

**Notes from the meeting of the West Regional Forum held in
Haggs Castle Golf Club on Tuesday 10 July 2018**

<u>Present</u>		Sheila Adams (SA), Stephen Anthony (SA), Ian Brown (IB), Kay Cherrie (KC), Tom Cummings (TC), Kieron Gallacher (KG), Jean Leitch (JL), Alasdair Malcolm (AM), Kevin McAleer (KM), Derek McGlynn (DG), Carol McNally (CM), Claire Middleton (CMi), Ann Scott (AS), Vic Skelton (VS)
<u>In attendance</u>		Craig Chalmers (CC) Malcolm Kpedekpo (MK), Sean Laird (SL) Karin Sharp (KS),
<u>Welcome & Introductions</u>	1	MK welcomed everyone and advised he would be acting as Chair for this inaugural meeting. A round table introduction followed.
<u>Purpose & Objectives of Forums</u>	2	The draft regulations for the forums were acknowledged as a good summary of the output from the working group and no amendments proposed. It was recognized that these forums will evolve naturally as they become more established but that input and feedback from the stakeholder base is critical to the future success of the game in Scotland.
<u>Core Discussion Items</u>		
<u>Communication</u>	3.1	<p>Strong communication at all levels of the game are key to increasing profile, participation and membership engagement. Within many club environments, the membership ask what they get for the affiliation to Scottish Golf (SG) – discussion on the varying approaches whereby membership is at Club level and therefore support not tangible to the individual golfer if they have no need for a handicap. Each club makes their own choice as to whether they pass on the affiliation fee or wrap it into the subscription charged and that should remain a club choice as to how they consider that piece. We need a proactive approach from clubs in supporting the messaging of services they get from Scottish Golf and the per capita being a means for collection of fees via clubs, with a strong sense of lets look forward and not back. Multiple membership frustration from golfers was discussed but CDH in current format does not contain robust data that SG could use to benchmark numbers or indeed in due course identify those individuals impacted. It was suggested that clubs be asked to cleanse CDH and perhaps a best practice guide could be circulated.</p> <p>More messaging using various mediums, particularly video would be welcomed. Encourage the local good news stories, better tagging on social media of clubs, associations to ensure message is then spread to wider audience. Better format and layout from SG comms that would allow news items to be copied into clubs templates. Could we provide templates? Website has great content but often difficult to find. How many</p>

<p><u>Membership Retention & Recruitment</u></p>	<p>3.2</p>	<p>clubs might benefit from help with website layout, template?</p> <p>Common theme in the Region of clubs losing members to other sports and to other golf clubs. Financial impact and time factor of modern lifestyles means multiple memberships are less common and that has impacted on bottom line for clubs. Significant competition from other sports, particularly for kids time and increased gaming technology has all contributed to current demise of membership.</p> <p>Kilmarnock Barrassie have seen 132 new members over the last period, using mainly member get member scheme with different age bracket categories offered. Club are fortunate that with 27 holes they don't have the same tee pressures as other and being links course have attracted members from other clubs who want the all year round playing option.</p> <p>South Ayrshire have grown season ticket numbers by 250, with 50% of those golfers not in club membership. The offer a very popular Get into Golf programme and have been successful in targeting winter links tickets to Glasgow based golfers. Further key amenities include clubhouses open 7-7pm, with catering back in-house and this coupled with season ticket holders having access to 8 courses currently sees numbers sitting at c3500.</p> <p>Flexibility without diluting the product is seen as key for club success, options like recommend a friend using credit to bar cards or club accounts rather than cash increases loyalty to club. It was felt that the Scottish Golf Membership Card has missed a trick in terms of value to golfers being offered through discounts both inside and outside golf and perhaps this should be reviewed.</p> <p>Junior golf and encouraging the younger generation into clubs remains a challenge for many. It was felt that part of the failure of Clubgolf has been in the club environment and membership options not being aligned to the needs of young, beginner golfers at that time.</p> <p>Troon are currently running a very successful junior initiative which has 2,500 kids through school activity, 180 signed up for lessons at club, 50 engaged in a summer camp and 2 schools that now have golf on their PE curriculum. This has been delivered in partnership with Golphin.</p>
<p><u>Club Support Services</u></p>	<p>3.3</p>	<p>Increased awareness amongst volunteer committees needed in terms of support available from SG. Not all clubs are aware of range, however SG need to remember that one size doesn't fit all.</p> <p>Payment for services on a tiered basis was suggested as an alternative to current per capita method of affiliation.</p> <p>Additional education options were thought to be a key area for</p>

