



Communications Group

(On behalf of the Management Committee and Club Members)

January 2021 Newsletter

Dear Members

After navigating through a cautiously optimistic summer, we are back in Lockdown mode. We have made the necessary, vital restrictions as the Covid virus spreads and we wait for the jab.

Retford Golf Club has had many months this year without normal income from Greens fees and bar takings, so, understandably, the winter months are becoming particularly challenging. Without the support of Government, through the furlough scheme, grants and business rates “holidays”, together with some help from suppliers, the situation would be much worse.

We will keep members informed of every development in these difficult, frustrating times, and we wish the best to everyone, especially those who have been affected by the virus.

Good news.

The course is looking good, and local folk are benefitting in Lockdown from the unexpected access for walking one of the most scenic areas in Retford.

On the Course

- ***The course is currently closed for any golf. We await the outcome of the national petition to allow golf courses to open for two-ball play, given that Scottish courses are allowing that.***

- ***We welcome a new apprentice, Oliver Rich, to the Greens staff. He will start at the end of January, and replaces Elliott. This maintains the complement of 5 Greens staff, whilst allowing on-going savings on labour costs and giving us eligibility for a Government grant for employing an apprentice***
- ***One member of the greens staff has been furloughed, in order to control costs. However, we recognise it's an important time on the course, with work needed over January and February to make improvements ready for the summer. We will continue to closely monitor staffing levels.***
- ***The winter course programme includes***
 - ***Adding irrigation to the 1st, 2nd and 18th greens approaches, to improve playability around the greens and create consistent chipping conditions***
 - ***Add irrigation to the back of the 1st tee***
 - ***Renovate several bunkers, including the 11th (see photo)***
 - ***Repair bare patches around the course***
 - ***Investigate, ready for work in September 2021, improving the drainage on the 15th and 18th fairways, and the 17th approach***



- ***There is a Greens Twitter feed, where you can get lots of information and photos posted by Carl and his team. Go to #retfordgreens.***

- *We are almost ready to erect the new “Welcome to Retford Golf Club” information board on the 1st tee, with a map of the course and other information. This should mean an end to pieces of laminated paper pinned to the 1st tee. Smaller tee marker boards are also being erected on all 18 tees. Sponsors have come forward for these boards, and we hope that by the time we are back playing in spring/summer 2021 (?) we will see those boards in place. Many thanks to everyone who has supported us in this project, which has kept to a minimum the costs to the Club.*

Competitions

Although we have not been able to arrange formal competitions in this Covid winter, there have been ad hoc informal games for the ladies and some winter league matches and gents’ fiddles, until the latest Lockdown.

As a club we are making provisional booking for the competitions that were cancelled in 2020, such as the Seniors Opens, and the Ladies have also rolled their 2020 matches and Open Competition over into 2021. All those are available on-line for bookings now.

At present the Centenary celebrations of 2020 are still on hold, and uncertainties about the direction of the pandemic make it unwise for us to make any definite plans about resurrecting that programme for summer 2021.

Club House and Social Events

The catering in the Clubhouse remains closed, although the half-way house was opened during the pre-Lockdown restrictions but with very strict conditions, in line with Government guidance and instructions.

The AGM was impossible to hold in the clubhouse, so information on the club, its progress, plans and finances was circulated to members. (See Chairman’s Report 2019-20, circulated in December 2020).

We welcome to the Management Committee Jacky Walsh, and we thank for all their work Barbara Burton and Mark Allan, who are stepping down from the Committee.

Mike Mahony has taken over as Club Treasurer.

We continue to operate at a distance, keeping members informed of developments. As ever we are immensely grateful to Craig Morris for remaining at the helm, and to other staff and committee members, for their pro-active work behind the scenes.

As in the previous Lockdown, the Office, catering and other staff have been partially furloughed, and any relevant grants and support from local and national funding have been secured. The Office staff are working on Tuesdays, so members can get in contact if they need to.

Other matters

- ***One of the dangers in these times of remote working is that we may get communications, about plans, finances etc, which may be genuine, or scams. We remind Members that if there are matters we will contact you directly, so please don't give any personal details to a third party.***
- ***A range of membership packages is still available, including Twilight, 1-Year Lifestyle, and various rates for Juniors. Overall, the Club membership has not only steadied, but risen slightly between 2019 and 2020, and there are some 20 new golfers who have indicated their intention to join the Club. We will try to ensure that our membership is healthy, but not over-subscribed to the point where Members find it hard to book tee-times, especially during the restricted daylight period of the year.***
- ***The electronic booking system, which was forced upon us after the first Lockdown, is now a prerequisite for golf today. Initially it was free to the Club, but from 1st January it is at a charge of £5 per Member. That will not be charged as an extra to Members, but the Club will need to budget for it.***

- *Details of membership deals are available on the Club website, and from the Office/Pro's Shop.*
- *We hope to send members a further Newsletter in March, by which time we should have a clearer idea of our plans for the future.*

Very best wishes from

The Communications Group (on behalf of the Management Committee)