



HOYLAKE GOLF CLUB

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE HOYLAKE GOLF CLUB HELD AT 7.30PM ON MONDAY, 24th FEBRUARY 2025 AT BRACKENWOOD GOLF CLUB

Present

Dave Denton - President 2025
Ron Hancock - Captain 2024
Simon Talbot - Captain 2025

K. Bruffell, D.M. Cowley, P. Davies, P.G. Davies, G.R. Edwards, R.L. Evans, F.R. Gilmore, R. Goodall, K. Hanrahan, G. Hicks, M. Higgins, J. Humphreys, T. Kerkhofs, J. Lally, R. Lally, J. Lawrence, M. McCabe, T.A. McNamara, P. Mobbs, S. Nardo, J. Nolan, K.A. O'Neill, R. O'Neill, C. Pugh and P. Qualtrough.

1. Deceased Members

At the request of the Captain, Members observed a minute's silence as a mark of respect for Mick Down, Mick Jones and Albert Schorah, who had passed since the last Annual General Meeting. Mick Down had served as President for the past seven years and had also served as Club Captain in 1994 as well as Club Secretary and Competition Secretary during over thirty years on the Club Council. Mick Jones had served as Club Captain in 2002 and Albert Schorah had been a popular long-standing member.

2. Remote Attendance of Members

The Council Secretary informed Members that the meeting was inquorate and asked that some Members who had been unable or unfit to travel to the meeting be admitted remotely via social media. The Membership agreed and A. Gardner, G. Handley, L. Martin, R. Wakefield and D. Wright joined the meeting and, in so doing, established a quorum.

3. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted in writing from D. Armitage, S. Ashford, S. Bagley, M.A. Baker, P. Bond, C. Boulton, I. Chantler, S. Clark, T. Coleman, K. Culligan, P. Davies Jnr, N. Down, D. Farley, D.R. Francis, A. Gardner, A. Greenland, J. Griffin, K. Hayhurst, W. Incontro, S. Jenkinson, D. Jerome, M. Jones, M.L. Jones, A. Kearney, L. Kelley, R. Koreman, H. Large, J. Lau, C. Lloyd, D. Lloyd, P. Martin, A. Mee, R.J. Murray, D.W. Owens, C. Pugh, P. Qualtrough, W. Rogers, J. Ross, C. Ruse, D. Salisbury, A. Shepherd, D. Smith, S. Smith, I.D. Thompson, W. Tripp, S. Walton, D. Watson, P. Watson, R. Winstanley and J. Woodhouse.

4. Minutes of the Annual General Meeting 2024

Members noted that the minutes for the Annual General Meeting held on 26th February 2024 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.

5. 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 thanked the Membership for their support during his time in office against the backcloth of having to leave the Hoylake course and clubhouse and relocate to Arrowe Park. It had been a difficult task to agree a place in the queue with all the other clubs and societies using the course and, having agreed arrangements, the Club encountered frequent closures because of the exceptionally poor weather.

The Club Secretary reported on preparations for the new season during which he hoped the weather would be more favourable. In 2024 the Club Secretary had asked Wirral Borough Council for seventeen summer tee times on Saturdays split into early and late morning groups from 7.18am to 8.14am and from 11.02am to 11.58am. The average number of Members playing each week was thirty-six with a maximum attendance of forty-eight and a minimum of twenty-eight. This year, and as a result of that lower usage he had needed to reduce the request and had asked for only eleven summer tee times: six from 07.18am to 07.58am and five from 11.18am to 11.50am. The Club Secretary expected that his request would be accepted and he further expected that the Club Council would wish to continue the booking format of the Winter Season, whereby Members would book into a vacant time slot each week rather than have a set time. The Warren Golf Club was to host the Merseyside Municipal Golf Clubs Championships on Sunday, 1st June, 2025 but the event would be played at Wirral Golf Club because the host course would be unable to accommodate the expected field of one hundred and fifty-six club representatives. Advice would soon be available for Hoylake Members interested in qualifying for the Championships.

The Club Secretary thanked the Captain, Club Council and Members for their support during his period in office and wished his successor every possible success, The Members showed their appreciation of his excellent contribution to the Club.

6. Club Treasurer's Report (Peter Davies)

The Club Treasurer introduced his Annual Financial Statement for the year ending 31st December 2024 and thanked Dave Francis and Andy Gardner, 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 surplus over the year of some £330 this was largely due to the reduction in tee time fees because so many days had been lost to inclement weather. The Club Treasurer reminded Members that the Club had only the two income streams of membership subscription and competition entry fees and any revival in the Club's

fortunes would rely on attracting new Members and more Members entering competitions when they were able to be staged.

