

# Minutes of the Village Golf Club Annual General Meeting

Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> November 2020

**Present:** Jane Annetts, Brian Ball, Oliver Barford, Mick Collins, Carol Edwards, Lindsay Edwards, Callum Finlay, John Gower, Pam Jameson, Andrew Norman, Annette Scott, Dave Tremain, John Waterman

Annette Scott thanked everyone for attending and opened the meeting at 6:30pm.

## 1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Terry O'Connor, Ursula O'Connor and David Williams

## 2. Minutes of the last AGM

The Minutes of the AGM held on 27<sup>th</sup> November 2019 had been circulated in advance of the meeting and were agreed as a true and correct record. Pam Jameson proposed and Callum Findlay seconded that they should be adopted unchanged. Annette Scott signed the minutes.

## 3. Chairman's Report

In what must be the strangest of years, I am delighted to report that despite all the enforced closures for either Covid19 or the appalling weather that the club has continued to go from strength to strength.

A generous donation and a grant from Sport England combined with a huge increase in membership and the associated green fees has enabled us to make substantial investments into both the course and physical resources such as machinery and building improvements. More of which I am sure you will hear about in the treasurers and grounds reports.

Although a huge amount has been achieved this year our major project has been completing the course extension and with the exception of some tree planting (as if we don't enough!) weather permitting we plan to have this open for play in the spring. Adding the three new holes meant that we have had to redesign our score cards to reflect a 12 hole course and whilst doing this we took the opportunity to rename 2 of the existing holes and there is no prize for guessing which hole is to be renamed "The Mighty Oak".

The programme of competitions was affected due to course closures but I am pleased to report that we did manage to arrange competitions in such a way that all the clubs trophies got awarded and we continued to get a good turn-out despite some pretty miserable Sunday mornings.

The Clubs unique feature is definitely being a real community resource and we could not have achieved all that we have done this year without the wonderful support of so many members of our community. I would like to thank and make special mention of:

- The Community Pay Back Group who undertook the mammoth task of clearing the pond which had suffered due to emergency tree felling last winter. I cannot thank this team enough for the brilliant work they have done in clearing this area up. Additionally they replaced and erected new security fencing around the tee bases, cleared the course after tree surgery work and so many other small but beneficial jobs – they really have made a huge impact on the course.

- Chris Holness who for more years than I care to count has opened and closed the course every day- with the exception of lockdown closures - and I don't know what we would do without him.
- Dave Witcher who put in all the new water points connectors for us
- J Brazil Civil Engineers for laying all the water pipe and new Tee bases at a much subsidised cost
- The bunker brigade – those members who volunteered to adopt a bunker and who have kept them looking pristine
- Rob Burr for his amazing work with the machinery and advice on the course
- Brian Ball who has done so many jobs around the course from painting to strimming
- Mick Collins for setting up the Facebook page for us - with the help of his friends.
- To the management committee who have continued to be there - planning and working behind the scenes to ensure that the club runs effectively.

Finally, can I thank all the members who have made such good use of the course this year it has been wonderful to see so many people out enjoying themselves and as a new member said “The best thing about this club is that everyone is so friendly and relaxed”. Here's to 2021 and even greater things.

#### **4. Treasurer's Report**

At the end of March I remember sitting here, looking at a spreadsheet and thinking, if we cannot re-open the course this could very easily bring about the end of the Club. Even stripping out every optional item of spend, we were not going to have enough money to maintain the course for the remainder of the year. But I am pleased to say that I could not have been more wrong.

JA shared the Balance Sheet and Income and Expenditure reports for the year. The accounts have been prepared on a simple cash accounting basis to reflect income actually received and expenses actually paid up to 31st October 2020. The accounts have been reconciled with the bank statements and have been audited by Mick Collins.

You will see from the accounts that at year end funds stood at £17,154, which is £7,344 or almost 75% more than the balance held at the 2019 year end.

There has been an increase of £18,534 (81%) in income when compared to 2019. Expenditure for the year has increased by £13,701 (67%) compared to last year.

I would like to expand on the reasons for some of the changes to income and expenditure over the year and comment on some of the larger items shown in the accounts:-

##### **Income**

- Membership Fees – Increased by £9,790, almost 59% reflecting a very significant increase in membership.
- Donations - Increased from £319 to £1,689. We have received many more donations than usual this year, some of which were exceptionally generous.
- Green Fees - Rose from £2,325 to £4,081, again reflecting the increased membership and use of the course.
- Grants - We were very grateful to receive three significant grants this year:

In November 2019 we received £1,000 from Maidstone Leisure Trust

In March 2020 we received £7,000 of Section 106 funding from Maidstone Borough Council (with thanks to Staplehurst Parish Council for their support in making this application)

In June 2020 we received £922 in Covid-19 Assistance from Sport England

The first two of these grants were specifically to assist with the cost of the course extension and I will say a little more about that later.

