

Sturminster Marshall Golf Club AGM 2020

Chair's Report

As everyone will be aware, this has been a difficult year due to the effects of Covid-19.

It began well with our club committee working extremely effectively to organise and develop activities for all members. Unfortunately, many plans have had to be cancelled or postponed.

However, some things have gone ahead, or were completed pre-lockdown.

New Honours Boards have been created in the clubhouse and in the process of ensuring these were accurate we realised that club records could be improved. As a result, we have developed an online repository for club documents.

Competitions have been reviewed and we hope that the revised options available will encourage even better participation, once we are 'back to normal'.

We have worked closely with the owners throughout the year and are delighted that Louise Read now attends our committee meetings. This means that she is able to keep us fully informed about plans and developments. It also enables us, if necessary, to raise issues/concerns directly with the owners.

I am grateful to, and would like to publicly thank, the owners for the investment that they continue to make in the club. This year has seen several improvements already and more are being completed within the next few days.

Anyone who has been in the club shop will have seen the exciting plans to redevelop the clubhouse. We have to hope that planning permission is granted as it would greatly enhance our facilities.

In recent weeks the path through the club has been clearly signposted with white markers which we hope will ensure walkers do not use alternative routes across our course.

Lockdown forced the club to introduce a booking system for tee-times. Whilst this has not been welcomed by all members, it has had a very positive effect. I believe that it has encouraged more people to play our course and consequently increased income. Hopefully, this will also translate into increased membership.

Dave Piercy, Senior Captain, has expressed his concern that having tee-times is reducing interaction between members and making our senior mornings less 'sociable'. I have to agree with him. It is, currently, difficult to arrange different groupings and players tend to play with the same 2 or 3 people every week. Hopefully, once Covid-19 restrictions are removed we can find a way around this issue.

The problems caused by Covid-19, continue to have a financial impact and must be reducing income for our club. So far, I believe the owners have done a fantastic job, in difficult circumstances, of keeping the clubhouse open as much as possible. I hope that everyone realises what a challenge it is in the current situation and will continue to support the efforts of staff and owners.

Our academy continues to introduce high numbers of young players to golf, thanks to Mike Dodd, and they definitely bring new life and significant funds into the club.

England Golf has launched a new SafeGolf accreditation for clubs which meet high standards to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people. I am delighted to say that we have achieved this award. It is, I believe, a recognition of the great work that our club and especially Mike Dodd do for young players.

As everyone should know, the World Handicap System replaces our current system on 2nd November. This will be used by all clubs around the world and should make playing across different courses fairer for all

players. Full details of the WHS are available on our website or from England Golf. If players wish to gain/maintain handicaps they MUST sign up to the WHS. We do this for all members through our 'Independent Software Vendor' (Handicapmaster). If you haven't already done so, please let us know your full name, date of birth and email address. We can then upload these details to the WHS.

I would like to thank the other committee members for their support during this year. They have made my job remarkably easy. It has, at times, been difficult holding our meetings using Zoom, but we have done so, thanks largely to Claire Perry who has allowed us to use her subscription. If we are forced to continue meeting in this way I think we will need to consider arranging a 'club subscription'.

Dave Piercy, our handicap secretary, must be singled out for thanks. He has done an amazing job in keeping all our competition results and handicaps up to date. The role requires more hours than any other post on our committee and I am delighted that he has agreed to continue in this role.

Special thanks also need to be given to our treasurer, Trevor Snoxell. He has successfully simplified our accounts so that all committee members can easily understand them!

In the absence of any other nomination I have agreed to stand for Chair again this year. I sincerely hope that by next year's AGM we will be clear of Covid-19 and back to 'normal' in all aspects of our lives and golf.

David Dorrell – October 2020