, I. Chantler, S. Clark, K. Culligan, M DeMatas, R.L. Evans, D. Farley, A. Fowler, D. Francis, A. Greenland, G. M. Handley, J.S. Hay, W. Incontro, D. Jerome, M. Jones, A. Kearney, H. Large, J. Lau, D. Lloyd, P. Martin, A. Mee, P. Mobbs, D. Owens, W. Rogers, D. Sefton, I.D. Thompson, D. Watson, P. Watson, R. Winstanley and J. Woodhouse.

#### **3. Minutes of the Annual General Meeting 2022**

Members noted that the minutes for the Annual General Meeting held on 21<sup>st</sup> February 2022 had been posted on the notice board immediately after their approval at the next following Council meeting. It was resolved unanimously that the minutes be accepted as a true record of proceedings without discussion.

#### **4. Club Secretary's Report (Dave Denton)**

The Club Secretary first thanked the committee and members of the Brackenwood Golf Club for offering the Club the use of its facilities for this meeting; and then reported on the organisation and activities of the Club during its initial year away from its traditional home. It

had been a difficult year because after the unseemly haste with which the Club had had to leave Hoylake, Members then had to settle in new surroundings, playing in an extended competition format and against a backcloth of uncertainty about whether there would be a permanent solution to maintain the Club or a risk to its future existence.

Although there had been significant progress by members of the Brackenwood Golf Club, with the recent decision of the Tourism, Communities, Culture and Leisure Committee, its future was unlikely to be determined before September and Hoylake Golf Club would continue to play its competitions at Arrowe Park. The Club Council would continue to keep members informed of the situation with Brackenwood and would consider the Club's future options when firm details and conditions were known. The Club Secretary was concentrating his immediate efforts on securing additional tee times and improvements in the facilities available to Hoylake Members at Arrowe Park. If sufficient additional Saturday tee times were not available then competitions would again be offered across weekends.

The Club Secretary hoped that whatever the normal arrangement might be, three particular events might be treated as exceptions: the Captain's Drive-In on 25<sup>th</sup> March; Captain's Day on 15<sup>th</sup> July and President's Day on 26<sup>th</sup> August; when every effort would be made to secure enough tee times to stage Saturday competitions with single block tee times; thus far he had managed to secure a single block booking of sixteen tees for the Drive-In. The Club Secretary reminded Members that this year marked the 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Club's formation and it was hoped that a further day out might be arranged to commemorate and to celebrate that landmark.

The Club Secretary also explained that the Club Council had reviewed the first-tee hospitality arrangements for these events, which had moved far from the traditional provision of a tot of whiskey, and the additional prizes for the Charity Days; given that the cost of hospitality and prizes was met by the Captain and the President, who received only their honoraria. Accordingly, the Club Council favoured a reduction in both the scale of hospitality and the extent of prizes.

The Club Secretary referred to the very grave difficulties that had been overcome in recent years with the pandemic and the compulsory sudden move away from Hoylake. However, perhaps the most significant success for the Membership was the manner in which everyone had coped with technological change in respect of Master Scoreboard and cashless payment systems. The Handicap Secretary and the Club Treasurer were to be congratulated for the manner in which they had overseen the management of their introduction and smooth operation; and for ensuring that these systems were now embedded securely for the future.

Members were aware that Dave Sefton was stepping back from his role as Handicap Secretary, and the Club Secretary felt it was important that special mention be made of his invaluable contribution to ensuring that the Club first weathered the introduction of the World Handicap System (WHS) and then used its various capabilities to its advantage. Similarly, the Club Treasurer had created a system that made the receipt and banking of payments and the award of cash prizes so much easier. The Club Secretary reported that the Club Council hoped that Members would in future simply ensure that their personal accounts were regularly topped up so that any and all disbursements could be made as a matter of

routine. The work of the Club Treasurer and Handicap Secretary meant that all the major management and administration functions of the Club could be undertaken remotely from the golf course.

