

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
HELD IN THE CLUBHOUSE ON WEDNESDAY 17th February 2021 5pm

The President, Mr D. Coverdale in the Chair.

PRESENT - 18 MEMBERS.

The Chairman opened the Meeting at 5pm and welcomed the Council members, manager and scrutineer. The chairman restated the need for the largely electronic format of the proceedings while at the same time fulfilling the requirements of the golf club's Articles of Association.

He reiterated that council felt delaying the meeting until May was not an option as very little would have changed, and that business does need to be transacted including new council members to adopt.

The Chairman continued to explain that an online Zoom / webinar-based meeting was discounted given the challenges of having up to 100 people present. He went on to explain all documentation was forwarded to all members including facilities for members to obtain hard copies of each stages of the process. Members have also been asked to approve the formal elements of the AGM through the web-based process or via hard copy. As a result, there will not be an actual show of hands and the responses obtained via hard copy and online will act in the same way.

The President explained that any questions raised by members will be addressed in the finance section, the Captains report or in the question-and-answer session during the meeting and will be published afterwards.

The President explained that the meeting has been set up as COVID compliant by undertaking a risk assessment and only inviting the club's directors and making sure social distancing measures were observed.

He asked everyone to stand in memory of the Members that had passed away during the year whilst he read the names out as follows: - Norman Hunter – Margaret Gardner – Dorothy Tate – Tony Oakes – Geoff Rayton – Christine Strangeways.

The Chairman asked the Secretary to read the notice convening the meeting.

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT THE ONE HUNDRED AND FOURTEENTH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE HORSFORTH GOLF CLUB LIMITED will be held in the CLUBHOUSE ON 17th February 2021 at 5pm when the following business will be transacted.

- 1. To read the notice convening the meeting***
- 2. To read the minutes of the one hundredth and thirteenth Annual General Meeting***
- 3. To receive the report of the Council, with the Balance Sheet and Accounts of the Year ended 31st May 2020***
- 4. To elect the Officers of the Club***
- 5. To fill vacancies on the Council***
- 6. To elect the Auditors***
- 7. To transact any other business as may arise***
- 8. To propose votes of thanks to the retiring Officers***

The Chairman asked the Manager to read any apologies and asked for any other apologies from the floor.

Apologies were received from: Ian Hawkyard, Kevin Hill, John Shaw & Terry Durham

The Chairman asked for approval of the Minutes that they were a true and correct copy.

The minutes of the 2020 meeting have been circulated online and 99% of those who voted accepted them.

A few minor changes to the minutes have been requested prior to their acceptance. These are:

Correction of the spelling of Mr Paul Edmondson's name.

Correction of the proposer for Mr Tony Greenhalgh to be an Honorary life member was made by Dr Tony Dearden.

Change of the title of Tony Dearden to Dr Tony Dearden.

Proposer Mr C. Hirst Seconder Mrs C. Outhwaite—

The President signed the minutes.

Matters Arising

There were no matters arising

COUNCIL REPORTS AND ACCOUNTS:

Mr Barry Brown, the clubs outgoing Treasurer, proceeded to read a report of the year end accounts to 31st May 2021 as follows:

The results here represent the outcome of what was a very unusual year in that the weather from October to March was extremely wet and despite the efforts of the Greens staff, the course had to be closed on occasions. This bad winter was followed by a complete lockdown of the course from March 20th to May 13th due to the COVID restrictions. The Clubhouse did not fully re-open until 4th July which was after the end of the financial year.

These two factors resulted in a significant loss of turnover from green fees, the bar and catering. Overall, the loss of turnover from these three sources was in the order of £135,000. The profit on the bar was greatly reduced, and the loss on the catering greatly increased, because during the lockdown period, staff were furloughed and in accordance with required accounting procedures, the 80% of wages they were paid continued to be charged against bar and catering. The cash we received to cover the cost of furlough is shown in *miscellaneous* income under Job Retention Scheme.

Fortunately, income from members subscriptions held up reasonably well resulting in a small increase over the previous year and we also received £17,000 from the landfill project over the year. The outcome, excluding landfill income, which forms part of a Course Development Fund, was a very small profit of £1,697 which given the extremely difficult circumstances is considered satisfactory.

