

# BUCKINGHAMSHIRE COUNTY LADIES GOLF ASSOCIATION

CENTENARY YEAR  
1923 - 2023

100  
YEARS



Celebrating **100 years** of supporting  
Women and Girls Golf in Buckinghamshire

## England Golf Report - AGM October 2023

### Staff update:

Tim Baker, the New Finance Director is now in place.

Staff turnover was at 38% which has caused concern and instigated a review of payment and terms & conditions / benefits. Turnover has now peaked and is down to 10% over the past 12 months.

**WHS:** 640,000 golfers are now using the My England golf App.

**iGolf:** 39,000 current subscribers and over 50,000 have been registered at some point in time.

**iPlay:** some technical issues prevented a launch earlier in the year but now planned for October. iPlay is aimed at those who play golf for fun. It is a free score indicator for download by anybody for fun scores (pitch & put, driving range, etc).

**Sustainability:** Implementation of our Sustainability Plan 2022-2025 #TheSustainabilityDrive (supported by industry bodies including The R&A, BIGGA, GCMA, GEO and BASIS) continues. Aligned to this is increasing awareness and impact through a targeted communications plan, utilising the comprehensive toolkit available online:

<https://eg.en.dotgolf.co.uk/resourcedetail/sustainability-toolkit>

### Respect in Golf:

Provide a place where everyone can visit and become better equipped to understand how to be more welcoming and inclusive- <https://www.Englandgolf.org/respect-in-golf>

- Implement a process that empowers clubs and counties to showcase their support to their audience

A new promotional campaign was featuring at the BMW Championship at Wentworth in September.

### Club Governance Handbook and Toolkit

The Blueprint for Good Governance handbook, webpages and resources was launched to clubs and counties in early June, with each receiving a printed version within the first two weeks of July.

### Handicap changes due in April 2024

EG will provide a contribution to the new Handicap Boards required in 2024. EG will also fund workshops required at County level.

### Affiliation Fee:

It was voted at the General Meeting in Sept 2023 to increase by £1 to £10.50. This increase is well behind inflation and CPI.

Areas EG need to increase investment: - staff retention & their benefits package; Governance; Performance budgets need to increase; Digital Services; creating a Disability pathway; WHS and Participation in the game.

England well behind other Home Nations and on a world-wide comparison at the bottom of the table.

**Nominations Committee:** Susanna Mitterer (Buckinghamshire) was re-elected to remain on the committee for a second term.

### **Equality, Diversity & inclusion / Richard Flint**

Respect in golf campaign: showed the video again – 60,000 views so far and 1,340 total website views.

Sport England have endorsed the campaign and sharing it out via their own platforms.

Club in Focus: 'Forget me not' initiative at Seckford Golf Club that focuses on getting players with Dementia back onto the course.

Each club or county could focus on one particular aspect of EDI – disability, mental health, juniors or girls, age brackets, social demographics or ethnic minorities.

Community Golf Instructors – training will start soon – PGA will support it as they will be working with PGA professionals.

### **WSLH (Woodhall Spa Land Holdings) Relationship / National Golf Centre Project**

A Brief History:

1995 EGU (men's counties) bought Woodhall Spa – money provided by men golfers.

2005 the Land was transferred to a property company – WSLH. Reason – to protect the asset and create a corporate veil, held separately from EG. In exchange the EGU received a lease for the property.

2012 – EGU merged with EWGA to form years ago.

EG has the money to build a clubhouse. WSLH does not have budget to build a new clubhouse. The simplest way would have been to dissolve the WSLH and transfer the property back to EG. WSLH have asked EG not to do that. The relationship between EG Board and WSLH is not where it should be. Majority of EG members voted that radical changes to the WSLH shareholding need to be made.

June: some members WSLH took vote (arranged by BB&O and Lancashire) – indicated support by the Unions for the proposal to give women the voting rights and ownership. John Lee (Chairman of WSLH) met with Ian Pattinson (Chairman of EG) but this meeting did not result in any progress since August. 6 letters were sent from Ian offering help (copies can be made available). 4 replies have been received. This week's letter is even more complicated and unpleasant.

3 Options were offered to WSLH members on 19 September – none were close to what EG wanted to achieve. EG explained in a letter on 14 Sept their view (we have received a copy). At that meeting – none of the 3 options were carried by 75% majority.

Letter from John Lee received 2 days ago: WSLH role is to protect the asset simply for their own members – just the men! (not for golf as a whole which was the express declaration when the asset was transferred). WSLH expressed a view that EGs remit to make golf inclusive had nothing to do with the ownership.

We, EG, stress that in our view EG strategy and ownership is intrinsically linked and therefore we reject this statement.

EG: we won't do anything in the short term. But we await their next vote. EG will provide guidance if counties request it. If a proposal will pass that is acceptable to EG then we will move heaven and earth to start the project.

WSLH has no funds to repair or improve the club house and therefore will look to its members (men's union) for further funds.

Ian Pattison: my view – independent chair – I will speak my mind and not parrot the board. Men golfers paid for the asset by a £2 levy on affiliation. Post-merger a voting system was implemented.

Original investment of the Unions can be protected and a split of 60:40 on voting rights could be achieved at the same time. Merger was more like a marriage than a commercial contract. My wife didn't earn as much as I did but I didn't give her just 10% of our house.

If this leaks to the press we will all suffer. Golf is in a race against time not just other sports but other activities that are relevant to them.

He urged the Men's Unions to demonstrate generosity of spirit and do what is plainly the 'right thing' to do.

Susanna Mitter

England Golf Voting Representative