The Annual Financial Statement showed the Club's overall reserves had reduced to £3,400 following the distribution to Members last year of nearly £8,000. Continued prudent management would be required as a number of price rises were anticipated, particularly from the Cheshire Union and Golf England. Acceptance of the Annual Financial Statement and the Club Treasurer's recommendation that the level of the annual subscription be increased to £45 was proposed by George Edwards, seconded by Paul Davies and agreed unanimously. The Club Treasurer had introduced key improvements during his time in office, particularly cashless operating systems, and he thanked Members for their great support. Members showed their appreciation of the Club Treasurer's efforts over the years.

7. Captain's Report (Ron Hancock)

The Captain was very happy to report that he had enjoyed a memorable year in office, which had started with inclement weather and his Drive-In being delayed until May. Nevertheless, he was grateful that so many Members had attended the Drive-In and his Captain's Charity Day and very pleased to confirm that his charities, the Macmillan Cancer Support and Kidney Research had benefitted to the tune of £1,675 and £650, respectively, thanks to the generosity of the contributions from Members. The Captain was also pleased to report that the President's Charity, Wirral Hospice St. John's, had received £910.

The Captain had greatly enjoyed the Club Day Out at the Vicars Cross Golf Club and also the Annual Dinner at the Royal Liverpool Golf Club, although he was certain the numbers attending could be improved. He was encouraged that the Club Council was considering allowing Members to bring a guest to both events.

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

8. Retirement of Club Council Officers

The Captain wished to recognise the tremendous service given to the Club, often during difficult times, of officers who were retiring from their positions at the end of the Annual General Meeting. Dave Denton had served as Club Secretary on two occasions and had expertly guided the Club through its exodus from Hoylake. Peter Davies, as Club Treasurer, had guarded the Club's accounts through difficult periods and had succeeded in making the Club a cashless operation whilst maintaining a healthy reserve, as the Club's financial statement had shown. Peter had also served as Club Secretary. Phil Mobbs, in his role as Handicap Secretary, had steered the Club Membership through the complexities of firstly computerised score entry and then the World Handicap System; and Tom Coleman, who had also served for some years as President and had championed the Club's interest within the

“98 Club Committee”. The Captain presented engraved plaques to each and the Membership showed its appreciation of their sterling service with warm and prolonged applause.

The Senior Past Captain, speaking on behalf of the Membership, added his appreciation of their distinguished efforts. He also congratulated and thanked those Members standing for election to the Club Council for the first time, Mike Higgins, Rich O’Neill and Simon Nardo, for volunteering at such a watershed moment for the Club. He was sure they would bring energy and fresh ideas to the Club and he wished them every success. The Membership responded with warm applause.

9. The Mick Down Memorial Trophy

The Captain and Vice-Captain were pleased to announce the introduction of a new annual event to honour the memory of Mick Down and they unveiled the new trophy which bore a striking resemblance to Mick’s beloved Claret Jug, in recognition of his many years of service to The Open Championship. Mick had served as President of both the Men’s and Ladies Sections and it was fitting therefore that the format would be a Calcutta team event in conjunction with the Ladies. Trish Down had been consulted and the Ladies Section at its Annual General Meeting had agreed that the inaugural event would take place on Saturday, 26th July. It was hoped that Members would give great support to this event.

10. Captain of Captains

The Senior Past Captain, on behalf of the Membership, noted that Derek Cowley had commenced his year as Captain of the Association of Merseyside Municipal Golf Club Captains and wished him every success. Members showed their appreciation of his appointment with warm applause.

11. Welcome to the Captain for 2025 (Simon Talbot)

The new Captain was welcomed in the traditional manner and took the Chair. He thanked members for their reception and said he felt both proud and privileged by his appointment. The Captain was grateful to be nominated by Phil Qualtrough and the Past Captains 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, Ron Hancock, who had proven to be an excellent Captain. The Captain described his formative first few months as a new Member in 1996 and how established Members had introduced him to the rules and etiquette of golf. He then thanked the Club Secretary and his Council for their unstinting efforts to make sure that there was a full and varied fixture list of competitions to be played, weather permitting, during his year in office.

Looking forward to the season’s 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. The Club Day Out would be at the Vale Royal Golf Club, Northwich, on Friday, 6th June at a total cost including meals of £70 and the Captain hoped that there would be a good response, particularly as there would be no Club competition the following day because of the Arrowe Park Open. The Captain’s Charity Day would be on 12th July and his nominated

charities for the year would be Myeloma UK and the Alder Hey Children's Hospital. The Captain hoped that Members would afford these deserving organisations the very generous support that others had enjoyed in recent years. The Annual Dinner and Prizegiving would be held at the Royal Liverpool Golf Club on Friday, 21st 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, Craig Pugh, and the members of the Council; and he wished all Members a very healthy, enjoyable and successful season.

