



Oundle Golf Club General Meeting
Friday 4nd December - 19.00
Zoom Meeting

Minutes of the General Meeting

4th December 2020 19.00 via Zoom

The chairperson welcomed everyone present to the General Meeting of Oundle Golf Club. There were three apologies: John & Pam Mumford and Mike Preston.

There were no matters arising from the previous General Meeting.

The President's Welcome address

As you will all know this General Meeting is going to be different from all proceeding meetings. We can't meet as a group, therefore the reports will be in the written form.

It is part of the duties of the President to inform Club members of any deaths of members and past members since our previous meeting. I am delighted to inform members that I have not been informed of any such deaths.

I promise to keep this address as short as possible as there will be a considerable amount of written material for you to get through.

I think it is important to say a huge thank you to all those members who have done so much for the club in these troubled times. Veronica and Barry have worked extremely hard to gain the Club considerable amounts of money in the form of Grants and loans. I'm sure they will give you more details in their reports to you.

Your Club Captain and Vice Captain, Tony and Garry, respectively, have also done a great job in setting up our new Swing Studio with Sam our club professional. In addition thanks also to the work Garry and Sheila Homer have done to ensure that we adhere to the new World Handicap Scheme.

I must also mention Richard Hankins for the work he has done around the clubhouse. All the repairs and remedial work preparing the clubhouse so that we are covid compliant. Also his work in the reception area and the proshop.

I also want to mention John Homer and the course volunteers, who have done much to improve the visual aspect of the course. These volunteers are working hard to get the new driving range ready for next year. They have also been carrying out general work around the course, thus freeing up our Green staff for their essential work on maintaining our course.

Also thanks to Claire Izod, Sue Brown and the ladies who have worked on the surrounds of the practice green to improve its appearance.

I have also to mention, all those club members who serve on our various committees and their efforts to keep our club going forward, a big thank you, to you all.

Having attended most of the Management Council meetings this year, I have to say that not all the decisions taken at those meetings are unanimous. There has been a fair amount of discussion and disagreement. Having said that, all the members of the Management Council are working for the betterment of the Club and it's members.

I wish to thank them all, on behalf of the members of our club for doing such a sterling job.

Finally, most members will be feeling that the atmosphere of the club is on the up, we are moving forward with a Driving Range and a Swing Studio. These developments don't happen on their own. We need members to come forward and help to manage the club. Thus I ask that members look at any of the vacancies to see if they can offer their skills and time in order that we continue to progress the Club.

My regards to you all and I hope you stay safe.

Chris Swan

President of Oundle Golf Club

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT TO GENERAL MEETING 4TH DECEMBER 2020

Well this has definitely been a year like no other! As a club we'd had a terrible winter with the weather, but our bar, catering and events business upstairs was starting to look promising. However, cancellations started to come thick and fast in February and on 24th March we closed when Coronavirus hit us! We have often this year said that WW2 did not shut us down, but Coronavirus did! It felt like the end of the world had come upon us!

But as you all know when we were allowed to re-open in May we had a surge of visitors and a surge of new members. Golf was the sport of the moment! The visitor numbers have calmed down now as we knew they would, but we are still attracting new members. Since May we have had 126 new members in all categories which must represent a new record for the Club in any one year in recent times!

We have resurrected the Buddy scheme so that these new members can find a mate to play with and get their handicaps. Captain Tony has successfully introduced roll-ups on the Saturdays when there is not a scheduled competition to involve the new members and integrate them into the Club.

At the last General meeting in December 2019 I outlined some of the plans for 2020 so the first thing I will do is respond to those items:

1. HR – to get staff job descriptions and contracts up to date

This task has just about been completed now and has been quite time consuming as you can imagine.

2. Health and Safety – responding to urgent issues raised

Meetings have been held every 2 months with many issues covered and dealt with. Staff in each area of the Club are being trained to use Ground2Control (our H and S system) and they are being made responsible for H and S issues in their own areas.

3. Improvement in signage at the club

As you know we have just acquired new signs at the front entrance and by the front door. These look fabulous thanks to all the hard work done by Helen Austen our Marketing Manager and our Seniors for the money. The only sign still outstanding is the one at the first tee and this will be done when we know our final slope rating for the course.

