

Minutes of the Board of Directors Meeting Tuesday 10th March 2020

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

The meeting commenced at 6.30pm with a warm welcome by the Chairman. With no amendments to the minutes of Tuesday 18th February, they were signed as a true record.

Finance Director's Report: Figures for the month of February have not been circulated due to the change of date of this meeting. Once figures are available and approved, they will be distributed.

The Finance Director stated that the accounts are not a true reflection of the trading of the Club. 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.

The Finance Director stated that our cash reserves are diminishing as we are not trading at usual levels of business due to course conditions and with increased expenditure as a direct result of the 2019 flooding. We need an additional interim payment from our loss assessors which has been requested. The Chairman will pursue.

The Chairman confirmed that a draft newsletter informing members of Annual Subscription Renewals for 2020/21 will be circulated for Board approval prior to full distribution. This will inform members of their discount for the new playing season and provide options should members wish to donate to Club improvements both on and off the golf course. A members evening will follow that will allow the membership to view the plans and ask questions and where refreshments and food will be available.

Biomass Boiler

The General Manager confirmed that the planning allocation to Manchester City Council for sighting of the biomass boiler, burner and pellet silo housed in a pod to the corner of the Clubhouse has been placed on hold pending additional information:

- A flood risk assessment as the site is located within a designated flood zone (cost £1035. EA have also been approached to see if they can assist)
- Technical specification of the biomass boiler – this has been provided
- A tree survey and arboricultural method statement – this has been commissioned

Bank Switch

The General Manager confirmed that the bank move from Royal Bank of Scotland to Santander was scheduled for Wednesday 11th March was rejected on two technical document issues. These have been resolved and the new switch date has been confirmed as Tuesday 17th March.

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

Impact of Flooding Events – Current Status

The outlet drain is now operating normally allowing water to drain off the course into the 16th pond and into the River Mersey as soon as river levels fall. However, exceptional levels of rainfall over February (over 333% more than the long-term average for the month) associated with Storms Ciara, Dennis and Jorge resulted in large areas of the 13th, 17th and 18th being covered again in standing water. River levels were also very high for most of the month preventing drainage into the Mersey.

Our own pumps are being used to remove water from the 18th fairway, and we have re-hired a larger pump to pump water off the course from the 16th pond into the river. We requested pumping support from the EA, but understandably their pumps were all deployed to address more serious flooding incidents.

Our concerns that the drains running down the 17th and 18th fairways were not working properly were confirmed when trial holes were taken to expose the end of each drain on 12th and 13th February. This identified that the joint between each lateral drain and the main collector drain had slipped preventing flow off the course into the 16th pond. This problem was temporarily resolved by removing the faulty joint and will be fully resolved by extending each drain into the new ditch / drain running across both fairways.

The package of work to dig the ditch and undertake jetting to remove silt deposits has had to be postponed several times due to the flooding of these holes. It is hoped the excavation work can now take place during the first week in March, with the jetting taking place early the following week. Installation of the extended drain runs on the 17th and 18th fairways will be undertaken by the ground staff on completion of the jetting.

We are still awaiting suitable conditions to undertake a visual flow test to check that the outlet drain flap valve is sealing properly and preventing back feed from the River on to the course via the 16th pond. Current indications are that the valve is not functioning correctly.

Assurance that the flap valve is working will allow us to maintain our isolating valve in an open position allowing discharge off the course at all times when river levels are low. Currently the valve is being closed when heavy rain is forecast.

We have held a meeting with the EA, at which they provided outline details of their proposals to replace the defective outlet sluice gate which caused the flooding incidents in July and October 2019. They have committed to involve us fully in the design proposals and indicated that they aim to have the work completed by the end of this year. They also provided assurances that they would undertake regular maintenance of the flap valve on the outlet to the 1st stream which should reduce flooding events.

A high-level proposal for providing flood protection to the basement storage areas of the

clubhouse was also discussed at the meeting with the EA. They provide indicative estimates of a similar scheme in the Didsbury basin, which were far in excess of what the Club could afford so we will not be pursuing this proposal.

The cut-off drain at the base of the M60 embankment remains blocked in places, resulting in localised flooding of the course from the 13th tee to the 16th tee. The Highways Agency have been notified of the problem, and a meeting has been requested to deal with this and a number of other ongoing issues.

