

Seniors' Golf Committee Meeting.

Thursday 23rd September 2021.

1. Present.

Tom Fletcher; Paul Smith; Paul Kent; John Ashton; Andrew Jennings; Richard Day; John Morley; Richard Fernley (who joined late)

2. Apologies.

Steve Ward.

3. Minutes of last meeting (1st July)

Read and approved.

4. Matters arising.

There were no matters arising no covered in the agenda.

5. Captain's Report.

The previous Seniors Committee meeting took place on Thursday 1st July 2021. It has been a busy period and I am grateful to the support provided by Richard Fernley (taking care of all Trophy competitions and Qualifiers), Paul Kent and Robert Steven (navigating us through the vagaries of the WHS).

Ben Townsend, HGC manager and Club Professional Richard Davies have been supportive of the Seniors section, particularly in providing block bookings that allow competitions to be planned more easily. The Seniors section also benefits from the work being done to improve the club. This can be readily seen in the improvements to the course undertaken by Mark and his team. We are also benefitting from the introduction of new items, including a flag system for the greens, a touchscreen computer for scoring and cups on tee boxes to collect broken tees. Ellie, her team and the chefs continue to provide great service and work to high standards. Richard and Ali have been very helpful with bookings and our management of home club matches. Richard was instrumental in planning block bookings to assist Seniors while taking account of all member's requirements.

There has been a good deal of progress since the committee last met. The Seniors section has managed two competitions per week (apart from Charity events) and continued with inter-club friendly matches. Block bookings provided by HGC for competitions have worked well, with a generally high attendance at competitions. The trial period for Friday's block booking has ended, with HGC management agreeing to continuing Friday block bookings next year. Players are becoming more familiar with the IG App for entering and scoring competitions. The WHS is at least more widely understood although the Handicap Committee have experienced problems, as discussed below. The Seniors continue to promote players submitting General Play cards and Qualifying competitions. The Seniors Section also continues to grow in number, with new members taking an active part in events.

Existing block bookings (Tuesdays 0730-1000 and Friday 0730 to 0930) for Senior's competitions will continue into 2022 apart from the winter months. During November to the end of February, when daylight hours are reduced, there will be a change to block bookings: Tuesday's period will start at 0800 and continue to 10:00, Fridays will start at 0900 and continue to 10:30. For our part, Seniors have committed to monitoring competitions to ensure that block bookings have few gaps in tee

times, and when there are fewer players, look at releasing tee times back to the club. Seniors are requested to assist with this by choosing tee times that do not create gaps in the timesheet.

In recent months entrants to competitions have ranged from 30-45 players. When there are home matches being played there has been up to 56 Seniors in the field (including 12 visitors), all having teed off before 1030.

Highlights of the competitions played since July, include: the Seniors Charity Shield on 6 Aug and the Wolfe Cup on 16 August. The Seniors Charity Shield competition raised £550 for charity, with Seniors donating prizes ensuring that all cash raised was shared by the Seniors Captain's chosen charities: The Halesworth Volunteer Centre and The Pear Tree Fund (receiving £275 each). In addition, £366 was raised on the day for the Halesworth "HOPPA" community bus. This was largely due to the efforts of John Giles, who managed a raffle and set up a putting competition. John is a volunteer driver and brought along a bus and lots of promotional material. Raffle prizes were all donated by Seniors. It was also good to see past Captain John Coward along for the day to help. Winners of the trophy competitions are relatively new members: Mike Slater (Charity Shield) and Steve Bacon (Wolfe Cup).

The Wolfe Cup is for higher handicappers. Paul Kent and I are introducing a new trophy on 8th October, which will be for lower handicappers (the Blyth Trophy). This will be for those with a playing handicap of 17, or less, which is the upper limit of Division 1 in Seniors' competitions.

The Seniors Championship over 27 holes took place Friday 20 August. The course was in very good condition, all credit to Mark and the team. Winners were Graham Schilling (gross), playing off 4 and scoring 110, and Tony Shrubshall (net) playing off 23 and scoring 104.

Seniors also took part in the Pear Tree Centre Charity Competition on 3rd September and The Club Captain's Charity day. An exceptional performance by Club Captain Rob Sherington, managing and promoting both the competition and fund raising, which raised £3714, split equally between Pear Tree, Halesworth Volunteers and Halesworth HOPPA.

