

Minutes of the Village Golf Club Annual General Meeting

Thursday 5th December 2023

Present: Jane Annetts, Richard Ash, Carol Edwards, Lindsay Edwards, Callum Finlay, John Gower, Paul Heard, Pam Jameson, Annette Scott, Dave Tremain

1. Introduction and welcome

Annette Scott thanked everyone for attending the Annual General Meeting of the Village Golf Club and opened the meeting at 7:00pm.

2. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Brian Ball and David Williams.

3. Minutes of the last AGM

The Minutes of the AGM held on 1st December 2022 had been circulated in advance of the meeting and were agreed as a true and correct record. Dave Tremain proposed and Callum Findlay seconded that they should be adopted unchanged. Annette Scott signed the minutes.

4. Chairman's Report (Annette Scott)

I am delighted to report on another hugely successful year for the club. Membership has reached record levels and in addition to all the ongoing maintenance work we have also managed to implement 4 of the significant infra structure improvements that have been on our development plan for a number of years.

The long-awaited drainage channels have been put in and are proving to be very effective. We have a new toilet container so there is no fear of falling through the floor now and we have also installed a proper cesspit rather than relying on the old farm tank that was sunk in the ground some 30 years ago. Additionally, we have replaced the unsightly front gates which again were long overdue. These developments have been possible in no small part due to the financial support that we have been given by the Parish Council, Staplehurst Firework Committee, Kent Playing Fields Association and Maidstone Leisure Trust. We are very grateful for their support as this is helping us to secure long term sustainability for the club.

I am delighted to report that we also have the Community Pay Back team back supporting us on Wednesday's, their help is invaluable at this time of the year and I am sure members will voice their appreciation when they see them - probably missing out the holes they are working on would be useful too!

As always there are a lot of people who I need to publicly thank as they are what makes our club work. So, my thanks go to:

- John for the many additional hours he puts in to maintaining the course and machinery. The course has never looked better.
- Jane who does so much behind the scenes taking phone calls, banking money, reconciling the books, sending out badges, ordering and budgeting to name but a few.

- To the gate closing team Alan, Matt and Paul who come out in all weathers to lock up often patiently waiting for players who are trying to get the last rays of daylight. Alan is currently locking up 4 nights a week so if anyone is able to help out for one night a week, I would be very pleased to hear from you.
- Ali who has kept the greens mowed when John has been on holiday.
- Dave Witcher, one of our members who has undertaken all of our plumbing works free of charge.
- Rob Burr who is always at the end of the telephone to advise or help out with machinery breakdowns and the delivery of equipment, fertilizer and seeds etc.
- Mira Martin the Community Warden who was such a great support when we were having unwanted visitors on the course. I would also like to thank the many members who offered to help coach the youngsters who were causing problems – sadly we were not able to take this forward as the problem disappeared before we identified those young people.
- And lastly to the committee who quietly but effectively respond to whatever is required.

I am conscious that we have had many new members over the last few years who may not be aware of the very unique setup that exists at the Village Golf Club. So I thought it would be helpful to give a brief overview.

We are a community managed venture that is run entirely by volunteer work. We are a not-for-profit organization with the sole purpose of making golf accessible and affordable, hence the membership fees are kept so low. However, in order to maintain this community ethos, we really do need members to play their part in supporting us - otherwise the onus of maintaining the club falls too heavily on a few. So, if you are able to help out even if it is only occasionally it really can make a huge difference. You can do this by supporting the volunteer working parties held throughout the year, although we understand that not everyone is able to assist at these times but there are always lots of tasks on the course that can be done at any time such as raking the leaves and bunkers, picking up twigs, emptying bins, cleaning the toilet, trimming the hedges etc. Any help no matter how small makes a huge difference and confirms that it really is a valued community resource that we are all invested in.

As always, the most satisfying thing is seeing the course being so well used by such a wide variety of players, long may it continue.

5. Membership Report (Jane Annetts)

At this time last year, we had 364 members. Today our membership numbers stand at 413; a notable increase of more than 13%, and the highest number of members the Club has ever had.