4. Improvements in Practice facilities

This is in direct response to the wishes of members from surveys carried out, but we also recognise that these improved facilities are a good business investment for the Club. We hope to retain members as well as attract new members. The covered bays, the driving net and the swing studio are all in the process of creation and grants have been successfully obtained for all of these.

5. Roll out and advertise the new membership categories – Birdie and Eagle

This has been a successful initiative with fewer issues than the previous Lifestyle or Flexible categories. We have ??? Birdie members and ??? Eagle members to date.

6. Member retention – advertise member benefits

We have now dedicated a section of the members' website to show the benefits of being a member of OGC. There is also a detailed explanation of these in the updated membership pack that every new member in every category receives.

7. Venue advertisement to raise income

We were in a promising position at the beginning of February having had a very profitable winter season of events and with a full calendar going forward. Our advertising was reaping rewards. We can only hope that this Covid-19 situation will be soon be over and we can get back to working on this aspect of the Club's business

8. Investigate grants to make improvements to the Club

The Covid-19 situation has forced us to look at this in even more detail. And we have been successful in our application for several grants. In fact there have been more grants available to golf clubs because of Covid-19! This has led us to be able to make the improvements to the practice facilities as I have already described.

Refurbishment of Clubhouse

At the last GM I reported on the refurbishment of the Clubhouse – would you believe this has only just been completely signed off? Barry our Finance Officer has worked tirelessly to get this completed with the replacement of the warped cladding finally finished in October.

New proposed Business Structure

Also, at the last GM I spoke about the Management Structure being outdated since it was created 20 years ago. Unfortunately, the new Business Structure that we proposed met with a few concerns and I intend to re-visit that issue when I have got the new Management team in place.

Plans for 2021

- Obviously, we will continue with the creation of the planned new practice facilities.
- We will further investigate the possibility of creating a driving range investing the money gained from the Bounce Back Loan from Barclays Bank and therefore investing in the future of the Club.
- We will investigate a new structure of governance to be relevant to the 21st century golf club
- We will continue to monitor the Birdie and Eagle memberships and encourage as many as possible to move up to the next level.
- We will continue to advertise our memberships and endeavour to continue increasing our membership numbers in all categories
- We will continue to encourage visitors and Societies to our Club
- We will investigate the possibility of more grants to allow us to do some of the work that does not fit the criteria of the grants available so far- such as the bridges on the course
- We will continue to update the Business Plan and I will meet with each Manager to discuss fully the short, medium and long term plans
- As soon as the Covid-19 situation is over we will re-launch our Events business

Please remember that this Club cannot survive on membership alone. We do not have enough members to cover the running costs of the Club. This is a fact! We need to attract visitors and societies to bring in the extra income needed. Also as I have said recently we cannot run our Bar and Catering business on members alone – we need extra events to bring in that extra income too. remember this. **We cannot be just a members' club – if we were, each of us would be paying double the subs we pay now! Please remember this.**

I love to take the opportunity in this report to pay tribute to and thank all the volunteers who help in a variety of ways to keep the Club thriving. We have the Tuesday morning gang out on the course, gardeners, painters, maintenance of the building, project managers of various ongoing plans, website designers as well as all the people who sit on the councils and committees who work tirelessly so that we can all play our golf on our fabulous course.

On your behalf I thank them all.

Also I must thank our great team of staff who go above and beyond their remit to provide a super service for us all - the greenkeeping team led by Dan, our Bar and Catering team led by Jemma and John, our Marketing Manager Helen, our Professional Sam, our Administrator Lesley and our cleaner Mick. We are very lucky at OGC!

Finally, I would like to pay tribute to our retiring Finance Officer Barry Robson who has been in post for the past 4 years and has been my right-hand man, particularly since Dave Foley left. He has been unfailingly careful, thoughtful, mindful of keeping costs down, dedicated to the Club in every way and has been a steadying influence on all members of the Management Council in terms of spending. Thank you for everything Barry – we will miss you!

Happy Christmas everyone – I hope you manage to meet with your families in this strange world we find ourselves in! Fingers crossed for 2021!

Veronica Lyon
Chairperson.

The Chairperson asked whether there were any questions related to her report. There were none.