The ground staff continue to remove localised silt deposits from the drainage system, which have built following the flooding events, allowing standing water to drain away more rapidly. In addition, short lengths of additional drain runs have been installed by the ground staff as part of this year's Winter Projects.

Reinstatement undertaken following the July floods, continues to be subject to further prolonged flooding and areas may be at risk of permanent damage. Further reinstatement i.e. verti-draining, seeding and top dressing will be required in late March to fully restore the playing surfaces to their former condition. Fine Turf undertook an inspection of the affected holes in mid-February and are available to commence work as soon as ground conditions permit.

Drainage Progress Summary – Phase 1

The Ground Director was pleased to confirm work has commenced on Phase 1 of the drainage program. Since excavation, rainfall and siltation from the other areas of the course has reduced the invert level of the trenches and caused some of the sides of the trench to collapse. The trench from the 16th pond back to the new pond area will need further work to reduce the invert level again. Work concluded:

- Trench across fairways excavated. Trench reprofiled on side closest to 18th Tee/17th green
- New pond excavation completed
- 3No trenches excavated along 18th fairway to connect to main 7 land drains completed
- 1No trench excavated along 17th fairway to connect to main land drain completed. Other 2 land drains now discharge direct into fairway trench
- Trench excavated from existing 16th pond back to new pond area. Some re-profiling completed

Progress required for completion

Pump out from new pond to existing pond. Await a period of dry weather and soil conditions. This will lower the water level in the trench and pond to enable:

- Levels to be confirmed
- Firmer ground conditions
- Trench to have invert reduced from existing 16th pond back to new pond area
- Trench bottom levelled
- Sides of trenches to be compacted, where required
- Gravel bedding to be laid
- Land drainage pipes to be laid
- Gravel drainage laid on top of pipes
- Spoil to be placed back into trench

- 18th fairway to be cleared and reprofiled
- 17th fairway to be cleared and reprofiled
- Fine turf to complete their work on 17th and 18th fairways
- Existing pipework in new pond to be removed
- Utilise existing pipework in trenches to provide pedestrian crossing points over the trench. Three number crossing points to be constructed
- Final jetting of land drains and removal of spoil within land drains

The above work will need approximately 1 to 2 weeks for pumping, weather dependant. A minimum of 10 days for work completed by Withington ground staff. Fine Turf and jetting drains would need additional time. Minimum of 6-8 weeks following Fine Turf installation required prior to using fairways.

The Ground Director asked the Board to approve overtime payments to ground staff for hours to be incurred over the next month in an attempt to get the course back to 18 holes prior to commencement of the 2020 playing season, this was approved.

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

The House Director confirmed that the redecoration of the Main Lounge has now been completed and the contractor has revisited to make good areas identified on a snagging list.

Repairs to the balcony are complete and it would appear this area is now waterproof. Unfortunately, the anti-slip coating has not been allied due to wet weather. Once the balcony has been sealed, work will commence to make good the damaged ceiling in both ladies and gents locker rooms.

Replacement garages doors has been ordered with a lead time of 4 weeks. The two wooden doors, for the trolley shed and Pro's teaching area will be fitted week commencing 16th March.

The House Director informed the Board he and the Chairman have met with a graphic designer with a view to give a new look to entrance area, foyer and ladies locker room. Floor plans of these areas were circulated. Following discussion, these were approved, and the House Director was asked to obtain cost and images. Once received these will be prioritised and displayed for members to see an overview of new proposals for Clubhouse developments.

The service lift remains out of order. A quotation to replace the motor and gearbox has been received at a cost of £1,287. In addition, it has been recommended that an isolation switch be fitted. This was approved.

The House Director informed the Board that a survey on the damaged roof guttering and recommendation to redirect rainwater flow from the balcony has been carried out and a second quotation has been received. The House and Finance Director will compare both quotations and recommend action to be taken.

The House Director confirmed that his proposal to maximize our inhouse catering operation is ongoing and hopes to have this finalised and in place by 1st May.

Golf Director's Report. No report for the month

The Golf Director stated that due to further delays with Ground issues as a result of recent rainfall, his committee feel that we will not be ready to comment the 2020 season as scheduled and competitions will not be Qualifying for handicap purpose. Modifications will be made to the 2020 fixture and posted accordingly. In the short term a number of 9-hole qualifying competitions will be rolled out.

The General Manager confirm that he has contacted Cheshire Union of Golf to ascertain what is the Counties view on prolonging Winter Rules as a direct result of the very wet weather.

