

SOUTH OF SCOTLAND GOLFERS' ASSOCIATION MINUTES OF EXECUTIVE MEETING 23 JANUARY

2018 Held at Selkirk Arms Hotel, Kirkcudbright at 7.15

Present: Tony Clark, President, in the Chair, J Forrest, A Millar, S. Kingston, P. Watson, B. Duguid, W. Tyrrell, D. Moore and R. McKnight.

Apologies: I.Robin and G. Sharp

In Attendance: Kenny Johnstone, Powfoot and Ian Brown and Jeff Sutcliffe, New Galloway

President's Welcome: The President welcomed the members and in particular the Golf Club representatives. He advised the meeting that the secretary was unwell and unable to attend and that the minute would be taken by Jean Forrest.

Executive Meeting 14 November 2017: The minutes were approved by Stephen Kingston and seconded by Wave Tyrrell. There were no matters arising.

AGM 23 November 2018: Draft Acceptance of the Minutes were approved by Brian Duguid and seconded by Alistair Millar.

Secretary's Report: Attached. There were no errors or omissions noted from the Who's Who of the officers.

Treasurer's Report: The President was asked to request information from SGL as to when the coaching grants would be forthcoming.

SGL Strategy: The Strategy Presentation delivered at the Stirling Forum and available on line, included some worthwhile ideas, but there is still no explanation on how these are to be delivered and funded. The suggested 4 Forum structure causes concerns as it is seen as being unworkable and will not address the need for SGL accountability. The mandate given to the Executive by Clubs at the meeting held in Castle Douglas prior to the Stirling Forum is still valid as we do not have any new information to share with clubs. The Club representatives agreed that their views had not altered since that meeting. A meeting with Clubs prior to the AGM in March may be appropriate .

Convenor's Reports attached.

The Coaching Convenor expressed concern that there were so few Juniors entering Open Competitions and this would have to be taken on board before it became a bigger problem. When asked about the comments made at the AGM regarding Junior Coaching, she expressed disappointment at the lack of understanding of the present coaching structure and emphasised that the South Coaching had nothing to do with Swing coaching as had been suggested.

Dumfriesshire: No Report

Kirkcudbrightshire: Brian Duguid reported that Jeff Sutcliffe had agreed to take on the role of Championship Secretary as well as the Vice-President role. The championship was being changed to a 3 round Knockout competition. There would be a meeting soon to arrange Junior Championship etc. Jeff Sutcliffe had produced a second edition of a KGA Handbook being distributed to all Kirkcudbright clubs. Merlin Office Ltd had sponsored and printed the Handbooks.

Wigtownshire: Stephen Kingston said all that had been happening was courses competing with the weather.

A O C B

Iain Brown said New Galloway Junior section was thriving, but the age of the adult membership was a concern for the future.

Brian Duguid said that at the 3rd attempt Castle Douglas were meeting with Craig Chalmers in February.

Duncan Moore thought there could be mileage in approaching retired PGA professionals living in the Region to assist in the Junior Coaching Programme.

There being no further business the President thanked the members and Club Representatives for their attendance. The Vice-President asked that the President conveyed the best wishes of those present to the Secretary and wished him a speedy recovery. The meeting closed at 8.30p.m.

The next meeting was scheduled for Tuesday 20 February 2018 at 7.15 pm in the Selkirk Arms Hotel Kirkcudbright.

APPENDICES

REPORT FOR COMMITTEE MEETING TUESDAY 23 JANUARY 2018

SGL DRAFT STRATEGY

Since the South AGM and Meeting with Clubs on Thursday 23 November 2017 Eleanor Cannon and her Board have been working tirelessly to produce the bones and a general agreement of a new Draft Strategy before the SGL AGM on 4 March 2018.

At the South Meeting with the Clubs it was agreed to put forward a "List of Wants" to be considered by the Board as a starting point for the new strategy. This list is attached for information.

SOUTH OF SCOTLAND GOLFERS' ASSOCIATION

SCOTTISH GOLF STRATEGY: MEETING WITH CLUBS 23 NOVEMBER 2017

NOTES FROM MEETING

A meeting with the Clubs in South Area was held at Castle Douglas Golf Club on 23 November 2017 to discuss what requirements they wanted to see in the new strategy. A conference was to be held in Edinburgh on 2 December to determine the issues affecting the Clubs since the Amalgamation of the Scottish Golf Union and Scottish Ladies Golfing Association in 2015.

There were 37 representatives from 17 Clubs, Dumfriesshire Ladies, Galloway Ladies and SoSGA present.