The cash position also remained reasonable with £148,000 in the bank. This figure may seem relatively high but considering the monthly running costs are between £45,000 and £50,000 and payments in advance contributed approximately £83,000 to the figure it is close to a bare minimum for a club of the size of Horsforth.

The club's Treasurer elect, Mr Ian Schofield updated the meeting on the current financial position of the club up to 31st May 2021.

Mr Schofield thanked Mr Brown for the hard work done.

Some draft, unaudited management accounts for the period up to 31st January 2021 have been made.

Headline figures for the Year to Date, including the membership figures, will be like 2020, standing circa £380k. Green fees for 8 months are higher than the whole of the 2020 accounts because of a large-scale demand for golf after lockdown. The hope is that the course can re-open to visitors before 31st May 2021 so this figure can be increased.

The bar and catering are where the club has suffered, largely due to the lockdowns. Last year's accounts broke even, and a small profit was made of £5,000 made up from a £32,000 profit on the bar and a £27,000 loss in the catering department. For the eight months to 31st January 2021, the bar has broken even but we made a £50,000 loss on the catering. These figures are before the Government Job Retention Scheme receipts, however as the claims are across all departments, the full breakdowns have not yet been allocated.

The Job Retention Scheme receipts in last year's accounts were £30,000 and this year to date we have received £52,000.

Local Authority Grants have been received to the sum of £19,650 and we are of the belief we will receive some more once we know more about the easing of the current lockdown.

The challenge we face in the short term is that the course may open, but the bar and catering may remain closed. This may be good for the playing membership, but less so for the club's cashflow as many of the members have already paid for their enjoyment of the course. We are hopeful to continue to receive cash from the landfill and from some green fees if we can. A meeting is planned to look at funding requirements from each department to look at the next 16 months to take us through to the end of the 2022 accounts. This will give Council a better idea of the proposed subscription rates to allow the club to trade and fulfil on course projects.

The loss for the 8-month period to date stands at £41,000 as a club, and this loss is before any landfill, however this is not meant to cover losses, but is ring-fenced for course improvements.

Of the landfill, we received £17,000 last year and to date this year we have received a further £50,000 bringing the total to £67,000. The landfill money requires allocating correctly.

In closing, the worst-case scenario is a £60,000 loss for the current financial year, however it may be that the loss can be reduced if lockdown restrictions are eased and some hospitality revenue can be received.

QUESTIONS FROM THE MEMBERSHIP, OF THE TREASURER

Following the notice of AGM and the published accounts, a total of nine questions were raised by two members. These have been answered by telephone and the members concerned have accepted the answers given. One point raised was the need to generate sufficient cash from normal activities to meet capital expenditure and loan repayments. I indicated that Council, and the new Treasurer, were aware of this and the matter would be a part of the discussions concerning membership subscriptions for the 2021/2022 year, both from the point of view of increasing income and cutting costs.

The Chairman then asked for approval for the accounts to be accepted.

Proposer Mr P. Edmondson Seconder Mr C. Baxendale– All in favour –Carried.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS OF THE GOLF CLUB:

To nominate Scrutineers and elect Members of Council:

Mrs Christine Greenhalgh, the scrutineer declared the following Nominations: -

Honorary Treasurer for 2021-2022 – Mr M I Schofield

Honorary Solicitor for 2021-2022 – Barton Legal

Auditors for 2021-2022 – Brown Butler Accountants

The online voting system was in favour of these appointments.

Nominations for Council

Election Results for Officers

The Officers of 2020 –

Mr President	Mr David Coverdale
Vice President	Mrs Carol Outhwaite
Gentlemen's Captain	Mr Paul Edmondson
Gentlemen's Vice Captain	Mr Brian Roddick
Ladies' Captain	Mrs Carole Edmondson
Ladies' Vice Captain	Mrs Sally Hirst

All were invited to continue in their positions for 2021.

109 Voting Forms were returned from the members and the results are in favour of the Officers being retained for 2021.

Proposal of Hon Treasurer, Mr Ian Schofield, Solicitors, Barton Legal and Auditors, Brown Butler.

The vote was in favour of each of these appointments.