The Club Captain's Report

My final report for the General Meeting, as Captain, comes as we exit lockdown#2. I hope everyone stayed safe and well and all are looking forward to getting back on the course soon.

As I reflect on my last two years as Captain I genuinely feel that, as a club, we have overcome everything that has been thrown at us and we have come out stronger as a consequence. It may not have been the Captaincy I had hoped for but I have been humbly honoured that the members have given me the capacity to represent the club during what has been an extremely difficult period.

As I look back over the two years I must pay tribute to all the members of the club who have supported me during my time. My playing partners and competitors on the course, my social partners in the bar and those that have supported the events throughout my tenure have made it such an enjoyable experience.

It goes without saying the groups of volunteers who man the various committees, in particular the Management Council, are the mainstay of the success the club has enjoyed. We may not have always seen eye to eye about things, but we all have the well-being of the club at heart. I thank you all for your unswerving support.

The vibe around the club on event days is as good as I have ever enjoyed during my membership and I must applaud our wonderful employees who have also taken the club to heart and shared in the successful feeling that there is around the club. The proudest moments for me are when visiting golfers or guests offer comments on the club, the course and the welcome they receive at Oundle – “ *You really have a great club here, it is a pleasure to come and play here* ” It is all down to the ‘Team’ approach that our staff and members deliver. I will say my personal thanks to each of you in due course.

On the golfing front we have been blessed that when we have been able to be open so that we have been able to hold our competitions as well as social golf. Unfortunately we have not been able to hold our Presentation Evening to celebrate our winners so far this year, but I hope circumstances may prevail that we can do something in the New Year.



It would be remiss of me not to comment on one particular golfer at the club. To win the Club Championship, Potter Bowl, Saxby Cup (Men’s Singles KO) and also the J&B Trophy (Men’s Pairs KO) with his father Guy, is a formidable feat for one year – I must offer my hearty congratulations to Charlie Fowler on his performances this year.

I have been grateful to my Vice–Captain, Garry Asbery for his complete support throughout this last year. His work during the recent months alongside Shelia Homer, Ladies HCPs and our marketing guru Helen Austen on the introduction of the WHS has been nothing but unbelievable. I can safely say that during my visits to other clubs around the country we were by far in advance with our preparations than any other I saw and in the communications to our members.

Garry now takes over as Captain of Oundle Golf Club. I know the role is in safe hands and he will do a fantastic job. I hope that the member’s, committees and our employees will give him the same level of support and encouragement that you all have given me these last two years. I wish him much success and I trust he will get as much enjoyment out of it as I did.

Thank you all for two wonderful years - enjoy your golf, play well and stay safe.

Tony Shillcock Oundle Golf Club Captain 2019 & 2020

Election of Officers

- 1. Club Captain (Garry Asbery)**
- 2. Club Vice Captain**
- 3. Ladies Captain (Sue Brown)**
- 4. Ladies Vice Captain (Debbie Verdino)**
- 5. Seniors Captain (Phil Churchward)**
- 6. Finance Officer**
- 7. Marketing and Membership Officer (Paul Kime)**
- 8. Facilities Officer (Tony Shillcock)**
- 9. Social Activities Coordinator**

There were no objections to any of the above elections, therefore all persons were voted in.

The Incoming Captains Address

Good evening

We're living in strange times! Pre-Covid I'd be jotting down bullet points for my incoming Captain's speech but instead, here I am, typing it out so that it can be distributed, along with other AGM papers, to be read rather than listened to, and I have to be conscious of my grammar rather than worrying about holding the microphone too close to my mouth.

I'll start by congratulating Tony on his two years in the Captain's seat. How he's managed it I don't know but I just hope I can do as well. It's been a privilege to be his Vice-Captain so – thank you Tony ***(stop for much applause)***. I'd also like to thank all of you for giving me the opportunity to be your Captain for 2021. I don't think I'll ever win a trophy, so it'll be the only way I'll get my name on a board ***(stop for much jeering and general abuse)***.