The County Secretary confirmed that following a meeting with England Golf, preferred lies rules can be extended until end of May. This will be circulated to all Clubs in early April.

Congu Section 15 P 35 + 36 gives you all the help to be able to have qualifying competitions when preferred lies are in place. See link to whole manual below.

<https://www.congu.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/2018-CONGU-Manual-2019.pdf>

Become Safegolf Accredited

The Golf Director informed the Board that England Golf have launched the above scheme to ensure all affiliated clubs have a standard, recognised and robust system in place for the welfare of young and vulnerable people.

In order to achieve accreditation clubs must:

- Adopt the England Golf safeguarding policy and communicate this to members, visitors, staff and volunteers
- Ensure appropriate safeguarding procedures are in place at your club
- Ensure appropriate procedures for the recruitment and deployment of staff and volunteers who work with juniors are in place
- Appoint a club welfare officer with an appropriate role description and completed training
- Appropriate safeguarding and child protection training is provided to professionals and other staff and volunteers working regularly with juniors
- Ensure the England Golf Adult Safeguarding Policy is in place at your club and has been approved by your club at management level

The Golf Director stated that we do not met all the requirements. M&H will lead on this and draft a proposal for the Board to consider. Any members wishing to volunteer with the setup and implementation of this accreditation, should contact either Paul Higgins or David Hunter.

Marketing Director's Report – no report for the month.

Current Focus for the Marketing Committee are as follows:

Ladies Academy

This is a 5-week program commencing Saturday 18th April.

- Professional coaching for 5 x 1-hour sessions
- Ladies receive a glass of Prosecco in the bar after the first session to build engagement and start to talk about next steps
- There will be an offer of £100 for 3 months membership following coaching – refunded from full price if ladies join as a 6 or 7 day player

8 ladies have signed up. A second session will be opened, subject to demand.

Spring Campaign

Join Withington and play 3 courses until the end of April 2021

- £188 ages 12 to 20
- £182 ages 21 to 24
- £449 ages 25 to 29
- £650 ages 30 plus

No enquiries have been received as result of this campaign as of 10th March.

Society Booking 2020

As per the campaign rolled out in 2019, Summer Society Packages at £38 to include the following:

- Bacon barm tea/coffee on arrival
- 18 holes of golf
- 2 course evening meal
- Four Ball Voucher – Master of the Stretch

Direct email has been sent to data base with 440 circulars.

No enquiries have been received as result of this campaign as of 10th March.

Reciprocal Membership

We continue with our reciprocal agreement with Aston and Marple golf clubs. Two other clubs have been contacted to see if they would join on a similar basis but have decline. However, they are considering offering a discounted green fee rate.

The marketing committee have been actively promoting our offers on social media, by email and website, in addition we have posters, flyers and banners at the club and Trafford Centre. In addition, we have the Palatine Road banner.

Our offer is compelling and competitive in the local market with strong collateral. We will continue to actively market for the next month at least. I do think the course condition will be impacting joiners, in addition, as the weather has been so poor, I suspect this may have affected people's mindset. Bob Ganley will continue to engage all new members.

Lady Director's Report – no report for the month.

General Manager:

The General Manager asked the Boards approval to transfer Mr D Brickliffe from Associate to that of Honorary Life Members. This was discussed and approved.

It has been reported to the General Manager that some members commonly feed wildlife. This has resulted in birds and squirrels damaging members and visitors golf bags searching for food. The Board request that this activity is stopped.

Suggestion Book: no suggestions for consideration.

Any other Business:

Coronavirus

The Coronavirus is a new illness that can affect the lungs and airways. The UK Chief Medical Officers have raised the risk to the public from low to moderate. The symptoms are as follows:

- A cough
- A high temperature
- Shortness of breath

These symptoms do not necessarily mean you have the illness. The symptoms are similar to other illnesses that are much more common, such as cold and flu. The Board will operate a policy in line with Government guidelines and ask members and visitors to adhere to these guidelines to keep you and other members of the public as safe as possible. Newsletter has been circulated and notices have been place within the Clubhouse.

Health & Safety – the General Manager has confirmed we have received our 6 monthly H&S Audit. A copy has been distributed to all Board members.

The meeting closed at 8.55pm. With no further business, the Chairman thanked all for attending. The next meeting will be Tuesday 28th April at 6.30pm.