Nominations for Council were –

Mr Barry Brown	Proposed by Mr Kevin Hill; Seconded by Mr David Johnston
Mr Steve Esterbrook	Proposed by Mr Paul Edmondson; Seconded by Mr Ian Hawkyard
Mr Billy Hayes	Proposed by Mr Billy Mather; Seconded by Mr Chris Baxendale
Mr John Gunn	Proposed by Mr David Vine; Seconded by Mr Simon Lax

There are 4 vacancies for 3 years and the 4 nominated have been elected.

The Chairman offered a vote of thanks to the new council members.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Chairman invited the General Manager to read out questions that members had submitted through the online system or who may have submitted questions through the postal service:

Tom Wilkinson – With the ongoing Pandemic what are the plans for golf in 2021 and the upcoming season? Members continue to pay for membership, with, through no fault of the Golf Club, little to show for this, there has been no communication on this however and are members simply expected to continue paying or do they have a choice?

The President responded: He felt this question was dealt with in his Interim Statement that was sent to members recently. The club relies on membership paying their annual fees, and the club will be as sympathetic as funds allow when the time comes to reset fees for 2021. We anticipate a full playing season to come.

Steve Cottle – Can we ensure that in the event of someone being unable to play in a final of a Pairs Knockout Club Competition, that there is no repetition of someone being parachuted in to take their place (as has recently happened) and that the final should be given to their opponents?

Competition Chairman, Mr John Gunn responded: The competition committee reached a decision with all players involved to ensure a final was played, so rather than 3 players missing the opportunity to play in a final, the decision ensured that a competition was completed. The circumstances were unusual, but we believe the right course of action was taken.

Scott Norton – Since the rise in new members is there a way forward where the Club can make the Booking On fair as I've been up on a Thursday night and been there for hours even took time off from work to get there so my name is near the top of the list and someone been there 10 minutes get called up before me and gets a Tee Time even though his name wasn't on the list before mine. At my previous club this has never been an issue. And I know from hearing around the course this is becoming one. Also I know the comps are over 2 days but I don't think this works if anything it should be 2 separate comps, 1 on Saturday and 1 on Sunday maybe the same format but 2 separate comps because the weather changes and not only that I played on the Saturday in the comp. Come Sunday when my mate did and I scored his card the tees had moved and the flags had and the course played a lot harder because there was a scratch or another comp on that day too so he was at an unfair advantage.

John Gunn responded: The booking in system on Thursday nights has been managed with the assistance of the members- all players are asked to sign in on arrival and each name is called in turn. If some members try and usurp this, that is unfortunate and frankly, rude to others who adhere to the rules. I was not made aware of anyone 'pushing in' and if they do so, anyone who believes they have been treated unfairly should bring it to the attention of a committee member as soon as possible.

The following questions were received and were dealt together by Greens Chairman Mr Ian Hawkyard:

Steve Galbraith – What plans are in place to address the drainage issues the course has?

Steve Cashmore - Please can council spell out detailed plans as to how and when they plan to tackle the serious issue of poor or non-existent drainage on the course. I do not know which local courses council compare it, to when in the latest newsletter they seem to think that Horsforth is better than most clubs in the area. Before lockdown I brought a guest from Rawdon, and he just could not believe how bad Horsforth was compared to Rawdon, I also brought other guests who play at Gotts park and Temple Newsam. They said that both the municipals were far better than Horsforth. This was an embarrassment to me, and certainly should be to the committee. In my view sorting out the drainage should take priority over any other non-essential spends. We need to remember that we are golf club first and foremost and not an entertainment venue, and members should be able to play 12 months of the year unless we have snow.

Ian Hawkyard, Greens Chairman responded:

I have been looking at various solutions to this issue for a number of months and brought in a number of experts to help gain an understanding of what can be done. Horsforth is built on clay with a very heavy 6 to 8 inch top soil layer. Accepting that the winters are going to remain wet or even wetter than a permanent solution is required, expert advice has confirmed that to significantly improve our worst fairways we need install a piped drainage system which should be supplemented by secondary drainage such as Gravel Banding or Sand Slitting. I have heard numerous times that Golf Course "xyz" has had drainage installed and its made no difference, unfortunately piped drainage isn't a magic bullet as it takes at least 2 years to start to have a noticeable effect and to get the quickest benefit secondary drainage should also be applied after the primary piped drainage has been installed. New piped drainage is expensive but Council has now received quotes to install primary drainage on one or two fairways, time depending on contractor availability and funds being made available. we hope to be able to confirm exactly what we intend to do in the next month. We plan to have an open forum about the course in the spring when lockdown rules allow.

