

**Minute of Council Meeting
held on 22nd October 2024 in the Trophy Room**

Present:	A. Gordon	(Vice Captain)
	C. Watson	(Finance Convener)
	H. Craigie	(Junior Convener)
	J. Gove	(Ladies Captain)
	P. Reilly	(Interim Greens Convener)

In Attendance:	D.P. Pern	(Club Manager)
	G. Nethercott	(Head Professional)

Apologies	D. Halliday	(Captain)
	S. Hutchison	(Match & H'Cap)
	A Powell	(President)
	N. McLoughlin	(Course Manager)

1. **Welcome:**
Vice-Captain AG welcomed everyone to the meeting.
2. **Minute of Council held on 17th September 2024**
The minute of the Council meeting on 17th September was approved.
3. **Matters arising from the previous Minute:**
 - AG/PR met with CBEC for initial discussions on possible course flooding solutions. It was agreed to arrange a site visit with CBEC with AG/PR/NM and Paul Birch to progress agreeing a scope of work.
 - AG will follow up with SH to finalise the terms of reference for sub committees.
 - AG/JG/DP/CW continue to progress with the Clubhouse refurbishment.
 - DP to circulate the mobile version of the website to Council, when it is available.
 - The upgraded bunkers on 7th and 13th have had both positive and negative feedback from members. This will be discussed with the Course Architect when he is on site on 30th and 31st October.
 - DP waiting for General & Technical to survey the threadbare area of carpet in the gent's locker room.
 - DP contacted the R&A on course sustainability. Their recommendation was to contact SEPA or Scottish Golf for more specific strategies.
 - AG/PR/NM follow up on further option for the path at Haughton 18th and Blairs 9th. Once drawings have been received, PR to forward to Kirsty McLean (Design Scotland) for review and comment.
 - NM to follow up on signage for course boundary.
 - It was agreed that the path area behind the 5th Tee and 10th Green requires upgrading before the fence is erected. This work to be carried out before the end of the year; weather dependent.
 - NM continue to research gate options next to the 5th tee area.

- PR has spoken to Davie Middleton (Head Greenkeeper) who will add some sort of barricade at the lower end section of path between the 1st and 2nd on Haughton as a temporary measure.
- NM to re-route the walkway off the 17th tee.
- NM to follow up with Scottish Water on the non-return valve at the course toilets.
- It was agreed that the colour of the dust path at the 1st hole will be discussed in more detail when Captain DH returns.
- The Budget for 2024 – 2025 is almost finalised and will be circulated to Council for approval at the November meeting.
- GN to finalise Stroke play format with SH and share final proposal with Council at the November meeting.
- GN to circulate a document on Sweeps and twos before the start of next season.
- PR issued a paper on data collected from trackman on the number and location of balls hit outside the boundary area during the first few weeks of trackman. It was agreed not to progress with a fence up the left-hand side of the range, as the data showed only a small number of balls being hit out of bounds. However, the data will continue to be monitored over the winter season. It was agreed to share the data with the members in an update from the pro shop.
- Having researched both round and square driving bay mats, it was agreed that replacement square mats will be purchased.
- Council to forward thoughts on the update and presentation of the Strategic Plan to DP.

4. Health and Safety

- PR circulated the updated hole by hole course risk assessment following AG's initial document. It was agreed to prioritise the higher risks over the winter season when weather allows.
- It was agreed to carry out a survey of all the sprinkler heads on both courses to see where the risks are. Some require adjusting to ground level. PR to discuss with NM.

5. Convener Reports

Vice-Captain's Report

- Nothing to report

Finance Report

A full Finance report was circulated in advance. To summarise:

- There was a net loss for the month of £8.3k which compares to a budget profit of £25.8K and profit of £3.3k in September 2024. There were some higher costs in the month in relation to the clubhouse repairs, marquee costs and website photography.
- The net profit for the year of £104k compares to a budgeted profit of £14k and a profit of £59k in the prior year. The results for the year are significantly better than budget due to course recovery from Scottish Water, Gains on sale of old equipment, improved F&B performance, higher interest income and lower administration and course costs. Compared to last year, costs are up due to inflation for both salaries and other costs offset by the increase in subscriptions and unexpected recoveries noted above.
- September was a quieter month for catering and so the net loss from **F&B** YTD was £30k which is £23k better than budget however is £8k worse than last year mainly due to higher staff costs. The Gross Profit from catering at 63.5% YTD which is not far off budget of 64% and up 1.5% on last year.

- The net loss from **Golf Operations** YTD is a loss of £35k and the variance to budget is about £30k. While there is a small impact to the loss from trackman and from low margins on sale of old stock, the bulk of the variance to both budget and prior year is due to lower level of sales. The implementation of the new loyalty scheme in October is hoped to bring some increase in sales volumes and we will continue to monitor how we can generate more sales in the coming year.

