



# Portlethen Golf Club Management Committee Thursday 18th February 2021

## Minute

**Present:**, David Fleming (Chair), Stephen Cook, Scott Sinclair, Tom Boyle, Jack Douglas, Ian Cruickshank, Paul Singer, Steve Lawrie, Raymond Cowan, Ian Elmslie, Hugh Murdoch, Gary Pacitti

### **Apologies:**

**In Attendance:** Dino Becci.

### **1. Minutes of previous Meeting**

The minutes of the meeting of 17<sup>th</sup> December 2020 were accepted as a true record.

Minute was approved, proposed by Tom Boyle and seconded by Ian Cruickshank

### **2. Opening remarks from the Chair.**

Welcome to our new Committee Members Hugh & Gary. I hope you enjoy your involvement on Committee and we look forward to your input. Its always great to get a fresh point of view. Congratulations also to Raymond on his election to the post of House Convenor and commiserations to Steve Lawrie in this respect but please that you are continuing on Committee.

At the first meeting of a new Committee following the AGM, it's appropriate to remind all that our deliberations are confidential and nothing should be discussed outside the meeting except for matters that may be available to Members by way of Minutes but even then, only after these are agreed at the following months meeting.

Given the odd comment made from time to time over the last year, I'd also like to remind everyone that we have been elected by the Members to run the Club in accordance with the Constitution and we should set aside what may be best for each of us individually or for any particular group of Members and make decisions based on what we think is best for the overall good of the Club as a whole. No one should feel they are here to do anything other than 'ensuring fair play for all' – to me that is a given!! None of us are here to 'represent' any particular section of our Membership over others!

I hope that everyone is also aware that we are expected to adhere to the principle of collective responsibility. We can have robust discussions from time to time, and while I think we are generally singing from the same hymn sheet, we may require to vote on particular matters from time to time. Once a decision is made however, we are all expected to stand behind it. Some of these decisions can be difficult and may not be universally popular but Its unacceptable for any Committee Member to be going about saying they disagreed with any particular decision. As far as I am concerned, we should be presenting a united front, acting as a team and be prepared to stand up for the Committee's position when we are confronted by any of the minority of moaning Minnies who think they have the monopoly on logical thought when they are not actually in possession of all the facts.

In the spirit of teamwork, I'd also like to remind everyone that we are here to make decisions on the strategic direction of the Club. It is then up to the Club Manager to implement the policies and manage the various staff members accordingly in conjunction with the Convenors of the relative Departments. As previously agreed, Convenors Reports are to be submitted in good time to allow distribution and consideration by Committee Members ahead of the monthly meeting. If anyone wants to discuss the quality of the sausages or the shape of the carrots then the House Convenor should be contacted directly ahead of the meeting. If

someone wants to discuss a minor matter of course presentation then the Greens Convenor should be contacted. If there is a figure in the financial report you don't understand, ask Dino or Tom ahead of the meeting. We should all be able to speak to each other at any time and its only when there are differences of opinion that you should find it necessary to bring any such matters to the Committee table and only then after advising the Club Manager or relevant Convenor that you intend to do so to enable a response to be prepared for discussion. The objective again is to manage the Club as well as possible and we should not be looking to come out with 'gotcha' moments! It's also the case, particularly at this time of Covid restrictions, that we, as Committee Members are seen to be adhering to the guidelines at all times. If we make a decision as to how matters are to be addressed it has got to be right that we comply. If anyone disagrees with anything, this is the place to voice these views but again, once a decision is made that is it and we all need to comply whether we agree or not.

Finally, if anyone has any issue with any other Member of the Committee, please be man enough to address that with them face to face and only if you don't get a satisfactory response should you consider raising it in Committee and, again, only after you have made it clear to that person you intend to do so. We are meant to be a team!!

### **3. Finance and Admin**

Nothing salient to report in the month with regard to P&L expenditure.

Revenue has obviously been non existent for January with course access being limited by the weather and even then, to members only.

The closure of the clubhouse since December has of course resulted in zero income in the month.

