

## Chairman's April blog -

Hello again to all members.

Well, we've been back now for just over 4 weeks and it's lovely to see so many smiling faces, just happy to be back out there ... trying to hit that little ball in to those little holes on those green bits with the flag and hopefully we're gradually getting better at it!

Since I last wrote, a few things have changed.... Feedback from many members was that the club was missing out on income from green fees and guests with so many empty tee times in the afternoons, so the board decided not to wait the proposed 6 weeks before allowing visitors and now we are accepting green fees with 48 hours notice.

By now you should have received the Survey questions about the online booking system, and I really hope you do give us your views please, as it is so much easier for the Board to make decisions when we have a good level of feedback from the members. The surveys should be returned by the end of the April please, so that the board can make a decision in May.

Our membership as with most golf clubs is still climbing and we are now very near to being FULL. Once we have seen the number of renewals and the number of natural resignations which we receive every year, we will be in a better position to know how many more members we can take before we start a waiting list. Also, just in case you don't know, we are not able to charge a joining fee at the moment because we have CASC status, which helps us financially with our business rates.

Changing the subject, I need to apologise to you all because I have not yet managed to set up the roadmap for the course, but I can assure you that it is in hand as I write this blog. Unfortunately, 2 of the younger members of the green keepers' team have left and so we have quickly tried to recruit. We decided to try to employ more experienced green staff and we had a good number of applicants in response to our adverts. Richard should be able to tell us soon, whom he has selected. This was obviously a priority and pushed back our discussions re the plans for the course, but things are progressing again now.

Regarding the course, we also are having to address the permanent problem of wayward golf balls going into the gardens of the houses in Upfield, off the 1<sup>st</sup> tee. So, the Board are reviewing many different ideas on how to get over this issue. Moving the hazard area and out of bounds?, creating a new bunker on the right hand side? clearing some of the trees on the left hand side? planting more trees on the right (long-term)? ..... Watch this space.

Secondly with regard to the course, we are planning on putting out 2 or 3 signs relating to speed of play and also some more signs regarding where you should be driving/not driving your buggy. Most of the time it is common sense, where you should be driving and trying to

stick to the path where possible. I'm sure you do not want to cause unnecessary damage to your course. Thank you.

Also thank you to all of you, who have been so complimentary about the great work Steve Denman (our Captain) and Richard (our head green keeper) have carried out so far on the new 13<sup>th</sup> tee.

The Board have been in touch with most, if not all, of the new members who have joined us in the last 18 months. Many of whom have not seen how Shirley Park operated pre-Covid. Therefore, as we are approaching renewal season, we thought it was only right to talk to them and explain a little about how we have been running events, competitions and what used to be the normal way of life at Shirley Park. Now we wait to see what is the 'new normal'.

As restrictions are gradually lifting and hopefully, we all continue to behave sensibly, then we should be able to start our golf events and social events from June. Bharat Patel has been getting plenty of ideas from the board and from other members. We have already introduced 'Happy Hour' on Friday evenings (half price drinks from 6-8pm) for the next few weeks at least and please look out for details of other events soon to be announced.

Other issues discussed at our last board meeting include .....

- A possible new roadside sign at the front entrance of the club.
- We are monitoring a tracker for use on the buggies.
- We are working towards a SafeGolf accreditation, along with more development of our junior section.
- We hope to have further information in June regarding this year's Captain's Away Day.
- We are reviewing all 2021 bookings for societies, private functions and our own club events, to see what promotions may still be required.
- Many golf competition dates have already been announced for this year. Please keep an eye out for more details as we move forward.
- House projects we are now discussing include a new entrance for the ladies, improving the Gents' visitor urinals and further painting of the exterior of the clubhouse and outbuildings.

As always, thank you taking the time to read the ramblings of your Chairman. Hopefully you are now a little more informed.

Best regards

Keith Povah