Balance Sheet Review

- Bank Balances at 30 September 2024 – total of £866k. This represents a reduction in cash in the month of about £109k as there are no subscription direct debits payments received in September.
- Cash Reserves Requirement for Operations – Based on budget, the requirement is £540k, leaving about £326k for working capital requirements and capital improvements. We anticipate going below this level for a temporary period in the next year or so while we incur additional costs on the clubhouse refurbishment as anticipated.
- Capital Expenditure – The main capital expenditure in the month of September were final implementation costs for Trackman, work on the 7th hole and Winter Tee mats.
- Clubhouse Refurbishment - The members information sessions and the written communications on the refurbishment have been largely well received and the planning for the start of the bar and lounge refurbishment in January is on track.

Budget 2024/25

- The first draft of the budget has been reviewed and is likely to show a small loss due to the impact of the clubhouse closure in January and February 2025. The budget will assume a slight increase in membership, but does not contemplate any increase in individual membership subscriptions. While 2023/24 has been financially very positive overall, it is expected that 2024/25 will be more challenging. It will be important for the pro-shop sales to increase and for the clubhouse to be busy pre and post refurbishment.
- One of the intentions of the new website is to attract more visitors to the course – this is an important strategic aim for the club financially and have a positive impact on pro-shop sales from visitors which should not be underestimated. While Deeside is very much a club for the membership, there may be significant financial challenges ahead if we do not take action to improve the current very low visitor income.
- DP to include a rolling 12 month analysis of the waiting list in the monthly report.

Greens Convener and Course Manager Report

The full report was circulated in advance. To summarise:

- End of season maintenance work continues with only a few tees remaining to be scarified on the Haughton course. Verti-draining of the fairways and approaches is already underway.
- In early November, it's planned to fully switch to winter tees and mats on the fairways, following the same approach as last year.
- Sewage Management - Scottish Water has successfully sealed 3 out of the 4 manholes. Week commencing October 14th, work will commence to clear one of the sewers, after which the final manhole will also be sealed.
- Bunker Construction - Significant progress has been made with bunker reconstruction. On the 7th hole, 2 bunkers have been converted into grass bunkers, along with 1 on the

13th hole. Currently, the team are working on the 13th greenside bunkers, where 3 bunkers will be removed and a further 2 will be rebuilt. Once this work is completed, the focus will shift to the 14th hole. Course architect James Edwards is expected on-site in the last week of October to assess the work carried out and agree plans for the next stage.

- The business plan for robotic mowers for the Haughton Course has been put on hold and will be revisited in the February meeting.
- Wizard bunker rakes have been removed for the winter season.
- Repairs to the public footpath behind the 10th green are scheduled for the end of October. Further discussions are ongoing regarding the gate at the 5th hole, with signage to be installed once posts are in place.
- The STRI report has been received, and a summary has been prepared for Council. A full report will be available on the website in due course.
- During Scottish Water's visit, they will inspect the damage to the non-return valve by using a camera in the sewer. Action will be taken depending on their findings.
- The robotic mowers will be adjusted to begin cutting a new walkway from the 17th tee to the fairway. Signage and ropes will be added as necessary to guide golfers to the new walkway around the tee, with the aim to reduce numbers of members walking down the steep front of the 17th Tee.

Ladies' Captain Report

The full report was circulated in advance. To summarise:

- The Ladies have commenced the Ladies Winter Fixture on the Haughton Course, featuring both Eclectic and Stableford competitions played over 14 holes. £5.00 entry fee. Following discussions with some ladies who play regularly on Tuesdays & Fridays on the Blairs Course it was agreed that they would play casual golf from October to March.
- The last friendly for 2024 was a win Deeside 4 - Banchory 0. JG thanked all the ladies who participated in the friendlies over the season and a special thank you to Sally Gordon for her amazing work in organizing us all over the season.
- JG & incoming Ladies Captain Jackie Henderson are currently preparing the ladies competition 2025 Fixture List for Haughton & Blairs Courses.
- The Fun Christmas Cross Country competition (9 holes) on the Blairs Course will be held on the 6th Dec.
- Preparations are underway for the annual Ladies Prize Giving Dinner on the 14th of December. All prize winners have been confirmed, and arrangements have been made for the silverware and trophies to be sent to the engravers in time for the event.
- The Ladies Business Meeting, will be on the 18th January 2025 at the Cults Hotel where JG will hand over the Captaincy to Jackie Henderson. Jackie will attend the November Council meeting.
- JG attended various meetings regarding refurbishment plans for the clubhouse.

