

Minute of Council Meeting
held on 27th June 2023 in the Conference Room @ 5.30pm

Present:

S. Cruickshank	(Captain)
A. Gordon	(Greens Convener)
J. Gove	(Ladies Captain)
G. Pryde	(Finance Convener)
A. Ross	(Match & Handicap)
D. Halliday	(Vice-Captain) via teams call

Apologies:

C. McCaul	(Junior Convener)
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In Attendance:

D.P. Pern	(Club Manager)
G Nethercott	(Head Professional)
N. McLoughlin	(Course Manager)

1. Welcome:

Prior to the meeting Council carried out a tour of the new and existing green keeping sheds. It was agreed that with the addition of the new shed, the greens team have a fantastic facility with all equipment now able to be stored inside.

2. Minute of Council held on 30th May 2023

The minute of the Council meeting on 30th May 2023 was approved.

3. Matters arising from the Minute:

- NM reported that the sails for driving range bays would be on site week commencing 3rd July.
- Bunker programme update covered in greens report.
- GP has spoken to David Rennie who will review the Rules and Regulations. GP to follow up with the proposed changes, by mid to late August.
- DH re-development programme covered in Strategy Report.
- DP updated Council progress with the Club Survey. There is still some work to be done, however the first draft will be circulated to Council before the next meeting.
- NM continues to work on existing bunkers.

4. Reports

Captain's Report

- SC expressed his thanks to all the teams for their efforts on Championship Day.
- Following feedback from members, SC proposed that there should be a further forward set of tees on the Haughton Course to ensure playability for all members. JG had also highlighted this in her Ladies report, which comes from feedback from the ladies on the length/difficulty of the Haughton Course from the blue tees. After discussion it was agreed that Council would have a walk round the course prior to the next Council meeting, to give further consideration to any potential changes. It was also agreed that

all tees would be gender neutral, although each will have a separate M/L course and slope rating, in accordance with current practice.

- It was agreed that wildflowers would be planted on the 18th bank in front of the Clubhouse.

Finance Report

The full report was circulated in advance. To summarise:

- **Profit & Loss Review**

The profit & loss results for the month of May 2023 and for the 8 months to date are set out below, along with a comparison to both the Budget and to the position in May 2022.

	Actual £	Budget £	Prior year £
May 2023 - Net Profit (Loss)	6,972	(10,559)	14,550
Year to Date - Net Profit (Loss)	46,287	(80,250)	38,656

May was another good trading month for the Club. Income included over £13k of green fees from outings, visitors, and Members guests (budget £10k).

The annual insurance renewal was included in the Budget for May (£21k), however this will now be a June cost. In the month, course costs exceeded budget by £17.5k - this is down to the timing of expenditure and all costs, with the exception of the tarring of the path to the 1st hole (£2.6k), were included in the Budget. Course costs remain around £25k behind budget for the 8 month period.

F&B returned a net profit for May of £2.2k, being a profit of £8k before the members' loyalty discount of £5.8k. The Budget was for a loss of £5.7k for the month. This was another good month for F&B with sales being 33% higher than budgeted, due in part to the increased footfall from outings, visitors, and Members guests.

The net profit from **Golf Operations** for the month was £2k, £400 over Budget. Coaching income was behind budget by £600, offset by staff costs being lower by £1k. This reflects the reduced capacity in the Pro Shop Team from mid-May.

There is a small amount of coaching income for the period to 30 April 2023 which has not yet been reflected as income in the accounts. This is being held in case of any further irregularities coming to light.

- **Balance Sheet Review**

Bank Balances at 31 May 2023 – total of £1,083k. Funds of £606k were held in the Virgin Money UK working accounts. There is a further £154k in instant access accounts and we have £323k invested in longer term deposit accounts.

- **Cash Reserves Requirement for Operations** – £540k, leaving circa £540k for capital improvements.
- **Members Loyalty Card Balances** – **£135k** at 31 May.
- **Capital Expenditure** during the month included: the final payment for the recladding of the old shed (£12.5k + Vat) and a fire hydrant for the new greenkeeping shed (£4.7k+Vat).

Greens Convener and Course Manager Report

The full report was circulated in advance. To summarise:

- **Courses:**
The month of June was dry, warm and wet. The dry spell resulted in the golf courses being in excellent condition, increasing the greens' speed to approximately 9.5 on the stimp. The heavy rain and thunderstorms, resulted in excessive grass growth and a secondary outbreak of poa seeding. Despite these challenges, the greens performed well overall during the month.
The fountain on the 3rd hole has been repaired and the control has been relocated to the box behind the 18th green to safeguard it from potential flood damage. Only an on/off switch remains at the box near the 3rd tees.
- **Driving Range:**
As reported above, the installation of the sail on the driving range is scheduled for the week commencing July 3rd. It is also planned to install new white posts on the driving range during the week commencing June 26th.
- **Bunker Project:**
NM circulated a preliminary copy of EDI's' bunker drawing of the Haughton Course. Once this has been thoroughly reviewed and discussed, James from EDI will make any necessary adjustments and provide Council with the finalized drawing. AG & NM have begun planning for the upcoming winter, which includes addressing problematic bunkers and those that receive frequent complaints from members. Furthermore, all bunker work costs will be assessed. Around 18 bunkers will be removed from the Haughton Course.
- **Capex and Opex Projects Review:**
Last winter, AG/NM compiled a list of projects that encompassed the following:
 - Bunker work on the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th holes of the Haughton Course.
 - Construction of a path from the 1st green to the 2nd tees.
 - Upgrading the 7th tee at Blairs.
 - Installation of steps on the 1st tees.
 - Clearing the NPD (North Perimeter Drain)
 - Groundwork preparation for the new shed.
 - Pruning of trees around waste areas.
 Despite a major flood in November, the bunker work on 2,3 and 4 was completed within the specified timeframe. The budget was £22,000, and at present the spend is £15,500. EDI invoice to come. Leftover bunker edging may be sufficient for constructing two bunkers next winter.

- Due to the flooding clear up, the in-house team was unable to construct the path from the 1st green to the 2nd tees. Consequently, it was outsourced to contractors who charged £5,476 plus VAT. Although our initial budget for this project was £3,000 in operating costs, it was reassigned to capex due to the increased expenses.
- The Blairs 7th tee project was postponed due to the November flood. The priority at that time was to focus on debris clearance throughout the courses. This project will be revisited, possibly during this upcoming winter.
- Steps to the 1st tees were completed shortly before the season started. By reducing the width of the steps, they integrated more seamlessly into the tee's corner, minimizing their visual impact.
- Head Green keeper Davie took charge of clearing the NPD (North Perimeter Drain) area in-house, eliminating the need for a contractor. The area will be monitored and cleaned as required. This winter, NM will explore the possibility of modifying some of the edges to facilitate easier access for machinery in challenging areas.
- NM/Davie successfully completed all the groundwork for the new shed.
- Regarding the pruning of trees around waste areas, so far only the area in front of the 9th tees have been pruned. More work will continue this winter.
- As mentioned in GP's report, the current underspend is approximately £25,000 in operating costs and £16,000 on payroll. Some of the payroll savings can be attributed to the challenges and delays encountered during the staff recruitment process. Timing-related issues and a prolonged cold spring have also contributed to operating cost savings in fertilizers, fuel, and other areas, which will continue through until year-end.
- Other Areas:
NM has carried out a thorough investigation by digging holes in the scrub area beside 4,5,6 on Haughton. NM confirmed it is not Clay based, it is shingle underneath a layer of organic matter. NM to scrape off the top layer of organic matter over the summer months.
NM/AG are currently reviewing and updating the Course Policy document as required. NM/AG are in the process of evaluating last year's winter course layout and exploring potential improvements.
NM/AG are developing a five-year capex plan to refresh our long-term objectives and strategic planning.
NM reported that the blower attachment required replacing. The quote from Toro of £9700 + Vat was approved. NM to request a trade in price.

Ladies' Captain Report

The full report was circulated in advance. To summarise:

- A fantastic Championship Day and congratulations go out to all the finalists.
- Earlier in the month Deeside welcomed Portlethen ladies for a friendly match, They were extremely complimentary on course conditions and post-match catering. Deeside ladies won all games.

- The Ladies Committee enjoyed the Maggie's Charity Day and would like to thank Captain Simon for giving them the opportunity to participate in such an event.
- Fiona Windle won the SVLGA (North) Division 2 Handicap Championship at Alyth Golf Club
- Margaret Parkinson was the defeated finalist in Division 1 Championship Cup.
- Congratulations go to both Jayne Leith & Geraldine O'Donnell who both had a hole in one on the same day. Hole 14 & Hole 16

Blue Tees

- Following on from Council discussions on Blue Tees, JG had canvassed the ladies. The majority of ladies feel that the Blue Tees should be pushed forward on many holes. Forward tees would also benefit other sections of the membership. JG has collated some information including score cards from other local clubs
 - Deeside scorecard BLUE tees course is 5318yds.(SR125)
 - RED Course 5616yds(129)
 - Ballater RED tees Course 5244 (SR121)
 - Peterculter RED tees 5440 (SR125)

At Deeside, ladies often stand on the tee box of a par 3 (all of which are all similar in length) with driver or 3 wood in hand, with zero chance of being on the green. On longer par 4s or par 5s, ladies often need to hit a fairway wood 3 or 4 times to reach the edge of the green and that's before chipping onto the green leading to, at best, a bogey. Speaking with ladies who have been members at other Clubs they find Deeside significantly more difficult not only the distance to the green but often about the forced layups or penalties caused by insurmountable cross hazards. Both issues contribute to higher scores and fewer pars, and birdies. For ladies who are new to the game, the situation can be soul destroying.