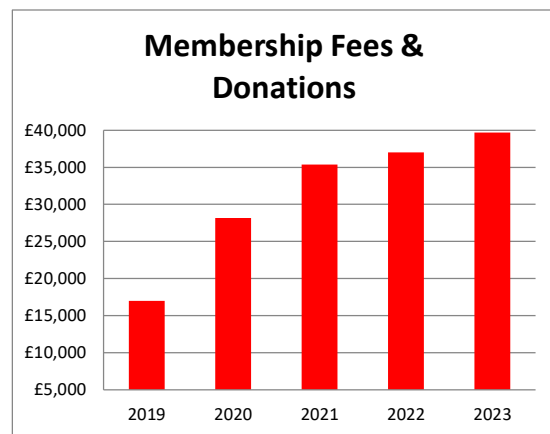
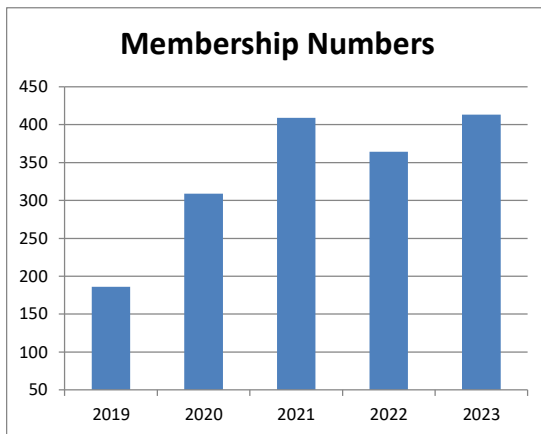
The previous highest membership of 409 was during the Covid-19 lockdown period in 2021 when golf was one of the few sports that could still be played and when many people had additional enforced leisure time. In terms of membership that was an exceptional year for us and one that we did not expect to be repeated. It is therefore, very pleasing to see that record beaten this year.

Despite the increase in membership the course is rarely too busy to be enjoyed and it is wonderful to see the course so well used by such a wide range of people; young, old, experts and beginners, all enjoying the social, mental and physical benefits that golf provides.

Although there are many projects and improvements we would like to undertake, as the Club's finances are currently enough to meet our regular running costs and, in the light of the continuing financial difficulties faced by many people, I am pleased to confirm that the Committee has decided to maintain the membership fees and guest green fees at their current level for a further year.

Annual Membership Fees	2024
Adult - 7 Day	125
Adult - Weekday Only	105
Junior	60
Family - 2 Adults, 2 Children under 16	260
Family - 1 Adult, 2 Children under 16	175

The two graphs below show the change in membership and income from fees and donations over the last few years.



6. Ground Staff Report (John Gower)

Going into 2023 saw the putting greens not in the best condition after I fertilised them in July 2022 and just couldn't get enough water on them at the time. Hence, they suffered with burning, although repeating the operation in late September helped with some recovery once the greens were cooler and damper, so lesson learned - no more fertiliser in the middle of the summer months.

So, this year I have only fertilised in the spring and autumn, and combined with aeration and scarification, the greens, certainly, in my opinion, are looking better than they've ever looked. Apart from one or two bare patches on some they all have a very good covering of grass.

The overall condition of the whole course this year has been looking really good, and continues to improve year on year, and with the addition of the drainage and with the continued support of the committee (especially Jane and Annette), volunteers and helpers, there's no reason why it shouldn't carry on in that way.

The machinery has performed generally very well, of course there will always be running costs on moving parts. We finally took delivery of the Jacobson fairways mower that was purchased in 2022. It has yet to prove it's worth as I only managed 3 full cuts with it before it was put away for the winter but I'm sure it will prove it's worth going forward.

We did sadly have one major breakdown with the Toro utility truck which appears to need an engine rebuild, although this didn't impact greatly on the upkeep of the course.

As always, my thanks to all volunteers from gate unlocking and locking to the leaf rakers.

7. Treasurer's Report (Jane Annetts)

The accounts have been prepared on a simple cash accounting basis to reflect income received and expenses actually incurred up until 31st October 2023. The accounts have been reconciled with the bank statements and have been audited by Callum Findlay.

Total **income** for the year was £65,767. Overall **expenditure** for the year was £66,036. Both of these figures include exceptional items which make them much higher than the equivalent figures for 2022.

We received a very significant £21,000 in grants this year. These were from the organisations and for the specific projects below.

Organisation	Grant	Project
Maidstone Leisure Trust	1,000	Course drainage
Staplehurst Fireworks Fund	5,000	Course drainage
Staplehurst Parish Council	15,000	Toilet container

In each case the Club has also contributed to the cost of these projects as follows.

Project	Total Cost	Grants	Club Contribution
Course Drainage	13,368	6,000	7,368
Cesspool & Container Base	9,060	0	9,060
Toilet & Storage Container *	15,138	15,000	138
	37,566	21,000	16,566

N.B. *£540 has not yet been invoiced and will be paid from club funds in the next financial year.

I would like to comment on some of the other, non-project related items of income and expenditure over the two years.

Firstly **Income:**

Excluding the grants received, our income would have increased by £4,181 or 10.3%, compared to 2022.

- Membership Fees – Increased by £3,692, which is just over 10%, and broadly in line with the increase in membership numbers this year.
- Donations - increased by 59% to £412, and we are very grateful to those members who choose to make voluntary contributions to the Club.
- Green Fees - Increased by 16% to £4,512.

Turning to the items of **Expenditure:**

- AGM & Membership costs – The majority of the expense shown here is £476 for postage. We have also subscribed to Google Workspace, which allows us to use an email address based on

the Club's domain name and simplifies our email administration. Additionally, we are now paying for a sim card which means we have a dedicated mobile phone number for the Club.