The Club Secretary, having mentioned Dave Sefton, referred to the fact that the Council had been unable to nominate a successor. The Club had recently changed its operating model so that Master Scoreboard could be managed from more than one computer via The Cloud and, in fact, Mike Jones would be able in future to manage the requirements of the Seniors Section because of this. In all the circumstances faced by the Club, Phil Mobbs had volunteered to manage the Club's remaining needs on an acting basis until a permanent appointment could be made. The Club Secretary wished to thank him for this gesture and to assure him that the Club Council would continue the search for a permanent solution.

The Club Secretary thanked the Captain, Club Council and Members for their continuing support and the Members showed their appreciation of his excellent contribution to the Club.

### **5. Club Treasurer's Report (Peter Davies)**

The Club Treasurer introduced his Annual Financial Statement for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> December 2022 and thanked Mike Baker and Dave Francis, the Club's auditors, for their diligent work in certifying the accounts and for the support they had given to him during the year. Although the statement showed a profit of some £1,900 this was largely due to the fact that there had been no precept paid for the "98 Club" and, in overall terms the Club Treasurer was pleased to report a balanced account at the end of a difficult year for the Club. Sadly, the closure of Hoylake had also signalled the end of the "98 Club" and the Club had received a share of the funds held on behalf of the constituent clubs. This had enabled the Club Treasurer to award a dividend of £25 to each member's personal account, provided he was a member on 1<sup>st</sup> May, 2021.

The Annual Financial Statement showed the Club's overall reserves remained healthily at £11,500. In view of these favourable conditions the Club Treasurer was able to recommend to Members that the annual subscription be reduced to £35. In addition, the Club Treasurer was pleased to report that the Club Council had agreed that £15 be added to the personal account of any member who had paid the £50 annual subscription in 2022 and had renewed his subscription for 2023.

On the subject of personal accounts and the earlier mention by the Club Secretary, the Club Treasurer explained that it was the Club Council's wish to move away from the "envelope" way of Members putting in precise amounts to cover a specific purpose or event, towards a culture of Members ensuring that their account would stand any charge made against it following decisions indicated by Members from time to time in respect of anything ranging from weekly competition entry and tee time bookings to annual subscription and the annual dinner.

Acceptance of the Annual Financial Statement was proposed by Derek Cowley, seconded by George Edwards and agreed unanimously; and Members showed their appreciation of the Club Treasurer's care of the Club's funds.

## **6. Annual Subscriptions**

It was proposed by Tom Coleman, seconded by John Lawrence and agreed unanimously that the annual subscription be set at £35 for the coming year.

## **7. Captain's Report (Dave Smith)**

The Captain was very happy to report that he had enjoyed a memorable year in office, which was both notable and exceptional by reason of the fact that major events were held at three different courses. He was grateful that so many Members had attended the Drive-In and witnessed the last event played at the Hoylake course. He was pleased that so many Members, especially in the Seniors Section, had adapted so quickly to the Arrowe Park course, and he was happy that his efforts to accommodate all Members in a single block booking at Bidston Golf Club for his Captain's Day Charity had been largely appreciated by the Membership. The Captain was pleased to confirm that his Charity, Wirral Autism, had benefitted to the tune of more than £1,000 thanks to the generosity of the contributions from Members.

The Captain had been greatly assisted by the Club Secretary and Council members and he was sure that his successor, Phil Qualtrough, would receive the same magnificent support from the Council and the Club Members as he had; and wished him and his Vice-Captain, Ron Hancock, an enjoyable and successful year. The Members applauded the Captain for his sterling efforts during his difficult period of office.

## **8. Welcome to the Captain for 2023 (Phil Qualtrough)**

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 privileged by his appointment. The Captain was grateful to be nominated by the Past Captains, after waiting patiently for 36 years, and would do all he could to ensure the new season was a memorable one; and he hoped he could follow the example set by his predecessor, Dave Smith.

