



Portlethen Golf Club Management Committee Thursday 16th May 2019

Minute

Present: David Fleming, Terry Kennedy, Stephen Cook, Denise Robertson, Jack Douglas, Tom Boyle, Raymond Cowan, Scott Sinclair, Ian Elmslie, Ian Cruickshank, Paul Singer

In Attendance: Dino Becci,

Apologies: Steve Lawrie

1. Minutes of previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting of 11th April 2019 were accepted as a true record.

Minute was approved, proposed by Terry Kennedy and seconded by Tom Boyle.

2. Matters arising:

Course Opening: After discussions it was agreed that the tee sheet be opened from 6am with the first medal time (excluding Saturdays) be kept at 7.30am.

Hole Cutting and pin placement: The process that was queried had been clarified in the interim period: Friday: Holes changed as late in the day as possible, Monday or Tuesday: changed again dependant on wear, Saturday: Greens cut & ironed, bunkers raked, Sunday: Greens cut or ironed, bunkers raked.

3. Greens

Ian presented Neil's report.

We have had very little in the way of rainfall and we have had very large range in temperatures. This all has an impact on the growth and recovery on the course. One thing the graph does not illustrate is the wind chill. For weeks now we have had cold winds of the sea. So the thermometer maybe reading 10 degrees but the real feel will be about 4 or 5 degrees.

The established grass has not suffered too badly but the seed we have sown is struggling to get a foothold. This is why we have left the par 3 tee mats out to protect them. They have now all been removed as I am confident we are going to see some more favourable conditions for recovery.

Greens: 2 weeks ago the greens had a growth explosion. I have never seen the growth rate on the greens. We normally take between 1-3 boxes of all the greens but at this time we were taking off as much as 24 boxes. We were double cutting the greens daily and verti-cutting them as well, but it seemed to make no difference. I applied some Primo Maxx to help slow the growth rate. When this kicked in the greens looked pale and unsightly. We applied some seaweed and some iron, which has helped to restore some of the health and colour of the greens.

Although the ball roll on the greens was not desirable the greens did fill in well. It is always better to have too much grass than to little.

The reason for the growth explosion was down to my initial granular feed going down and the weather turning very dry. The fertiliser works in 2 ways, the 1st is the initial release after a short period of time then you get a secondary release. This did not happen as it was that dry. So when the weather changed and we got some rain I applied a second granular fertiliser, a controlled release one, which will drip feed the plant for up to 4 months. This product also has an initial release this combined with the secondary release from the 1st fertiliser gave us the growth explosion.

The growth is now under control and the greens are performing better now.

Tees and Approaches: Both these areas have had a granular feed and have been overseeded. The germination is slower than I would of liked but you can see areas of new grass appearing.

2 different methods of seeding, disc seeding and dimple seeding. Both very effective methods.

The fairways have been sprayed with a foliar feed to help them recover from all the scarifying.

These are now getting cut on a weekly basis

The semi rough is now beginning to grow. The weaker areas of the rough I gave them a good feed to help boost the growth.

The secondary rough now is beginning to grow and is being cut when required.

Bunkers: I am wondering why we even bother raking the bunkers, it is very evident that some golfers have a complete lack of respect for their fellow golfers. An example of how a golfer thinks it is acceptable to leave a bunker was displayed as was a picture of how we leave it!

Our irrigation system is now up and running now. We have had a lot of problems with it. The pump had to go and get repaired then we had to drain the tank and clean out all the leaves and debris out of it. The float switch was also playing up, but hopefully we have got it all sorted and I can get some water to the areas that need it most.

Other areas of the course: we have started dead killing the tree compartments again. This will be on going for the next few weeks when the weather allows.

The 3 green side bunkers at 13 have been edged and the old heavy sand has been replaced with the same sand as the rest of the course. There is still a couple of fairway bunkers with the old sand, but these will be done when the funds are there to purchase more sand. The old sand that came out of the bunkers was used to topdress tees and approaches.