There were only two items on the Agenda, namely:-

- 1. What do you, as a Club member, want from Scottish Golf?*
- 2. What do you, as a Club member, not want from Scottish Golf?*

The attendees had been asked to bring a "List of Wants" to the meeting for discussion. The following were the issues raised:-

- Proper governance to manage golf in Scotland, but not empire build, at an acceptable cost*
- Do not take the elite golfers, and their entourage, all round the world during the winter months. There was no evidence this improved their performance during the season when they represented Scotland. The money could be better spent in providing coaching facilities in this country for all golfers.*
- In favour of Club representative on Board*
- Audit Committee to be formed to approve strategy. At present Board does not react well to criticism with viable options*
- Mission statement – information required on how this is to be achieved and the strategy aligned to it.*
- This consultation and conference should have been the first thing the Board should have done after appointed eighteen months ago*

- *A 4 or 5 year plan should be produced with costings and achievable aims after each year and assessed. The plan can also be used for Clubs to feed off. Benchmark progress*
- *A detailed description with costings on what SGL can do with present income*
- *Executive decisions need to be shared with the Clubs. If improvement in governance is visible there is a case for increasing the Affiliation Fee.*
- *The Board need to regain the trust of stakeholders and be more transparent after the recent fiasco*
- *The new strategy needs to encompass all Clubs and be relevant to their needs and aspirations. There are Clubs in South area which have small timber clubhouses with very limited changing facilities, no showers, no bar, no catering, no computer, no electronic tee booking system and an honesty box for collecting green fees but are the centre of their community. These Clubs need to feel part of Scottish Golf. What happens if they want to opt out?*
- *The method of calculation of the Affiliation Fee needs to be investigated again. With the present system the rich Clubs continue to prosper but the poorer Clubs suffer. There was substantial support at the meeting for a system based on a percentage of the annual subscription or a base fee plus an extra for those wishing to play competitive golf and have a handicap*
- *Creative thinking is required as there is not one solution for every Club.*
- *Are Clubs categorized eg. By membership numbers*
- *On the negative side the Clubs did not want SGL interfering in the management and operation of their Clubs. They did not want a national tee booking system and they wanted to be able to set their own green fees. The Clubs in Scotland are bigger than Scottish Golf.*
- *The effectiveness of the Development Officers is not apparent in this area as they are never seen*

On 15 November both Stephen and Iain had received an invite to a Meeting in Stirling with SGL on either Tuesday 21 November or Friday 27 November to discuss the views of South Area but both had to decline as this was the week of the South AGM and Meeting with Clubs. Iain agreed to join meeting by skype on 27th but modern technology let us down and Iain abandoned meeting after 30 minutes. Another attempt was made on 29 November but this also failed. A letter was sent to Eleanor Cannon expressing South views so she would receive it before the Conference on 2 December.

Copy of letter:-
Dear Eleanor

SGL DRAFT STRATEGY

In response to your commitment to listen and react accordingly to feedback from stakeholders in creating a new strategy I offer the following suggestions.

At a meeting on 23 November 2017, 37 representatives from South Area Executive, Dumfriesshire Ladies, Galloway Ladies and 17 of the 23 Clubs discussed the two items on the Agenda, namely:-

1. *What do you, as a Club Member, want from Scottish Golf Limited?*

2. *What do you, as a Club Member, not want from Scottish Golf Limited?*

The over-riding theme from the discussions was the requirement for an organisation which will live within its means, provide effective leadership and be honest and open with a good communication system. It was agreed that Scottish Golf Limited did not achieve pass marks in any of these priorities and had lost the trust and confidence of its stakeholders.

The immediate governance of SGL should concentrate on building a solid foundation from the Articles of Association agreed by all stakeholders in 2015, to regain their trust and confidence, before embarking on a strategy for the future. Within the Articles are particular and specific issues that require explanation and guidance so that the amalgamation of the Areas and Counties can proceed and the Regional Forums, if required, can be set up.

The meeting was pleased to note that the previous draft strategy had been removed, that the CRM system had been withdrawn as a recommendation and the Affiliation Fee would not be increased for 2018.

The main issues that the South stakeholders wanted addressed in the immediate future included:-

- *The Audit Committee: It is vitally important that the Audit Committee is formed immediately and accountable to the stakeholders. At least one member should have a financial skill set. It is recognised that this is an additional layer of governance but better to take time to get it right than end up with another fiasco.*
- *Governance: Only those with the right skill for the job should be elected to serve on the Board and Audit Committee. Any appointments to the Board or Audit Committee must have a background in Golf Club administration and up-to-date information on the issues affecting the grass roots.*
- *Affiliation Fees: These have to be addressed and an alternative way of calculating the Affiliation Fee found so that the smaller Clubs are not paying such a large percentage of their subscription to Scottish Golf.*
- *Finance: An organisation that will live within its means and an Audit Committee which rigorously examine all proposals.*
- *Honesty, Integrity, Openness and Good Communications: These have been seriously lacking and improvement is vital to regain the trust and confidence of all stakeholders.*
- *Amalgamation: There are numerous issues from 2015 which are outstanding and require to be resolved before any progress can be made.*
- *Leadership: This is the most important to ensure all the issues above are resolved.*

I have attached the "List of Wants" generated from the meeting on 23 November and previous meetings with the Clubs. This list describes in more detail why these issues require to be addressed before the organisation moves forward.

