

Helsby Golf Club Directors Communication – August 2018

- 1) The directors now have the income and expenditure position of the club after the first trading quarter and have discussed this and are now looking into ways of improving all aspects:
 - a) The membership subscription income is down against budget and the directors have asked M&M committee to look at further ways of attracting new members.
 - b) The bar income is down year on year and is down against budget for this year(both in normal bar takings and in the number of people attending club functions), the House committee have been asked to look at ways to improve this situation. The directors have identified some areas for consideration too rectify this decline such as an annual bar levy, dress code, reducing members bar discount, external functions(with relaxed dress code restrictions), and ways to encourage those members who do not use the bar facility to use it after playing golf. The bar income is an integral part of running the clubhouse and we cannot afford to run this at a loss, all members are asked to support the bar and club functions and if any members have any ideas would they please give them to the Secretary for discussion at the next directors meeting.
 - c) Society income is down against budget, some members may look at the number of societies we have and say increase the cost for the society packages. From experience we know that societies have fixed budgets for what their members want and would book other courses if we cannot meet their budget expectations.
 - d) The number of societies visiting our course each year may appear to be similar year on year however we have seen a decline in both the number of societies booking our course mid-week and the numbers within the societies coming to our course, this is therefore reducing this income stream. One area being considered and will be trialled is combining some ladies and gent's competitions into the same day on some weekends, thus freeing up the other weekend day for a society (from experience we know that societies will pay a premium for playing at the weekend). If any members have any ideas would they please give them to the Secretary for discussion.
 - e) Green fee income is also down against budget, this appears to be now recovering, however we do have the income shortfall for the first quarter.
- 2) The results of the members survey regarding the course were published to the membership and greens are working through some of the issues raised by members.
 - a) Practice nets have been installed.
 - b) Astroturf trials are to be carried out in bunkers. (This would involve having an Astroturf 'carpet' under the sand to prevent club damage by stones under the sand, weed prevention and drainage). There will also be a trial on the practice ground bunker of an Astroturf riveted face.
 - c) Tee steps and some pathways have been renovated (we are now awaiting our next load of road plainings).
 - d) Some rough was allowed to grow in various parts of the course, and after some members comments some rough has been cut back slightly and the situation regarding this rough is being monitored by greens.
 - e) Improvements to the greens and fringes and the increased top dressing is showing great benefit.
 - f) The directors have approved bring forward by one year to this year the removal of the Oak tree to the right of the 6th green (the one nearest to the green). This is due to the damage being caused to the green and green drainage by the roots, the removal of this tree will be part of this year's winter program.
 - g) A tree survey has been carried out by two members who are well qualified to carry out such a survey, the survey has identified that we have c17800 trees on and around our course; of this

number there is c20% which can be classed as Oak/Scrub Oak and hardwood trees. It has identified the need to remove 4 Oak trees which are badly decayed (and which the survey has deemed a hazard to the health of the golfing public) and 1 Oak tree which is decaying, but we may be able to reduce this trees size in the short term until the decay becomes too severe and the tree needs to be removed for safety reasons. There are also 7 softwood trees on the corner of the 14th for removal. The survey also identified the need for the reduction/shaping of 7 Oak trees. The estimated cost of the survey and contractors cost for doing this work would be c£5700, we can do this work inhouse for c£1000 using the green staff and qualified volunteers and hiring in equipment. The directors have considering this proposal in the light of the cost, the safety aspect to golfers, the impact to the playability of the course coupled with the emotive concerns of members when Oak tree/tree removal is discussed. To this end the directors have agreed for the funding of the work. The work of reduction/shaping will commence on or around the 11th September. Tree maintenance and removal is an on going item for the good of members and the course (as was shown when trees to the left of the 4th fairway were thinned out). **The directors are aware some members have great concerns over any tree removal and not just Oak trees, therefore the removal of the 4 Oak trees will commence after the tree reduction/shaping, unless 33% of the playing members of the club lodge a complaint to the secretary, by the end of the first week in September.** It is the intention where possible to utilise smaller Oak trees on the course and plant them near the trees which are being removed where this is possible.

- 3) The green committee are currently identifying dead trees, and trees with stunted growth (due to their location amongst other trees), for removal during the winter period. Helsby Golf Club is very fortunate to have a Proactive Green committee, a very knowledgeable Head Greenkeeper and volunteers with a wealth of knowledge in tree management. We have a tree policy but from time to time decisions need to be made regarding trees outside those already identified in the tree policy. **No trees will be removed without the members being notified first, however as previously stated the directors are aware that tree removal is a very emotive issue and to clarify the members views on this subject.**

The directors request that playing members who object to any trees being removed (outside those identified within the tree policy) without their approval, lodge their views to the secretary by the end of September. Unless 33% of the playing membership object, the decisions on tree removal in the future will be left to those qualified to make such decisions.

- 4) Winter programme costings have been submitted which consist of work to the 11th tee and 11th green bunkers (new one to the right, left front removed) plus removal of the right tree to the left of the approach to the 11th green. The 4th white and yellow tee refurbishment. The 9th fairway open ditch development, which includes the fairway bunker removal. The winter programme is historically a programme that is never included in the greens budgeted costs for the year, due to the need to identify course drainage requirements for the winter programme. The proposed winter programmes have historically been approved or not by the management committees of the past around this time of the year. Given the wet conditions on the course last winter the greens wish to commence this programme as soon as possible (with the need to consider bring machinery onto the course). The estimated cost of this work is c£12000. The directors have not yet agreed to make funds available to carry out this work, given our current financial position.

5) To summarise

- a) As stated at the beginning we currently have a shortfall in our budgeted income, any suggestions from members to rectify this will be welcome and should be passed to the Secretary.
- b) Expenditure is being carefully controlled to ensure that expenditure does not exceed the budget.
- c) The un-budgeted work regarding the tree survey and winter programme is an area in which the directors have and are giving careful consideration.
- d) Work is being carried out in-regards to the members survey.
- e) We require your views on tree removal.

Paul Trow and Pauline Branigan have decided they no longer wish to be Directors and Jim Potter is now the Chairman of the Board.

HGC Directors

August 2018