

**SOUTH OF SCOTLAND GOLFERS' ASSOCIATION
MINUTES OF EXECUTIVE MEETING 30 MAY 2017**

Held at the Selkirk Arms Hotel, Kirkcudbright at 7.15 pm

Present:

Stephen Kingston, President, in the Chair; A Millar; T Clark; P Watson; W Tyrrell; R McKnight and I Robin, Secretary.

In Attendance:

Tony Bark (Wigtown & Bladnock), Peter McGarrie (Lockerbie) and Douglas Hunter (Southernness)

Apologies:

G Sharp; J Forrest; D. Moore and B Duguid

President's Welcome:

The President welcomed the members and in particular Tony Bark, Peter McGarrie and Douglas Hunter

Executive Meeting 18 April 2017

The Minutes were approved by Wave Tyrrell, seconded by Alastair Millar

Matters Arising:

The Secretary reported that he had checked over the old minutes and also contacted Neville Wright regarding the claim that 5p per head of members' capitation fee be allocated to D&GGP annually. There was nothing in the minutes and Neville advised that it had been discussed within D&GGP but not applied for.

Secretary's Report:

The Secretary reported that all papers had been sent to the Club representatives.

Jackie Davidson, SGL Development Officer, who arranged a follow-up meeting on Thursday 9 March at Crichton GC for Clubs in Kirkcudbrightshire and Dumfriesshire on Marketing had sent a copy of the slides used in the presentation. The Secretary was asked to contact Jean Forrest, who had a copy, and distribute to those who had not received their copy.

Scottish Golf issued the May Newsletter on 2 May which was forwarded to all Executive Members. It contained the proposed launch of Club Forums, a proposal to instigate a world handicap system and a note that a couple of groups were seeking support for the amalgamation of an Area and Ladies' County.

The Club May Newsletter was issued on 12 May and forwarded to all Executive Members.

SGL had been in contact with Jim Burns to enquire as to the present capitation fee in South Area. The Secretary had had no communication.

Stuart Clayton, SGL Head of Performance, and Colin Bell, SGL Coaching Manager, had requested a meeting with the Association's Coaching personnel regarding our coaching policy and that of SGL in regard to the coaching grant for next year. I contacted Pam Watson, Ian McWhirter, Brian Haining and Chris Robinson and the meeting has been arranged for Thursday 15 June at 5.00 pm at D&G. It was important to stress that coaching was carried out within the South area as the present location of the Academies were too far away.

The Secretary had received intimation from SGL that they had sent out application forms to Cally Palace with a view to them applying for membership. As members of this Association he advised Gatehouse Golf Club of developments but did not know what they can do about it. It was pointed out that the course was only open for six months in the year, the course was in need of extensive drainage work and no money was being spent on green staff.

Treasurer's Report:

The Treasurer reported that the Summary of Accounts up to 17 May 2017 was as follows:-

Income		Expenditure	
In bank 1/9/16	9,632.09	Sundries	484.45
Comps	390.00	Coaching	2110.00
IMT	420.00	ATC	1,919.07
Sponsor	300.00	NCF	1,871.16
Subs	16,450.00	Vouchers	2,315.00
Coaching Grant	<u>1250.00</u>	Matches	1,162.68
	28,442.09	Counties	513.00
		In bank 23/3/17	<u>18,066.73</u>
			28,442.09

Of the 23 Clubs, all have paid their subscriptions except Newton Stewart, despite several reminders. A sheet showing the affiliation fees paid to date and the membership in each Club had been distributed. Membership was down 147 from last year and expenditure was rising. Some of this can be attributed to SGL who were passing some of their expenditure to the Areas so they can claim they are cutting costs and meeting their budgets. Gatehouse have recently paid last year's IMT takings of £280.

Ladies:

The Secretary reported that the meeting arranged for Thursday 27 April had been cancelled. He read out an e-mail of 23 May from Eileen Scott, Secretary, Dumfriesshire Ladies in which she explained that at a Dumfriesshire Ladies Committee Meeting the committee felt everything was getting a bit too complicated. P&K was having a meeting with Karin Sharp and Karin was going to tell her what came out of that meeting. To date Eileen had not heard back from Karin but there was another Committee Meeting scheduled for 5th June. Dumfriesshire Ladies are probably going to meet Stuart Clayton on the 15th along with you. We could perhaps have more discussion after that meeting. One of our problem area's is funding. At the moment Area, Galloway Ladies and Dumfriesshire Ladies get separate funding for coaching. instead of getting £1250 each we might just get one payment of £1250 for the umbrella group. Our Ladies also feel we have enough meetings as it is and don't want any more. I think we have a long way to go yet. I did send a letter to Karin asking various funding questions and Karin can't give an answer. If I get an answer from Karin re the P&K meeting I will pass it onto you.

