

Dear Member

17 May 2021.

Thank you for a great response to our recent survey, which we sent out to canvass members' opinions about the online booking system. It was not a vote, but we wanted to see what members generally felt about the system, which we had to introduce because of Covid. We asked whether members wanted to keep the online system or remove it altogether or whether they would prefer some sort of hybrid system, if neither for nor against.

We had 353 member responses. I know a few members replied twice, as they did not realise they were getting 2 separate emails, but I think we can safely say that over 300 members have given us their preferences, making it a good representation of the golf membership.

Most preferences were totally for or totally against, not much middle ground. We didn't get a strong majority either way (eg. 70% +), which made it more difficult for the Board. We knew that whatever we decided, it was going to upset some people, but we recognise that we are elected for that purpose and we will have to make some unpopular decisions from time to time.

The results were as follows:

- To summarise.....
 - 125 5-day members.... 59 For and 42 Against, with 24 wanting some form of hybrid system
 - 227 7-day members answering question 2 about weekend golf 101 For (44.5%) and 86 Against (37.9%) and 40 for some form of hybrid system (17.6%).
- Very interesting to read the comments, which show up the divide amongst members. Comments from the 7-day members are split 50/50, with 46 against and 45 for the system. 20 made general comments that are neither for nor against the system.
- It is very evident that the majority of those against the system are those from the swindles, who would probably be happy if they were allocated some reserved slots every week, so they would avoid the madness of trying to book one week ahead, currently at 7am.
- A lot of members have said that booking online for a Sunday is much fairer than the old system of having to go to the club, queue up to write your name up on a start sheet at 4pm on a Saturday.
- We have a lot of new younger members, who much prefer using online technology.
- Those 40 of the 7-day members who stated a preference for some sort of hybrid system, mostly want to see a change to the booking system on Sat & Sun mornings.
- We have made extensive research and most private members clubs now operate an online booking system. This is 2021.

The Board had 2 long meetings to debate this, as we know how important this is to members and we also took advice from the England Golf Union.....

So we reached the following decisions:

- Currently it is mandatory for all clubs to run a booking system and obviously these days it is easiest, if it is online. So our booking system will continue exactly as it is now until 21 June, hoping that the government restrictions will then be lifted.
- Judging by the majority of responses from the survey, members want us to retain online bookings, so we have voted to keep it, but will review it again in mid-June.
- When we review it mid-June, hopefully just prior to the 21st, we have agreed to see if it is possible to tweak the system, particularly for weekends when the course is the busiest. However, just to confirm, we will be keeping the system beyond 21 June and we will review it regularly.

We recognise that club swindles are the life blood of any club, giving new members the best possibility to integrate with other members. However we do not want to give swindles any preferential treatment to the exclusivity of others.

So even though we had planned to make a trial of some reserved tee times for recognised club swindles, organised and coordinated by Mick Taylor, England Golf also reminded us that we must continue to use a track and trace system during Covid. During the last year, we have had a couple of visits from Enforcement Officers to make sure we are complying with the restrictions and having block bookings for swindles was a concern for Mick. This will all be taken into consideration when we review this in about 4 weeks' time.

Finally, following lots of moans from members about having to book a week ahead at 7am in the morning, the Board talked to other clubs and then decided to try a different time and we agreed on 8 days ahead at 7pm. Since we announced that, we have received a few complaints about that and as I have said, we know we cannot please everyone all the time, but we are happy to also review this going forward. So if you have a strong feeling about this and want to propose a different time for booking (eg. 4 days ahead at 6pm or 6 days at 1pm and so on), please email us on - marketing@shirleyparkgolfclub.co.uk.

Thank you for your understanding.

Kind regards
Keith Povah
Chairman