I had intended to raise these matters with you tonight via Skype but unfortunately the technology let us down. I have sent them to you, as there are a considerable number, although most do overlap, as South's contribution to the Meeting on 2 December in Edinburgh.

The Notes from the Area and County Reps Meeting of 27/11/17 in Stirling were received on 30 November (27 Nov 17 County and Area Mtg Notes) as follows

COUNTY AND AREA MEETING (2)
STIRLING COURT HOTEL
27th NOVEMBER 2017: 7pm - 9pm

Notes & Actions

1. Welcome and Introductions:

A list of those in attendance from Counties and Areas was given:

(It is noted that those on Skype were unable to connect to the meeting but were advised that minutes would be circulated with a copy of the presentation).

2. Purpose of Meeting

- *EC explained that the purpose of this meeting was a determination to re-engage with the Counties and Areas for the health of golf in Scotland, such that we became a united force for good addressing the challenges that golf and golfers face together.*

3. County and Area Amalgamation

- *Each County and Area provided an update on their own amalgamation discussions, outlining the various challenges and differences.*
- *Northern Counties – confirmed that amalgamation with the North would take place on 1 January 2018*
- *Stirlingshire – a productive meeting had taken place with discussions ongoing*
- *Dumbartonshire/Dunbartonshire & Argyll – productive discussion from initial meeting although challenges around boundaries*
- *Ayrshire – 2 years of negotiation but unfortunately Ayrshire Ladies voted no to amalgamation with Ayrshire Men*
- *Fife – a number of discussions had taken place but amalgamation not progressed*
- *Perth & Kinross – different demarcations causing some issues; awaiting Karin Sharp to feedback*
- *Aberdeenshire & North East – good discussions but demarcation issues*
- *Renfrewshire – held a meeting with Ladies captain but different club numbers and boundaries causing some challenges*
- *EC committed to meeting with each of the County Committees over the next three months to understand and support each team in their amalgamation objectives , with the understanding that one size does not fit all Counties but a commitment to working on creative solutions to resolve the various challenges.*

4. Regional Forum Dates

- *EC committed to sharing a Forum proposal and dates with the Counties Committees before the end of December 2017.*
- *CN requested that there was an opportunity to submit alternative proposals to the Forum structure – EC agreed to listen to alternative proposals*

5. Articles Review

- *EC requested feedback on the proposed Article changes as part of the ongoing consultation process with Counties and Areas.*

6. Ongoing Consultation with Counties and Areas

- *Following discussion of last week's Counties & Areas meeting, EC asked if the mandate and Terms of Reference of the Action Group had been circulated around all representatives, which was confirmed by the group*
- *CN clarified that the mandate was agreed by 16 Areas and 11 Counties*

- GC refuted that the mandate had been agreed and suggested that the phrase 'Action Group' was aggressive and inappropriate
- DM suggested 'Action Group' was adopted as it was a positive phrase which would promote positive action
- GC read out a series of derogatory e-mails about EC and the SGL Board that had been circulated by representatives of the Action Group. The emails covered the period since the CEO advert had been placed through to the days before the current meeting.
- GC stated that Stirlingshire would not support the Action Group because of the way they were conducting their business through the language used in a number of the e-mails and had the mandate of Stirlingshire's clubs not to support the group. GC added that in light of the behaviour of the group, the formation of a new Working Group would be the appropriate way forward.
- DM opposed some of the views expressed by GC regarding the Action Group but acknowledged that the mandate had to come from all Areas and Counties
- CN stated that he hadn't been aware of some of the e-mails, which was disputed by GC who stated that his name had been included in the circulation list and that he had written one of the emails
- AS stated that Glasgow did not want to be included in the Action Group and apologised to EC for the offence caused by the e-mails
- AS stated that Glasgow wanted to look forward and work with SGL
- NM stated that all Counties and Areas needed to move forward and change for the good of the game in Scotland

7. National Conference 2 December 2017

- EC shared the draft Agenda for the National Conference and invited any questions and feedback on the Conference
- No questions were asked and EC handed over to Non-Executive Director Stewart Darling to deliver his presentation on 'The Impact of Doing Nothing' which would also be given at the conference on Saturday

