

Minutes of the Board of Directors Meeting Tuesday 7th July 2020

Present:	M Keates	Chairman
	T McIvor	Finance Director
	P Higgins	Golf Director
	T Longden	Marketing Director
	A Crawford	Lady Captain
	S Wells	Captain
	A Stewart	President
	D Folland	Co-opted Member
	S Webb	Co-opted Member
	PJ Keane	General Manager

Apologies: J Bliss Lady Director

Zoom meeting commenced at 6.30pm with a warm welcome by the Chairman. With no amendments to the minutes of Tuesday 9th June, they were signed as a true record.

The Chairman opened the meeting by announcing the sad death of Malcolm Parlane and Debbie Marr.

The Chairman informed the Board to the resignation of Tony Longden as Marketing Director. He thanked Tony for his hard work and professionalism in serving the Club and representing the membership over last three years.

A warm welcome and introduction to Shaun Webb who has been co-opted to the Ground Committee.

Biomass Boiler

Our application to MCC for the construction of a concrete raft to house the biomass boiler remains live, however there has been an objection from the Environment Agency due to the absence of an acceptable Flood Risk Assessment and the displacement of 10m³ of water the construction will create within the flood basin. A proposal to make a depression in the landscape totaling 10m³ to compensatory for the loss has been put forward to the EA. The Finance Director stated he has raised this objection with our contact at the EA and a meeting is scheduled with all parties next week. Action TM

Direct debit Collections

The General Manager confirmed that the direct debit collection of some members subscriptions remains a problem, many HSBC and Barclays resulting in the not collection of income to the value of £6K for the month. Whist Santander are aware of the problem this remains an issue. The Marketing Director requested recent correspondence with a view to resolve this problem. Action TL.

Guttering

A quotation for the repair and alignment of Clubhouse gutter together with replacement/repair of fascia boards in pending. Action DF.

Furlough Staff

With the reopening of the Clubhouse, Kath and Marcus have resumed the bar operation. The catering staff remain on furlough. HMRC changes to the scheme are as follows:

1st July: Employers will be able to bring back furloughed employees part time if they need to

1st August: Employers will need to start paying the employer's national insurance and pension contributions

1st September: - Employers will continue paying the employer's national insurance and pension contributions the government will pay 70% of wages employers will need to top up to 80% or more, depending on what has been agreed with the employee

From 1 October: Employers will continue paying the employee's national insurance and pension contributions the government's contribution to wages will go down to 60%

Employers will need to top up to 80% or more, depending on what has been agreed with the employee

31st October 2020: The furlough scheme will close.

Staff will be encouraged to take holiday entitlement, up to a quarter of their entitlement. Action point TM.

Insurance Claim

The Chairman confirmed that he, the President and General Manager had a recent meeting with our loss assessor to discuss points raised by loss adjusters working on behalf of Aviva. This was deemed to be a successful meeting. An additional £10K VAT overstated and omission of £9K on sponsorship was discussed. The Finance Director asked if uninsured loss figures to the end of March had been submitted. The Chairman stated that a calculation has been included with figures provided by the loss adjuster and will provide details for comparison. The General Manager confirmed a further £75K has been received as part of the claim.

Finance Director's Report: The figures for the month of May have been circulated.

Income for May: £21.7K – last year £38K

Expenditure for May: £32.4K – last year £37.8K

Loss: £10.7K – against a profit last year of £0.2K

The Finance Director confirmed he has finalised 2020/21 budget and has circulated a copy to all Board members which shows a deficit for the year of £90K.

Following the reopening of the golf course, Pro shop and restricted use of the Clubhouse, it remains uncertain how the trading will affect this year's budget. Whilst cash flow is health, this is all spoken for:

- Biomass boiler
- Insurance claim
- Membership donations

The growth of new members is very encouraging, but we will not have a clearer picture of our performance until first quarter trading figures have been produced. Best assumption would be a break even for the year. This is not sustainable moving forward.

Cost Savings

The Captain and subcommittee are yet to provide any recommendations to any potential cost savings and restructure of the Club that may be considered or implemented.

Bank overdraft

Our current agreed overdraft facility is £26K reduced from £50K with Royal Bank of Scotland. Following discussion, it was agreed that we should request a £50K facility that would mean security against the Club in the form of a debenture. Action MK.

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

Membership has deteriorated over a 10 Year period between 2006 and 2015 before a more progressive marketing approach has steadied the ship and averted the declining trend over the past 5 years.

Market for full members is very competitive, in particular around the Mersey basin. Some clubs have been more aggressive with pricing, but we try to understand the balance between offers that attracts new members as well as being fair to existing, loyal members that will pay a higher rate.