- Course Maintenance - In addition to the land drainage costs already mentioned, this year's expenditure included £2,706 for hedge cutting and for 9 days of tree surgery. £505 for the Mick Collins memorial bench, and £1,758 for grass seed, wetting agent, fertiliser, liquid iron and weed killer.
- Machinery Service and Repair – The servicing and repair costs for the mowers and other machinery amounted to £4,708. An additional £720 was spent on: a contribution to the cost of a strimmer, new batteries, oil, new tyres and (5) puncture repairs.
- Other Repair and Maintenance – Apart from the new cesspool, toilet and storage container, the car park gates were replaced at a cost of £1,165, hire of the Portaloo for 8 weeks cost £486, and waste bin collection costs were £245.
- General Expenditure – In addition to a couple of smaller items, we had 5,000 score cards printed at a cost of £396.

Looking Forward

You will see from the **balance sheet** that the year end funds stand at £21,504. It is important to look ahead at this stage of the year, when we continue to incur costs but with no further income until the new membership year starts. Committed expenditure until then means that we are forecasting a balance of just over £8,000 by April next year.

Plans for Next Year

Our priorities for next year include:-

- replacing the Kubota mower used to cut the semi-rough, and which is now 15 years old
- replacing the old 40' shipping container. This leaks and the doors no longer close or lock
- replacing four of the tee mats. In future our intension is to replace four mats each year on a rolling 3 year basis.

Any other of the many projects and improvements we would like to make will depend on income levels next year and on securing additional external funding.

8. Election of Officers

Annette Scott confirmed that the current committee had already confirmed that they were prepared to stand again. Paul Heard proposed and Richard Ash seconded the re-election of officers who were voted in en block.

9. Any Other Business

9.1 Paul Heard stated that he was a responsible owner of a very well behaved dog and asked the meeting to consider allowing his dog to accompany him when he was at the course, pointing out that many other golf clubs did allow this. Annette Scott confirmed that other members had also asked about dogs being allowed on the course, and that in principal she was not opposed to trialling it, but invited the attendees to express their views on the subject.

Whilst sympathising with those wishing to have a dog with them, for a variety of reasons, the majority of the views expressed were against the proposal. Annette Scott indicated that the matter would be further discussed and a final decision would be made at the next committee meeting.

9.2 Jane Annetts indicated that there were 2 or 3 updates needed to the current rules. These concerned dress, warnings of wayward shots and priority to be given to ground staff working on the greens. These items would be agreed at the next committee meeting so that the rules could be updated before the start of the new membership year.

9.3 Jane Annetts stated that there would be a delay in issuing renewal invitations and new badges next year. The renewal process would not start until the beginning of April rather than in mid-March as normal.

9.4 Annette Scott announced that the results of the 'Player of the Year' shield, which is based on points accumulated from competitions played throughout the year. In joint third place was Brian Ball and Neil Smith with 23 points, in second place was David Ellison with 26 points and the winner was Keith Ellison with 29 points.

There being no other business the **Meeting closed at 7.38 p.m.**

Village Golf and Sports Club

Income and Expenditure Account for the Year Ending 31st October 2023

	2023	2022
	£	£
Income		
Membership Fees	39,674.00	35,982.00
Donations	412.50	259.00
Green Fees	4,582.00	3,945.00
Competition Income	98.50	100.00
Grants	21,000.00	300.00
Sponsorship	0.00	0.00
Sale of Equipment	0.00	0.00
	<u>65,767.00</u>	<u>40,586.00</u>
Expenditure		
AGM & Member Administration	655.78	533.04
Course Maintenance	18,538.26	6,518.39
Machinery Service & Maintenance	5,428.24	4,197.24
Other Repair & Maintenance	25,586.89	879.17
Wages	12,915.00	14,220.00
Expenses - Fuel	1,004.27	1,064.60
Expenses - General	476.00	116.23
Insurance Premium	671.12	573.63
Water Rates	311.00	432.02
Website, Publicity & Advertising	64.80	224.85
Affiliation Fee	25.00	25.00
Sandvik Licence Fee	0.00	0.00
Purchase of Equipment	360.00	14,616.72
	<u>66,036.36</u>	<u>43,400.89</u>
Balance to Accumulated Fund	-269.36	-2,814.89

Village Golf and Sports Club

Balance Sheet as at 31st October 2023

	2023	2022
	£	£
Balance Brought Forward	21,773.85	24,588.74
Balance from Income and Expenditure	<u>-269.36</u>	<u>- 2,814.89</u>
	<u>21,504.49</u>	<u>21,773.85</u>
 Represented By:		
Current Account - NatWest	<u>21,504.49</u>	<u>21,773.85</u>
	<u>21,504.49</u>	<u>21,773.85</u>