8. The Impact of Doing Nothing

- SD presented the work prepared to date on his presentation for the 2 December, encouraging all present to focus on the challenges presented by the main themes as we consider the future of golf in Scotland in the coming months.
- There was positive discussion around some of the key issues presented with positive and negative examples from club experiences within the room.
- EC stated that approximately 50% of the working population were now women and there was a need for clubs to address the issue of full equality, particularly in reference to tee-times and competitions for women at weekends
- SD also suggested that the term 'social golf' needed to be better understood, highlighted by research which shows only 53% of members played competitive golf in 2017. Whilst clubs could make more tee-times available for social golfers on a weekend, there was also evidence to suggest that this did not result in more people playing the course.
- AM suggested a change to the minimum number of members for an affiliated club was required, back to its previous level of 30. EC agreed to revisit this.
- CN stated that the concept of a Club Handicap and National Handicap be reintroduced, to help increase the number of golfers maintaining a handicap
- NM suggested that the number of holes be more flexible for course rating requirements, as 9 or 18 was not always suitable
- DM suggested that SGL should challenge CONGU on some of the handicapping changes, as they were not always in tune with the needs of the modern golfer

- *CN stated that SGL and its member clubs needed to do more to address the challenge of recruiting volunteers*

9. Any Other Business

- *Those not able to connect on Skype would be invited to join a conference call on Friday 1 December at 12pm (RD sent out an e-mail 28/11).*
- *EC thanked attendees for their attendance and invited Counties and Areas to work together with Scottish Golf so those involved can move forward and work on developing solutions that can address the priority challenges within the game.*
- *EC closed by stating that the Board at SGL was united and would not yield to bullying or intimidation.*

Meeting closed at 9.09pm

The Scottish Golf Conference was held in Edinburgh on Saturday 2 December and attended by Stephen Kingston and Iain Robin from South Association. Iain's notes on the proceedings were as follows:-

SOUTH OF SCOTLAND GOLFERS' ASSOCIATION

SGL CONFERENCE 2 DECEMBER 2017 EDINBURGH

NOTES OF MEETING

The First Scottish Golf Conference was held in the Edinburgh International Conference Centre on Saturday 2 December 2017. There were 511 delegates present of whom 29% were Club Committee Members, 26% Club members, 14% Club Managers and Secretaries and 11% from the Areas and Counties. The remainder were made up of Golf Professionals, Press and Media and other interested individuals. South Area was represented by Stephen Kingston, and Iain Robin and Dumfriesshire Ladies by Eileen Scott, Fiona MacGregor and Diane Macdonald.

The theme for the conference was "Working Together to Grow the Game and Build Stronger Clubs" When I read the theme for the conference I decided that it would not address the views, issues and concerns of those Clubs in South Area. I could not see how the South representatives could get their points across so I sent a letter to the Chair prior to the meeting. A copy of this letter is attached for information.

Eleanor Cannon, Chair SGL, started proceedings by admitting The Board and CEO had got off to a bad start since the amalgamation of SGU and SLGA on 1 October 2015 by trying to do too much too soon. However it was still urgent to halt the decline in the game across all Clubs. She asked the delegates to suspend their present beliefs and focus on the future. A cut back in resources will only accelerate the decline.

Mel Young, Chair of SportScotland, confirmed categorically that SportScotland wanted to see a strong Scottish Golf with support from beginners to the elite. He wants to see all sports in Scotland functioning well and golf is an important part of his remit. It is challenging times but with commitment the future is bright. He will never abandon Scottish Golf.

In his Financial Overview, Malcolm Kpedekpo, reported that Scottish Golf was in a robust financial position with healthy reserves. Total income is presently £3.7m made up from Affiliation Fees at £11.25, £770k from SportScotland, event entry fees, grants from R&A and key sponsors. Expenditure is on Development, Coaching, Performance and Performance Academies, National Squads, Events, 11% on Marketing and 15p in the £ on Corporate Services. In February 2016 SportScotland reduced their funding by £350k and the Board sanctioned cut backs on staff, Development Officers and training. The audit this year will show a small surplus with protected reserves.

The keynote presentation was given by Stewart Darling and entitled "The Impact of Doing Nothing" (This presentation was forwarded to all Clubs and South Executive members in the week prior to the conference and I do not intend to summarise it here.)

Questions:-

Should Clubs appoint a Club Manager to provide continuity and business oriented acumen? Yes provided there is a management and financial plan.

Is the Committee structure relevant in this day and age? Yes, members need a voice and representation

Why has ClubGolf gone downhill? It was funded from monies from Alec Salmon for 5 years and this has run out and at present there are no resources to fund it

During the Working Lunch Workshops everyone was asked to discuss the following themes:-

How do we increase the value of Club membership?