We replaced of the yellow stakes at the ponds with painted lines.

The grassed bunker at 17 is now ready for play.

It was asked if more openings could be created through roped areas around tees .To be reviewed.

4. Hatch & Handicap

Terry presented his report.

We had 45 players taking part in the May day open.

The gents team lost in the first round of the Maitland Shield to Royal Aberdeen.

The gents Deeside league team won their first match.

It had been noted that monetary values of sweep & two wins are no longer displayed. This will be addressed.

Some enquiries had been made by some members believing that option to opt out of the scratch match play stages had now been revoked. To be investigated further.

A request to improve the quality of food offered at Junior Pennant matches was made as well as a review of the seating arrangements for participants while dining.

There had been some feedback from parents of younger members that they had been let down by the club with the changes to the Saturday afternoon coaching sessions.

The format for denoting medal participation on walk on days on the tee sheet to be resurrected and implemented.

A final draft of the local rules to be used on the new scorecards had been distributed in advance and agreed on.

5. House

Steve has submitted a short report in advance of his absence.

The entertainment night went well with 92 attending and 20 members within that number. I though the guy was very good and the night went well.

Kitchen breakdowns again are a worry with the aircon unit failing and we have details and estimates to replace.

6. Finance & Admin

Tom presented the report.

The P&L to April shows a shortfall of £53,000 against budget with the majority being against membership income and house.

Members who had not renewed by mid-April were sent an exit questionnaire.

Only 2 responses were received although neither had completed the questionnaire. One had advised that the course had simply gotten too long for him and had satisfied himself with the 9 hole course at Edzell while the other one has found it difficult to play at his preferred time with his preferred partners.

Of the 30 resigned/defaulters in the 7 day bracket we have not heard anything from 11 of them, 7 have transferred to other clubs but giving no indication of reasons nor have we had any CDH transfer requests from the "new" clubs. The remaining 12 have cited a variety of reasons from health issues to lack of time to justify membership to giving up the game full stop.

Although the total membership numbers look healthy enough we will still come well short in terms of income with the "cost" of the various age related and referral discounts equating to around £18,000 (P&L) / £24,000 (cash) in this financial year.

The shortfall in bar takings is also particularly concerning and can be wholly attributable to the lack of private functions throughout April.

Restaurant income was also slightly down in the month but was covered by the underspend in wages.

On the cost side there are a few lines within the P & L that have slightly overrun within the month but these are mainly timing matters and should all come back in line with annual budget values.

The exception as previously reported is with the various repairs being incurred in the kitchen area where we are facing another £1,500 repair cost for the air conditioning unit that has basically died.

Green Fee Income is much in line with the same period last year.

7. Marketing

Raymond presented a report

We have started the process of improving the marketing of Portlethen Golf Club. Rather than rush into detailed marketing we have carried out a review of where we are, looked into developing a strategy and will then work on a detailed plan to deliver the strategy.

I have distributed a brief SWOT analysis we have completed on the golf club and would ask everyone to submit their comments or additions to this. Also distributed is a first pass at a marketing strategy and again we need comments on this to move towards finalising it soonest to allow us to get on with the detailed plan that will flow from the strategy.

When we reviewed the marketing carried out to date we felt that the branding of PGC could be improved. We have enlisted the help of a marketing professional to come up with some ideas on how we develop our brand identity. We will circulate these once received and reviewed.

We have lots of ideas on items to be included in the marketing plan from a fortnightly newsletter (will need committee help with content for these) to daily Facebook posts on the specials on offer in the clubhouse and Friday evening 6 hole competitions. We encourage committee members to submit to us any and all idea you may have and we will work on them to identify those we can deliver and in some cases it will be on a trial and error basis.

In summary we are moving forward but don't want to jump in until we can deliver a cohesive marketing plan.

8. World Handicap System (WHS)

Match and Handicap will be looking into this.

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Next meeting Thursday 20th June at 7.15pm.