### **Expenditure**

- Machinery Service, Repair and Maintenance - we have spent approximately £800 on routine servicing and just over £2,000 on various repairs to five separate machines.
- Other Repair and Maintenance - expenditure includes £1,284 to replace the roof on the green fees hut. The majority of this cost related to the removal of the existing asbestos roof, which had begun to deteriorate.
- Course Maintenance - in addition to the regular items this year's expenditure includes £2,870 on tree surgery, £969 on the sand and seed to improve the greens.
- Wages - are higher as John is now looking after a larger area, spent many hours working on the greens and we are now paying for the greens to be swished on a regular basis.
- Publicity and Advertising - costs included printing of leaflets, web-site hosting, domain name renewal and replacing the banners in the car park, which were looking very tired.
- Course Extension Costs - Our original estimate for the 3 additional holes was £12,600. We have managed to make considerable savings along the way and are now projecting a final cost of under £10,300. Over the course of the last two years we have paid £8,993 and therefore expect to spend a further £1,245 next year. The grants received from Maidstone Leisure Trust and Maidstone Borough Council mean that we have only needed to fund just over £2,100 from Club funds for the entire project.
- Purchase of Equipment - as well as some smaller items, we have replaced the old tractor with a more versatile UTV vehicle, bought a used aerator for the greens improvement project and a new leaf blower.

### **Looking Forward**

Taking into account the income and expenditure since the 31st October we have a current balance of £16,758.

We will have no further significant income until 1st April 2021 when the new membership year starts. Projected costs until then - items such as wages, further planned tree surgery, the remaining course extension costs, water rates, servicing of machinery, insurance premiums and hedge cutting - means we are forecasting a balance of approximately £7,800 by 31st March next year.

Brian Ball commented that income would be reduced next year, without the grants received this year. Jane Annetts agreed, but pointed out that £8,000 of the grant money received was specifically for the course extension project and we would not be incurring the corresponding expenditure next year.

## **5. Membership Report**

Because it is a word that has been used so frequently this year I am going to try to avoid saying 'unprecedented' when delivering this report. But, I might struggle to get through the next few minutes without it.

After the record breaking very heavy rainfall in February we were forced to close the course temporarily; something that had never happened before. The Committee had already agreed to change the membership renewal date from 1<sup>st</sup> March to 1<sup>st</sup> April, but despite that it was still necessary to invite members to renew at a time when the course was closed, which was clearly difficult. The course just about dried out sufficiently for us to re-open on Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> March. Four days later the Prime Minister announced the first national lockdown. I think it's fair to say, this was not a good start to the year.

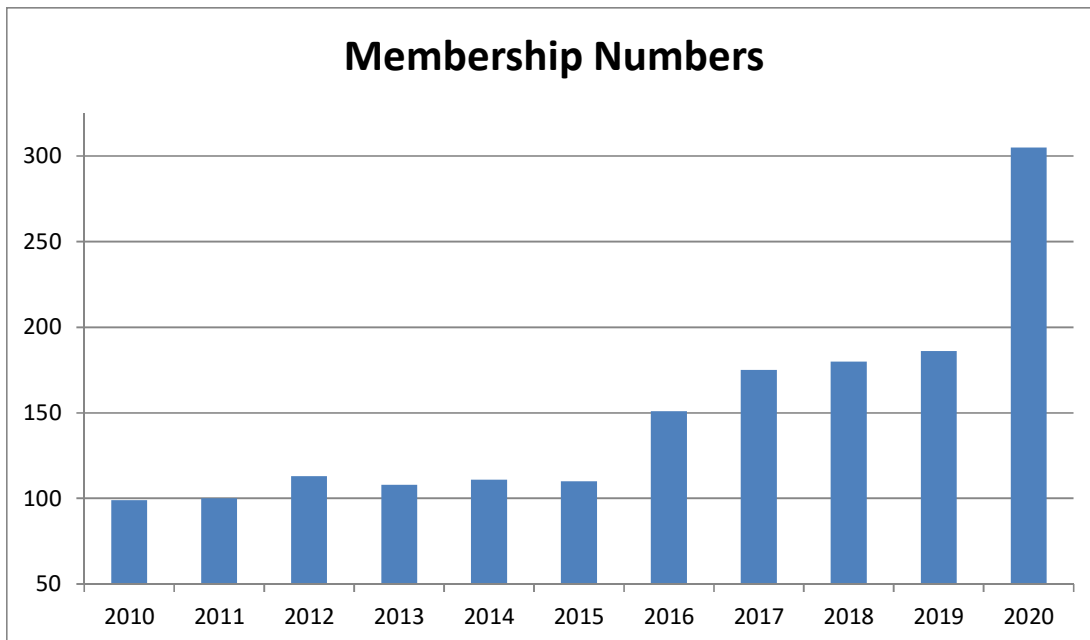
During this period, and in the knowledge that it was closed, in order to support the Club a number of members choose to re-join, and indeed made some very generous and significant donations to funds. For this we were very grateful, but it still left the Club in a precarious position financially.