Discounts should only be available to existing members

Better/more creative tee time yield management

Utilise students from university to assist Scottish Golf with research among members and non-members

Family membership packages. More child friendly

Relaxation of outdated dress code

A natural/global commitment to green fee pricing

Reciprocal arrangements with other Clubs

Improve ambience of Clubhouse

Increased investment in staff training

Improved practice facilities

Educate members on how they should behave towards beginners and juniors

Improved engagement with Club professional

Building a better membership bundle eg gym membership partnership

Ban members only areas

How can Clubs afford to upgrade facilities unless guaranteed revenue

Adopt a comprehensive rewards programme for Scottish Golf commercial partners

How do we generate a greater contribution to the development of the game from the nomadic golfer?

Increase green fees for nomadic golfer with preferential rate for members of other Clubs

Levy on green fee shared between Club and Scottish Golf – revenue is ring fenced for development of game

A charged licenced fee for nomadic golfers

Charge a tax, say £3, per round for nomadic golfers

A tiered levy on visitor income

Purchase a prepaid card

In Spain there is a tax on visitors to play courses

Nomadic golfers here to stay – get used to it

How Can We Attract and Retain More Women, Youngsters, Families and New Generations of Golfers into the Game?

Make golf fun. How can we do this?

Reduce the time it takes to play a round

A better schools strategy as youngsters move through the age categories

Get more insight/research from young people – recruit junior members on committee

Discounted coaching for children and beginners

Designated tee times for juniors and their parents so they don't feel intimidated and under pressure from adults

More golf on terrestrial tv

Promote case studies from those Clubs who are bucking the trend

1. How can we collectively improve the customer experience in all Golf Clubs in Scotland?

Investment in education for Club managers – focus on customer service

Embrace digital media

Actively promote Facebook so Clubs are getting continual feedback

Improve catering

Volunteers to help meet and greet visitors

Staff training

For the next half-hour two members of the Board facilitated a discussion around the key answers arising from the workshop.

The next, and last item on the agenda, was a video presentation on the Digital Future of Golf. This painted a picture of how digital technology can support golf and how the use of digital media has helped other sports. Suggestions included golf apps for your scorecard and for tee bookings

To conclude the conference there was a Question and Answer session with the members of the Board.

- *Can Scottish Golf look into the cost of SKY tv in Clubs? The Scottish Rugby Union have had the cost reduced for their Clubs*
- *What is happening to ClubGolf? It is still part of Scottish Golf with over 300 Clubs still using it. Get interested adults on to committee and have it embraced by the full Club. The Development Officers have resources.*
- *Should this conference not have happened 18 months ago? If I could go back I would have had it 2 years ago. Yes.*
- *Is this to be a yearly event? Good idea. We will look into it and open it up by taking it on the road to get more Clubs to attend.*
- *National Forum – Articles of Association. Regional Forums. Watching to see Scottish Golf commitment and if looks promising we will implement*
- *Can we have Championships with reasonably priced entry fees? We need a solution but this will require collaboration. Do you agree collaboration is way forward?*
- *Can we assume that the Affiliation Fee of £23 is off the table? This is the start of the process. We will come back with proposals fully funded.*
- *Tees should be handicapped*
- *Is Bunkered 2 for 1 vouchers the reason for drop in visitor income. Clubs want them. Only account for 0.12% of golf in Scotland*
- *What is the progress in appointing new CEO? Had a good response to advert. Interviews are planned for December. Appointment by end of January.*
- *£350k taken from reserves. To fund commercial development and partnerships to increase revenue*
- *Withdrawal of Rate Relief? Having meetings. Heavily lobbying government. Extent of damage to Clubs.*
- *Structure for golfers – regardless of gender?*
- *What is Scottish Golf doing about Solheim Cup in 2020 to get funding? Working with EventScotland and in partnerships with others.*

At the end of the official record of proceedings are 16 pages of questions which were never answered. Most of these questions raised concerns similar to those of South Area. These questions have still not been answered.

The Chair intimated that all the activities at the conference had been videoed and would be sent to all delegates with a copy of the written proceedings.

My personal conclusion of the conference was that it was a well-orchestrated event (from their perspective) to put their point across and promote their vision for the future. This vision was based on the previous draft strategy with the contentious issues omitted. There was no mention of Affiliation Fees, National Tee Booking System, Amalgamation of Areas and Counties, smaller Clubs, Release of facts and figures and detailed financial information, etc. Any questions on these topics were ignored and not selected for an answer so the promise to get the views of all the Clubs, Areas and Counties on the way forward was not addressed.

There appeared to be no great enthusiasm for the new strategy but the devil may be in the detail still to come. For those of us, from the Areas and Counties, who had attended all of the previous meetings there was a sense of déjà vu and having been here before.

On 30 December Eleanor issued an e-mail detailing her vision for the use of Regional Forums as follows:-

Dear Iain and Stephen,

It has been an extremely busy few months at Scottish Golf. I thank you for your contribution at the National Conference and I look forward to hearing your views as to how effective the onward communication to our members, and stakeholders has been.

Firstly, I write to you with the notes from the second County and Area Meeting on the 27th of November in Stirling. These are attached to this email.

