

Minutes of the Board of Directors Meeting Tuesday 9th June 2020

Present:	M Keates	Chairman
	T McIvor	Finance Director
	P Higgins	Golf Director
	E Botham	Ground Director
	G Unsworth	House Director
	T Longden	Marketing Director
	J Bliss	Lady Director
	S Wells	Captain
	A Stewart	President
	D Folland	Co-opted Member
	PJ Keane	General Manager

Apologies: A Crawford Lady Captain

Zoom meeting commenced at 6.30pm with a warm welcome by the Chairman. With no amendments to the minutes of Tuesday 12th May, they were signed as a true record.

The Chairman opened the meeting by stating it was with regret that he informed the Board to the resignation of both Gary Unsworth, House Director and Eric Botham as Ground Director due to personal circumstances. He thanked both Directors' for their hard work and dedication in serving the Club and representing the membership over several years. Both will continue to support their respective committees.

Drew Folland has been co-opted to the House Committee and Colin Webb will continue overseeing Ground.

Biomass Boiler

MCC to consider our planning application on 23rd June.

Bank Switch

The General Manager was pleased to confirm that the direct debit facility for the collection of members subscriptions has been resolved with the first collection on 28th May. This did result in several collections (£5K in total) not being collected with the error No Instruction. Following an investigation, it was discovered that most of these failed instructions were by HSBC. Santander BACS team are working on this with HSBC. This remains an issue and we trust this is resolved with a matter of urgency.

In addition, some new direct debit mandates have failed due to the bank switch then our unique SUN reference was not secured by Santander. The next direct debit collection is scheduled for Monday 15th June.

Bounce Back Loan Scheme

The President was please to confirm that our application for Bounce Back Loan Scheme has been successful. The scheme helps small and medium-sized businesses to borrow between £2,000 and up to 25% of their turnover. The maximum loan available is £50,000. The government guarantees 100% of the loan and there will not be any fees or interest to pay for the first 12 months. After 12

months the interest rate will be 2.5% a year. Whilst it was hoped that this loan would not be required, it was felt prudent to take advantage of its availability.

Garage Doors

Replacement up and over garage doors to green keepers' sheds will be fitted on 10th June.

Guttering

A quotation for the repair and alignment of Clubhouse gutter has been obtained. Following discussion, it was requested that a quotation was obtained to include the replacement/repair of fascia boards. Action FD.

Furlough Staff

In line with the Government Job Retention Scheme, all bar and catering staff have been placed on furlough. HMRC changes to the scheme are as follows:

1st July - Flexible Furlough.

Employers will be able to bring back furloughed employees part time if they need to

1st August

Employers will need to start paying the employer's national insurance and pension contributions

1st September:

Employers will continue paying the employer's national insurance and pension contributions the government will pay 70% of wages employers will need to top up to 80% or more, depending on what has been agreed with the employee

From 1 October:

Employers will continue paying the employee's national insurance and pension contributions the government's contribution to wages will go down to 60%

Employers will need to top up to 80% or more, depending on what has been agreed with the employee

31st October 2020:

The furlough scheme will close.

In line with guidance, staff will be encouraged to take holiday entitlement, up to a quarter of their entitlement. Action point FD.

Insurance Claim

The Chairman informed the Board that the insurer's contribution to the members' rebate was now confirmed at £158,000, which was good news. Our claim for loss of income was still being worked through by the insurer and we should hear soon. The FD was asked to progress our loss of income claim from 1st January 2020 to 31st March 2020.

PMG Membership

We are in a two-year contractual agreement that is due for renewal in January 2021. The Marketing Director will review this membership category in late summer and report accordingly prior to the renewal date. Action MD.

Finance Director's Report: The figures for the month of April and draft year end accounts have been circulated.

Income: Year End £493.9K – last year £413.5K

Expenditure: Year £461.9K – last year £418.7K

Profit: Year End of £32.0K – against a loss last year of £5.2K

These figures will be adjusted once our accounts have reviewed and draft Year end Accounts will be available for approval by the Board for the August Board Meeting.

