

Autumn Newsletter

It continues to be a strange year as we still are in the midst of the Covid crisis. Increasingly this looks unlikely to change in the near future, but at least we are still able to play golf. Since we returned to play in June, we have coped with the initial burden of 2 ball golf and gradually transitioned to normal playing conditions. Generally it has been relatively easy to adapt with the ever-changing rules and regulations and members for the most part followed the guidelines and adapted to the new way of playing. Ball lifters and stationary flagsticks are the new way of life.

The green staff have continued to work hard preparing the course for play. There has been some personnel changes during this time. Joining our regular green keeping team this year we have welcomed two new faces. Firstly in July we welcomed Graham McDonald who brings a wealth of experience from his previous job at Newark Golf Club where he was head green keeper for many years. Graham is able to bring a vast amount of knowledge with his extensive experience and qualifications, but importantly is an experienced additional set of hands. Graham is also a low handicap golfer playing with his wife. Also following the retirement of longstanding team member Colin we have now secured the services of Andrew King who comes across from Erewash Council and is also similarly well qualified and experienced in golf, both members have extensive turf management qualifications. Together with our head green keeper Malcolm and assistants Alex, Vince, Dave and Pete we have an experienced workforce to develop the course further than has previously been possible.

Richard Bell has now adopted the role of running a greens committee to work alongside Malcolm and his team. Members with suggestions, comments or ideas can contact Richard directly. We are hoping that this developing partnership will help the greens team improve and maintain the course for the benefit of members and visitors.

Working with the Greens team and Greens Committee we continue to review our current equipment position. It has always been the aim of the club to improve machinery and renew what we have in line with financial



constraints. Members will have notice the new tractor we recently purchased, it is more functional than our older model and more capable of handling the tasks we require. This came through a developing partnership with Cheshire Turf machinery based in Stockport. Through this liaison we have also purchased an upgraded greens mower and had our sidewinder tees mower extensively rebuilt. These machines are already working, the improvements are already noticeable. Over winter we are looking to upgrade other smaller equipment so as we can easier treat, maintain and improve the greens as well as other areas of the course.

As we have progressed from the lockdown situation work on the course has quickened and progressed, there has been a steady improvement as the weather improved, and we now have a very playable well-presented course. Scarifying of the fairways has removed a lot of organic debris and that improved the playing surface. Over winter it should lead to better drainage. The greens have steadily improved and now are in excellent condition. There are some areas of concern with areas of "die back" which is unusual at Ormonde, normally it's fusarium and anthrax, these problems are all being addressed and treated. Soon we will be increasing the work on the greens with the intention of improving the grass coverage, removing thatch and organic material this will mean a period

of coring and dressing. The tees have been a little mixed this year with issues around weather, amount of use



and problems with irrigation affecting some more than others. An earlier closure of the medal tees this year will allow more work to be done on these tees. Already the 6th tee is being re-laid and there are plans to re-lay others as well as tree work to open out and allow better growth. We hope to improve irrigation on the course by accessing additional water sources, but this is currently dependant on a water quality analysis. There are also plans to renovate some of the bunkers, remove trees and other improvements. The gardening club have continued to beautify the course and have now completed the impressive OFGC logo alongside the 4th fairway. Many thanks to all the team for their continued efforts.

The business has now concluded negotiations to acquire the club shop from current owner Richard White. In line with our business plan this now brings into our control another key asset of the golf club and increases our revenue stream. It also enables us to expand the role that Richard already has with the club and he will now move into the role of Golf Operations Manager, acquiring an additional portfolio. As such he will now become fully responsible for the day to day running of the club and we are looking forward to him taking up the role in November. This is an important step as it not only focuses the responsibility of running the club to one office, but it gives stability in dealing with the day to day as well as long term aims of the club. The club will now have a single figure who is the main point of contact at the golf club, responsible for the daily as well as long term operations. This is an important step as it gives us the capacity to progress and develop the club forwards within our financial capabilities at this time. The arrangement is seen as a cost neutral to the club, as such this makes it more attractive and feasible to develop this role at this time. We are also negotiating with Richard to transfer the members accounts so that they remain secure and available for members to purchase from the shop using their accounts. This is an exciting development and we look forward to working with Richard in this expanded role.

November will also see the introduction of the World handicapping System when there will be a big bang and a

new system will be born. Please keep looking at the information that is being sent out by England Golf and the Club in connection with this. It had been our intention to hold information events but current Covid rules will prevent this so we must rely on members taking it on board themselves as far as possible. The current slope rating has been available for some time and we are awaiting individual ratings of players. Its then just a case of multiplication and division to get the handicap for the course. Easy! We are currently acquiring new scorecards and will have the conversion tables available soon. Initially, as we will be using a winter handicap procedure the real big bang for most players will be next year.

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The handicap committee were unable to run the scheduled competitions during the summer. Competitions were run as pro comps from the shop by Richard at their request. We are hoping from October the committee will be back at the helm and organising a winter series. The new fixture list for 2021 is being developed and we all hope that we can resume a full season in April. In the meantime please continue to enter your scores into the computer, it is good practice for the WHS as failing to do so then will mean your handicap is not correctly adjusted.

We were able to run successful Open Texas competitions for all-comers and seniors. Mr Captain, Carl Powell arranged a friendly against Breadsall which was won by Ormonde. The seniors have had more luck and have arranged a competitive series of fixtures for the final part of the season thanks to the efforts of Seniors Captain Ivan Chambers. Results have not always gone our way.

The junior programme this year has been a tremendous success. Lee Sheldon and Club Junior organiser Darren Smart have despite Covid developed a flourishing young junior section. Lessons are happening on Saturdays and until recently a regular Thursday get together for a small competition on the practice ground. Members using the practice ground will have noticed the small par 3 course set out for this purpose. Junior lessons will continue over winter both at the club and possibly at a local facility. Please see Lee or Darren for further information.

The teaching studio is available via Lee for lessons and Lee is also able to offer the facility to play any course you wish using the on-screen technology. Lee continues to offer a variety of instructional packages for all ages. If you know anyone who is interested in starting to play Lee now offers an introductory "Academy" membership combining lessons with use of the practice facilities and eventually into full membership. Thinking of new clubs? Lee is available to fit and recommend clubs to you. Depending on brand chosen we can facilitate a purchase through the club shop at favourable rates. Please contact Lee directly or Richard who will be able to advise on all these aspects.

The clubhouse remains open but with variable opening hours to fit in with the Covid guidance and to take account of seasonal variations. Please continue to support Kellie and her team and follow the guidance they have had to put in place. In these difficult times it is important that we support the clubhouse business so that they are able to continue to provide the hospitality to members and visitors.