Secondly, I write to propose a way forward on our Forums. The concept in the December 2014 Amalgamation Booklet was that Forums would

'meet a minimum of once per year nationally and twice per year regionally, possibly on a North, South, East, West basis.'

I appreciate and understand the frustration at the lack of progress on the forums since amalgamation, and I am delighted that we have held our first National Forum. As you know, I have made a personal commitment to get a full diary of meetings published for the year ahead. The process for getting there, described below, has been drawn from the many discussions that have taken place through our meetings and conversations in recent weeks.

The forums will act as a two way communication conduit, in support of the clubs and the key role that the Counties and Areas play in

Coaching

Championships

Handicapping

Course Rating

In short, in order to agree how the Forums will work -

Where and when they shall meet.

Who shall attend.

***What the agreed agenda shall be.
How the outputs of the meetings will be shared.***

-and to formalise dates for next year, I propose that we pull together a Working Group whose sole purpose it is to consult broadly with colleagues to achieve a concrete and diarised plan that is both robust and practical, meeting the needs of our many constituents across our challenging geography.

I propose that the Working Group comprises:

***3 Club Representatives
3 Club Managers
3 County Representatives
3 Area Representatives
2 SGL Board Members***

The Working Group would meet in January through February 2018 such that together we have an agreed plan ahead of the AGM at the beginning of March.

I invite you to nominate representatives from the Counties and Areas whom you believe are best placed to serve on this Working Group, bringing our endeavours to a successful conclusion by the end of February 2018.

It was clear from the two meetings that we held in Stirling at the end of November that there is a real desire for us all- the Counties, Areas, the Executive Directors and the Non Executive Directors-to pull together for the future health of the game- this Working Group will play a key part in us all starting to deliver that ambition.

Please send the nominations direct to me at eleanor@therubiconpartnership.co.uk by the close of play on the 12th of January 2018.

Thirdly, I can report that Panel Interviews for the CEO position are now planned for January with Board and sportscotland taking part each day.

Lastly, the Board are meeting in Edinburgh on the 12th of January to review all the feedback from our consultation with a view to formulating a revised, straightforward strategy and plan. Clearly the formation of a Working Group will allow us the opportunity to consult on the outcomes from the 12th ahead of the AGM.

As 2017 comes to a close, I wish you a healthy and prosperous 2018. I look forward to us all moving forward positively and collaboratively with a resolute focus on the future.

Kind regards

Eleanor Cannon

I am pleased to confirm that Jean Forrest has put her name forward to serve on the Working Group. I do hope she is successful.

While trawling through my files on the SGL Draft Strategy to ensure everything was included I came across another discussion document for the Meeting with the Clubs on 23 November. This has some items which I consider relevant and have extracted these for discussion.

SOUTH OF SCOTLAND GOLFERS' ASSOCIATION

MEETING WITH CLUBS AT CASTLE DOUGLAS 23 NOVEMBER 2017

DISCUSSION ON SGL DRAFT STRATEGY

Following the resignation of the CEO, Blane Dodds, the Chair of SGL, Eleanor Cannon has intimated that she is committed to listening and reacting accordingly to feedback from stakeholders in creating a new strategy to grow the participation and build stronger Clubs. She has also announced that:-

- *The CRM system has been withdrawn as a recommendation*
- *She wants to deliver Regional Forums*
- *She has suggested possible changes to the Articles of Association such as:-*
 - *A new smaller Board of 7 including Chair*
 - *Representative on Board from Counties and Areas*
 - *Club representative on Board*
 - *Youth representative*
 - *Moving from single President's role to Regional Ambassadors roles*
 - *CEO to sit on Board*

A list of wants has been prepared to form a structure for discussions at the meeting on 23 November in lieu of an agenda. We have to present the issues and concerns affecting the Golf Clubs in South Area, as well as comment on her suggestions above, and inform the Board so that they can formulate a new strategy. It is accepted that there will be some overlap between the different topics. The list is not exhaustive or written in stone and all views will be put to the Board at the Meeting in Edinburgh on 2 December.

LIST OF WANTS

1. *What do you, as a Club Member, want from Scottish Golf?*
2. *What do you not want?*
3. *Affiliation Fees – alternative method of calculation required*
4. *Audit Committee*
5. *Governance - Live within your means – build a solid foundation – before you decide to progress*
6. *Finance – more details required – how deep is the black hole?*
7. *Home of Golf - give a definition*
8. *Amalgamation*
9. *Regional Forums*
10. *Articles of Association*
11. *Sharing of green keeping equipment*
12. *Group purchasing of green keeping materials and clubhouse purchases*
13. *International Affiliation*

4 Home of Golf

The "Home of Golf" is all the courses in every village and town in Scotland. They are a very important community facility with a long history, tradition and heritage going back many years. Golf in Scotland is not an elite sport but one where everybody, no matter

their social standing, has an equal right to play the links. They are run by enthusiastic volunteers who give of their time and expertise very willingly to ensure the traditions are maintained and progressed. Those courses with a worldwide reputation will always be popular and attract members and visitors from abroad because of their exposure to tv audiences and their place on the Open Championship rota. What has to be done is encourage those visitors to extend their stay and play the many little gems that exist in other parts of the country. A very concerted advertising campaign is required, funded by SGL and VisitScotland.