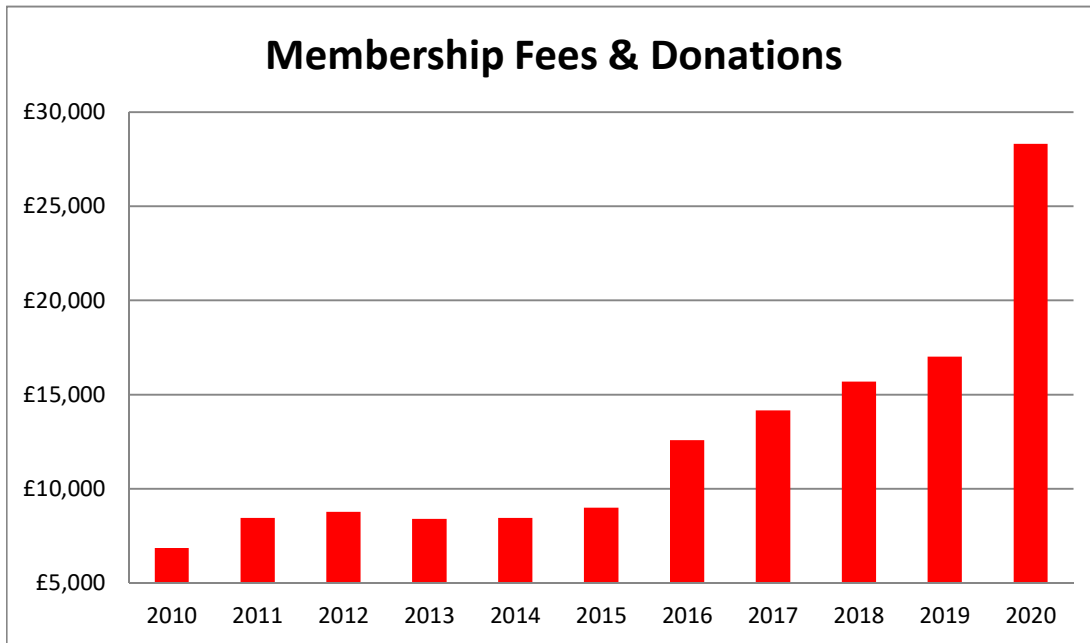
However, things changed very radically from May. When the lockdown measures were eased and, fortunately golf was one of the few sports we were allowed to play, it was at times hard to keep up with the number of enquiries, phone calls, text messages and emails from people asking about the Club. During May alone, 84 members joined or renewed their membership. By comparison, in 2019 only 8 members joined during May.

At the time of the AGM last year, we had 186 members. We passed that number at the beginning of June and currently we have 305 members. This is certainly the highest number of members we have had since the records I hold began, and I believe it is probably the most members the Club has ever had. (You will notice that I have still not said unprecedented.)

Although there were times during May when the course was a little too busy, things soon settled down and it was great to see the course so well used, especially by the many younger members and families.

You have probably seen enough graphs this year to last a lifetime, but I will just share these two with you, because they clearly show the transformation that the Club has undergone over the last few years.





Whilst this has been and continues to be an extremely difficult year for many, and a very sad year for some, Golf generally and our Club in particular has benefited greatly from the availability of golf during the period of restricted activity.

Obviously we do not know what will happen in future. We are not really expecting interest to continue at its current level, but we are hopeful that a reasonable proportion of the new members will remain with the Club next year.

Finally, as the Club's finances are currently secure I am pleased to confirm that the Committee have agreed to maintain membership fees for next year at their existing levels, which supports our aim of making golf at this Club accessible to all.