<p><u>Sharing Experiences/ Case Studies</u></p>	<p>3.4</p>	<p>us to better support. Local authority courses would also like to access these services and potential to consider how this could be delivered in return for a contribution to SG.</p>
<p><u>Championships</u></p>	<p>3.5</p>	<p>Recognised as a key area to share experiences, including highlighting things that perhaps didn't work for clubs.</p> <p>MK advised that with budget challenges ahead, there were some sensitive proposals currently being considered in relation to MATC, BATC, County Finals, whereby SG would continue to deliver the events but no financial support (eg accommodation, subsistence or travel costs) would be covered. Alternative formats, timing of events, shared basis or shared resource all options for consideration. County representatives feedback was that the women currently appear to do more fundraising to participate in the regional events and this model might be something the areas look to.</p> <p>It was felt that with better use of local volunteers, SG must be able to reduce costs within events and better engage with the local community through opportunity to support at these tournaments.</p> <p>Additional events that are being removed or replaced are Team Club Championships which will be removed from calendar, albeit if Areas chose to host a national final on a rotational basis we would provide some tournament administrative support. Captain & Secretary event, with current sponsorship coming to an end this will be replaced with a more open and inclusive event for all male golfers, aligned to that of the current Regional Medal Finals for female golfers.</p> <p>Better visibility and early sight of fixtures would help engagement and avoid clashes with other events.</p> <p>Grass roots support is key in any budget changes made, especially junior development. Could means testing be considered to ensure that all can participate?</p>
<p><u>Coaching</u></p>	<p>3.6</p>	<p>Investment in coaching grants to be scaled back with a review of the current process in consultation with Areas and Counties to ensure best impact eg matched funding, spaces funded in Performance Academy etc. Communication is key to this being clear for all parties moving forward.</p> <p>Appointments within the Performance Team, Clare Queen & Gillian Paton now permanent roles. Lack of understanding still exists within the performance pathway from club, regional, national both for coaching and for competition. Club events struggle to attract players for weekly medal, competition from Stephen Gallagher Foundation, Paul Lawrie Foundation, Junior Tour etc. The reintroduction of the Junior Tour in partnership</p>

		with Areas and Counties – what consultation or approval was given? Partnership opportunities with Wee Wonders Tour etc?
<u>Volunteers</u>	3.7	It becoming more challenging at local level to get volunteers on board, time poor society feels like it impacts and often a lack of clarity in terms of defining of roles or amount of time that would need committed are seen as barriers.
<u>Course Rating</u>	3.8	Feels like a dark art, or over complicated approach and this might be preventing further volunteers from engaging? Likewise existing teams can sometimes be a barrier to new recruits. Better use of technology to remove paper based approach would be welcomed and clearer picture on the cycles and timelines at regional level would help. Timelines for completion of paperwork etc seems slow and perhaps publishing more detail on what things impact on SSS etc would help understanding in clubs.
<u>Scottish Golf Update</u>		
<u>Reporting Format</u>	4.1	Format was liked and report of this nature on a regular basis would be welcomed. Addition of target monitoring and assessment of progress versus strategy over time would be of interest.
<u>Strategic Overview</u>	4.2	MK provided an overview of the 3 pillars announced at AGM in March and advised that more detail on the actions and targets underpinning these areas had just been signed off by Board. We are currently working with an external partner to devise an appropriate communications plan to deliver our external messaging to all stakeholders.
<u>Any Other Business</u>	5	World Handicapping System (WHS) – what comms are planned? Later in 2018 full roadshows on regional basis will be undertaken and also touch on 2019 Rule Changes. Nomadic golfer – what progress been made in getting financial contribution? Options continue to be reviewed and updates will be provided as these are progressed. Constitutional Changes – after last AGM where some items were not approved will any of these be reconsidered? Not proposed by SG Board at this time, however request made by SA that this be covered as an Agenda item at next forum meeting.
<u>Date of Next Meeting</u>	6	Aiming for another Regional Forum, in mid/late September ahead of next National Conference which is scheduled for 1 December. KS to circulate doodle poll for completion.