The general consensus of the Executive was that if SoSGA was not proactive events would overtake us and we will regret it. If Dumfriesshire Ladies were not as keen on amalgamation as Galloway Ladies we should just proceed with Galloway Ladies. It was agreed not to arrange another Joint Meeting until after the outcome of the Coaching Meeting with SGL.

Convenor's Reports:

CHAMPIONSHIPS 2017

In the absence of Graeme Sharp there was nothing to report.

COACHING CONVENOR

Pam Watson reported that she was working on plans for next winter. The survey from last year had received less than 50% response but is not closed yet. To date it was obvious that the benefits were different for the older boys than the younger boys. Most thoroughly enjoyed the sessions and would like to play more golf to put into practice the information they had received. They would also like to play on unfamiliar courses on which league

matches were to be played the following summer. Once all the responses were in and the information collated she would discuss the findings with Chris Robinson.

The Castle Douglas Junior Open had been cancelled. This was unfortunate as boys were being encouraged to play in as many of these opens as possible as it gave them experience of playing on different courses and they all counted towards the order of merit.

ClubGolf had produced a leaflet on golf etiquette which outlined the basic rules and the do's and don'ts. She was trying to get copies.

SENIOR TEAM MANAGER

In the absence of Graeme Sharp there was nothing to report.

JUNIOR TEAM MANAGER

Iain Robin reported that the six boys in the ATC squad are to have another practice day at Stranraer on Friday 2 June. Stranraer have offered another practice day prior to the competition on Friday 16 June and we intend to take advantage of this. The rules and conditions for the competition have been issued. The SGL will only pay for three rooms B & B and lunch during the competition. All other expenses fall to the Area including the meals after the practice round on the Saturday, any additional rooms for B & B and a meal after the competition. These all used to be paid for by SGL.

Congratulations to Lewis Cheetham (D&C), who was second in the Junior Tour event for U16 and U14 boys at Turnhouse recently and has been asked to attend the national Scottish Boys Development Day at Forfar on Sunday 28 May.

The U16 match against Cumbria U16's at Appleby on Saturday 27 May was abandoned in the afternoon due to thunder and lightning in the area. The match was declared a draw. Cumbria were leading by 3 games to 1 after the morning foursomes but South were fighting back in the afternoon singles and the state of play when play was stopped was South 4 up, Cumbria 2 up and two games were halved.

COURSE RATING

Robert McKnight reported that St Medan and Wigtown & Bladnoch courses were rated on 18 May from the Gents Medal tees; unfortunately the Ladies called off. Eileen Scott stated she would "try and get another date with the girls" She was available on 25 May but Neville was unavailable so the men went ahead on the 18th.as it was eight years since the previous Gent's Rating.

Eileen also advised that despite agreeing a schedule of dates with her, Linda could only manage to attend on one of the days and Fiona could not attend any.

Robert completed the paperwork and submitted it to Calum Grant on Friday 26 May. Wigtown seems straightforward as it was previously 67.0 and now comes out at 66.9, presumably it will continue at SSS 67. St Medan was previously 63.6 and is now 63.3 and would suggest a reduction of a stroke from 64 to 63 – it is however up to Calum and Bill Mitchell at HQ.

It is proposed to complete Brighthouse Bay on Thursday 15 June. Robert will arrange a meeting time with Eileen at the club and hopefully will complete a rating from both Ladies and Gents tees.

D&GGP CO-ORDINATOR

In the absence of Jean Forrest the Secretary read out her report. VisitScotland's Promotion has taken place. Jean did not have a report since completion, but halfway through over four and a half landings on our website had been recorded and Wave's figures showed a dramatic increase in page viewings.

12 clubs have spoken with Hilary Stewart of Hetland Hall. Jean had made contact with her last week and she says the Golf Page for their website will be up and running in the next few weeks.

Jean met with Mark Geddes, Economic Development Officer of D & G Council, to

discuss the possibility of acquiring funding for Partnership Organisers to promote Golf packages, but, unfortunately, he is unable to help in this way. He, however, did flag up that he was in the position of being able to offer 1-1 specialist support to individual golf clubs provided they could meet certain criteria. He is already working with one golf club in this way. It is her intention to forward this information to clubs in an "Update Newsletter" she will be circulating to clubs in June.

Wave has done some research into the requirements needed for the role of Partnership Organisers to be carried out successfully, and this will not be taken forward at present.

There has still been no feedback from clubs regarding the creation of marketing packages to be added to the website. Wave and herself have decided to focus on the Hotels in the region which are already offering golf holidays and see if they can get them to agree to also advertising these on our website. Next week she is talking with P&O Ferries regarding possible package developments.

Scottish Club Golfer Magazine will be running an advert (one eighth of a page) in their next three additions promoting the clubs in the Partnership. This will also appear on their website as a boxed advert for six months. Also for one week on their Facebook page they will run a competition for a 4BBB at Southernness GC. This will cost £717.60 inc vat and will be paid in two instalments.

