

A photograph of a forest path in spring. The path is covered with a dense carpet of small blue flowers, likely bluebells. Tall trees with light-colored bark and fresh green leaves line the path, with sunlight filtering through the canopy. The text "ROWLANDS CASTLE GOLF CLUB" is overlaid in large, bold, yellow letters with a black drop shadow.

# ROWLANDS CASTLE GOLF CLUB

## NEWSLETTER MAY 2020





# Rowlands Castle Golf Club

## Newsletter - May 2020

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# GENERAL MANAGER NEWSLETTER

By Shahin Bani-Sadr

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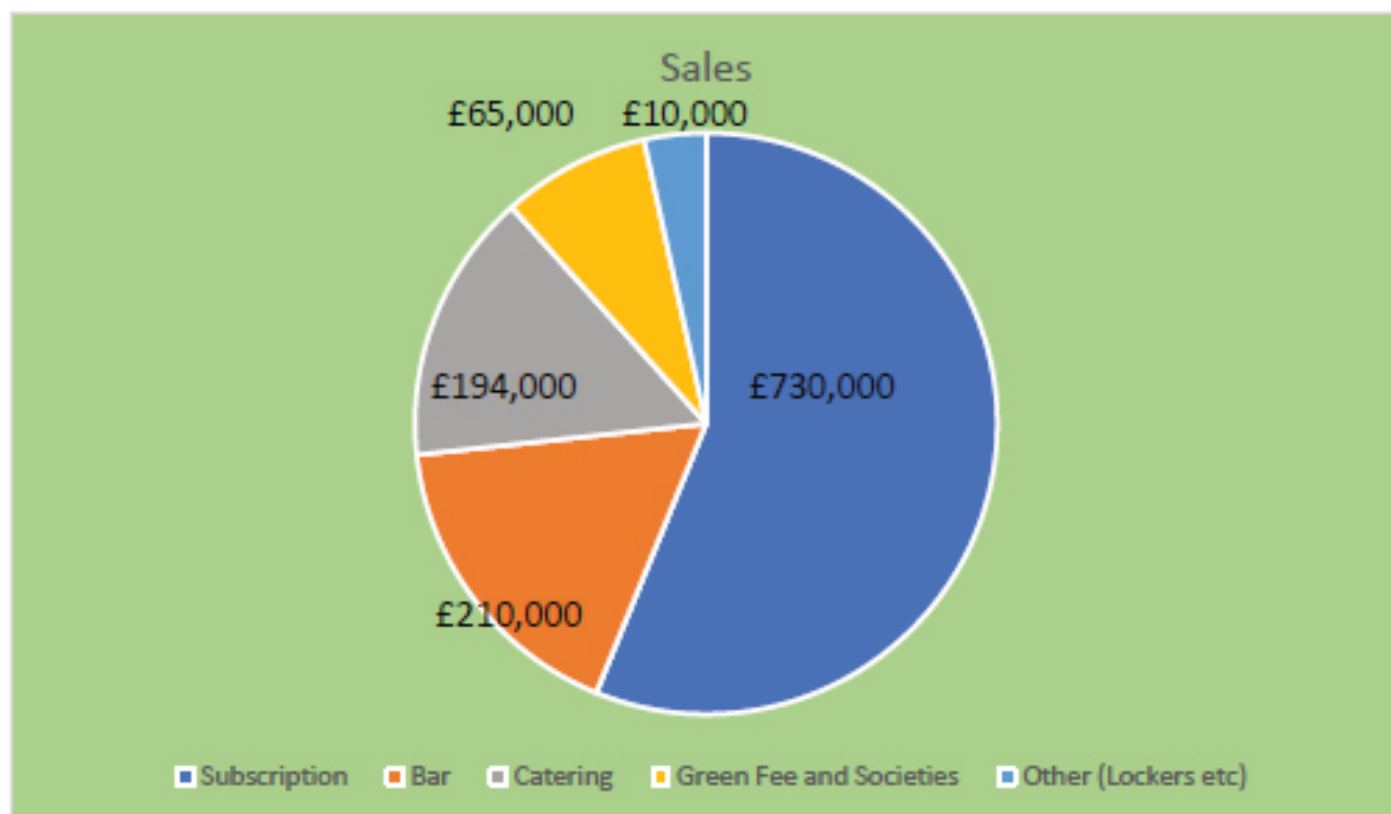
Dear Members