It is a delicate balance but as you can see from the success of recent campaigns, we feel we are striking that balance.

When the lockdown was lifted the marketing were ready with collateral to go the minute the announcement was made with an extensive, heavily promoted and targeted pro rata offer until 30th April 2021:

- 7-day membership at £650
- Young Player 25 to 29 at £449
- Young Player 21 to 24 at £282
- Young Player 18 to 20 £188
- 6 Day Lady Member £500

The impact exceeded expectations with growth in male categories whilst Ladies membership remained flat. An increase of 110 full members, plus PMG from 40 to 60.

The impact of campaign pricing as a factor of total income is increasingly significant and vital to the Club creating additional revenue of over £70,000. Our actual marketing costs are minimal at around £500 per year, a reflection of the hard work of the Marketing Committee.

Credit to Bob Ganley, Buddy Organiser and his team in helping get new members handicaps, engaging them and enabling them to enter competitions. Bob's engagement and the support of the Buddy group has been outstanding and created a great welcome experience. Not forgetting M&H in entering all these cards for handicap purpose.

Playmore Golf (PMG)

Flexible membership was launched in Spring 2018. Although this was a success with 27 joining the scheme, it proved difficult for the Office and Pro Shop to efficiently administer and was open to misuse.

PMG who have an association with over 180 Golf clubs in the UK and both administer and promote the offer, enabling the Marketing team to concentrate on “full membership” schemes, Societies, Opens, Green fees and events. On 1st January 2019 PMG became our flexible membership scheme.

The approach has been to protect membership losses, those existing members who are playing less for family or health reasons and would otherwise resign. Primarily the focus was to acquire new members.

As well as giving an option for some existing full members (only a handful have moved in 2019) that otherwise would have left, PMG has delivered incremental income of circa £18,000 to the Club from fees plus any profit on bar or catering spend.

This has grown steadily month on month. We work equally hard to integrate PMG members into the Club. As they become more involved, we feel many will join as full members.

The next critical step is integrating booking systems so that PMG members can book online via the ClubV1 App. Club Systems are actively working on a solution and should have one within weeks.

The Marketing Managers recommendation to the Board is to continue with PMG as a Flexible membership category.

Key Focus for the Board to action:

- Social Media daily across all 3 channels including monitoring messages and responding to enquiries
- 2021/22 Membership campaign, price, timing, campaign creatives, campaign roll out
- Year 2 pricing for people who have just joined in order to ensure maximum retention
- Green fee income, needs reviewing monthly and promoting weekly

Ground Director’s Report – no report for the month.

Drainage – costs are being obtained for the inspection and jetting of our land drains to ensure they are working correctly. Some drains are very old and have not been inspected in years. Costs will be provided for Board approval.

Environment Agency – a meeting is scheduled week commencing 20th July with the EA to discuss the design and installation of the faulty sluice gate. In addition, we will discuss that the EA can do to assist with drainage in particular:

- Review of the manual penstock allowing the release of flood water into the River Mersey
- Replacement Fielden Brook flap valves that would assist with back flow of water to the stream on the 1st hole and flooding of holes 1, 2 and 4
- Assist with course drainage
- Assist with objection with the construction of the raft for the biomass boiler

Ground staff to inspect river levels on a regular basis and provide documentation/photographs.

House Director's Report.

Ceiling tiles – replacement ceiling tiles in both the ladies and gentlemen locker rooms ceiling tiles remain outstanding. The General Manager informed the Board that there is still a water leak in the Ladies locker room and confirmed that Lovatt's will be sending a representative to review.

Reopening of Clubhouse 19th July 2020

The safety and health of our staff, volunteers and members will always be our priority. Certain changes will need to be implemented to ensure we are compliant with some service restrictions.

- Bar will open 12-8 at Thu-Sun, 12-6 Mon-Wed with vastly reduced capacity and as drinks and bar snacks only
- Catering will remain closed until further notice
- Locker rooms will remain closed, please continue to change in the car park and kindly do not enter the Clubhouse with wet/muddy gear or golf shoes
- Ladies and gents' toilets, in main foyer, will be made available

Social distancing guidelines remain in place with contact tracing of all members and visitors to be recorded and kept for a period of 21 days. Full details of these measures will be circulated to the membership and displayed within the Clubhouse.

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

Review Saturday 13th June 2020 Test Event. Some anti-social issues and social distancing matters, but generally competition progressed well. Great job Marcus, with support from Kara that without there drive the events would not have run so smoothly.

Club V1 Hub. Training/Familiarity with New Software. Some teething problems were being dealt with and that Club V1 had been supportive in changing their system to accommodate our requirements. Steve Marr had also submitted a wish list that had been fully implemented.