5 Articles of Association

The President's role should be retained as the ambassador for golf in Scotland. The Regional Ambassadors could form the basis of the Audit Committee and report back to the Regional Forums. One of the Regional Ambassadors could be the next President.

- *A new smaller Board of 7 including Chair*
- *Representative on Board from Counties and Areas*
- *Club representative on Board*
- *Youth representative*
- *Moving from single President's role to Regional Ambassadors roles*
- *CEO to sit on Board*
- *CEO The Board should employ someone who has a deep rooted knowledge of Scottish Golf at all levels – not a tennis player*
- *Representative from the smaller Clubs, 9 hole/18 hole Clubs with under 200 Full Members.*

13 International Affiliation

If it is necessary to raise funds immediately probably the International Affiliation would be the most acceptable solution to all Clubs (£5/£10 per head)

“Grow the Game”

This is a phrase that appears more often in correspondence from SGL. But what does it mean? I assume this is the organisation's response to the wish from Clubs to increase their membership and consequently their income.

If SGL increase the affiliation fee it is widely believed that this will see the demise of the smaller Clubs. Some of the membership may wish to join another local Club but this seems unlikely as subscriptions and travelling costs will rise and they could have saved money by paying the increased affiliation fee. They, and the rest of the membership, will be lost to golf and the numbers left to pay the higher affiliation fee will be reduced. Consequently, before SGL can increase membership overall they will have to find a way of reclaiming those lost from the smaller Clubs.

Just A Final Thought!

One of the benefits of the national booking system was to attract some of the nomadic golfers to join a Club. The 750,000 nomadic golfers would seem to be a figure taken out of context. I assume this figure is the number of golfers who play the “pay and play” courses, including St. Andrews etc. and must include visitors from outside Scotland, who are members of Clubs in their own country and unlikely to want to join a Scottish Club, and members of Scottish Clubs. All players who play these courses are supposed to provide a current handicap certificate, as are most Clubs accepting visitors, so if this rule is observed there can be very few nomadic golfers available to join Clubs.

The Articles of Association can be viewed or downloaded from the SGL website.

I have tried to put together all the information received from Scottish Golf and I am sure you will now realise that a lot has been happening over the past two months and this Association has been lagging behind in its collective decision making. The one major omission from Scottish Golf is the cost of implementing the new strategy, and in particular, its impact on the per capita fee but I believe this will be the last thing we hear.

The information for the SGL AGM is due to be put in the public domain 21 days before the event (11 February) and we need to have a corporate view so we can respond as South Association on behalf of our members.

CHAMPIONSHIP 2018 REPORT TO COMMITTEE 23 JANUARY 2018

South Championship strokeplay at Powfoot on Sunday 19 August

South Championship matchplay at Powfoot on Saturday 25 and Sunday 26 August

South Seniors at Wigtownshire County on Wednesday 1 August

Drennan Salver at Southernness

Shamash Trophy at Kirkcudbright on Sunday 23 September.

Executive Meeting 23 Jan 2018 Coaching Convenors Report

Seventeen boys, no girls were invited to be part of the Performance squad for 2018. To date 15 have accepted their place. Three dates were planned with Chris Robinson all of which were to take place at Brighthouse Bay. Unfortunately Jim Dougall has been unwell and is off sick and therefore Brighthouse have been unable to host the first two coaching days. At late notice Chris hosted the first session at Portpatrick on Saturday 20th January. Duncan Moore and myself offered to transport boys there and back. Seven boys attended. They had a warm up session on the new range a pressure putting routine and some pitching practice before lunch. In the afternoon they played 7 holes on their own to record their statistics and 6 holes as a Texas Scramble.

The second session will hopefully be held at Powfoot Golf club and the final day at Brighthouse.

Ross Murdoch has been running development coaching at Towerwood and Chris has been doing the same from the range at Castle Kennedy.

Having recorded the results for the Junior order of merit I have become increasingly concerned at the number of entries into the Junior opens and to how many clubs are no longer running opens. When we changed the order of merit to include every open we included the rule that there had to be a field of 15 or more for the competition to be counting. This year that was 5 competitions. I plan to have a look to see if there is something we can do to promote Junior golf in the area. Myself and Iain Robin will have discussions with Pros and junior organisers to decide on a way forward.