Dave Sayner - Bunkers and drainage. Both been ongoing for the last 4 years. Can we have a completion date instead of blaming the weather all the time.

Ian Hawkyard responded:

HGC have not had any specific drainage work planned in the last 4 years, we have a plan to refurbish all greenside bunkers over 4 years. This started winter 19/20 with the first 6 bunkers completed ready for the main playing season spring 2020. We started to refurbish a further 8 bunker during the winter 20/21, these bunkers will also be ready for the start of the main playing season, the weather plays a huge part in how quickly the work can be completed, the works have always been planned over each winter. The last 2 years we have made good progress before Christmas and then the weather stopped all work until Feb/March. The final 15 bunkers should be completed over the next 2 winters to meet our original 4 year plan.

Mary Smith – Why isn't there a fairer proportion of women being put forward as nominees? There is a male bias in all of this.

Vice President Mrs Carol Outhwaite responded:

The lady's proportion of membership is currently just over 10% and the proportion on council currently stands at 20%.

Questions were raised concerning the practice ground redevelopments. These questions will be answered as part of the statement to be made by the Club Captain, Mr Paul Edmondson.

Mr Paul Edmondson, the Club Captain gave the following statement:

Our intention is to play ALL the board events, for the gents, the ladies and the mixed events.

There is every indication from the Yorkshire Union and the Leeds & District Union, that the various male leagues will be re-instated.

- 1) The scratch team run by Simon Hurd and myself.
- 2) The net team, run by Phil Swinney and Vice-Captain, Brian Roddick.
- 3) 8-15 Leeds league run by Steve Galbraith.
- 4) 8-15 Bradford league run by Jonathan Hirst.

There are also 3 sets of friendly matches:

- 1) The Rabbit's friendlies run by Rabbit's Captain Kevin Hill.
- 2) The Toff's friendlies run by Chris Baxendale and myself.
- 3) And finally, The Captain's friendlies.

All games will be advertised in the main diary on the website and in the little handbooks – which are now available from the office.

We have received several questions about the practice ground.

- 1) John Hogg asked for a revised date for the completion of the practice ground.
- 2) Craig Jennings asked the same question and suggested there is no price increase until completion.
- 3) Mark Bennett asked if the Committee have an open policy regarding the contract for the tipping rights.
- 4) Peter Hunter asked if we provide our own balls on the new practice ground or will we have to pay for them.

In December 2017, I presented a plan to the membership which would transform the practice ground, I was supported by the course designer Jonathan Gaunt and the contractor Jonathan Snelgrove. The proposal was unanimously accepted by the membership.

It took 2 years to clear all the obstructions from the planners, highways, bat & newt surveys etc. In August 2019, I presented again to the membership, supported by the course designer and contractor, this time to specifically explain our schedule. Which was to start 23rd September 2019, directly after finals day. Construction and seeding were due to end July 2020, with potential play resuming in September/October 2020. In effect a 12-month project.

However, between October 2019 and February 2020 was the wettest Autumn period on record, we could not get the soil on the site, the contractor had to build a concrete slab to dump the soil on to.

March 2020, COVID-19 kicked in and everything was locked down, during the summer while we restarted golf -- all our donor sites were closed, it was not until September did the building sites open for the movement of soil, as evidenced by the high volume of lorry traffic during this period.

Deliveries through to the end of December were exceptionally good, however, the snow and rain since the New Year has stopped progress again. The site became so wet that the contractor has had to build a concrete road to move the muck further up the site, we are therefore about to restart – yet again.

There are 3 elements to the landfill project,

- 1) the practice ground itself,
- 2) completion of the approach and pond on the 18th, we are taking the opportunity to install new drains in the approach to the green which run into the new pond.
- 3) work on the 3rd to remove the lake and replace with a swale stream which will drain via a new drain across the 16th - this will prevent the water overflow as we have now - finally draining into the lower reservoir.

In response to John Hogg and Craig Jennings:

I am sorry to say John and Craig, that I cannot give an accurate finish date, because it is as fluid as the weather. However, at this point in time our best target for completion of the practice ground is the end of summer, seeding is planned during autumn. We therefore expect resumption of the practice facilities in spring 2022.