Thank you also to Ken Parry Brown who has transferred £100 from the proceeds of the 100 Club draw for the Seniors Charities.

It is great to see the "Roll-up" WhatsApp group being used by new members allowing them to arrange play when they can have their cards signed and subsequently integration into the Seniors section. Some relatively new members are now supporting the newest members.

We have continued with interclub matches although this year's programme and planning was disrupted by the COVID lockdown and restrictions that followed. Nevertheless, we have still managed to play in a total of 19 matches, home and away. The Halesworth team has been supported by a total of 40 Seniors at one time or another. Brian Dennis has competed in 18 of these matches. Others who have played in ten or more matches include me (15), Mike Hill (15), Richard Fernley (14), Dennis Higgins (14), David Pryke (14), Jim Doyle (13), Rob Sherington (12), Robert Steven (11), John Giles (10) and KPB (10). Dennis Higgins has a success rate of 79%, best of all.

Teams played were Eaton, Sprowston, Diss, Felixstowe, Seckford, Rushmere, Gorleston, Woodbridge, Bungay, Southwold, Caldecott, Thorpeness and Rookery. The remaining matches are Thorpeness away on 29th September, Felixstowe away on 15th October and Rookery at home on 27th October (new date).

We clearly have a core of players, those mentioned above and others who support the team whenever they can, and we usually manage to put a team of 12 together. Teams of 16, which were common in the past, have proven to be difficult to organise. There also appears to be a trend amongst clubs to have teams of 12 so this may be considered at HGC for 2022. A casualty of COVID was the St Audrys fixture. HGC pre-COVID had 32 matches on the fixture list. This is a lot more than most other clubs and the feeling amongst those of us managing the matches is that it is too many. We have informed St Audrys that we will not be playing them next year. John Morley has been working on the fixtures programme for next year: removing the requirement to play two fixtures in a week, matches on consecutive days, etc. As he and Paul Kent will be managing these matches, I will leave it to them to advise the committee of their proposals or recommendations for the future.

I am continuing to track roll-up competition fees (£1 per time) on a spreadsheet, which is posted on the men's changing room notice board. There are several Seniors yet to pay towards their fees. On the other hand, there are many who are in credit. We will need to decide whether to continue with this in 2022. Richard Fernley keeps a separate spreadsheet of fees paid for the Trophy and Qualifier matches.

There are a few issues that have required attention during these past few months. A general view that handicaps were not accurate leading to exceptionally high scoring in competitions, was probably the main driving force behind the call for a Handicap Committee meeting. This took place on 12th August. In the meeting 18 members were identified for handicap reductions (all Seniors). Unfortunately, it was discovered later that England Golf's software did not allow for straight forward reductions: applying the reduction did not produce the outcome anticipated. England Golf were not able to provide a simple solution and some of the reductions were anomalous. Handicap Secretary Robert Steven has followed up with England Golf and reports that guidance will be provided by England Golf ahead of the annual Handicap review.

Another outcome of the Handicap Review meeting were interim recommendations for frequency of Qualifiers and an update to conditions for players entering competitions with respect to Qualifiers. The committee recommended that Seniors plan for four Qualifying competitions per month, comparable with the Gents Sections whose Sunday matches are generally all Qualifying. This proved not to be so easy to fit into the Seniors varied programme. However, qualifying matches have been added to the programme, which now add up to three per month. In addition to this Robert Steven reports that the numbers of General Play Cards being submitted by club members, which includes Seniors, is high (for example, 283 in August).

The Handicap Committee made recommendations for Trophy Board competitions, as follows.

1. The Committee agreed that the qualification requirement for Seniors Board Competitions should be amended in light of WHS.
2. The next Board competition is the Memorial Trophy and qualification for this will now require that Seniors must have played in eight qualifying competitions (not including General Play rounds) in the previous 12 months.
3. For subsequent Board Competitions this will be increased to 10 qualifying competitions.

My proposal is that we extend this recommendation to all competitions, including knockout competitions, transitioning to the full recommendation by starting with a requirement of 5 qualifying rounds. The requirement for the Blyth Trophy, however, should remain at 3.