JUNIOR TEAM MANAGER'S REPORT

The Scottish Boys ATC will be held at Bothwell Castle Golf Club on Sunday 10 June

I am presently arranging dates and venues for the NCF league matches and hope to have these finalized soon.

Course Rating Report - Tuesday, 23rd. January 2018.

I intimated at the last Committee Meeting on 14th. November 2017 that I had received the results of the May Ratings for St.Medan and Wigtown; I still however await the outcomes of the following Ratings Viz. Brighthouse Bay (JUNE), Lockerbie (JULY), Powfoot (AUGUST) and Castle Douglas & Gatehouse (SEPT).

Michael Dickie, Secretary of Lochmaben GC. asked me if they could recover their 'lost stroke' and revert to 70 by adding 50 yards to one of their Par 3s. I contacted Calum Grant who was unable to assist as the World Wide Handicapping System will see Ratings published to the first decimal place along with a Slope Rating, this will have a significant impact on Handicapping and Course Rating in Scotland. There are also Rule Changes for 2019 re. new penalty areas which will have an impact on Course Rating, they are presently in talks with the USGA.

This year we are due to rerate Crichton, Stranraer & Wigtownshire County; I have however received an Email from Eileen Scott stating that she will be babysitting for her daughter on Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays this year and as she golfs at Powfoot on Tuesdays this only leaves Mondays or Weekends for Course Rating. I contacted Jim Arnott and Neville Wright and although it is their least convenient day they were confident of being available on two suitable Mondays. The Ladies last Rated the Crichton in 2014 so they are giving it a miss this year.

DGGPartnership Report January 2018 The VisitScotland media promotion will run for 4 weeks starting on the last week in January. The initial landings will be on the Courses page to which Wave has added an advert about the Partnership's attendance at the Scottish Golf Show.

Arrangements for our participation in the Golf Show are moving forward steadily with an encouraging response from the clubs. 11 clubs showed interest in response to an e-mail communication at the beginning of December. A planning meeting was held on the 18th December with 7 clubs represented as well as the SSGA secretary. A further 3 clubs sent apologies. Several decisions were agreed at this meeting and personnel identified to take forward certain tasks.

Where matters stand at present - Prizes have been agreed for each of the 3 days of the show. Participants are asked to guess the number of tees in a container and to record this on a form along with their name, e-mail and 'phone number. This data will be available to clubs to use for promotion of their own events. Friday Prize - Cairndale Hotel is offering Dinner, Bed and Breakfast and a round of golf for 4. Saturday Prize - Thornhill GC is offering 2 nights on-site accommodation and unlimited

golf for 4. Sunday Prize - Selkirk Arms is offering 2 nights Bed and Breakfast and 2 rounds of golf for 4. The Cairndale Hotel is contributing a third of the cost of the stand and will have a pop-up on the stand advertising the Hotel and their Birdie Trail, which shows pictures of Dumfries and Galloway, Lochmaben and Thornhill golf courses. Kevin Potts of the Cairndale has also agreed to take responsibility for setting up the stand on the Thursday before the Show opens on the Friday.

There will be a large map of the region on display on the larger wall of the stand, showing all the golf courses and the main roads leading into and through the region. The locations of the Prizes will also be highlighted on the map. Jon Gibbs-Smith is currently working on this. Our website is advertising our participation at the show.

All clubs have been e-mailed asking them to - * Advertise the event on their websites * Create flyers to take to the show offering discounted golf and accommodation. In response to this e-mail 3 additional clubs have expressed interest in taking part. At this stage, it is not possible to say how many flyers we will be taking to the show, but last year the Cairndale collected more than 300 e-mails so there is a potential market to be tapped into.

People to attend the show and promote our offers - Friday - Kevin Potts, Cairndale, Jon Gibbs-Smith, Kirkcudbright, Tricia and Mick Crook, Dalbeattie Saturday - Jim Nicholson, Thornhill, Wave Tyrrell, New Galloway, Graeme Maxwell, Castle Douglas, Kevin Potts Sunday - Jean and John Forrest, Partnership, Peter McGarrie, Lockerbie, Chris Walker, Selkirk Arms, Kevin Potts

Report of Fixture Secretary and Webmaster

1. I have received updates from all clubs. The system is working well and the only problem I see is that the google spreadsheet uses the American date format that catches the unwary.
2. I updated the Association website in line with the South of Scotland Golf site. Both sites are now mobile friendly. They are in the same style and have a common appearance. The site is simpler and integrates with the visitor site. The site will be tidied up.
3. I upgraded the hosting package to cloud package that should improve the performance of the site. In doing so, the site were automatically migrated which led the files being corrupted. This led to utter frustration. I had to remake the sites.
4. I have uses the logos that are saleable with loss of quality on both sites

5.  and 