Match & Handicap Report

The full report was circulated in advance. To summarise:

- Nothing to report

Junior Report

- Adult v Junior match is fully subscribed. The Prizegiving will be held in the restaurant.

Pro Shop Report

A full report was circulated in advance, to summarise:

- End of Year stock was completed at the end of September.
- Winter Fixtures 24/25 are all complete and have been added to Club V1.
- 51 juniors have played in the Flag series which was sponsored by TaylorMade. As a result of the coaching, flag & thisgirlgolfs initiatives the Pro Shop have introduced 35 new juniors since start of March 2024.
- The Professional Shop budget for 2025 has been completed.
- GN recently had a meeting with Scottish Golf, Active Schools Aberdeen & Club Sport Aberdeen about Deeside working with these groups on their Unleash Your Drive Junior Program. This would involve potentially attending a couple sessions at schools to assist teachers with coaching in the delivery of Unleash Your Drive within school. This would then potentially lead to those that have enjoyed these sessions to attend either our current junior coaching sessions or a separate 'Active Schools' coaching at Deeside (similar to Robert Gordons in the past). It may also involve attending an after schools fair. The schools that would be involved in this program are Peterculter, Milltimber & Cults Primary/Academy.
- Trackman - The majority of members have found the system to be much more user friendly than expected. Awaiting feedback from YourGolfBooking in how to highlight turn up bays on their system. A bit of confusion as it looks like they're booked despite correspondence in weekly updates that bays 2,3,5 & 6 are turn up bays. There have been 64 border breaches from 100,000 golf shots since Trackman Range installed. One member has been given a two week ban and two others a warning. Most of the breaches are down the left side c60m to 140m
- Stroke Play / Scratch / Divisions - There's been a lot of varying opinions regarding the Stroke Play Championship. GN polled the Pennant Team which resulted in a multitude of different opinions from 4 rounds over 4 Saturdays (done before & didn't work); 4 rounds over 2 weekends (again, done before, didn't work & bigger commitment than current format). Another option is making it 36 holes in one day (more may play but decreases the value of the competition). Another idea is to pay out Top 3 places in vouchers to encourage interest into rounds 3 & 4. Also make the Stroke Play later (after school holidays) thus swap with Members Day. More thought needed over Winter.
- GN has been asked to make the Scratch OOM (sponsored by Frank Coutts) more of 'a thing'. Historically, all the competitions throughout the season on Club V1 are combined which would tally points and a winner would be identified at the end of season. From 2025, GN will publicise the Scr OOM monthly which will include Monthly & Wednesday Monthly + Club Champ Qual & Stroke Play as agreed with Frank. This is quite time consuming, and GN will be looking at ways to decrease/make the admin responsibilities more efficient in 2025, to allow the team to focus on other elements of the Pro Shops responsibilities.
- Since the introduction of the World Handicap System it is evident the way that we do sweep & twos/divisions is outdated and needs upgraded. There have been calls for sweep & twos to rise to £5 every week (it's been £2 since Frank started). The 'majors' where we charge £5 have been more popular with 80% entering sweeps compared to 73% when it's £2 (based on data from end of May to start of September). Increasing the sweeps & two's will allow for us to have more divisions/categories. There have been calls from our Scr contingent that a percentage of the pot should go towards a Scratch prize. There have also been calls to have a 'higher' handicap division due to this

category having more ‘extreme variances’ of scoring. With the above in mind I believe we should have four divisions – Scratch, Handicap Scr – 9.4; Handicap 9.5 – 17.4 & Handicap 17.5+.

- Sam & Kevin have both completed their PGA Traineeship and are fully qualified. As a result GN will be increasing their fees to £25 junior & £30 adult. GN’s fees have been stagnant for 10 years at £30, so will rise to £32 from October which is less than fellow competitors with tracking technology. The Club have been kind enough to incorporate 2* lessons for Juniors at £40 total. Now that the prices have increased GN proposes that the Junior Coaching allowance to become £50. This would equal two junior lessons or a series of 5 group coaching lessons. This was approved.
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- After discussion it was agreed that during the winter season 4 balls will be permitted on a Wednesday due to the reduced daylight hours.
- It was agreed that more discussion is required on reducing play to 3 balls only on a Wednesday during the season.

Club Manager Report

- Membership Numbers:

Full members	796
Senior members	124
Associate 30 – 34	14
Associate 24 – 29	18
Young Adults	24
House/Non Playing	184
Senior VIP	11
House 5 Day	2
Country	16
Junior 12 – 18	111
Junior under 12	58
Non Resident	68
Life	15
Honorary	8
- Applications for membership – September. All approved by membership sub-Committee.