We will re-start work on the 18th as soon as possible, probably end of March for a couple of weeks. We expect to re-open the 18th ready to play by the end of May.

Once work on the 18th is complete, we will move to the 3rd, we will keep disturbance to a minimum.

The original values were approximately 100,000 cubic metres to provide £100,000 cash to the club on top of a new practice ground.

To date we have received £17,000 to the end of May 2020 – our last financial year, and this year so far, we have received £51,000, making a total of £68,000 in cash. We are expecting a further £40,000.

This money is ring-fenced from general working capital and is held in a separate account, which is primarily for the development of the course. Cash will be released for new and ongoing projects to improve drainage, to implement additional bunkers, and any special projects as approved by Council.

In response to Mr Peter Hunter:

Peter, in the first instance we will be using our own balls, as the project develops, we will have 4 proper driving bays and a teaching bay for the professionals, which will of course mean that we will have a ball dispenser, where there will be a nominal charge to members.

Mr President, David Coverdale made the following statement:

Council is aware that our staff and members are suffering personal difficulties and loss, and that we will all be affected in some way by this Pandemic. As a Council, we imagined that the Pandemic might peter out by late summer, and we took the brave decision to reduce membership fees, by passing on the Government support we had received in grants, rates and furlough to ease the burden in the coming year.

We were one of only a handful of clubs to take this step which I think is reflected in the loyalty shown by members to date, and which is greatly appreciated.

Whilst we could not hold events, which slashed revenues on bar and catering, we could take on new members, and our numbers grew in all categories, bringing us close to capacity by the end of the summer. This is a testament to the quality of our course, the facilities we offer and the friendliness and vibrant atmosphere of our clubhouse in normal times.

And in the clubhouse, the 19th refurbishment is complete, whilst the meeting room, office and snooker room area have all been decorated by volunteers. We are one club serving the needs and demands of a wide range of people and we must take due care of all.

And on this note, an important achievement for the club this year is gaining the Safe Golf Standard, one of the first clubs in Yorkshire to do this. I am very grateful to Gerry O’Kane supported by Simon Lax, for driving us through this process, developing the policies and framework needed. It is important for members to understand that it is incumbent on all of us to take due care of all our colleagues while at the club, and to be mindful of our responsibility for the wellbeing of others.

With 3 months of the financial year to go, the position remains challenging, and while posting an operating loss, we will have come through the worst of this.

By the end of March, we need to set the new fees for 2021-22, and as indicated in the recent statement, we will see if there is headroom to ease the burden on members.

VOTE OF THANKS

Mr President offered the following vote of thanks:

Simon Lax for his dedication to the manager role and the club, and his insights on when to act and when to let things ride. I wish him well in his retirement and his role with the Leeds and District Golf Union. The Club has awarded Simon 3 years honorary membership in recognition of this position, and his work here as manager. Also, thanks to Dave Johnson for his supporting work in the office.

Paul Edmondson for his energy and enthusiasm for the Practice Ground project, staying positive as Club Captain, and his support to me in the role of President. I wish him and Vice-Captain Brian Roddick well this year.

Carol Outhwaite for her wise words and support with communications.

Barry Brown for taking on the role of Treasurer and keeping us on track financially.

Kevin Hill for his leadership of the House function and for delivering on the 19th project, sorting leaking rooves, dodgy fridges, club decoration and all things House, ably supported by Chris Baxendale and Chris Hirst who can be found under a mower or a floor most of the time.

Ian Hawkyard for his commitment to Greens, developing a structure and interaction with the Green’s team which we may have lacked in recent years, whilst driving through the course improvement plan, bunker refurbishments and now starting on the drainage issue.

Thanks to John Gunn for stepping up as Head of Competitions – an essential and testing position.

The Professionals Dean and Simon who have had such a tough year with the closures, for their endless hope and enthusiasm, sure that it will all be better soon. The “virtual golf” videos live long in the memory.

Welcome to Jonathan Pearson as our New Manager and Ian Schofield as Treasurer and wish them well in their new roles. And finally, thanks to Christine Greenhalgh for acting as Scrutineer today.

I look forward to serving the membership for another year and like all of us I hope it will be somewhat better than this one.

The Meeting closed at 17:55.