Income:	41.5K	Balfour released from suspense account
	4K	Bank Switch Payment
Expenditure	3.9K	Loss Adjuster Fees
	1K	Vat review
Accruals release	5.9K	Clubhouse repairs & decoration
	4K	Bradley Fold rental
	3.9K	Course miscellaneous

Trading Company - The value attributed to closing bar stock remains at February's level, this being the most recent valuation. Any subsequent revaluation will impact profit correspondingly.

Flood Proceeds - No accrual has been made for any further income that may be received from the insurer:

- £260K had been received and net expenditure of £104k allocated against this, leaving a balance of £156k on the Balance Sheet
- Adjustments have yet to be made to match some of this balance against claims for loss of income, disallowable VAT, replacement of the Biomass Boiler etc. (still on the Balance Sheet at book value of £36K).

The Finance Director stated that the accounts are not a true reflection to the trading of the Club (as above). Income is inflated as a result of the profit incurred of the stolen tractor and two tractors that have been replaced as a result of the 2019 flooding. Income levels are a fraction of budget forecast because of the flood and Covid-19 across all income streams - green fee, room hire, bar and catering. Whilst part will be recoverable as part of our insurance claim, this could go on for years. Cash reserves are inflated, as payments received have been allocated by the loss assessors.

No calculation has been finalised for any uninsured losses:

- Increased insurance premium
- Excess on insurance claim 1 & 2
- Loss adjusters fee

The revenue loss claim was to the end of December 2019. A further claim will be made for loss to the end of March. Action FD.

The Finance Director confirmed he has finalised 2020/21 budget and will circulate to all Board members.

Cost Savings

The Finance Director stated that changes need to be made to underpin the deficit the Club is forecasting this financial year. The Finance Committee requested accurate cash flow figures to aid with understanding our current financial position. The General Manager stated that Nicola is

working very hard, above and beyond her contractual hours to ensure figures are produced in a professional and accurate manner. Action FD.

The Captain and subcommittee are not yet in a position -to provide any recommendations to any potential cost savings and restructure of the Club that may be considered or implemented.

Bank overdraft

The Finance Committee will look to increase our current agreed overdraft facility from £26K to £50K. Action TL

Sport England Small Grant

An application has been made to Sport England that may general between £300 to £10,000 to support projects that help everyone to take part in physical activity, whether it is formal sport or informal activity that helps people lead more active lifestyles.

Some people and communities face real barriers to getting active. The funding can support project to run activities that help overcome barriers, and not just formal or traditional sports. The Small Grants programme wants to support projects which meet one or more of the following aims of our Towards an Active Nation strategy:

- Encouraging inactive people to become more active
- Developing lasting sporting habits
- Developing more positive attitudes among young people

Our application was declined.

Marketing Director's Report for the month has been circulated.

Marketing Activity and Pro Rata Membership Offer

The result of an extensive promotion across social media, website, email and Palatine Road banner has been above expectations:

- Membership growth to 522 up 80 - highest number of members since 2000's
- Full male members have increased by 38 to 203 (plus 23%)
- Ladies are down 2 at just 50 versus 52 although 2 new players have joined
- PMG has grown from 40 to 57 (plus 43%)
- Income from new members £57K
- PMG income £14K
- Net uplift £48K less resignation

Buddy Update

A huge thanks to Bob Ganley for his tireless focus and immediate response to this challenge. We know handicap engagement is vital to loyalty. Over 90 new members have all been engaged with a phone call and personal follow up email. Over 20 buddy volunteers are supporting over 40 new members to acquire a handicap. Some have already received handicaps, whilst others are in the process of working towards one.

A very responsive support from Paul Higgins and the M&H team with many cards turned around in less than 24 hours to support new member handicap allocation.

Reciprocal Membership

Both Denton and High Legh rejected our proposal to join the scheme.

Aston under Lynne has agreed to a tentative return to reciprocal golf. We have yet to hear back from Marple. It remains the view of the Marketing Committee that the reciprocal agreement strengthening our offer to members is a key part of our retention approach.