We have however been in receipt of grant assistance from the "Strategic Framework Fund" which comes in every 4 weeks. The amount was original £2,100 under the business interruption category but has now increased to £3,000 under the business closure label. These amounts cover significantly our planned GP figures as well as the separate Job Retention Scheme (JRS) ie staff furlough offset.

At the time of budgeting we were still in tier 2 so direct comparisons can't be made but the decision at that time was to still furlough certain staff from greens.

The actual grant income breakdown compared to that budgeted for the year was reported as was the award of a significant additional one-off grant that will be received in February.

Additional cost in the region of £8,000 is anticipated for the additional ground works being undertaken as a result of the extra funding received.

A full breakdown would be made available for the next meeting.

### **4. Match and Handicap**

The bad news is we have got little to no golf in the last month due to the snow and frozen conditions – the good news is weather seems to be turning and getting warmer and possibility of some (lockdown) golf soon. However, with still being in lockdown we are still unable to restart the winter fours or sweeps.

Champion of Champion entries for 2021 have been submitted and acknowledged by District; Lewis Shand, Graham Smith, Sarah Ritchie and Hazel Lamb. Best of luck to those members.

It has been confirmed by the Northern Open that the club matches (Aberdeen Pennant, Deeside League, Seniors match) that clashed with the Northern Open can go ahead as planned in evening as planned.

The 2021 fixture list is now fixed and the document now ready for the printers, with a final review required.

For the new WHS handicapping system we had about 35 members who didn't have CDH numbers when the systems transferred from CONGU. All of these now have CDH and after manually inputting all of their last 20 rounds and all but 3 have official Handicap Indexes. We're still investigating the issues of the 3 concerned but may simply be a case of re-inputting the relevant rounds, this should be resolved prior to the start of competitive golf.

Dino along with David Pocock are working on the tee sheet setup regarding different categories and booking rights, this shall be completed shortly.

For competition tee sheet set up the system allows tee times to be cancelled either 1) right up to the tee time itself (which we tend to apply over winter), 2) A predetermined time/day for all tee times e.g. 12 noon on the Friday of the Saturday or 3) an option of x hours/minutes before the tee time – I propose to discuss this further during the meeting.

With regards to the Prize winner list for 2020 I am still awaiting confirmation of some winners and therefore still unable to send out the winners list.

An analysis of the capacities that various tee time intervals would result in was requested. This would help make decisions on medal/ competition play if current restrictions were to remain in force for the start of the season.

It was agreed that tee time cancellation would remain at "up to the tee time", at the moment.

It was confirmed, that when feasible, we would be returning to a first tee time of 6am on Saturdays.

It was also confirmed that we would not be printing fixture list booklets this season given the likelihood of ongoing schedule changes.

It was agreed that the current restriction on members having 3 live advance bookings including only one at the weekend should remain in place.

## **5.Greens**

Since the 1<sup>st</sup> of January we have only managed to get the course open on 8 occasions, and that was on the frost course. This has been the worst winter for golf for many years. It does look like this coming week the temperatures are set to rise and hopefully we will manage to get some golf played again.

The temperature has been very cold, and we have had a lot of rain but what we have generally fell on frozen ground and turn to ice, leaving the course very difficult to walk around never mind golfing.

The course in general has had no real maintenance done on it as the ground conditions have not been suitable. With many of the greens covered in solid ice for many days it was getting a bit concerning how this would affect the plant. After a brief thaw the ice

melted and left the surface free from ice and water. It looks like the ice hasn't had any real effect on the greens which is very pleasing.

A photo of ice covering the 12<sup>th</sup> green was presented.

The ice was not gone for long then the snow returned covering the whole course in about 6 inches of snow. The concern was how long this would lie on the course and especially on the shaded greens. I made a decision to remove some of the snow of some of the greens we know that take longer to defrost. I only did a few as an experiment to see how the plant would react to this.

Photos of the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> greens were presented. Time will tell if this is the way to move forward or whether or not you just let mother nature do her thing.