The negative impact of distance on the golf experience is one of the key reasons why women abandon the game. It's not that the industry is unaware of the issue. The **PGA's 2015 report**, Setting Up Golf Courses for Success: A Critical Factor in Attracting More Women to Golf, gave courses clear guidance on how to address the distance challenges for women:

"The way many golf courses have been designed and built is a critical contributing factor in the low percentage of women's participation in the sport. Most golf courses are, on average, excessively long and place women at a disadvantage to their male counterparts...unless this design flaw is addressed and corrected, many women will never be enthusiastic long-term customers and golf facilities will not capture the full potential of the women's market."

It's been 10 years since the USGA and PGA launched their **"Tee it Forward"** campaign, promoting the concept that "the playing field is levelled by giving golfers the opportunity to play from distances that are properly aligned with their abilities." On average, female amateurs drive the ball 148 yards. Under **"Tee It Forward" guidelines**, they should play a 3,500-3,700-yard course length. Consider also that driving distances decline with age for all players. **Arccos tracking data** shows that women lose distance more rapidly than men do. A 50-54-year-old female player with a 20-25 handicap averages a driving distance of about 135 yards; for a 60-64-year-old, that figure drops to 115 yards.

The playing field isn't level if it forces most women to settle for higher scores. Back in 2011 it found that most women golfers were playing courses which were more than 1,000 yards too long for them.

Based on the above information I would urge Council to engage with a process of shortening the forward tees.

- JG requested that Council look at entertainment for Members Day on the 26th August. DP to follow up.

Match & Handicap Report

The full report was circulated in advance. To summarise:

- Pennant Team. - The gents pennant team has won all four of the group matches against Peterculter, Stonehaven, Craibstone and finally Murcar. This now gives Deeside a home tie in the quarter final against Bon Accord. 13 different players have been used during these matches with the intention of getting a group mentality on our WhatsApp page which so far has produced the results. Referees have been organised for men's events on Championship Day.

Junior Report

The full report was circulated in advance. To summarise:

- Junior Pennants
Teams are split into two Leagues with the top team in each league going on to play a Final. Deeside 1 – finished joint top of the league, tied with Banchory. Banchory have progressed to the final on individual matches won countback.
Deeside 2 – finished mid table, enjoyed away trips to Cruden Bay, Stonehaven and McDonald Ellon.
- Club Championships
Angusfield (Scratch) Winner : Oli Blackadder
Littleway (Handicap) Winner : Euan Youngson
Armstrong Cup (Blairs) Winner : Austin McCaul
- School Holidays
Term ends on the 30th June and 7th July.
Summer holiday medals will run on Monday, Thursday and Saturday.

Pro Shop Report

The full report was circulated in advance. To summarise:

- GN confirmed that Kevin Duncan has been appointed as 2nd Assistant Professional. Kevin joins us from The Kings Links Golf Centre and has already gained a healthy knowledge of custom fitting, lessons & retail.
- Unfortunately, Golf Operations Assistant Lewis Coull is leaving for a year to a University work placement at the end of July. GN thanked for all his hard work and dedication over the last 18 months and looks forward to welcoming him back at the end of his placement.
- All Deeside Opens are fully subscribed apart from the Ladies Open Greensomes.
- The North East Simmers Trophy at Cruden Bay has been moved to the same day as The Dalswinton which is historically the first Sunday of September. Invites will be sent out after Finals Day. Hopefully this clash does not have a detrimental effect to The Dalswinton.
- GN attached a data sheet for Council from the Gents Club Championship Qualifier highlighting the differences between 2022 & 2023. It would somewhat suggest that the changes made have had a positive influence on Past Captains Salver, Ivor Erroll & general membership. Expectedly the Dunriach Cup Qualifier had less participants than normal. Whilst it would be agreed by council, staff, historians & low handicappers

that this event should be the highlight of the Club calendar/day, unfortunately the consensus of the wider membership is different.

- GN is looking to add/restructure a couple of the Deeside Opens in 2024. Unfortunately, the Super Seniors on Blairs was not well subscribed, however, GN believes the Club could add another Senior Open Stableford towards the end of the season (around the Texas Scramble. It has also been agreed with the Ladies to make the Ladies Greensomes a Tri Am from 2024.