Visitor and Member's Guest Green fee table for Summer 2020

The following green fee rates were applied for visitors and members guests from mid-May:

- Visitors Monday to Friday £30.00
- Visitors Saturday & Sunday £35.00
- Members guests Monday to Friday £15.00
- Members guests Saturday & Sunday £18.00

The view of the Marketing Director is that he believes this price structure is not working and that our rates are out of line with the local competition with similar standard of course. He will review this and make a recommendation to the Board week commencing 15th June.

Ground Director's Report for the month has been circulated and a copy has been posted on the Club's website. Summary as follows:

Impact of Flooding Events – Reinstatement Options

The re-seeding of damaged areas undertaken by Fine Turf in early April, has been adversely affected by the exceptionally dry weather over the last 8 weeks (only 3.5mm on rainfall was recorded in Manchester for the whole of May).

Particularly badly affected are areas of the 18th extending from opposite the Clubhouse down towards the teeing areas, and then across to the 17th fairway either side of the newly formed drainage ditches and pond areas.

Inspections have taken place to identify 3 options to address the lack of, and patchy nature of re-growth:

Option 1: Lightly Rotovate, using chains, the hard-panned areas showing little or no re-growth, and apply a new thin layer of topsoil from our stockpiles held on the 6th. Then re-seed these plus other areas with only patchy growth. Further localised applications of seed may be required over the course of the summer to achieve a uniform dense sward.

Turf the bare slopes of the newly formed drainage ditches using the limited amounts available from the 15th practice area. This will reduce the risk of seed run-off and erosion of the slopes, and immediately improve aesthetics. The turf areas will require frequently manually watering. Hopefully, rainfall forecast in early June will be sufficient to promote seed germination, but this will also be supported by manual watering by the ground staff when required. This option will require the purchase of additional seed at an estimated cost of £1650. This is the Ground committee's preferred Option and is supported by Gwynn Davies, STRI.

Option 2: Preparatory work for the hard-panned areas as Option 1, but purchase and lay new turf over all areas, rather than re-seed. This will provide quicker grass coverage, but will be more expensive and much more labour intensive for the ground staff. Also, laying large areas of new turf at this time of the year is not recommended and carries significant risk of it not establishing.

It would also not be possible to play off the turf until the root system matured. It is estimated that over 2500m² of turf would be required at a cost of £8250.

Option 3: Continue manual watering by the ground staff and leave the areas to re-establish naturally over time. This may take until next Spring for a dense sward to be achieved. However, this would be at zero cost.

For all Options it is proposed to re-seed the newly formed slopes to the water hazard to the rear of the 17th green and the other bare areas between the two ponds on the 16th. This would be carried out during the August maintenance week.

Following consideration, Option 1 was approved.

A quotation has been obtained to repair one of the John Deere mowers, used to cut the rough which is 10 years old at a cost of £8K. Action FD.

House Director's Report.

The House Director stated that as this will be his last report, and he would like to raise a number of items that remain outstanding for the record:

Ceiling tiles – now that the balcony roof has been sealed and pre the opening of the Clubhouse he requested that both the ladies and gentlemen locker rooms ceiling tiles are replaced. Action FD.

Disabled Parking – whilst signages has been installed, two signs have been damaged and need replacing and suggests that the hight be modified so they are visible when parked. Action GM.

Reopening of Clubhouse – with the potential opening of Clubhouses in early July the House Director stated that measured need to be implemented to ensure we are compliant and meet governments guidelines. Consideration to the following areas:

- Outside areas, table & chairs
- Engagement with staff & members
- Food & drink ordering – use of point of sale terminals/printers
- H&S Policy

The General Manager confirmed that once he has guidelines, he will forward to all Directors for their input. Action GM.

Golf Director's Report for the month has been circulated.

The Board has agreed to introduce an integrated Golf Competition package, developed by Club Systems. This will manage the process of entering a golf competition through to posting your score directly on to an App without the need to handle a scorecard. Competition closing, result sheet and handicap adjustments will remain the same.