It feels like every time I am beginning a newsletter I am reflecting on some sort of dilemma. Whether it is coming through a terrible spell of weather or a global pandemic. It's not been an easy start to life as GM of RCGC but there are far more terrible issues going on in the world right now so it is imperative I stay positive and try to keep you positive.

I took the below out from one of my previous communications as we must understand just how important subscriptions are to our business. They make up 70% of our income and without it, we would not last more than a few months. The loyalty shown by members during this crisis has been amazing and we thank you. I appreciate incomes have been affected and golf may not take priority. But any decision we make must be fair to the entire membership.

## THE FINANCIAL SITUATION

Based on 2019 Final Accounts



## GENERAL MANAGER NEWSLETTER (continued)

INCOME for the quarter ended 31 March 2020						Mar 2020 to Mar 2019
	2020 Plan	Mar 2020 Actual	% Plan	Mar 2019 Actual	% Year End 2019	
Bar GP	110,000	16,000	14.5%	24,382	21.9%	65.6%
Catering GP	96,000	9,000	9.4%	21,046	22.2%	42.8%
Green Fees	47,000	4,406	9.4%	7,799	20.2%	56.5%
Societies	20,000	0	0.0%	1,846	8.7%	0.0%
Subscriptions	715,000	672,930	94.1%	678,799	99.2%	99.1%
Entrance Fees	32,000	30,782	96.2%	26,280	77.4%	117.1%
Lockers	9,000	6,272	69.7%	8,681	102.3%	72.2%
Other	15,000	3,564	23.8%	5,533	40.1%	64.4%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,044,000</b>	<b>742,954</b>	<b>71.2%</b>	<b>774,366</b>	<b>76.9%</b>	<b>95.9%</b>
We have received £703,702 from Subs and entry fees, which equates to 94.5% of the 2020 Budget for the year.						
We are therefore in a very good position with our cash resources and we are confident that we have sufficient cash to last through 2020 and beyond.						
As regards expenditure, we have suspended our business rates for the entire year, we have furloughed all of our bar & catering staff as well as half our green staff and both of our handymen.						
We have frozen all future Capital expenditure for the remainder of this year.						
We will continue to review all costs to try to further reduce our expenditure.						

Peter Russell - Treasurer

## COVID GROUP

The Covid group consists of the following:

- ❖ Shahin Bani-Sadr – General Manager
- ❖ Steven Doel – Club Captain
- ❖ Carol Taylor – Vice Captain + Chair of House
- ❖ Mark Willcox – Immediate Past Captain
- ❖ Peter Russell – Treasurer
- ❖ Robert Brown – Chair of Course
- ❖ Tom Robson – Assistant General Manager
- ❖ Jimmy – Pro-Shop
- ❖ Kevin Hensman – Course Manager
- ❖ Kevin Creese – House Manager

Since lockdown took place, we formed a COVID group to try and tackle the issues we are being faced with. But before I get into what has been discussed within the group, I want to thank the individuals that form it. The experience and knowledge from the group has helped no end and we have made some excellent decisions. We meet twice a week online and discussing any changes that have come through, plus more long-term issues. I chair these meetings which is important as a lot of what we discuss is operational. Many of the updates from myself come from discussions in the group. We have covered:

# GENERAL MANAGER NEWSLETTER (continued)

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Security, Protection of the course, Staffing, Finance, returning to golf, member and much more on the operation of the club once we can return.