12. Brackenwood Community Golf Club

Members extended a warm greeting to Keith Marsh, a director of Brackenwood Community Golf Club Ltd and Secretary of Brackenwood Golf Club, who had been invited to attend and address the meeting on the journey the Members of Brackenwood Golf Club had travelled since the course closed in March 2022 along with the Hoylake Municipal Golf Course. Many Hoylake Members had attended Wirral Council committee meetings in support of Brackenwood's community asset transfer bid and, therefore, had some knowledge of the ups and downs experienced by the Club's Members and indeed the Brackenwood and Clatterbridge community support groups.

Keith, however, took Members behind the scenes and described with great candour and emotion the efforts that had consumed his Members for three years and which, despite their overcoming one obstacle after another, had yet to secure a successful outcome. Keith explained that the original partnership with a private sector operator at the Ellesmere Port course had failed because the partner wished to vary the course layout from eighteen to nine holes and add a driving range. The Club had now partnered with Link Golf UK, a private sector company with control of or involved in bids for seven golf courses, and as a consequence Keith believed that the Members would prevail later this year in the bid but that the course was unlikely to be ready for play before 2026. Hoylake Members offered Keith and his Club their best wishes for a successful outcome and warmly applauded his presentation.

13. Election of President

It was resolved unanimously that Dave Denton be elected to serve as President. The President announced that his charities for the year would be the Stroke Association and the Alzheimer's Society.

14. Election of Officers

It was resolved unanimously that the following members be elected to serve the Club in the positions indicated – Rich O'Neill (Club Secretary); Simon Nardo (Club Treasurer); Mike Jones (Handicap Secretary); Mike Higgins (Assistant Club Secretary); Tom McNamara (Council Secretary) and Jaime Griffin, Jimmy Humphreys, Tonny Kerkhofs, Phil Qualtrough and Dave Smith (Ordinary Members). The Members once again applauded the young Members who had stepped into the Club's senior positions

15. Appointment of Auditors

It was resolved unanimously that Dave Francis and Andy Gardner be re-appointed to serve as the Club's auditors for the ensuing year. Members thanked them for their valuable support to the Club Treasurer.

16. Changes to the Constitution

It was resolved unanimously that the Club Constitution and Rules be varied by the changes indicated in italics below: -

2(c).....The Club Secretary, *Assistant Club Secretary*, Club Treasurer, Handicap Secretary and Council Secretary and five ordinary members who will be elected at the Annual General Meeting and will be eligible for re-election.

5..... The Club Secretary, Club Treasurer, *Assistant Club Secretary*, Handicap Secretary and Council Secretary will not be required to pay an annual subscription, in recognition of their work for the Club throughout the year.

19.....A new member must have a WHS handicap index or must submit scorecards of three medal rounds played with members of the Club. *New members who obtain a handicap index from three submitted cards must submit five further cards from competition play before becoming eligible to win a prize.* Confirmation of membership will be subject to a satisfactory probationary period of twelve months.

23.....Club members will ensure that any postings made to social media applications managed and maintained by the Club conform to acceptable standards of behaviour, equality and inclusion *as described by the Council from time to time and notified to Members.*

Members noted that new Members affected by the change to Rule 19 would be eligible to win sweepstake money during their first five competition rounds but not any cash prize or trophy awarded by the Club.

17. Concessions for Members

Members noted that concessions had been granted in 2024, 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.

18. Winter League

Members agreed that there was a need to review the arrangements for Club golf during the off season because of the dreadful weather and the inability of the Arrowe Park Golf Course to recover quickly. The Club Council would consider all the points made at the meeting and by Members in their social media postings, such as location, minimum number, format and status, before determining the offer for 2025/26.

19. Wirral Borough Council Budget 2025/26

Members noted that there had been no explicit mention of the Arrowe Park Golf Course in the revenue budget proposals recommended by the Policy and Finance Committee and awaiting approval by the full Council at its budget meeting on 3rd March. There was a general reference to reviewing the options for modernising the Council's existing leisure offer, which would include delivery arrangements, opportunities for greater partner and service integration and an associated investment programme in new or retained facilities to ensure the future provision effectively delivered better outcomes. There was also a specific capital programme bid for the replacement of some forty-five pieces of machinery in the Council's Parks and Countryside Golf fleet, ranging in size from handheld hedge cutters to large four-wheel drive tractors. However, if agreed, the bid would be added to the wider capital programme and might not be reached in the next financial year. There was no direct mention in the Council submissions to improving the drainage at Arrowe Park.

20. Invigor8

Members noted that there would likely be a price increase between 5% and 10% in the Invigor8 memberships offered by Wirral Borough Council. Initial charges of £452 for a full-year contract or £45.20 per twelve calendar months had been signalled with a single round green fee of £21.50. Members were advised that there was also an option to buy an Invigor8 Passport membership for a one off fee of £7.50 which entitled the holder to a 25% discount on a green fee and this pay-as-you-go approach could be more appropriate during the winter season months.