A wise man once said “If it aint broke don’t fix it”; so I intend to continue in much the same style as Tony by:

- Meeting and playing with new Members as they get to know the course and how we approach the game at Oundle.
- Organising the roll-ups, until we come out of Covid, when we can go back to pulling balls out of a hat. It’s important to keep up the Saturday and Sunday morning tradition of turning up to play with whoever is picked with you.
- Holding the Captains Drive in and Charity Day
- Supporting the Clubs Teams and other events through the year
- Running the monthly 100 club draw
- Generally acting as an Ambassador for the Club

The only thing I won’t be putting in the diary this year is Club Finals Day. We’ve had problems with this – people unable to play on the chosen day, someone being in more than one final etc. This year Finals must be played by the closing date of each competition.

I would also like to focus on friendly and inclusive golf. As a person who doesn’t have a regular playing partner (*I would hope for a witty but not too harsh comment here*) I think the roll-ups are essential. It allows those like me, and new members, to join in with people we may not know very well and extends our pool of golfing friends. In this respect BRS is a double edged sword. On the one hand it allows an individual to join in with two and three balls for social and competitive golf. On the other hand it allows people to solidify into the same three and four ball every week and every competition. I know some people prefer this but we must be careful it doesn’t lock out other members at popular times. If you’re a three ball for social golf leave the other space free for someone else to join in.

I also intend to run two additional competitions alongside the normal calendar. This won’t mean more qualifiers, I think we have enough of those already, but will be incorporated into them. They are:

- **The Carlsberg Cup:** This will be an eclectic run alongside the monthly Medal and Stableford competitions. Your best scores on each hole during these competitions will be collected to provide details of *“probably the best round you could ever play”*.
- **The PMP (Points Make Prizes) Pot:** Run on a Fedex Cup basis, points will be awarded to players based on placings in the “Board” competitions.

Hopefully, these will add a little frisson to each competition, especially when you’ve had a couple of nightmare holes and not managed a 2.

I mentioned the Captains Charity Day earlier. My chosen charity for the year is the **On Course Foundation** whose strap line is

“Reigniting the futures of our wounded Service personnel and veterans through golf”.

The aims of the organisation are:

- To support those who have given so much to support us
- To provide recovery, and kick-start futures through golf
- To unite the golfing family into offering new tomorrows

There will be leaflets available with more information and the Foundation will hopefully provide a presence on the Captain's Charity Day scheduled for Sunday 23rd May. I also hope to get beneficiaries of the Foundation along to the club if and when, the opportunity arises.

You can get more information by logging onto www.oncoursefoundation.com .

I can already feel your eyes wandering, or you may already be asleep, so I'll draw this to a close. No jokes I'm afraid but they come over even worse on paper than when I tell them (***your last opportunity for abuse***).

So with the help and support of the Golf and Social Committee, Jemma and her team, Sam in the Pro's shop, and most of all from you guys, let's look forward to a great year of golf. Hopefully, Covid permitting, this will include a welcome back to social functions and shotgun starts.

Wait for thunderous applause, whoops, etc. (in my dreams!)

Thank you

Garry Asbery

The chairperson then asked if there was any other business.

- **Financial Update from Barry Robson, the finance officer**

(couldn't load the update!!!!)

In addition there was a further grant of £50K available to apply for but at present this grant is being investigated.

Any questions regarding the financial update.

Richard Cole asked whether the surplus was for the year ending. BR informed the meeting that this surplus was the current position and as we had a very small income forecast for the rest of our golfing year, the surplus would be much reduced from its present position.

There were no further questions for the finance officer.

- **Megan Smedley asked whether dogs could be allowed on the golf course. She stated that she and her partner had carried out considerable research and that they had found 390 courses which allowed dogs onto their course. She suggested that only well trained and those on leads should be allowed and only for those golfers playing social golf, not in competitions. There was a general discussion regarding this change in the clubs' constitution. As the next AGM should be held in July 2021 perhaps we can have a trial period of 3 months prior to the next AGM so that the membership could be informed how the trial had worked.**
- **Gary Asbery informed the meeting that the financial costs of a driving range on the lower part of the course was far too expensive as a project, however we will continue to work on the area chosen thus improving the practice facilities for members.**
- **Veronica Lyon then gave her thanks to Ray Rata, Richard Hankin and Barry Robson for all the work they had done for the club during the time they had spent on the various committees.**
- **The meeting closed at 20.00 hours**