## RETURNING TO GOLF

Like all of you, we are hoping this will be sooner rather than later. Any decision we make on opening up the golf course will be led from the government and England Golf. It is very likely that England Golf will be putting restrictions in place upon return. Therefore, we have already been planning on the return and how we are going to operate. We have also had a meeting with representatives from the Seniors, Ladies and Men about how the diary will look on return. There is no time limit on how long the following will be in place for, but these are likely to be in place upon return:

I need to stress that the BRS system is being brought in as it will allow us to keep you safe while golfing and ensure we do not have groups on the tee box. This is not something we are bringing in indefinitely. Club Systems have a separate BRS system so we are hoping it will work a lot better than start sheets. We have not agreed on the details as of yet, but it will more than likely work on a 7 day in advance booking system. The office and pro-shop will manage the system and keep an eye on it to ensure all bookings are being adhered too. The tee system is now live so we encourage you to have a play with it and get comfortable with the procedure. In regards to a date for return, we simply do not know, nor do our governing bodies. A piece of work was presented to parliament this week from England Golf to explain how the return of golf will work. So, we will have to see if anything comes from that. We are all so desperate to return to playing golf, however keeping healthy has to take priority over everything else. I understand many are getting frustrated that shopping is probably more of a health hazard than golf, but shopping is essential and in the grand scheme of things, golf is not.

# GENERAL MANAGER NEWSLETTER (continued)

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## PERSONAL NOTE

I hope I have covered the majority and put our minds at ease, however you can always contact me via email or phone if you want to discuss anything further.

To round it off I wanted to give you an insight from me personally. This entire crisis has been an eye opener and made me learn a lot about myself. Though the whole situation is tragic, it's always good when you can take a small piece of positivity from it. Chairing the meetings for the COVID group has almost been a reminder than I have a powerful voice within this golf club and should use it more. My early months I have done a lot behind the scenes in making the office work place more efficient. Along with taking on Warner Goodman as our HR support, which has helped us no end over the past few months. But I have not done enough in regards to member facing and doing tasks that the members notice. I am gutted that I have missed launching a season this year and putting my own spin on certain events but hopefully we will salvage some of the golfing season and be ready for a brilliant 2021. I now have a club laptop which means I will be able to base myself up in the bar more often to complete work. The idea behind this is to see a lot more of you and give you my time if you want to discuss anything. Though it will not be a solo effort... Far from it... But if I can lead RCGC through this and out the other side, I will take a lot of pride from that.

Many thanks

Shah

General Manager

## By Steve Doel

When I first began to draft this article, I endeavoured to make it light-hearted. This now feels quite uncomfortable with members who have passed way or are ill with Covid 19. Perhaps you may wish to take a moment to reflect at this point.

Many people have expressed their sympathy for the start to my year. My response has consistently been the same. Think more about the key workers, the people across the UK who everyday take the risk of infection as a part of the role they perform. Think of the bereaved or those that are struggling financially to cope with this crisis.

Golfing Captaincy can wait. Business Captaincy continues though.

On a positive note my 'just giving' page, set up in lieu of the Charity Race Night has now raised £1585 (Inc. gift aid). I have left the portal open. That chap Captain 'Tom' has done slightly better than me – quite rightly so. If you have any more to spare go to Just Giving, search Steve Doel – there's only one of me. Or click <https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/steven-doel>

My thanks to Jimmy for his idea for the virtual Masters which has raised another £500 – thank you everyone that has contributed. I got Rory McIlroy in the draw, another missed Masters win for him and me.

**£1,585 raised  
through just  
giving for my  
chosen charity**

## BUSINESS AS USUAL FOR COMMITTEES

Very early on in this crisis the club established a Covid 19 emergency group, we have been meeting 'virtually' twice a week since the restrictions began. Our first meeting was before the lockdown which meant we were ready when the move to a more enforced approach was adopted. The meetings have been chaired by Shah with the panel made up of those in the image. Kevin Creese is also included but not featured in this picture. Shah has done and will no doubt communicate more about the decisions taken in the management of the staff and the club finances. I just want to publicly praise Shah and the group for their work and efforts to keep the golf club a viable business.