Cat	Name	Proposer	Seconder
Junior	Ethan Bruce	Lynn McGurran	Turlough McGurran
Full	Valerie Millar	Gill Pryde	Graham Pryde
Full	Gary Yeoman	Andrew Imrie	Atholl Taylor
Full	Reeve Watt	Simon Cruickshank	Gavin Broadley
Full	William Johnston	Jim McQueen	Bruce McKenzie
Full	Craig McDonald	Andrew Strachan	William Strachan
Full	Fiona Arris	Marta Moody	Ron Moody
Full	Duncan Raitt	Frank Coutts	Norman Forster
House	Andrew Minellas	Noel Kelly	David Montgomery

- **Transfers from within the membership during September**

Philip Duncan – Associate 30 – 34 to Non Resident

Daniel Wilkies – Full to Non Resident

- **Resignations**

No resignations

- **New members**

Joseph McKnight – Junior <12

Cameron Welsh – Junior 12 - 18

- **Waiting List**

252 on Full waiting list

7 on Senior waiting list

23 on deferred list (2024)

16 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	5288	5684	6381	4880	42304
2023													
–													
2024	1078	1286	495	498	2078	2436	3689	5373	5041	5880	6211	4745	38810

- **General Information/Actions/Requests etc. for discussion**

Request from Scottish Golf to host the 2027 Scottish Boys U16 Open Championship 5th – 8th July. This prestigious event was last hosted by Deeside in 2007. Approved

- CW/DP/NM continue to work on the budget for 2024 – 2025.

- Refurb meetings and discussions are progressing well. 50% deposit has been paid for the furniture. Macleod & Aitken and Cummings & Co are still awaiting for detailed drawings from Hutcheon on HVAC and lighting options.

- Following on from NM's Course report on the Riverside Path. DP/NM met with Iain Clark who is part of the CBMCC Path Group. It was agreed the following:
NM will repair the sunken hole with shuttering and hardcore in the path behind the 10th green this winter (as per report).

- A consultant's flooding report will be undertaken which will include guidelines for the riverside path. This will be part of discussions with CBEC.

- DP/NM to provide advice to CBMCC from the report on the amount and type of materials required to improve the path in specific sections.
- CBMCC will then, subject to agreement on plans for the path, apply for grants for this material. If the grants are successful, the money will be used by NM to order the materials. The work to restore these path areas will be undertaken by DGC.
- General & Technical will be on site week beginning 21st October to check and hopefully repair the threadbare areas of carpet in the gent's locker room.
- Having contacted the R&A on sustainability on a flood plain, their advice was to contact SEPA in the first instance. Perhaps we need to work with SEPA and CBEC before progressing further with the wider sustainability study. The other option would be to contact Scottish Golf for advice.

6. October Agenda Items

- All covered in reports above.
- Strategy Plan – Council to report back to DP on Strategy Plan thoughts. AG to touch base with SH to progress with small sub-committee to drive this forward. Sustainability will form part of the strategy plan.

AOCB

- DP to arrange a meeting with Macleod & Aitken week commencing 4th November.
- Email received from member regarding Senior Membership and in particular s Seniors playing in the Winter Fours. After discussion it was agreed to continue with Seniors playing in the Winter Fours for now, however this is under continual review. AG to reply.
- Council to approve the President nomination for 2025 – 2026 at November Council meeting,

Next Meeting – 19th November @ 5.30pm in the trophy room

Actions

AG/PR/NM	Arrange site visit with CBEC to survey both courses
AG/SH	Follow up on discussion regarding the terms of reference for Sub Committees
AG/JG/DP/CW	Attend meetings and continue with progress on the Club Refurbishment
DP	Forward the link to the new mobile website to Council before going live. Follow up with General & Technical on Gents Locker Room carpet.
AG/NM/PR	Follow up on cost and further survey on alternative 18 th path option.
CW/DP/GN	Meet to discuss allocation of “Opens” and Trackman in the budget
DP	Keep in touch with the CMBCC on the river path progress Contact Scottish Golf regarding sustainability.
NM	Complete signage for Boundary with amendments agreed. Follow up with Scottish Water on the return valve at the course toilets Progress with boundary repair work before fencing Progress with options for the gate at the 5 th . Install some sort of barrier on the path between 1 st and 2 nd hole on Haughton. Re-route the walkway off the 17 th tee.
CW/DP/GN	Finalise the budget for 2024 – 2025
GN	Follow up with SH on Stroke Play Championship format. Circulate document to members on the increase cost of Sweeps and twos as agreed. Share the Trackman data with members in pro Shop update
GN/NM	Source new square driving range mats
Council	Feedback thoughts to DP on how best to progress with 2025 – 2030 Strategic Plan by 8 th November.

