

# AGM 2022

## CLUB MANAGER'S REPORT

I think that we can all agree that this year hasn't been the best, here at Newburgh Golf Club. Although everything has come to head this year in particular it is something, financially, that has been on the horizon for a number of years as was stated at the EGM, by the committee. A lack of investment, due to limited funds, had left the club with worn out equipment, dilapidated shed and surroundings, and with a big drop in members, after the 2021 covid bounce, the club found itself in a position it was near the start of this year. A lot of things needed to be replaced, and with the shed we needed to get a new one completely as the facilities were just not fit for purpose any longer, and the committee, then committed to getting the new shed done and investment in new equipment at the back end of 2021. All of this was needed and with the generosity of some of the members it was done at less cost to the club than it could have been, and we are incredibly lucky to have willing tradesmen, to call upon, amongst the membership.

One of the first issues we encountered this year was, a big drop in members from the previous year which left a financial hole to begin with, then, it became apparent, that the irrigation system was, again, not on point at the beginning of the season, therefore meaning we had no water getting onto the Golf Course, apart from rain, until May, by which time we had had a good number of warm and sunny days baking the grass and effecting the greens. It then took a large chunk of the season to put this right. This issue, in particular, was to have a knock-on effect to what was to come.

As of September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2021, the club had 371 adult members of the golf club, over 18 years of age. This dropped to 335 this year. The committee's vision for 2022 was that we would be able to retain those who had joined the club in 2021 and further increase the membership, and with this in mind it was decided that the upgrading the sheds and the machinery for the course had to be a priority. This was all arranged, and the new shed was erected, septic tank installed, and the machinery was delivered in stages once there was somewhere for it to be housed.

I sat down with Norman during the month of March, and it was apparent that there was going to be an issue as we moved forward through the year, the drop in members and the slashing of the available OD facility at the bank was going to massively impact on the clubs' resources. We put together an Income and Expenditure forecast, as best you could with knowns and unknowns. This was brought to the committee at that time with a prepared document that could be shared with the members. It was decided at that point to hold off as the course condition would need to improve to be able to get people on board, the problems on the course having a direct impact at that time with numerous complaints having already been received by the members. Ultimately, as was brought up at the EGM, this proved to be the wrong course of action. However, saying that, we have since started to move in the right direction again and the hope is that we can come out the other side of this and push on with improving in all aspects surrounding the club both on and off the golf course.

Norman will give us a more in depth look at the finances when he does the treasurer's report on the night of the AGM.

On a personal note, the last few months have been, probably, the worst in my working life (this includes redundancy in 2016) as well as my personal life. From the pressures of dealing with the issues at the

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golf club and long hours, evening phone calls, sleepless nights etc, I also had to deal with a very personal tragedy in the middle of it all, with the fallout from this still ongoing.

This can be a very difficult job, and a lot is expected of you, but it is a job that I still enjoy doing and want to be doing for the foreseeable future. This has not just been a 4/5-month battle, albeit those months have probably been the worst, this has been an almost 3-year battle since the end of 2019 and everything that 3 years since have brought. There is still a job to be done here and with the support of the committee, staff and members, this golf club can get back to where it should be. I will be doing my MDP 2 in February 2023 and I will look forward to using the knowledge gained at this to move the club forward still. We have a great bunch of members here that will help when required, are welcoming to others visiting the club and want their club to go on and on into the future. This has been apparent by the generosity there has been since July to ensure that this club can survive and then strive as we go forward. I believe that the club has the potential to be a great place to come for both members and visitors alike. When I first started, in this job, the course was ranked 68<sup>th</sup> in the Scotland top 100 and I believe that with the right attitude, commitment and ambition we can get back into the top 100 again.

I believe that we have a fantastic facility, here at Newburgh, and a course that has so much potential to be up there alongside the ones by which we are surrounded. I will again head to St Andrews with a really positive view and will make sure that all the people I talk to, not only know where we are but that they can rest assured that any groups they send to Newburgh will not be disappointed.

### **MEMBERSHIP**

As mentioned, we have had our membership numbers have dropped after the "covid bounce" of 2021.

