

AGM 2017 – CLUB CAPTAIN'S REPORT

INTRODUCTION

We have come through a roller-coaster of a year with major changes occurring during these past twelve months. We have appointed a new and very able Club Manager. We have a new Head Greenkeeper. We have a new Bar Manager. We enjoy the support of a Golf Pro. We have operated under the new Constitution introduced at the 2016 AGM. We have completely revised and updated the Employee Handbook. We have re-focused on our Business Plan. We have updated and implemented all staff contracts. And for the most part we have remained financially in the black! All in all a demanding and challenging period in the life of Newburgh-on-Ythan Golf Club.

CLUB MANAGER CHANGE

Perhaps the most significant change this year has been the consolidation of the post of Club Manager. Shona Reid who was doing an excellent job as our Club Manger requested, for personal reasons, a return to her previous post as Club Administrator. It was always understood Shona's role as Club Manager would allow this to happen if she so wished. The Committee therefore supported her request and set itself the task of finding a replacement. After very careful deliberation it was decided to offer the post to Paul Manson. Paul had previously been acting as our Bookkeeper/Administrator with additional employment elsewhere. But he accepted the post of Club Manager on the basis of sole commitment to the Club. He also agreed to maintain his bookkeeping duties. Paul previously underwent extensive Management training with a previous employer and this has stood him in good stead. He also had the advantage of having Shona's support as he settled into his new role. This he has now accomplished with distinction and we look forward to his continuing leadership.

BAR MANAGER CHANGE - CLUBHOUSE MANAGEMENT

Another important change that was forced upon us was due to the untimely death of dear Sandy Penny. Sandy's loss was a real cause for sorrow. We paid tribute to him in our July Newsletter and now simply record our gratitude to all that he did for and was to the Club. This presented the Committee with the daunting task of replacing Sandy's invaluable contribution to the Club. We are very grateful to Colleen Lorimer for agreeing to take on this important role. Members may not fully realise just what a demanding job this is. It requires a high degree of communication, managerial, and administrative skills linked with a full-on time commitment. Colleen is tackling this task with real dedication. We wish her well and promise her our whole-hearted support. Our Clubhouse hosts a number of highly successful events and we remain grateful to Bar staff and Martin Buhler & catering staff for the regular work that goes in to making our Club a good place to be. A constant source of gratitude is for the work carried out quietly and unostentatiously by our Clubhouse Cleaner Pauline. It's always a welcome sight to see Pauline's bike parked at the door for that means easy

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early morning access to the Clubhouse. It's also a guarantee that everything will be in a clean and orderly state. So thank you Pauline AND HENRY!!!

GREENS STAFF CHANGE - CLUB COURSE MANAGEMENT

This year also saw a change in what for a Golf Club must be arguably the most important post of all - Head Greenkeeper. James Peace decided to resign after many, many years of service to the Club. In parting company I thanked Jim for the reputation he had established in maintaining good greens and wished him well for the future. Dale Robertson became known to the Club during Jim's enforced absence due to injury and it is perhaps not surprising that he became a front runner as replacement Head Greenkeeper. That this has turned out to be a sound Committee decision is reflected in the condition of our golf course and greens facilities together with the many compliments that members have passed on. Dale has not only introduced and maintained a range of positive developments but has managed to do so even during the temporary absence of Forbes Bruce. Our thanks to Dale's son Craig for part-time help during Forbes' absence. Forbes is recovering well from his broken leg accident and we are hopeful of his early return to work. We wish them well in the months ahead. The Committee also remain grateful for the dedication shown by a number of regular volunteers who do scaffolding, rabbit hole filling, bunker raking, and pin positioning. Keep up the good work.

ADMINISTRATION CHANGE

There is more to running a Golf Club than meets the eye! A lot of work has gone in to updating various documents. For example, Staff Contracts, of which there are several, have all been brought up to date and duly agreed. The Employee Handbook has undergone a thorough revision and we are grateful to John Gray for the hours spent in making this possible. The Club's Business Plan has been re-visited and is entrusted to the watchful eye of Russell Crofts. We now operate under our New Constitution agreed at last year's AGM and which took a huge amount of time to produce. Richard Charles has a watching brief to explore more effective ways of using our Clubhouse. Shelley Johnstone has been charged with securing quotations for new green keeping sheds should we agree to pursue this project. Bobby McClymont, on top of his many other golfing duties, has maintained a watchful eye on our Club accounts and expenditure as Treasurer. At this time last year the outstanding loan on the Clubhouse stood at £13,000. I said that I looked forward to the day when we can close the account and gain a major Clubhouse asset. WELL WE HAVE DONE JUST THAT! So once again thanks to all of you who made this happen. Bobby continues to maintain close relationships with our Bank. We have continued to produce our Club Newsletter and to publish Committee minutes on the Club Noticeboard on a regular basis. In this way we try to keep members informed of all that is happening. This has been a strong, hard-working Committee and I am grateful to them. My hope is that we will maintain this strength in the coming year.