<b>2021 Annual Membership Fees</b>	<b>£</b>
Adult - 7 Day	115
Adult - Weekday Only	97
Junior	55
Family - 2 Adults, 2 Children under 16	240
Family - 1 Adult, 2 Children under 16	160

Green fees for members' guests will remain at the current level of £5 per guest.

## **6. Ground Staff Report**

At this time last year I was looking at a very wet and in places flooded golf course, with the late autumn competitions being cancelled.

The weather didn't improve going into the new year, so much so that I needed with the support of both Jane and Annette to advise the committee that the course should be closed due to the underfoot conditions. This was agreed and the course was closed for several weeks if I remember correctly.

Again from memory we reopened for a week only to then go into lockdown.

Flipping the coin totally we had a really hot and dry summer and the greens really started to suffer due to not being able to get the water down to the grass roots. I discussed the issue with Rob Burr

who advised this was because the greens were rock hard due to not having been solid or hollow tined with the necessary equipment for several years, something that needs to be done two or three times a year to keep the greens soft and able to absorb any rain or watering.

The club were able to purchase a tining machine, sourced for us by Rob, we were then able to solid tine the greens in September and this is something we can now do as required through the year.

At the same time with the help of Rob we heavily sanded the greens and also over seeded, again this is something that requires doing, albeit not as heavily, a couple of times a year to help keep the greens as smooth and flat as possible.

The three new greens have really come along well and have just been rolled going into winter and should be ready for play this coming May.

All the machines have performed well with just a few running repairs but nothing major or serious as in years gone by.

The newly purchased utility truck is a real bonus for the course.

Thanks to all who have helped during the year, and special thanks to Rob for all his help and advice.

Callum Findlay expressed concern that the greens had been solid tined and not hollow tined. John Gower confirmed that they would be hollow tined in the spring. Annette Scott explained that the original intention had been to hollow tine the greens, but that they were still too hard from the dry summer to allow this to be completed in September.

## **8. Election of Officers**

Annette Scott asked if anyone wished to stand for election. Brian Ball indicated that he would be prepared to join the Committee and was proposed by Pam Jameson and seconded by Callum Findlay.

Annette Scott confirmed that the current committee had already confirmed that they were all prepared to stand again. The current committee had already been proposed by Ursula O'Connor and seconded by Terry O'Connor and were therefore voted in en block.

## **9. Any Other Business**

9.1 Mick Collins thanked everyone for their work and indicated that was very pleased with the way the Club was developing.

9.2 Annette Scott announced that the winner of the 'Player of the Year' shield, which is based on points accumulated from competitions played throughout the year, was Dave Rowe.

There being no other business the **Meeting closed at 7.01 p.m.**

## Village Golf and Sports Club

### Balance Sheet as at 31st October 2020

	2020	2019
	£	£
Balance Brought Forward	9,809.77	7,296.81
Balance from Income and Expenditure	<u>7,344.98</u>	<u>2,512.96</u>
	<u>17,154.75</u>	<u>9,809.77</u>
Represented By:		
Current Account - NatWest	<u>17154.75</u>	<u>9,809.77</u>
	<u>17,154.75</u>	<u>9,809.77</u>

## Village Golf and Sports Club

### Income and Expenditure Account for the Year Ending 31st October 2020

	2020	2019
	£	£
<b>Income</b>		
Membership Fees	26,468.00	16,678.00
Donations	1,689.00	319.00
Green Fees	4,081.00	2,325.00
Competition Income	280.00	400.00
Junior Golf - Profit	0.00	215.00
Grants	8,922.00	125.00
Sponsorship	0.00	200.00
Insurance Claim	0.00	2,549.00
Sale of Equipment	0.00	95.00
	<u>41,440.00</u>	<u>22,906.00</u>
<b>Expenditure</b>		
AGM & Membership Renewal	317.27	112.56
Machinery Service, Repair & Maintenance	2,964.16	469.95
Other Repair & Maintenance	1,689.07	745.79
Course Maintenance	4,847.27	3,692.76
Wages	9,403.25	6,375.00
Expenses - General	304.58	164.61
Expenses - Fuel	488.70	391.83
Publicity & Advertisements	413.18	40.00
Insurance Premium	567.51	550.56
Water Rates	895.81	76.79
Affiliation Fee	25.00	25.00
Sandvik Licence Fee	0.00	0.00
Course Extension	5,444.94	3,548.19
Purchase of Equipment	6,734.28	4,200.00
	<u>34,095.02</u>	<u>20,393.04</u>
Balance to Accumulated Fund	7,344.98	2,512.96