Club Manager Report

The full report was circulated in advance. To summarise:

- Membership Numbers:

Full members	794
Senior members	128
Associate 30 – 34	13
Associate 24 – 29	22
Young Adults	34
House/Non Playing	173
Senior VIP	11
House 5 Day	2
Country	20
Junior 12 – 18	84
Junior under 12	28
Non Resident	57
Life	15

- Applications for membership – May/June

Full	Gillian Urquhart	Turlough McGurran	Mark Garden
Full	Scott Begg	Brad Youngson	Graham Cox
Full	John Mearns	Brad Youngson	Graham Cox
Full	Claire Pearson	Alan Pearson	Graeme Milne
House	Graham Burnett	Roy Angus	Paul Dumont
Full	Craig Fraser	Graeme Nethercott	Scott Hutcheon
Junior	Josh Allan	Terry Allan	Ian Hogg
House	Hazel Forrest	Ann Jones	Mollie Mennie
Full	Marc McGregor	Scott Johnston	Greig Ritchie
Junior	Liam Coffey	Rod Coffey	Alastair Dornan
Full	Ross Cochrane	Mark Gilmour	Mike Straughen

- Transfers from within the membership – May
 - Archie Love – Non-resident to Young Adult
 - Harry Webster – Non-resident to Young Adult
- Resigned
 - No resignations
- Deceased
 - Frank Lefevre

- New members
 Finlay Buchan – <12
 Archie Burnett – Junior 12 – 18
 Erin Chapman - Junior 12 – 18
 Alexander Gardiner – House
 James Leask – Junior 12 - 18
- Waiting List - April
 244 on Full waiting list
 42 on deferred list
 7 on House list

Course Usage – H & B

	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	
2018													
2019	1996	1558	909	1047	1489	2495	3606	3795	3999	4218	4038	2843	31993
2019													
2020	2184	1033	943	1704	1202	1928	0	773	7359	6823	7413	5374	36736
2020													
2021	3873	3869	809	0	0	2451	5930	5435	7156	6939	6244	5130	47836
2021													
2022	3659	2131	1843	2926	2250	3502	4501	5221	5548	5495	5362	5236	47674
2022													
–													
2023	3179	1361	90	1245	2355	2220	4073	5548					

General Information/Actions/Requests etc.

- Despite best efforts, there has been very little response to the Hogmanay Dinner Dance. The main reason for pushing it this early in the year is because of the band. After discussion it was agreed that DP would cancel the band and organise a Hogmanay Dinner which would finish around 10.30pm .
- Maggie's Charity has requested a Shot Gun start at 8.45 on 1st Thursday June 2024. After discussion this was approved.
- GN and DP met with a golf competition software company Golf Genius, both agreed there would be no benefit in engaging with their services now. They have no casual booking sheet. It would mean members operating yet another App (one for casual booking and one for competitions). It would double up the work in the pro shop and defeats the purpose of trying to make things easier.
- JG, GP, AG, DP have met a couple of times to progress with the member club survey. This is still work in progress, but the first draft will be circulated before the next Council meeting.
- DP to submit a claim for the break-in, as soon as all the invoices have been received.

5. Strategy Plan

DH updated Council on progress with engaging professional advisors to carry out a feasibility study on the re-development / refurbishment of the Clubhouse and external area. After discussion Council approved the appointment of Davidson Smith Architects, Hutcheon Electrical, Ramsay Chalmers and Macleod & Aitken to be the professional advisors. It was agreed that Chris Smith from Davidson Smith will report back to Council at the next meeting.

6. Health and Safety

NM uses Health and Safety software from Ground 2Control It was agreed that NM would share this software with DP to allow all the H&S documentation to be held in one place. AG & NM conducted a comprehensive health and safety walk-through of the greenkeeping sheds. During this inspection, various actions were highlighted.

- Assess the need for a high voltage sign in the shed.
- Verify the condition of all first aid boxes and eye wash stations.
- Ensure the workman bed is laid flat.
- Block off the path alongside the old shed.

9. AOCB

- DP requested permission to sell the old chairs currently being stored in the store on the driving range.

Next Meeting Tuesday 25th July - Walk round on the Course at 3.00pm followed by meeting at 5.30pm

ACTIONS

NM	Progress with Driving range Sails
NM/AG	Progress with EDI on future bunker programme following walk round of Haughton Course on 25th July
GP	Progress with Rules and Regulations with David Rennie
DH	Progress with Re-developmemt/Refurbishment
AG/DP/GP/JG	Progress with survey questions with CCL
Council	Walk round Haughton on the 25th July to look at shortening the forward tees
NM	Look at planting Wild flowers on the 18th bank in front of the greenhouse
NM	Install white posts at the Driving Range
NM	Scrape of the organic matter from the scrub area around 4,5,6
AG/NM	Review Course Policy
AG/NM	Finalise Winter Course design from last year's evaluation
AG/NM	Develop a five year cap-ex plan.
NM	Look at trade in piece for the blower
DP	Follow up on entertainment for members day
DP	Confirm Maggies Charity Day 2024
DP	Cancel Band for Hogmanay
NM	Arrange access for DP to Ground2Control H&S Software