The Captain was looking forward to the season's main events. He hoped as many Members as possible would attend the Captain's Drive-In on 25th March to observe the traditional start to the season, even though it might look and feel different to what the Membership had become accustomed; and he was pleased that there had been such a good response to the Club Secretary's notice. The Drive-In would, of course, mark the Club's 90<sup>th</sup> birthday and he hoped that there would be an event to celebrate this achievement, as the Club Secretary had suggested. The Captain's nominated charity for the year would be The Stroke Association and he hoped that Members would afford this deserving organisation the very generous support that others had enjoyed in recent years.

The Captain was looking forward to playing in the Merseyside Municipal Championships at Ellesmere Port on Sunday, 4<sup>th</sup> June. The Club Day Out would be to the Hawarden Golf Club in North Wales on Friday, 7<sup>th</sup> July. The Annual Dinner and Prizegiving would be held at the Royal Liverpool Golf Club on Friday, 3<sup>rd</sup> November; and golf would again be available at a discounted

price. The Captain finished his first address by saying that he was looking forward to working with his Vice-Captain, Ron Hancock, and the members of the Council; and he wished all Members a very healthy, enjoyable and successful season.

## **9. Election of President**

It was resolved unanimously that Mike Down be re-elected to serve as President.

## **10. Election of Officers**

It was resolved unanimously that the following members be elected to serve the Club in the positions indicated – Dave Denton (Club Secretary); Peter Davies (Club Treasurer); Phil Mobbs (Communications Secretary); Tom McNamara (Council Secretary) and Peter Bond, Tom Coleman, Jimmy Humphreys, Tonny Kerkhofs and Dave Sefton (Ordinary Members).

## **11. Concessions for Members**

Members noted that concessions had been granted in 2022, as in previous years, to the Club's Webmaster and Photographer in recognition of their significant and on-going contribution to the management of the Club.

## **12. Election of Auditors**

It was resolved unanimously that Mike Baker and Dave Francis be appointed to serve as the Club's auditors for the ensuing year.

## **13. Matters Raised by Members for Discussion Only**

Members asked questions about the future of the Club in terms of its location and viability; and the timing of any decision by Wirral Borough Council on the future of the Brackenwood course and the cost of Invigor8. The Club Officers answered as far as they were able and the following emerged: -

1. The Tourism, Communities, Culture and Leisure Committee was unlikely to consider a report on further discussions with the Directors of the Brackenwood Community Golf Club before its June meeting; and if there was a decision at that time to proceed to a lease the Wirral Borough Council would be required to issue a public notice of its intention and invite members of the public to raise complaints if they so wished. This process could take as long as eight weeks. If the proposal cleared the public hurdle there would then be a process to agree the details of the lease.
2. The Club Council would not be considering a move away from Arrowe Park until there was an available alternative against which the current arrangements could be compared.

3. In the absence of choice and against the timetable faced by the Brackenwood Community Golf Club, the Club Council would be preparing for a second winter season at Arrowse Park until such time as circumstances dictated otherwise.
4. The Club Council had not considered and furthermore had no plans to consider folding the Club. If an opportunity arose that presented the Club with a choice of locations and a decision had to be made, the Club Council would determine how that decision would be made. That was to say that the Club Constitution and Rules were silent on where the Club was based but permitted the Club Council to act as it saw fit in such circumstances. The Club Council would consider all aspects of the opportunity for choice and decide whether to put the choice to Members through a ballot or general meeting; or, if it thought either might be overly divisive, to make and take responsibility for the decision itself.
5. The Club Council believed the more pressing existential threat to be the absence of a permanent handicap secretary rather than a permanent home. Failure to fill that vacancy would in the extreme case mean that the Club could not offer competitions; and, if that were the case, the Club would soon fold as Members sought competition elsewhere.
6. The Wirral Borough Council normally set fees from 1st April and it was expected that the cost of Invigor8 would rise. The Club Council would not make a recommendation to Members on whether or not to pay for Invigor8 by discounted annual payment or by monthly instalments: Members would be informed of any developments and free to make individual decisions.