

Greens Committee Minutes

Date: 02-07-2020 17:00

Attendees: Andy Hall, Richard Carter, David Crampton (HGK)
Gary Pritchard (Pro), Andy Bell, John Whiteley, John Stirling, Bryan Harvey.

Apologies: Nil

- **Reading of the previous minutes and actions taken:**

Agreed, with no further actions to note.

The last Greens committee (GC) meeting was May 2019, for 14 months the club has not had formal direction or guidance, the previous minutes were considered and noted. Our intention is to re-establish governance of the Greens and the committee overseeing this crucially important part of the club.

- **Agenda:**

All attendees gave a short resume of each person's reasons for volunteering and a quick mention of any areas of knowledge or interest they may bring to the committee.

AH updated the group on the current status of the Greens staff and the direction they had received during lockdown to the current date.

RC outlined our vision to improve the course, by slow a methodical process, a 'Rome wasn't built in a day' approach.

AH and RC explained the financial status of the Golf Club, it is our collective hope we can amass a fund, ring-fenced for the sole purpose of large and small scale projects in the future.

- **Greenkeepers Update:**

DC outlined his team's efforts during the lockdown to date, he has two members still on furlough, these could be returning soon, the first on 13th July and second 1st Aug.

Essential maintenance has increased to full maintenance, with greens top dressing and fertilisation. Bunkers in play, and full Tee access and also including 7- day greens cutting when weather permitted.

The practice green, nets and practice bunker are all back in use from Sat 4th July, Social Distancing rules apply.

DC described the planned winter work he was proposing, the committee endorsed this plan as no other direction was available to DC till this time.

DC will improve and extend paths on the 3rd 11th and 12th. Drainage, where shown as troublesome earlier this year due to heavier than normal rainfall, will also be addressed. Some of this will happen alongside footpath development. Planning and costing for these areas will be described and explained at the next GC meeting, some materials are currently available from 2019 supplies.

Greens are being cut to 4mm, the guidance used for several years at NGC has been 3mm to 4mm. During lockdown and since resumption AH & DC had agreed to allow a growth

just over 4mm to ease the burden of repeated cutting during the essential maintenance period. 4mm has proven to benefit the greens, health of the grass has slowly improved, top dressing and fertilisation will further improve the surface to give consistency.

Previously a high stimp measurements in excess of 10 was common on some greens. The stimp of our greens will be reassessed during July, a final decision on greens length will be made at the next meeting.

- **Terms of Reference:**

(TOR) for the Greens Committee have been produced, these will be placed on the web site under Greens section of the member's area soon. Along with these minutes and the Greens Director's monthly report, (the June edition is there now).

- **Points raised by committee:**

- Drainage is a major issue at NGC, we have several areas of problematic and reoccurring flooding and grass churning. This was fully accepted by the GC as being one of our biggest challenges, along with bunker drainage. Specific tasks have been allocated to committee members to look into some of our known wet spots and come back to the future meetings with outline ideas. For example, churning occurs due to wet conditions and high footfall, buggies, trollies and golfers could help to elevate the churning by remaining on pathways until next to greenside, not parking or walking across green side banks such as the 3rd, unless playing a shot. Pathways abeam the flag on the 3rd to 4th should be used before crossing to the green, the drainage on this hole as well as others is being investigated.
- The use of winter mats for a longer period or reintroducing them in the spring if conditions deteriorate due to climate was discussed, this measure was accepted by all as a potential way to help reduce churning.
- Land sale was discussed, our directors are investigating the possible sale of land, this is a very complicated issue and unlikely to be fruitful. We should allow the directors time to report on its viability once they have all the facts.
- We have over 60 bunkers, we have decided to survey these and discuss the possibilities of reducing size or shape of some even removing where any bunkers role is now redundant, due to maturing trees for example. No bunker will be altered without proper consultation, including that of DC and GP, our experts. Previous survey reports will be consulted also.
- The committee agreed communication with the membership has to be improved, we will publish our minutes on the web site and the GD will give a monthly update. Transparency and communication will improve, members can contact the committee by emailing the club, FAO Greens Director.