# CAPTAINCY 2020 (continued)

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## MANAGEMENT, COURSE & HOUSE

We have held two virtual committee meetings. The meeting at the end of April welcomed our two new members Peter Farrier and Rob Brown. Rob returns and will pick up Chair of Course. Peter with his financial experience will work with Carol Taylor who will Chair House. The management committee's focus going forward will be maximising our financial position. Peter Russell's work with Shah supported by the committee will be key to the club remaining solvent as we track through this crisis. I pleased to say Mark Willcox, your outgoing Captain is supporting this work. When the time is right, Mark has agreed to continue to lead on the structural changes work started in his year.

### Course

Rob Brown will deal more with work on the course. However, I would like to extend my thanks to the help of a small group of volunteers that carried out divot repairs. Absolutely necessary with the reduced green keeper team. Thanks to Rob for organising this work.

Kevin Hensman (acting Head Green Keeper), Harvey and Graeme were not furloughed and have worked very hard. We hope we can welcome back Dave, Mike and Jack, who have been furloughed, in the very near future.

### House

I think we all expect this part of the business to be the last to come back to full function and I am grateful for the commitment of Kevin Crease who continues to keep in touch with his team who are all furloughed. Let's hope we can all, members and staff, resume in the bar soon.

### Back to Golf

Shah will deal more with this but rest assured our aim is to get as many members as possible playing golf as soon as possible. SAFELY

## My Aspirations for 2020/21

In my first address to members at the beginning of April I talked about keeping members and staff safe and getting through this crisis with a viable golf club to return to. This remains my sole purpose as Captain. If we can all have some fun and good or average golf along the way that will be a bonus. What I, Shah and the committee have to ensure is that Rowlands Castle Golf Club survives as an excellent golfing venue and a sound business. Where members and staff are safe and can enjoy golf and each other's company.

Steven Doel - Club Captain



# HOUSE COMMITTEE REPORT

By Carol Taylor

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Elsewhere in this newsletter you will have heard from our Club Captain, Steve Doel, about the measures that Rowlands Castle Golf Club has taken to manage the business of the Club during this unprecedented and worrying time. The safety and wellbeing of staff and members alike has been at the forefront in the Covid 19 emergency group's deliberations. In addition, a lot of effort has been taken to put measures in place to ensure that the Club will be a viable concern going forward once restrictions, to a lesser or greater extent, are lifted. The income that the Club receives from the bar and catering operation is a very important and integral part of the Club's finances and given the current situation this will be impacted. Information on the Club's finances is given in the General Manager's section in this newsletter.

Upon lockdown at the Club, Kevin Creese and his team undertook a massive deep clean and sanitisation of the bar, kitchen and clubhouse and these areas have been closed since that time.

With the current restrictions in place, the entire House team have been furloughed. I know that they are all really keen to get back to work at the Club as soon as we are permitted to do so. It goes without saying that there will still be challenges when we reach that point. Your House Committee members for 2020/21 are:

- ❖ Carol Taylor - Chair
- ❖ Steve Doel - Club Captain
- ❖ Pat Meech
- ❖ Steve Joy
- ❖ Steve Lapage
- ❖ Peter Farrier
- ❖ Shah Bani-Sadr - General Manager
- ❖ Kevin Creese - House Manager

A special welcome goes out to Peter Farrier who has recently joined the Management Committee and has agreed to sit on the House Committee. His financial background and experience will be invaluable going forward in these uncertain times.

The House Committee will continue to support the Club Captain, the General Manager and the House Manager in whichever way possible through these difficult times.

There is the likelihood that the bar and catering operation of the Club will be the last area to re-open and the expectation is, that even once it does, it will not be "business as usual". In this respect, there is no doubt we will all have to make adjustments going forward but knowing what a fantastically supportive membership Rowlands Castle Golf Club has we will be able to see this through.

