

## Rob Clark Letter - AGM

05 Dec 2017

Dear

Chairman, officers and members of Cardigan Golf Club.

Having been co-opted onto the exec committee, I feel it is my duty both to praise much good work by the exec members but also to highlight serious shortcomings in the way the committee has acted both on a personal note and also with regard to other employees.

Paul has put in a huge effort on Health and Safety both on the course and in the clubhouse to bring us more into line with where we should be. Lorna has had a great result in obtaining 'grant funding' for the covered bay practice facility and has started the ball rolling with regard to staff contracts.

Emyr, Julia and Aled continue to do great work with the juniors and new to golf.

Geoff has taken on organising successful winter opens and also, overseen the task of sign manufacture and sponsorship. I'm sure most of you will agree they are a huge improvement.

Many other committee members are putting in a big effort to make the club tick, often with the help of members within the club, an example being Ron Scott who has helped Paul with the club h&S policy. Please don't be offended, I can't mention everyone by name.

However, I feel I have to make members aware how failure by the committee to deal satisfactorily with certain issues has caused me considerable stress.

For over four years I have had to try and run a golf course with figures that are not always up-to-date and certainly not in a user friendly format for budgeting, I am continually told this is about to change.

The professional has constantly been critical of the course and the way it is managed, despite green fees being up by £10k and him receiving an extra £2k in commission he still said in front of the finance committee and myself, that he would prefer it if I wasn't there.

There was an incident with a "self-appointed" gardener within the club, which brought greens staff operations to a standstill by his car, being parked in front of the sheds. He refused to move the car. This occurred despite 3 phone calls, on separate days to the chairmen, Captain and secretary to forewarn them that the actions of this individual were getting out of control.

Earlier this year I asked for a change in my management role. I wanted to take more time off in the winter. Given that I had agreed to reduce my contract by £6.5k in order to allow another apprentice to start, I thought this would be reasonable.

Carwyn Jones left the club and a new head greenkeeper was advertised for. When we drafted the advert at a greens meeting I said, "See who applies and I will see how I can work alongside them"

Bearing in mind the last time we advertised no suitable candidates applied and I offered to pick up the reins.

The next thing I knew was when people said they had seen I was finishing in the newsletter. I was sent a letter thanking me for my services and although I didn't open it immediately once I did I contested it.

I asked for a meeting with the exec and when I turned up only Lorna and Barrie were present. I was told this discussion couldn't be opened to the whole exec-Why? I had asked for a meeting with the finance committee at the September exec to make sure we were able to afford a new greenkeeper before he was appointed. I was invited to a meeting on the 14<sup>th</sup> Sept by the chairman. This meeting was cancelled and rescheduled to which I was not invited.

The meeting took place out of which was born an HR sub-committee.

When I asked who was on the HR subcommittee I was informed by the chairman not surprisingly it was the same people as on finance.

It was all becoming rather incestuous. I made a phone call to Barrie to ask about the HR sub-committee to which he replied "what's that?" I said you should know you're on it!!

Although I asked for minutes of this committee to date I've never received any.

Then followed a meeting with myself, Peter, Barrie and Lorna to discuss staffing and the budget.

Lorna wanted us to reach an agreement rather than I call an EGM. Bearing in mind they had met two days earlier they could only remember one figure from their finance meeting. The tablet /iPad wouldn't work and the meeting was a complete shambles. Then the truth came out- I was told by the incoming Captain I was not financially viable.

I believe the tablet would have turned on but I was not included in the figures.

I guess after they took advice, a hastily reconciled budget was drawn up and I was included again.

I could go on highlighting failings of the committee but will list a few later.

As the year has progressed there has become more of a feeling of an "inner circle" within the committee with three committee members voicing their disquiet to me as to the secretive workings.

As you will know, I have therefore decided to stand for chairman partly to try and remove the inner circle scenario.

Lorna for varying reasons has resigned as chairman, and I asked a few likely candidates including Barrie if they were going to stand to which he replied – No.

I then put my name forward only for Barrie then to put his name down, then withdraw his nomination then put it down again.

Is this the kind of indecision we need moving forwards and at that I'm told for only 1 year why not change now.

Barrie has always been a very efficient and supportive green's chairman, but his inability to sort out the issues with budgeting, the professional and self-appointed head-gardener along with my own terms of engagement have caused great stress.

I'm sure you have all heard enough by now to know how I feel on all of this. I could go on for much longer.

Despite all this I remain committed to improving Cardigan Golf Club as both a course and how it is run.

Looking forward I see big challenges to running the club. We have an ever-increasing average age of golfers and have to remain the best in the area to survive. We also have to be realistic about the workloads of our volunteer committee members, we've struggled for years to find a replacement treasurer and the idea of job sharing key roles is more a short-term solution than the long-term answer. To limit liability of the club and committee members it can't be long before we need to look at incorporating the golf club which in turn will require a board of directors who are unlikely to be able to shoulder all the work. Therefore a Secretary / General Manager post may need to be created and to raise money for this we may well have to ask the question whether a professional is a necessity.

CASC implications will dictate that the steward's contract will have to be renegotiated in order to allow us to comply with the rules.

All of this whilst not for the faint-hearted needs someone prepared to commit for the long term.

I did say earlier I would list a few other points and even these relatively simple things have remained unanswered or incomplete.

I asked for the staff contracts so I could read them through before issue to see what they were being asked to do. The first one was being given out full of mistakes- I'm told the wrong copy was printed.

No one met with the new employee on arrival at the club despite Peter saying he would be there to meet him. Consequently, my role as course manager and that of head greenkeeper have still not been clearly defined.

I still don't have a contract and would like it minuted that I have agreed to work for at least four more years. Barrie and Peter are supposed to be monitoring employees particularly during probationary periods – there is no evidence of this so far. What has happened to the 360 review of all staff that was talked about in my meeting with hr and finance.

Applicants for the job of head greenkeeper were not given the decency of a reply from the club and Barrie and Lorna decided not to put alternative cost saving proposal to the exec committee.

Enough said at least I have a clear conscience and have informed the members of the situation as I see it.

Wishing the best for Cardigan Golf Club. Robert Clark