



**Portlethen Golf Club
Management Committee
Thursday 19th November 2020**

Minute

Present:, David Fleming, Stephen Cook, Scott Sinclair, , Ian Elmslie, Steve Lawrie, Tom Boyle, Jack Douglas, Denise Robertson, Raymond Cowan, Ian Cruickshank

Apologies: Paul Singer

In Attendance: Dino Becci.

1. Minutes of previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting of 15th October 2020 were accepted as a true record.

Minute was approved, proposed by Raymond Cowan and seconded by Steve Lawrie.

2. Greens

Ian presented Neil's report

We really have had a mixed bag of weather in the last month. We have had a lot of rain in October with over 200mm falling. We have had 3 closures due to the course been unplayable. We have also had several fog delays. With the golf course still being so busy we have had to introduce maintenance Monday, this is where we close 9 holes to allow us do essential maintenance work. We have had a 3 of them so far, we cored, scarified and dressed the approaches in the first 2. The one that has just passed we solid tined back 9 greens and heavily dressed them.

With the course being so busy it is starting to show signs of wear. We really need look at these areas and create an action plan to stop these areas getting worse.

Greens

For the time of year the greens are looking and performing well. They are softer than I would like but that is to be expected after all the rain we have had. With the temperatures still quite mild we r still getting some growth. So the greens are getting cut when required. We are ironing them frequently to help maintain the smoothness and firmness. As we learn more about the plants requirements and the milder weather we have had, we are continuing to spray the greens. We are spraying them with various turf hardners and bio stimulants, this helps maintain the plants health and well-being.

As our ageing greens machines are entering the unknown on how long they will last we have taken in a demonstration of the all new electric mower. The boys tried it out this morning and were suitably impressed. The thoughts for going down the all electric route is to eliminate any fluids leaking onto and damaging the greens, especially if we have to cut in the dark. Another huge benefit of this machine is that we charge the machines overnight for minimal cost. As new legislation comes in forbidding us to use red diesel at roughly 50 pence a litre and having to use white diesel at forecourt prices our running cost will be more than doubled.

On maintenance Mondays we started aerating the greens with 20mm tines down to a depth of 200mm. We carried out this operation to the back 9 last week and I was hoping to get the front 9 done today (16th) but a fault appeared with the machine and had to go away and be repaired. Hopefully we will get the front 9 done next Monday. After aerating them we dressed them with 2 tonne of sand each. The back 9 has recovered very well from this maintenance.

The benefits of this aeration is huge. It relieves compaction, it allow gaseous exchange to take place and it also allows water to move down through the profile.

APPROACHES

All the approaches have now been hollow cored, scarified and top dressed with a medium coarse sand. The back 9 approaches have had an application of soluble feed and iron.

We have started to run the roto-knife through the fairways and this will continue to be done as long as the weather and ground conditions allow.

We are also continuing with the scarifying of the fairways.

Semi rough and rough

This has all been cut back to first height cut, the next stage is to rake the rough and remove some of the dead material that has built up over the season.

Overview.

The course has been so busy lately that the course is taking a real pounding. Especially some of the walk offs and the narrower tees. A decision has been made to purchase more tee mats to help protect the tees and still maintain a reasonable length golf course.

The back 9 in particular is really struggling. The worst areas are to the right of the 12th green and from the 13th green to the 14th tee.

As I mentioned above about putting out tee mats to protect the tees, this is a short term solution, the long term solution is to increase the tee size to accommodate the increased amount of traffic. I am currently working on a plan of action for these areas.

The area to the right of the 12th tee is really struggling. It is a narrow gap down to the 13th tee and is getting very worn and tired looking. There is a couple of solutions to this problem, 1 would be to extend the path up to the edge of the trees, the second would be to remove the dogwoods and turf the area to allow greater flexibility of managing the traffic. The second option is my preferred method, as I feel the bushes don't really bring anything to the hole, apart from being quite unsightly and potentially slowing up play.

3. House

Steve presented his report

We had a meeting last week with Margaret and martin we went over a few things which included Wednesday eat out to help out and the only change was that we have not included drinks on the 50% discount and to date not much have noticed the change the Wednesdays have continued to be successful with a lot of repeat customers

We also spoke about the possibility of doing something with Fridays offering a deal on something like burgers,steak,pizza,evenings etc once a week was spoken about with the possibility of it going to 2 nights once established M and M are looking in to it and hopefully January will see a start

Christmas meals will soon start but wont be offered on a Wednesday as not to conflict with the 50% discount on Wednesdays

The junior prize giving went ahead with roughly 15 tables in use and all went well

The seniors are also having an afternoon or an evening roughly on the 13 th December details were not clear but Margaret to organise with seniors

Ladies are also in the process of doing similar again details with Margaret

The alarm has Now been looked at and repaired we also have had a review of all bulbs in the house/locker rooms and all bulbs that need replaced will be in due course

The ducting in the disabled toilet will be fixed also

4.Match & Handicap

Stephen presented his report

The new WHS went live on 2nd November as planned – although a few hiccups with indicative handicaps in the run up to Day 1 the system seems to be accurate using the right scores and right tees for most – I am not aware of any issues with scores missing etc. Former CONGU associations moved the goal posts a little and used a different formula than had been rolled out to work out initial handicaps taking CSS into account which caused some confusion. We have disabled the General play ability for now as we are not playing on a measured course. This will be reactivated next march once we come off the winter setup.

