

**Notes from the meeting of the West Regional Forum held in
Haggs Castle Golf Club on Tuesday 12 March 2019**

<u>Present</u>		Stephen Anthony (SA), Ian Brown (IB), Jim Ewing (JE), Kieron Gallacher (KG), Jean Leitch (JL), Derek McGlynn (DM), Carol McNally (CM), Ann Scott (AS)
<u>In attendance</u>		Addi Spiers (ASp), Iain Forsyth (IF), Sean Laird (SL), Karin Sharp (KS),
<u>Welcome & Introductions</u>	1	ASp welcomed everyone and advised she would be acting as Chair for this meeting. A round table introduction followed. Apologies were noted from Sheila Adams, Steve Ellis, Alasdair Malcolm, Frank Gloag, Vic Skelton, Kevin McAleer, Claire Middleton, Tom Cummings.
<u>Outputs from previous meeting</u>	2	<p>Queries regarding the key themes document circulated were:</p> <p>SA – is there any update on Barclay Review of business rates? KS advised that we are anticipating an update in the next week or two via our colleagues in Scottish Sports Association. It not anticipated this will be a final decision or ruling but will potentially give clarity on intent. As soon as detail is obtained it will be shared with clubs.</p> <p>SA – what timescale expected for upgrade/change of Scottish Golf website? IF advised that some initial work is underway and would anticipate within the next 3 months seeing this complete. General feedback remains that site layout is difficult to locate items and search functionality is very poor.</p>
<u>Core Discussion Items</u>		
<u>Communication</u>	3.1	<p>From SG perspective:</p> <p>New website is underway, will be mobile friendly, slicker and easier to navigate. Is a real opportunity to cleanse and ensure information is easy to find.</p> <p>New club platform – interest has been significantly higher than anticipated. Within the platform & member app piece there will be opportunity for enhanced communication from clubs to members and between members in a whats app style approach. Team – we now have 2 new staff members appointed into roles of Marketing Manager and Communications Manager respectively.</p> <p>In summary we have made progress with our approach to communication but still a way to go.</p> <p>AS enquired about WHS and particularly when further updates or education might be expected. A wide ranging discussion ensued where KS advised that Scottish Golf will be participating in training provided by the R&A in April and thereafter will embark on an education and communication programme with clubs. There is not a currently signed off position for WHS and</p>