Other work that we have been carrying out, we have opened up the drain to the left of the 1<sup>st</sup> green. We removed the old soil that was on top of the drain and replaced it with fresh free draining material. We have also put in some new gully pots. This will help remove any surface water quicker.

The very wet area to the left of the 5<sup>th</sup> green has also been dug out and a new drain has been put in. The old heavy clay soil and thatchy turf has been removed and been replaced with free draining material. This job will be completed soon.

Last winter we were going to remove the overgrown out of control dogwoods behind the 14<sup>th</sup> green, this never happened last year but we have managed to remove them now and we are in the process of re-turfing the area. This has tidied up the area no end, it will also allow a lot more air movement through the tree compartment towards the 11<sup>th</sup> green.

The lefthand side which has all been turfed and looking good.

There has been a lot of working happening down at the 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup>. This work has been carried out by Easy Landscapes. This work includes cleaning out the 2 ponds, redirecting the flow of water through the pond at the 4<sup>th</sup>, redirecting the water to the 5<sup>th</sup> pond. Creating a maintenance road along the burn from the tar road at the 6<sup>th</sup>. Crushing rocks for future projects. Tidying the path and the surrounding area leading up to the 6<sup>th</sup> tee.

Once the banks are turfed and a drain is put down the middle of the path and then re-dusted this area will look very good.

There is still a lot of work to do in this corner but hopefully in the next few weeks it will be completed.

There are a number of other jobs that Neil and his team are in the process of undertaking but with the inclement conditions progress has been hampered:

Putting Green Sponsor Board: This is all ready and complete with signage attached. Once ground conditions allow this will be finally put in place. Pilot holes have been dug.

"Terry Taylor" Bench at 1<sup>st</sup> Tee: As with putting green sign this is now good to go once ground conditions allow.

Buggies: All buggies require thorough testing to ensure they have endured the cold winter. There are certainly 2 units that are likely to require replacement battery banks which unfortunately have been difficult to source recently.

Shoe Cleaner: Unit is in full working order but cannot be used due to current restriction and is likely to remain so for some time, Unfortunately, this is becoming a bit of a rusty eyesore and although a new housing would be ideal the unit should at least be covered in the meantime with a tarpaulin or such like.

Academy Course: A revised layout has been mapped out and agreed with 3 new greens and 5 tees being built. Some additional bunding and fencing will also be incorporated to clearly define the facility. Total cost of the project will be not more than £10k and will also provide some improvements to the existing driving range. We already have £6k banked (£4k

from Scottish Golf Grant & £2k from Dave Pocock's "cash for clubs" event last year so the balance will come from various sponsorship/fundraising initiatives.

Car Park Entrance: The potholes are continuing to worsen and need addressing as soon as possible. Prior to any work being carried out however we need to find a solution to the running water coming running off the Causeymouth Road, untreated we'll just be back to square on  
can be distributed to the printers for the fixture books – if we feel we are confident enough to print at this stage.

## 6. House

As the clubhouse remains closed it is tempting to assume nothing is happening however even with Dino being the only member of staff in the clubhouse much is ongoing including:

- Limited heating remains on to ensure no frozen pipes
- Weekly programme carried out for legionella testing
- Staff on furlough (80%) however many staff taking accrued holidays
- Refuse collection suspended

## Golf Studio

The completion certificate for the golf studio structural work has been applied for and we await a response from the council planning department.

David Pocock has offered to take on the studio on a Sunday for a pro rata increase in rental (extra £50 per month). His assistant Iain would use Sundays for lessons and/or club fittings.

### Pros

Guaranteed revenue  
Additional services to members  
Responsibility for room fully with David  
Remove need for detailed instructions/staff training

### Cons

Loss of potential for revenue

For the committee to decide.

After discussion it was agreed that the originally agreed plan of club use for the facility should remain and therefore the booking system that has up to now been a major stumbling block in making this logistically possible should be pushed for by the club.

## 7. Other Business

**Wish List:** Suggestion tabled that each project be ranked in order of priority.

**Next meeting Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> March 2021**