The technology is new, and Withington Golf Club will be one of 50 test centres trialling the software, which is good in that we will have plenty of support and potentially worrying in that the package is still in its infancy.

Nevertheless, the software has other benefits that the Club is keen to introduce in addition to the Golf Competition element. Training sessions are being organised to familiarise those directly involved with the process.

It is intended to introduce the process on Saturday 13th June 2020 and that being our 1st Summer Medal Qualifier. Saturday 20th June 2020 will be our 2nd Summer Medal Qualifier.

This is huge ask to take the potentially 100+ golfers returning to competitive golf with us, consequently it is not proposed to complicate matters in the first week by offering supplementary 9-hole competition or Midweek events. The Ladies are to meet on Saturday where their competition diary will be discussed, however it is unlikely they will recommence competitive play before Thursday 18th June 2020 and the numbers will be more manageable.

We will have to manage the expectations of the members and if necessary, re-educate some regarding the new process. The Pro Shop will not be open, social distancing remains in force, and the avoidance of scorecards is an EGU recommendation. Marcus and Caroline have already indicated they will assist members completing their scoring duties, particularly if the technology is not something they grasp instinctively.

The first two competitions will not carry an entry fee and prizes will be paid out of M&H funds as previously discussed.

Engagement with members as follows:

- Instruction on how the system will operate following training session scheduled for 8/6/2020.
 - Information for new members who may be unaware Saturday is Competition Day, certainly until early afternoon, 3rd June
 - A revised Newsletter regarding the rules and etiquette, including local rules incorporating sand hazards and responsibilities on the newly seeded areas.
- Noticeboard updated 6/6/2020

The other major initiative currently ongoing is the handicapping of 100 new members some of whom will undoubtedly be keen to enter competitions.

Bob Ganley is managing a team of “golf buddies”. If anyone is free to mark cards for new members and/or upload scores for handicap assessment it would be helpful to let Bob know.

In summary the Golf Club has committed to a number of initiatives which is now placing considerable pressure on M&H to deliver. In the short term this may lead to some member dissatisfaction, but longer term we should have a more efficient and less onerous competition/handicap system.

Looking ahead, with the World Handicap System due to launch this year a more robust system is sorely needed.

Any other Business:

Health & Safety

The following action points to be deferred pending the re-opening of the Clubhouse:

- Fire evacuation training for all staff to be completed and noted

- Fire Evacuation Procedure to be displayed
- Appropriate PPE is in place for use in the cellar
- Bar steward and staff are familiar with correct working practices
- Correct signage is in place
- Clubhouse Risk Assessment
- Introduction and compliance with Clubhouse toolbox

Dress Code:

With the influx of new members, it is apparent that the dress code standard is not been adhered too. Following discussion, Marketing will add this in the next members newsletter and the General Manager will modify the members areas of the Clubs website accordingly.

President and Officers:

The Vice President (Brenda Dagnall via email) request confirmation that when in Office as President, she would have full 7 day playing privileges. This was discussed by the Board. The conclusion was any Officer or Board member of the Club would have 7 day playing privileges during their term.

Environment Agency – damaged sluice gate

The Finance Director stated that he is in receipt of an update for the replacement and installation of the damaged sluice gate. The design will take place to include safety measures and second line defence features in mid-July and will be constructed onsite early next year (2021).

Following discussion, the Board agreed that this was totally unacceptable and asked the Finance Director to reply stating this will be 12 months longer that previously agreed. Action FD/MK

Lady Director

On behalf of the Ladies Section, the Lady Director requested that reserved tee times be in place of Thursday's for Ladies Competitions as follows:

- Morning 10am to 12 noon
- Afternoon 1.30 to 1.50
- Evening 5.30 to 5.40

This was approved.

The meeting closed at 9.20pm. With no further business, the Chairman thanked all for attending. The next Zoom meeting will be Tuesday 7th July at 6.30pm.