PSI hardware to compliment new software. Terminals to record scores consideration for our requirements from 1/11/2020 when World Golf Handicap goes live. Can existing terminals be refurbished. Can we consider additional PSI's in the changing rooms? PHS to investigate costs and raise at Board.

World Golf Handicap (now only 5 months away). Recognition this had been derailed by lockdown. PHS to arrange members Intro when clubhouse re-opens, possibly in tandem with Rules Night/Quiz. Little steer from EGU in recent times.

Competitions Format and Set Up. Ratification of Diary. – MPL has updated the Club V1 diary, it has come to light that Clive Allen gets involved in the diary and I have made a note for next year to delegate accordingly.

- *Prizes and Introduction of an Order of Merit for Over 65.* An additional OoM was not deemed the most appropriate way forward as may not achieve the principal purpose of inclusion and inspiring. An alternative for Over 65's nett prize in major competitions

to reflect the extra difficulty and length of the course was discussed and supported. In addition, the inclusion of a Division 4 for Summer Medal's may disproportionately favour senior but also reward higher handicappers generally. A £50 1st prize for divisional awards 1 to 3 was confirmed. The aim is to even out the numbers participating in each group. The meeting agreed that a member coming 3rd or 4th off a trusted handicap were more deserving of a prize than a winner receiving a greater sum off an untested handicap. PH to discuss with DH.

- *Handicaps* – Quality of cards very poor. A training video has been created which has been distributed to Bob Ganley. A shorter punchier update will go out to new members where appropriate.
- *Professional Shop* - To improve communication now things are getting back to normal myself, Marcus and Ted (Bell) will proactively seek out issues. All committee members to engage and ensure we are identifying challenges early. Andy Parrington particularly but all the Pro shop staff generally appear to have a full understanding of the Club V1 process/system and been very helpful dealing with members queries.
- *Support Pro Shop* during Club V1 transfer and increased numbers of competition entrants. Promote “Two's”, Review remuneration for Pro Shop support on competition days. Ways to maximise Pro shop involvement with new members.
- *A.O.B.* In view of demand and appearance of waiting lists it was agreed to reduce booking to 8 minutes for Saturday competition actioned from (11/7/2020). It was not felt necessary to change Ladies Competition although CP indicate she wished to mirror where possible. Ladies Roll Up on Sunday 12:00 noon (3 tee times) and Tuesday 11:00am (4 tee times) to be re-introduced in Club V1. The Dress Code is deemed to be worth highlighting. Football shirts and T shirts have been noted in recent days.

The other major initiative currently ongoing is the handicapping of 100 new members some of whom will undoubtedly be keen to enter competitions.

Bob Ganley is managing a team of “golf buddies” and cards are already hitting my Whatsapp and e-mail. We are hopeful that this will be a short-term phenomenon, however if anyone is free to mark cards for new members and/or upload scores for handicap assessment that would be helpful.

In summary the Golf Club has committed to a number of initiatives which is now placing considerable pressure on M&H to deliver. In the short term this may lead to some member dissatisfaction, but longer term we should have a more efficient and less onerous competition/handicap system.

Looking ahead, with the World Handicap System due to launch this year a more robust system is sorely needed.

Any other Business:

Health & Safety

The following action points to be deferred pending the re-opening of the Clubhouse:

- Fire evacuation training for all staff to be completed and noted
- Fire Evacuation Procedure to be displayed
- Appropriate PPE is in place for use in the cellar

- Bar steward and staff are familiar with correct working practices
- Correct signage is in place
- Clubhouse Risk Assessment
- Introduction and compliance with Clubhouse toolbox
- Directors to sign off H&S Policy

Next H&S Audit is scheduled for Tuesday 28th July

Dress Code:

Marketing have circulated members newsletter to include appropriate dress code to be worn on and off the golf course the members areas of the Clubs website has been updated. The General manager will commission Dress Code guidance to be sighted by the Pro shop.

Protocol for members communication

To ensure the Club is communicating clearly and professional across all forms of communication platforms, the following procedure is to be adopted:

- Communication to be signed off by appropriate Director
- Approved by Chairman

Exceptions to this protocol would be Weekly Newsletters by M&H and discretionary correspondences by the General Manager.

Ground staff playing privileges

Following discussion, it was agreed that the ground staff should be given playing privileges outside of normal working hours to the golf course. The General Manager was asked to convey the Boards decision on the is matter.

The meeting closed at 9.20pm. With no further business, the Chairman thanked all for attending. The next Zoom meeting will be Tuesday 11th at 6.30pm.