<p><u>Club Support</u></p>	<p>3.2</p>	<p>we believe it highly unlikely that implementation will be until later in 2020. As soon as there is more detail available we will ensure clubs are communicated with but meantime we would suggest that golfers concentrate on getting familiar with the new rules and not worry about handicapping changes as they certainly not going to impact in the short term.</p> <p>From SG perspective:</p> <p>As advised at conference, we have realigned the Development Team with 6 central roles and 7 regional roles now supporting our service delivery. The Annual Review document shared at AGM and available on website, has more detail on the team changes and also contains some good case studies for clubs to consider. Key priorities for the SG team are increased visibility and more focused support for clubs through improved/refreshed resource material.</p> <p>SL updated on the Solheim Ambassador programme which now has c100 individuals signed up. The Women In Golf Charter has seen slower uptake with around 18 clubs committed thus far – we looking at pulling together a case study to demonstrate to clubs some of the commitments the early adopters have made. The club requires to make a minimum of 3 commitments within the charter and many are using this to link to existing Get into Golf initiatives to relaunch or refresh activity. Junior Forums are underway, with strong engagement from clubs in terms of sign-up to participate (5 scheduled in the West with 68 clubs registered). Golf Sixes League has been launched, interest is high with potentially 16 leagues being a possibility this year.</p> <p>CM asked about the Solheim Ambassador programme and how it had been launched to clubs? This had been via club bulletin and social media (KS will check specific details and revert to CM).</p> <p>Membership renewals were covered as a general discussion topic, continue to be a challenge for clubs and a time of uncertainty with some golfers chasing the price deal over loyalty. Churn has increased with removal of joining fees in some clubs, alongside introduction of year 1 offers taking precedent in clubs versus loyalty schemes to encourage longevity of membership. Time and financial impact remain factors for many prospective members but particularly female. Stigma of which tee to play from remains a sensitive situation for many golfers. Green fee pricing continues to be driven down and is devaluing membership. Some clubs are starting to revisit green fees as being too low can often give a poor perception as to the quality of the course but this is slow to catch on in some areas. It was agreed that adding value to club membership continues to be a critical aspect for clubs to consider.</p> <p>AS advised that at Douglas Park part of their Get into Golf programme, includes club hire for the year.</p>
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<p><u>Events</u></p>	<p>3.3</p>	<p>KG advised that in South Ayrshire, demand for golf remains high with players looking for casual golf not competition golf in the main. Social/fun/engagement much higher priorities for the nomadic golfer than a handicap is.</p> <p>JE intimated that many club members still look for a traditional club as opposed to a more modern approach.</p> <p>AS asked if any clubs currently undertook any membership modelling eg rolling annual membership, how they price and administer? South Ayrshire do operate on a rolling basis but their model is very different to that of a traditional member club. No other evidence or information was identified and perhaps this an area in which Scottish Golf could consider a future working group? Digital Platform will potentially allow clubs to better categorise their membership and to consider fee collection and through time that might prove a valuable tool in developing different membership structures to those that currently exist.</p> <p>SA enquired about the data ownership within the platform. IF confirmed that at club level this would be the club who owns, with opt in for communication options via the APP so that golfers determine whether Scottish Golf can communicate with them or not.</p> <p>DM enquired about Sky packages for golf clubs. IF advised this not something we exploring, direction of travel is seeing golf delivery being channeled differently and Sky could very quickly lose their stranglehold on golf viewing in this country. We are in early stage discussion with a potential supplier that might see a wholesale broadband and hardware (TV screens) being available to clubs but no guarantees on where those discussions might head.</p> <p>KS brief update:</p> <p>Area & County meeting held at end of January has now been summarized and circulated for feedback, particularly around team events.</p> <p>Boys Open Championship & Girls Open Championship closed earlier in week, with both events oversubscribed for entries. Both have entries from 14 countries, with the boys ballot falling provisionally at 3.6 and girls at 5.5 which is the lowest ever for the girls field.</p> <p>Events poster will be sent out to clubs in the next week or so and we would hope this will raise awareness of the different Club and National events that we offer. Particularly for clubs we keen to see engagement with the new Mens Regional Final event, the continuation of the 9 hole Championship and the PING mixed event.</p> <p>CM enquired about potential change of events for Womens Senior event in 2020 and the impact for Pollok as hosts. KS will get additional detail and respond directly in due course.</p>
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<u>Volunteers</u>	3.4	<p>KS provided a brief update: SG have recruited a new post which will provide support for Safeguarding, Volunteer Management and Equality work. A key piece that will be looked at is the introduction of a Volunteer Strategy that provides a consistent framework for the volunteers that support SG across categories such as rules, course rating, coaching, team captains and more.</p> <p>DM asked about Rules training and when this might be rolled out to a wider group including Area & County officials. KS advised that the team had initially concentrated on training of National Rules Panel and that wider regional sessions would be looked at for later in 2019 and beyond, with plans for a more robust training schedule that offers flexible delivery/participation.</p>
<u>Scottish Golf Update Reporting Format</u>	4	The update circulated was an extract from recent report to Board. A new reporting system is being set-up and moving forward it would be our intention to provide a more dashboard style reporting format to add strategic context and measurement against targets to be displayed.
<u>Any Other Business</u>	5	SA – what progress has been made regarding review of affiliation and voting structure? KS advised that the voting structure had been subject of some early discussion at an Area & County Forum in late January, with outputs currently with the participants for feedback. Details will be shared of proposed next steps in due course. On the affiliation fee method of calculation, with a commitment given it will be frozen until 2022 we unlikely to review this as a priority, however we remain committed to looking to address the multiple membership piece.
<u>Date of Next Meeting</u>	6	Next dates for Regional Forums will be around June 2019 and a doodle poll will follow for potential dates.