- Rubbish on the course has been evident during the resumption, reasons are manifold e.g. : public visiting, extra players, more waste from bottles and cans. A '5 good habits' notice has been sent to members. Senior members should role model more junior members. The committee decided to install up to 3 new waste bins in the next 12 months, locations yet to be agreed. The old home made wooden structures around the course are now past their best, DC has been asked to remove all old wooden waste benches and dispose of them. This will happen slowly over the next months, as the opportunity arises. The bin on the 14th will be brought closer towards the winter mat area. The bin at the corner 10TH/11TH overfills, a spare bin bag will be placed in it, AH will ask the steward NH, to arrange its disposal if it becomes overfilled ON Saturdays, the bin is normally emptied Friday and Sunday mornings by Greens staff. AH will be asking all members to pick up all litter and use bins where provided.
- The committee asked for trees to be thinned and low overhanging branches to be removed. DC reiterated, this is a result of 3 months of only essential maintenance, with only 4 sometimes only 3 greens staff working. DC said he will commence these tasks as soon as he can, two staff returning from medical isolation by the 1st august or sooner. A plan for tree thinning is to be discussed at the next meeting.
- Andy Bell (AB) suggested a plan to repair the area of the bridge on the 8th. This hole is one the committee have agreed to develop. AB proposed we move the bridge left along the ditch, eventually taking the path from T to the 9th via the new bridge. The area then can be repaired, re-turfed and utilised as a playing surface as it was meant to be, it lays directly in line with the green and as of recent years has been effectively redundant as a surface to play golf off due to the bare ground.
- The club H&S report covers all the course, the last report commented on conflict of 1st hole players walking over the small bridge towards their ball, while players drive from the 18th Tee. Priority is to the 18th 'Driving' players, but safe play must take precedence, sometimes visitors, even members walk into the line of fire from the 18th. The committee have several ideas to pursue in resolving this conflict, an immediate measure would include signage, whilst long term could involve removing the small wooden bridge. Other ideas include, increasing the size of the woods on the far lake side 18th, removing LH fairway bunker once these woods are increased, and thinning trees RH side fairway 18th before lake and after. And long term, a pathway along treeline across wooden bridge by the drive, and up through woodland to rear of 18th, one for the future?
- All Tee boxes need evaluating, Blue, White and Yellow markers need highlighting. Surfaces need levelling, divot repair boxes are being missed during COVID, a short term solution is being considered using 50 volunteer divot bags holders, for divot repairs. The positioning of Tee markers has been requested to be altered more frequently.

- The 6th Ditch is in need of spraying to kill growth, a longer term plan needs further discussion. Tree thinning at the greenside end of the ditch is to happen soon, ball dropping in the vicinity is difficult due to branches.
- The staking and colour code of stakes needs reviewing; RC will work with DC on this along with consulting GP.
Some OOB stakes are in places hard to see, a suggestion is to increase their dimensions, this will be looked at, and in the meantime all stakes will be refreshed with new paint.
- AH advised the committee of the new signage just about to be installed at the 7th to 13th footpath, and the 16th footpath crossing each fairway. The rise in public usage of our course has brought several reports of walkers and illegal cyclists crossing these areas unannounced and creating a high risk of injury. These new signs will be in place by next week, members will continue to be advised to be vigilant in these and other areas of high public risk.

AOB:

A trial ball retriever system has been developed by a member, this will be put to trial on the 18th provisionally. If successful, we will put this device on all holes.

An idea to improve bunker quality and standard, was to ask members to adopt a bunker, when passing their adopted sand trap to tend it in a small way if needed, i.e. remove weed, stone, rubbish or use a personal rake 30 seconds would do.

Date and time of next meeting Thursday 06-08-2020 17:00

ITEM	NAME	UPDATE or ACTIONED	RAISED
Stint readings	DC	Ongoing	02-07-2020
Funding plans	AH & RC	Ongoing	02-07-2020
Footpath Surveys	AB & JW	Ongoing	02-07-2020
TORs BOD agreement	AH	Ongoing	02-07-2020
Drainage 3 rd GS	DC	Ongoing	02-07-2020
8 TH Bridge project	AB & DC	Ongoing	02-07-2020
Bunker survey	BH & JS	Ongoing	02-07-2020
Dustbin replacement	DC & AH	Ongoing	02-07-2020
Tree thinning	DC	Ongoing	02-07-2020
Trial Ball retriever 18th	AH/DC/GP	Ongoing	02-07-2020
Repainting of T and distance markers	DC & AB	Ongoing	02-07-2020

OOB and hazard stakes repaint	DC	Ongoing	02-07-2020
Signage inspection	BH	Ongoing	02-07-2020
Erect new warning signs 16,13 and 7 th	AH	Ongoing	02-07-2020
50 Volunteer sandbaggers	AH	Ongoing	02-07-2020
Adopt a Bunker plan	AH	Ongoing	02-07-2020

AH Closed the meeting at 19:00.