The main focus needs to be to attract more people to the golf club, the product that we have has huge potential and with competitive prices for membership and year-round golf available there is no reason why the membership numbers can't go up. We need to do a lot of things right to make this happen, this goes from the welcome people can receive when coming to the club, the golf course being in a condition which we can hopefully say is "second to none," and the hospitality after the round in the bar. All these things are, can and will be done as we go forward.

As last year, the fee notes will be e mailed out again this year at the beginning of December, with those not having an e-mail address getting their Fee notes posted to them. There will be a separate note on the fee's proposal in the AGM agenda. Again, it is important, at this time of year, with the income stream at the club being very low, we would ask that those who are in a position to pay their fees during December please do. Cash is King and it important to keep a close eye on the cashflow at the club moving forward. You will notice that the committee have decided not to up the fees this year as a show of gratitude for the donations from members this year. Take note that some of the categories have changed, e.g., the Intermediate category now goes to 34 instead of 29. The view is that we need to encourage more young members to the club which in turn will help with the sustainable future.

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We have also proposed an SPRA membership category, and this is only eligible to members of this Police Scotland organisation. We hope that this will bring new people to the club, both as members and as visitors in groups of outings etc.

As always, we thank all our corporate sponsors this year, and we hope that they continue to support the club in the future. We will strive to try and grow our corporate support this year to add more names to the list of our sponsors. We still have hole sponsorship available as well as other sponsorship options at the club. I have listed all our current sponsors below:

- Trac Oil & Gas
- Mile End Motors
- HFD Ltd
- KR Steel
- Romar
- Scarf
- Mitchells (Newburgh)
- Wildwell
- Still Tours Scotland
- Tidy Green Clean
- 2 Circles
- RGR/Euroline
- James Aiken
- Air Control Airtech
- Electric Center
- KF Watson Electrical
- The Granite Spa
- Helix Well Ops

### **CLUB COMPETITIONS**

We certainly managed to get back more competitive golf this year, and we managed to have all our trophies competed for. I would like to congratulate our club champions for the season of their achievement, Jonathan Dobson (Gents), Maureen McFarland (Ladies) and Jim Allan (Seniors). The Prize giving event went well again, and this time the sun came out. A big thank you to those who continue to support the event and make the prize giving a good day. Congratulations go to all our prize winners for 2022. In 2023 I hope to rejig the fixture list slightly to mix it up a bit in conjunction with committee, Seniors and Ladies fixture convenors and the course manager.

This year we had a new Trophy to play for, which was kindly donated by Air Control Entech. Each year this competition will be sponsored by them bringing in a fee for doing so. We appreciate this gesture and hope to keep this relationship going for years to come.

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### **VISITORS**

The year, actually, started off brightly and a trip to St Andrews for the Scottish Golf Tourism week was a great success with a lot of new contacts made, which have already born fruit and will do more as we move forward. Next year's follow up trip will again give us the chance to engage with the tour operators as they start to get tours booked for 2023 and 2024.

The club being represented at the Scottish Golf Tourism week has boosted our visitor's income through that method. We had 25 groups booked in through Tour Ops this year which is compared to 12 groups in 2019 (Obviously there was little movement in 202 and 2021). The indication that we got when we were at the event this year was that when booking trips to the area groups can only really afford to play either one or two of the "trophy courses" and they then want the tour operator to suggest others and that is the market that we fit into.

I will ensure that one of the updates in February 2023 has detail about this coming trip to the event and what has come out of this.

### **CLUB PERSONNEL**

As you are all aware, on Wednesday November 16<sup>th</sup>, Dale Robertson worked his last day as Course Manager at Newburgh Golf Club. I am sure some of you have been able to say your farewells to Dale before he headed off to pastures new. It is always sad to lose someone, especially when they have been here for a number of years and coupled with the circumstances surrounding the departure itself. However, we now have Matthew Smith in place as the new Course Manager with Wayne Gibson joining the club as an assistant, Wayne comes with 8 years' experience working at Auchmill Golf Club where he was latterly the Head Green Keeper. I am confident that a fresh approach and innovative ideas to bring to the course will be of benefit and we hope that this will both encourage people to remain at the club and also to get more people on board as members of the club for 2023. Following on from what I said earlier in the report, I think that we can get back into the top 100 and I can go to St Andrews with confidence when promoting our club. We are currently still down to 2 Green Keepers as Forbes continues to battle with his current health issues. Forbes will be supported and given the time required to aid his recovery.