Another condition related to experience of the WHS is the maximum playing handicap for Trophy competitions. This is currently set to 28 (playing handicap). We should review this ahead of the AGM, and consider reducing it further for Board competitions.

A regular issue for both Gents and Seniors competitions is slow play. There are several factors that contribute to what is referred to as slow play and it is often related to the difference in abilities of the teams involved. The higher handicapper will play more shots and have less success negotiating the longer grass. The average time for a team of lower handicapper can therefore be a lot less. I can not see how (apart from not wasting time, of course) higher handicappers can play any faster. The answer must be that players respect others and allowing teams that are waiting to pass through. This is a message that has been passed on to individuals and needs to be generally promoted within the Seniors.

Finally, the year so far has been one of transition with use of IG and generally using the Apps for managing and playing in competitions. We are also gaining in experience with the WHS system; although this is a slow process and it doesn't look like issues will be resolved by the end of the WHS annual review. The experienced gained so far this year should put us (the new Captaincy) in good stead for 2022. Paul Kent is compiling and updating documents that deal with the Club's policy and rules as related to Seniors competitions, while also ensuring both Club and Seniors policy is compatible. I will be working with Paul to generate a new document that will provide guidelines for future Seniors Captains, and a manual that can be updated with procedures, for example for setting up competitions.

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TF reported that when Robert Stevens stands down as Handicap Sec. his position would be covered in the future by a Handicap Committee consisting of the Club and Seniors' Captains and Vice Captains. The committee acknowledged the considerable efforts of Rob in ensuring a smooth transition to the World Handicap System and it was agreed to recognise this invaluable contribution in the proper manner in due course.

6. Treasurer's report

Funds held at bank adjusted for cheques not yet presented total £3155.82

Receipts net of prizes since 1st Jan £1475.75

Payments and donations made since 1st Jan £1188.50

Net cash flow + £287.25 since 1/1/2

Cheques not yet presented are in respect of donations made to Halesworth Volunteer Centre and Pear Tree Fund (£275.00 each)

Figures exclude cash held net of prizes from competitions prior to passing to Treasurer.

PK reported that he had gained agreement from Ben that on a par with the Gents and Ladies situation the Seniors' captain should have his subscription for the year covered by the club in the year of his office.

7. Forthcoming Competitions and conditions for entry into trophies et al.

TF proposed that there should be a minimum of playing 5 Qualifying competitions for all entrants to Trophy and the winter Knockout competitions, which is in line but less than recommended by the

Handicap Committee. The only suitable Trophy competition remaining this year is the Memorial Trophy on 29th October, which is a board competition. RF suggested it was considered on a trial basis as the rule is historically 3 and this was approved at the last AGM. TF commented that due to difficulties with the WHS, new rules had already been adopted by the Seniors Captain as allowed by the AGM, for example, a reduction in the Playing Handicap (PH).

It was agreed by the Committee to adopt 5 for the memorial Trophy and 3 for Knockouts but that the condition is clearly identified in IG competition descriptions and that players are given as much notice as possible. To conform with the Gents section, it was agreed that Qualifiers can be at any club, not just Halesworth. It will be the player's responsibility to check how many Qualifiers they have played in the previous 12 months.

It was agreed that a proposal for both this and the minimum PH considered again ahead of making a recommendation at the next AGM for 2022.

8. Fixtures for 2022/23

It was agreed by the committee that it was proving to be difficult to raise teams for matches and the total number of matches played prior to COVID (32) were too many, and that this needs to be reviewed. Currently the plan for 2022 is based on 30 matches and it is helpful that JM has tidied up the fixtures programme, removing all but one of the weeks when there are two fixtures.

AJ stated that home matches are best played on days other than Tuesdays and Fridays, however TF and JM reported that HGC didn't have that flexibility due to restrictions at other clubs.

PK asked for support to have JM draft a questionnaire to squad members re current fixtures: how many fixtures to play and any alterations they would like to the fixtures list. Approval was given by all committee members. TF stated that he hoped numbers of fixtures would not be reduced drastically and also suggested that this should be put to all Seniors eventually because there are those who are relatively new to the club and may be willing to play in the future.

There being no further business the meeting concluded at 4.15p.m.

Paul K Smith (Secretary)