

**Notes from the meeting of the West Regional Forum held in  
Hags Castle Golf Club on Monday 1 October 2018**

<u>Present</u>		Sheila Adams (SA), Stephen Anthony (SAn), Graham Bolton (GB), Ian Brown (IB), Tom Cummings (TC), Jim Ewing (JE), Kieron Gallacher (KG), Frank Gloag (FG), Anne Lloyd (AL), Alasdair Malcolm (AMa), Derek McGlynn (DG), Carol McNally (CM), Claire Middleton (CMi), Ann Scott (AS), Andrew Smith (ASm)
<u>In attendance</u>		Ross Duncan (RD), Sean Duffy (SD), Andrew McKinlay (AM), Karin Sharp (KS),
<u>Welcome &amp; Introductions</u>	1	SD welcomed everyone and advised he would be acting as Chair for this meeting.
<u>Outputs from previous meeting</u>	2	Consistent themes across all 4 regions were noted.
<u>Core Discussion Items</u>		
<u>Communication</u>	3.1	<p>AM updated on internal plans, with a review recently undertaken and decision to realign resource and strengthen our marketing and commercial team - this is being done through reallocation of budget from external support previously used and recruitment process is underway. Vital area for Scottish Golf and one which we know needs to continue to improve and to provide content that is of relevance and interest to better engage with golfers across Scotland. We will be continuing to issue ebulletins on a regular basis to Golfers, Clubs and Areas/Counties but challenge remains increasing the circulation of these newsletters and getting beyond gatekeepers to a wider audience. A request to add Area &amp; County contacts to the club newsletter distribution list will be actioned. Within the newsletter could Scottish Golf include a call to action, encouraging direct sign ups for the newsletter to reduce reliance on clubs from passing on? A number of club managers indicated that they do circulate the newsletter to committee members in their clubs and chose which content to share with wider members through their own channels. Printed copy, magazine style approach was discussed but potentially considered an expensive medium unless significant advertising revenue could be identified and unlikely to be something that would be pursued at this time.</p> <p>A request was made from CMi that Scottish Golf consider providing an e-leaflet that clubs can use to distribute to membership at subscription renewal time defining what a golfer gets for their affiliation to Scottish Golf.</p>

<p><u>Membership Retention &amp; Recruitment</u></p>	<p>3.2</p>	<p>AS provided feedback on Douglas Park’s positive involvement in Go Live on the Green (part of European Championships in August 2018) – whilst numbers interested in signposting to try golf on the North side of Glasgow were low, the feedback as to the volume of people through the facility, the advertising opportunity, the teamwork and camaraderie through the event was a really positive experience for the club. Their offering advertised at the event, was a follow up Open Day at which they had 100% conversion through sale of a family membership. In addition AS advised that through the ongoing success of their Get into Golf programme, the club are having to work hard with wider membership to provide additional member perks to ensure they remain satisfied.</p> <p>RD advised that discussion was underway within the Scottish Golf development team regarding input or visibility at major events, not only traditional golf events but also looking at those such as Girls Day Out at SECC. RD also advised that engagement with Box of Tricks workshops around junior participation and coaching have been well supported over recent weeks and feedback has been positive on the fresh ideas and takeaway tips for reinvigorating coaching sessions.</p> <p>Additional club activity or positive approach noted as follows:  Wishaw – strong junior section, regularly have 40 participating on a Sunday with a range of competitions available and good integration with wider club members.  Hilton Park – all members get a bar card for spouse/partner use.  Whitecraigs – 30 Get into Golf members who have access to the 9 hole par 3 course as an introductory to on course play.  Kilmarnock Barrassie – have had a drive on social members over the summer period, with 600 new houses being built within a 10 minute walk of course. Leaflet drop and targeted approach taken has seen 14 new members as a result. This approach lead to wider discussion about potential for engagement with housebuilders to have nearby golf courses built into their sale approach.  David Lloyd Rouken Glen – Renfrewshire County are looking to work in partnership with this facility to encourage more of their existing female members to add on golf to their monthly membership.  Pollok – deals now in place for spouse to join at a discounted rate. Removal of entrance fee has helped encourage more females into membership, which now sits at 8 ladies (of which 5 are new to golf) and 8 girls.  Golf South Ayrshire – are seeing 10-12% attrition rate each year, the clubhouse experience is critical and an area that they have been striving to improve. Equipment amnesty undertaken earlier in year, a real mix of clubs received but now making clubs available to use free of charge at a number of venues ensuring that taking up the game can be a viable option from a cost perspective.</p>
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<p><u>Club Support Services</u></p>	<p>3.3</p>	<p>AM updated on a realignment within the team, where we are bringing in some new roles to a central team that will provide more specific expertise and will be supported by 7 club facing roles that will provide more focused services. Plan is to create more tools and resources for clubs. A website refresh is required, we recognise that there is a lot of good content but it often is lost within the really busy layout that currently exists. Early feedback on the Buying Group has been positive with requests from other regional forums to explore expansion into on-course material eg sand, seed, fertilizer. ASm reported that Bishopbriggs had a positive experience with savings identified on utilities of c4/5k over 3 years. Kirkintilloch switched to a better contract through their existing supplier through reach of buying group power. JE advised that Shotts have used GMG for a number of years and believe Iain Howieson to be very knowledgeable and supportive. SA also commended the contracts manager platform as a really useful tool for use within the club environment. The time saving of having all contract information in a single platform was also considered a real benefit, clearly it takes time to set up but once loaded it a very good tool for clubs. AS noted challenge in getting appropriate response from buying group with regards to renewal on a couple of contracts – subsequent to the meeting it was advised that the matter has been resolved.</p> <p>Education and seminars will be a focus moving forward and topics to be covered that would benefit clubs are welcomed. Current plans are for seminars on Rules Changes to be held Nov/Dec 2018, with World Handicapping System planned for spring 2019.</p>
<p><u>Sharing Experiences/ Case Studies</u></p>	<p>3.4</p>	<p>No additional updates at this time, as addressed during particular topic headings.</p>
<p><u>Championships</u></p>	<p>3.5</p>	<p>AM updated on a busy season of events, many of which he attended during the summer months and was impressed by the significant efforts that go into successful delivery from staff team and volunteers alike. We are very conscious that the fixture list is an emotive topic but volume of events to be considered at all levels of the game makes for congestion challenges that we continue to have to try and address. The plan is for a 3 year draft fixture list to be circulated to all Area and County representatives by end of November 2018 so there is better visibility on the draft events calendar through to 2021. AMa enquired as to what value Scottish Golf place on elite events? AM advised that we continue to provide a diverse event calendar that will provide opportunities for all level of golfer to participate and our focus is on delivery to a very high standard but with control of costs. Feedback from others were PING mixed and 9 Hole Championship were considered really positive new events on the calendar and one which clubs have welcomed and embraced. Saturation of fixtures can take best</p>