I will have a short statement to read out to at the AGM from our New Course Manager.

With the situation surrounding the club it was decided back in August that we had to lose James Warren, who had been with us since Shona retired in October 2021. This has not been ideal, and there have been some periods when it has been very difficult, however I have been able to call on Robbie to ensure the shop is open when I have had annual leave. We also had to cut back on the shop opening hours on the weekend, again this has not been ideal as the shop has been closing around 1pm (ish). I am grateful that Robbie is doing both weekend mornings, as finding someone else to cover that role for one morning a week would be very difficult. Both these scenarios will continue throughout the remainder of the winter; however, we will need to review this before the start of the new season.

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Pauline has continued to stick to working 5 mornings per week, which was introduced in the post covid era. This will remain to be the case as it keeps us on top of any potential scrutiny regarding cleanliness, particularly with toilets and washing areas. Pauline does a fantastic job of keeping everything looking great around the clubhouse.

We have, again, had a lot of people this year who have given up their personal time over the summer to do various things around the course and clubhouse. There have been a number of people who have helped throughout the summer months patching fairways etc. You may have seen the piles of seed and sand mix at the side of the holes, at various times, which was left by our greens team so that the patching work could be done. This was a great effort and this help is very much appreciated by all of us at the club, we also had, during Maintenance week and during the period when the tees were cored, help from volunteers where the cores were cleared from the greens and tee boxes, the area around the putting green was weeded and some hard soles went out and raked the bunkers amongst other things.

The continued support of the membership with regards to these jobs is something that the club cannot do without and is a fantastic help to our small team on the course.

Jane Middleton, Sarah Shackleton, and Shelley Johnstone have kept the surrounding areas of the clubhouse in exceptionally good condition which is a massive help and keeps the club surrounding looking inviting to members and visitors alike. Sarah and Jane regularly look after the garden area around the clubhouse and Shelley keeps on top of the grass cutting, which is a sizeable area in itself.

### **THE COMMITTEE**

There is obviously going to be wholesale changes within the committee after the AGM this year. Hopefully by the time we get to the AGM we will have nominations for all the positions to be filled.

The captain is stepping down after 3 years in the role, starting in December 2019. I think we would find it difficult to have a time when a captain of the golf club had 3 consecutive years like we have had here. No one has gone through a worldwide pandemic and everything that brought with it, that is for sure.

All members of the committee this year have contributed to activities in and around the club. I thank them for their support this year and hope to continue good relationships with the clubs committee moving forward.

Things of particular note are:

Lynda took on the role of getting volunteers for working at desks for opens throughout the season, Lynda has also headed up the membership subgroup and a lot of excellent work has come from that also, and now she is set to embark on some winter decorating within the clubhouse with a band of volunteers.

Craig has continued the good work this team regards to all things social media, and we need to give a special mention to Mission 10, who have helped us for the last 3 months free of charge, putting out blogs, posts, and coming into the club and doing photo shoots and videos.

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### **MOVING FORWARD.....**

As I said at the beginning of this report, this year hasn't been the best. An understatement possibly, however, as I have also said there is plenty to have the feel-good factor about too. The course is in a pretty good condition for the time of year and the greens are massively better than they were this time last year so the signs are good that we can get back on track.

The club will, again, this year be represented at the Scottish Golf Tourism Week, and I will be flying solo this time to try and get as many of the Tour Ops on board and send their groups to play our course.

Next season we will gain further sponsorship as we have come to an agreement to have the hole cups sponsored around the course. There are still some hole sponsorship available and we will also be pushing the corporate side again for both one off tournaments and outings in general.

I look forward to 2023 with optimism that we can retain the majority of our current members and gain a number more. If you have been undecided, up until now, about renewing, and the course has been the main sticking point, give the new on Course team a chance for 2023 and I am sure that you won't regret it.

If you have any questions on any of the report, then send those in and they will be answered at the AGM.

Thank You

Paul Manson

Club Manager