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NO CHANGE

Some things have not changed and one is the support we receive from TRAC Oil & Gas for continuing to act as Club auditors and supplying us with attractive scorecards. Our thanks to TRAC.

Likewise we remain grateful to our Corporate Member Quensh for their continued support in advising us on Health and Safety matters. Thank you Quensh.

MARKETING

We continue to ensure our Club is well publicised with a view to encouraging both new members and visitors. The use of the Website and social Media is one way to sell our wares. The continued production of monthly Newsletters also helps to keep our members and others informed. We thank Martyn Colebrook for inducting Paul and Shona into how to transfer our Newsletter onto the Club Website. The additional help of our Club pro Andrew Cooper in making our name known is also greatly appreciated.

COMPETITION EVENTS

Competition events continue to have run smoothly despite the fact we are understaffed on the administration front. The staffing and stocking of the Club Pro Shop is an integral part of running competitions and we are indebted to a team of regular workers, both staff and volunteers, for all that they do. Our Club Manager, Paul, has put a great deal of time and effort into improving shop sales. Donald Webster has been going through a difficult time on the health front but despite this he has spent a huge amount of time in supporting the Club. We wish him well for a return to good health. Oliver Philip has continued to cover shop and competition duties and we thank him for this.

A successful Prize Giving Evening took place in November. Our thanks to Sheena Cruickshank and Sarah Shackleton for presenting the Ladies Section and to Paul for presenting the Men's trophies. Well done and congratulations to Karen Shaw (Ladies Champion) and Derek Mulgrew (Gents Champion), all the winners and all those who took part. It was good to see the fund-raising effort put in by Mark Graham and colleagues in memory of Stuart Gill. Just as it is good to know that the families of Jack McRobbie and Dennis McGillivray have been able to participate in the presentation of trophies in their memory. The Senior Men's Section has continued apace with a very active and successful programme including the Christmas Dinner which is combined with Prize Giving. Perhaps this model is one the Club could apply to its own Prize Giving evening.

Once again we are indebted to Graham Lorimer (Quiz Nights) and Arline Seager (Bingo Nights) for reminding us there is more to life than golf! These are very worthwhile events. We appreciate the time spent in organising them.

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JUNIOR SECTION

In many ways, a Golf Club's future depends on its Junior Section. We are grateful to Andrew Cooper for beginning to rebuild our strength in this important area. We have a formal Partnership agreement with Andrew whereby he is able to use Club facilities for teaching purposes. We wish him well in his teaching and coaching career.

CLUB-HUB COOPERATION

Informal meetings between Golf Club (Club) representatives and Gallows Hill Sports Centre Committee (Hub) representatives continue to take place from time to time. However, recent events have proceeded at a slow pace and there are issues that need to be clarified. Paul is in touch with the Chairperson of the Sports Hub and will continue to promote further cooperation between it and the Golf Club.

THE WAY FORWARD

The way forward remains steady as you go. We have made significant progress during the course of last year. But even when financially in a relatively healthy position there is no room for complacency. We operate on thin margins. We can only proceed on the basis of continued careful oversight of our Club finances.

To date we have maintained Club Fees at the same level for the past five years. Now may be the time to carefully review the situation and to consider a modest increase in fees in order to generate greater financial security. We invite members to express their views on this.

A FINAL THANK YOU

Finally, my thanks go to our Committee for all the hard work carried out this year in your name. We have had a very strong, reliable, hard working Committee and the good news is current members are willing to continue for a further period of office if you so decide. It had been my intention to stand down from the Captaincy this year, having been in the post for some three years. However, I have allowed my nomination to go forward for one more year in the absence of any other nominee coming forward. It will be very important during the coming session for members to give serious consideration to assuming Committee responsibility in the future.

Best wishes for the coming session. "KEEP.....GOLFING!!!"

Don Hawthorn
Club Captain
4th December 2017