The Winter league is underway – hopefully we will get a decent winter to allow us to play a good number of qualifiers. Turnout so far has been very good.

We are encountering a number of issues with regards to time bookings – firstly due to demand come Thursday/Friday there is still a waiting list for Sat play – however come Sat there are a number of 3-balls playing due to late Friday night cancellations or no shows – this is stopping our members getting a game as many do not get an email from waiting list until late at night and therefore unaware they have a time until it is too late. There appears to be a group of persistent offenders and I suggest this is tracked and repercussions for continued no-shows or late cancellations. I would also like to see a return to closing of the timesheet at 5pm or 7pm on a Friday night to stop people pulling out – I realise this causes admin for Dave on a Sat morning but we need to make the membership aware that late pull outs are not acceptable and persistent offenders are dealt with, it is about educating the members the effects of this behaviour and how it stops other members from playing.

The second issue we are finding is Sunday bookings – members adding guest in to block the time and then removing on the day and again members not getting a game. The tee sheet on a Sunday is generally booked solid to 1pm yet the course always appears quiet on a Sunday. We also have corporate booking whole tee times and only 2-3 playing. We cannot stop members booking every Sunday and then removing their name late on Saturday but again we need to remind them this is not acceptable and take action where required.

I would like to see an email being sent out reminding members of tee booking etiquette and advising persistent offenders they will have their booking rights removed for a future Saturday / Sundays. Should members struggle to get a time Saturday and Sunday they may leave the club to go elsewhere, yet we have capacity to let them play. With times being a premium, members appear to be booking a slot or adding a name just to secure a space in case the weather is ok or they fancy a game.

I realise this is additional admin for the starter however feel if tracked and enforced for a month or so people will soon get the message and situation will improve. When Muriel was here Saturday pull outs received a warning, repeat offenders received a letter and further repeats meant removal of name from next competition – although strict people knew where they stood and we did not have as big an issue. I feel as we have got lax about this so have the membership which is frustrating for members looking for a game. There will be people with a valid reason for not making their time however the likelihood of this happening 2 weeks in a row is unlikely and where valid reasons are involved this can be raised on a case by case basis.

The Prize winners list is generated but require some of the non-Howdidido results (Greensomes, Adult/Junior, Bill Lamb Memorial, etc.) – these have been requested. Also Order of Merit and Most Improved seem to be an issue as with the update to Howdidido these options are no longer available – Dino is speaking to ClubV1 Systems to try and get resolved. I hope to distribute to the membership by the end of the month.

5. Finance and Admin

Tom presented the report and P&L to October.

The financial year has now been completed and we have, as recently predicted, finished the year well ahead of where we might have been had the original lockdown continued through from March.

For the avoidance of doubt the figures incorporate some provision for certain as yet unbilled and incomplete works such as the further development of the 5 hole academy course for which we received grant funding from Scottish Golf from and the urgently required ground works around the greens shed that is yet to be completed, both items of which had previously been reported.

As was previously highlighted recent restrictions in the hospitality sector has had a significant impact on F&B figures with October alone generating a net "operating loss" of £5,000 albeit this was after "giving away" discounts of £2,800 on our Wednesday deals which still however is seen as a positive and is a significant driver of revenue which is highly unlikely to be replaced if we didn't offer this deal.

We also continue to benefit from the reduced VAT on food which in October gained us a figure of £1,900 so without this the numbers would have been significantly worse.

Monthly losses in the region of £5,000 would simply be unsustainable.

As we go into the last two months of the year, in comparison, November has always been a historically quiet month but with losses being cancelled out by a festive period in December so a ball park break-even over the 2 months.

The slight relaxation of restrictions during November with regard to alcohol sale and extended hours will certainly help but given the time of year volume will not be that great and another direct loss will be anticipated.

We do expect, and have already secured some bookings, a reasonable December but again with restricted numbers the revenues that will be generated will still fall well short of those historically.

The award of a £2,155 Business "hardship" Grant received in November and another "up to" £2,100 application made to the recently announced Business "Restriction" Grant will certainly help for these 2 months.

When we come to January however we may be forced into making some difficult decisions if things continue as they are which will be worsened by the planned ending of the VAT reduction schemes.

At the time of writing we remain in tier 2 so any detrimental changes to this will obviously have a significantly more negative impact.

6. AGM – Date set for 19th January 2021

7. Other Business:

- A communication had been received from a member who had missed a proportion of the season due to a back injury and was looking for some reduction toward his fees for next year.

It was disclosed that he had in fact managed 38 rounds this season and his request was therefore rejected.

- A member was seen to be overshooting the driving range on a consistent basis and would be spoken to about his practice regime.

Next meeting Thursday 19th November 2020