		<p>players away from some events, burnout of players chasing all over country to play in Order of Merit events. Additionally it was suggested that too many players are still being advised by National Coaches which targeted events they should be playing in, at an age where potentially they are impressionable the messaging potentially needs to be considered.</p> <p>General desire from Area &amp; County representatives to see more local volunteers being used to support our events – engagement will be planned for 2019 events in due course directly by Events team.</p> <p>Rules changes for 2019 has potential to impact on volume of referees moving forward and if training was to be delivered doing this on a more local basis rather than national would be welcomed.</p>
<p><u>Coaching</u></p>	<p>3.6</p>	<p>Clare Queen will be undertaking a review of the existing performance and coaching pathway, with engagement with Areas, Counties, Clubs, PGA to ensure that views of those delivering at different levels are all captured.</p>
<p><u>Volunteers</u></p>	<p>3.7</p>	<p>Longer term plans are for the development of a formal volunteer strategy but meantime we will circulate a database of existing volunteer names across rules, course rating, coaching to the Area and County representatives for updating and identification of any training that might be required. It was also suggested that the Feedback Survey that many golf clubs issue to club members could have an additional question added “Would you be interested in volunteering at National events?”</p>
<p><u>Course Rating</u></p>	<p>3.8</p>	<p>Feedback from other forums has suggested that additional females raters would be welcomed and a plea to reduce the heavy paper burden on course rating and make the process more streamlined through better use of technology would be of huge benefit. AMa advised that clubs find it unclear as to where responsibility for Course Rating sits, often clubs go straight to the Course Rating team for advice and not to Scottish Golf. KS confirmed that responsibility and accountability sits with Scottish Golf and that rating teams should be assisting clubs to understand that message. Previous suggestion of a Course Rating FAQ/Do you know would potentially help address any confusion, including when a course should be re-rated. Other feedback was on frustration of clubs regarding turnaround of paperwork or response of ratification of rating, which could also be addressed in the above noted guide. Also some younger volunteers that undertook the course rating training have been put off by lack of encouragement or integration to established rating teams with rigid approach to when ratings are undertaken.</p>

<u>Additional Agenda Items from participants</u>	4.1	SA enquired as to whether the constitutional changes that had been proposed at Mar18 AGM and which were unsuccessful would be revisited at 2019 AGM? AM advised that usual cycle for considering of AGM resolutions was December Board meeting and it was anticipated that timescale would be followed with matters reconsidered at that time. Additionally, would the voting structure be considered by the Board as it feels inappropriate from a club perspective that the Areas and Counties have such a significant share of the vote. AM advised that the voting structure was adopted at time of Amalgamation and therefore inherited by current Board and Executive and was a situation that whilst perhaps not in full agreement with is something that we would work with. AM advised that should the membership determine they wished this matter to be considered there was an option to put forward an appropriate resolution to the Board for consideration. Alternatively if there was sufficient desire to review this aspect, then a request could be made to Scottish Golf to enter into a consultation exercise with all member organisations as to potential alternative voting structures.
<u>Constitutional Changes</u>	4.2	Matter resolved and no discussion required
<u>Event attendance/support</u>		
<u>Scottish Golf Update</u>		
<u>Reporting Format</u>	5	Report format was praised and any relevant parts already discussed through meeting. The report will continue to be developed in 2019.
<u>Any Other Business</u>	6	Business Rates Relief any update for clubs? KS provided update on meeting with Finance Minister, whereby it was advised that local authority discretion would remain an option for rates relief but constitutions or membership rules that don't evidence equality traits and inclusion will potentially cause challenge to clubs in retaining rates relief. We continue to lobby through Scottish Sports Association and will fully participate in the ongoing consultation with government, keeping clubs apprised of outcomes.
		Club representation within the Forum was raised, it was agreed that an article in a future Club Newsletter would be helpful to spread awareness and encourage engagement with the Forum groups from club perspective.
<u>Date of Next Meeting</u>	7	National Conference confirmed for 1 December at EICC. KS to circulate doodle poll for completion to agree date for next Regional Meeting in March.