If you have questions or concerns on any House issues please feel free to contact me – my email address is [taylor396@btinternet.com](mailto:taylor396@btinternet.com).

Carol Taylor  
Chair of House

# CHAIRMAN OF COURSE REPORT

By Robert Brown

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It has been estimated that 25% of small businesses don't re open after a serious emergency and we do not want Rowlands Castle Golf Club to be on that list. Our Covid-19 and golf club Management Committees have been meeting (online) twice a week, to plan ahead and put procedures into operation that give your golf club every chance of securing the facility for members to enjoy for years ahead.

Rowland Castle Golf Club is a close community, with a small number of staff and volunteers working extremely hard to maintain a facility that provides enjoyment, relaxation and sometimes torture to golfers. It is also a highly-skilled working environment, with staff who are professionally trained to complete each of their daily roles and without whom the entire operation would grind to a halt.

The green keepers and I thank our members for their continued support, Rowlands Castle Golf Club is a non profit organisation, it has yearly expenses that are covered mostly by membership revenue, support from our membership has been exceptional during this extremely challenging and difficult time.

As a member I thank Kevin and the green keeping staff for going the extra mile during the last six weeks.

Our green keepers have been working under the guidance of an Essential Maintenance Statement for Golf Courses During COVID-19 Outbreak.

The essential maintenance regime limits activity on the golf course, protecting workers and securing the playing surfaces at golfing facilities.

The statement outlines those treatments considered essential for the safe maintenance of a golf course during the current government restrictions.

The primary consideration must be the health and wellbeing of our green keeping staff.

## **Measures include but are not limited to:**

- Focus on hygiene and social distancing
- Ensure staff members work separately

# CHAIRMAN OF COURSE REPORT (continued)

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- Allocate individual machinery to one worker only
- If multiple staff on site, then stagger working hours and break times
- Limit or prohibit use of communal areas
- Regularly disinfect any surface that is contacted e.g. door handles, fuel pumps, communal machinery
- Ensure there is a robust lone working policy

## Mowing

Greens should be mown according to the rate of growth to a maximum of three times per week. Dew removal should be considered on non-mowing days as required to prevent disease spread. Tees and green surrounds should be mown according to the rate of growth to a maximum of once per week. Fairways should be mown according to the rate of growth to a maximum of once per week.

Managed roughs and grass paths should be mown according to need to a maximum of once every two weeks (fortnightly). Only roughs considered to be in direct play should be mown allowing for naturalisation to areas largely out of play. The height of cut adopted for all these areas is site specific but the elevation of the cutting height on fine turf areas is advised to minimise unnecessary stress on the turf. The aim of the above operations is to maintain uniformity, density, texture and health to allow surfaces to be quickly brought back to an appropriate playing standard once play resume. The greens have been cut at 6mm which is high for the time of year, this reduced stress and possible costly disease treatment, we are experiencing a bit of Fusarium, it usually starts on the more shaded greens with less air movement i.e our 13th.



# CHAIRMAN OF COURSE REPORT (continued)

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## Other Maintenance

Operations such as maintaining bunkers, penalty areas, wider practice facilities (other than greens and tees), aeration, top dressing and spraying are not considered essential at this time. However, it is conceivable that occasional spraying to control an acute pest, weed or disease problem may be considered essential at times and in some circumstances.

When we return to golf - Course Condition

Due to the restricted maintenance it could take some time for the golf course to return to our expected condition and the conditions experienced are the result of limitations imposed by the pandemic essential maintenance safety measures and not through neglect.

Possible Issues will be

- Reduced pace of greens through higher cutting heights
- Higher cutting heights in all / most maintained areas
- Lengthier rough areas, particularly in 'out of play' areas
- Untidy bunkers
- Lack of golf course furniture such as bunker rakes, bins, ball washers, benches

Chair of Course

Robert Brown