See, Do, Stay and Play Leaflets are now printed and have been distributed. Peter McGarrie from Lockerbie GC kindly took some with him on a holiday to Northern Ireland and dropped some in at a few golf clubs.

There has not been an encouraging response, so far, to Donald's efforts as an Ambassador to engage with one Dumfries Club so he is considering cutting his losses and moving forward to approach another club.

The Club representatives were encouraged to return to their Clubs and engage with the Partnership.

Southernness, Powfoot and Lockerbie had taken out an advert with the Northern Golfer and had gained good coverage. It had been printed as cross-border and not D & G.

It was suggested that Clubs run golf weeks, even promoting two or three Clubs, to gain visitors. These promotions were very popular elsewhere.

WEBMASTER & FIXTURES SECRETARY

Wave Tyrrell reported that there was nothing to report on fixtures.

He had set up a Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/sosgolfers/> and urged everyone to promote the page. He advised everyone to write glowing replies and to "like it"

He had attended a course on Facebook at Stranraer on Wednesday 3rd May and learned a number of tips to promote the page such as

- a. Asking anyone you can to like the page, and
- b. Getting five members to write glowing 5 star reviews.
- c. Contributing 2 or 3 articles each week.

Facebook provides the most cost effective platform for advertising to Facebook followers. This is a limitation for South of Scotland Golf as our main audience tend not to be Facebook users. He was minded that the Ladies representative at the last meeting was quite happy as the ladies had their own Facebook page. It would be beneficial for all to share the same Facebook page to widen the audience and make it an effective tool. Having a Facebook page is not enough for promoting golf in the South. Pictures and draws for competitions can also be added

Wave had redesigned the logo in two versions that now appear on the visitor site.



He had a discussion with Ronnie Bradford, a marketing expert, who is involved with Visit Scotland and was involved in promoting support for walkers on the Southern Upland Way. They discussed how we might attract someone to arrange packages and what would be involved. Some of the points he raised.

1. The first thing is to have a product to sell,
2. Define your market,
3. Decide how you can target your market,
4. This would involve an awful lot of work.
5. We should consider funding someone to set it up.

We would need to have a product to sell in the first place. This would involve having a full package for golf, accommodation, transport, evening meal and entertainment. The cost is not as important as providing value for money and having a good experience. The market could be the over 50's or the family groups. Social media may be suitable for the family category but the over 50's might be better targeted with hard media. Wave was of the view that we should employ a specialist to set up packages. This raises the question of funding. There are a number of specialists about.

He mentioned "teeing up for Success" publication by Visit Scotland as a useful document. Useful contacts are Caroline Robertson or Douglas Watson of Visit Scotland (01750 723805).

His conclusion is that we should develop a clear and fully researched market strategy allowing us to target our efforts to best effect. This is a huge task beyond his capabilities.

In view of the above he has revamped the Packages page on the website to highlight all the suitable packages he could find on the web. The emphasis is on detailed offers and actual products, for example

- 2 Nights Bed, Breakfast and Evening meal plus 3 rounds golf at the Cairndale Hotel
 - o £239 per person April & October
 - o £259 per person May to September

He also added a note "Please contact us to include your package on the website"

Wave was advised that there was no funding available and just to continue and see how it goes. It was suggested that the hotels be charged for advertising to pay for the costs of development. If VisitScotland were in a helpful mood they might visit the Facebook page and offer an opinion and suggestions for improvement.

CHILD PROTECTION OFFICER

In the absence of Duncan Moore there was nothing to report.

DUMFRIESSHIRE

Tony Clark reported that the inter-club leagues had started. The Junior league had also started with both D&C and D&G entering two teams. Dumfriesshire had retained the Drennan Salver and he thanked Powfoot for hosting the event.

KIRKCUDBRIGHTSHIRE

In the absence of Brian Duguid there was nothing to report.

WIGTOWNSHIRE

Stephen Kingston reported that the Senior A and B leagues had started. The Wigtownshire Championships were on Sunday 4 June at Stranraer. There was a Scratch, Handicap 12 and under and Handicap 13 and over competitions.

CLUB REPRESENTATIVES

Peter McGarrie reported that the better weather had resulted in the Lockerbie course being in good condition this year. 30 juniors (ages 7 – 12) were turning up for coaching regularly. A recent Ladies Open had attracted players from Ayrshire and Cumbria. Membership was holding steady and visitors were up slightly.

Tony Bark explained that Wigtown & Bladnoch were also on the up after good weather in the spring.

Douglas Hunter reported that the better weather in the spring had helped the course although the leatherjackets were very active this year. Visitor numbers were up, as were those pre-booked.

A.O.C.B.

The Club representatives were asked if there was anything that the Association could do to realistically help in any way but no questions were raised.

The Club representatives thanked the Chairman for the invitation.

There being no further business the Meeting closed at 8.50 pm

The next Meeting was arranged for 7.15pm on Tuesday 27 June at the Selkirk Arms Hotel, Kirkcudbright.