

WORCESTERSHIRE COUNTY GOLF LIMITED
Company Number: 13065967

General Meeting – Bromsgrove Golf Club at 7.00 pm on Thursday 2 November 2023

Present:

Ian Rone	President
John Whitehead	Governance Director
Jonathan Cray	Finance Director
Clive Werrett	Director
Ian Griffiths	County Secretary

Representatives of Member Clubs

Kings Norton Golf Club	Gordon Clark	Narinder Jandhu
Little Lakes Golf Club	Andy Simmonds	
Gaudet Luce Golf Club	Andrew Phillips	
Droitwich Golf Club	Scott Shuck	Iain Milroy
Bromsgrove Golf Club	John Brothwood	Richard Alsop
Ombersley Golf Club	Gill Clayton	
Wharton Park Golf Club	Jon Shore	
Redditch Kingfisher Golf Club	Stuart Gorton	Hayley Gorton- Snowball
Fulford Heath Golf Club	Chris White	
Churchill & Blakedown Golf Club	Bob Julier	Pete Cash
Hollywood Golf Club Ltd	Malcolm Smith	
Hagley Golf Club	Richard P Mason	Roy Sims
Halesowen Golf Club	Richard Moyes	
Bransford Golf Club	David Hunt	Chris Ritson
Worcester Golf & Country Club	Simon Fletcher	Chris Devney
Ravenmeadow and Perdiswell Park Golf Club	Andy Turner	Malcolm Dainty
Moseley Golf Club	Kevin Clarke	Mike Henrick
Kidderminster Golf Club	Claire Painter	
Redditch Golf Club	John Cranton	Gary Robson

In Attendance

Chris Gupwell	Honorary Vice President WCG Ltd
Kieron Austin	County Captain
Tony Edwards	Honorary Vice President WCG Ltd
Mark Hewlett	Junior Organiser
Grenville Rose	Past President WUGC
Will Painter	Past President WUGC
Alex Bishop	Former WUGC Executive
Brian Morris	Past President WUGC
Brian Peplow	Past President WUGC
Mark Evans	Boys' Assistant Manager
Luke Perry	U14 Team Manager

Kevin Fee
Jo Gupwell

U16 Team Manager
Meeting Secretary

Apologies

Stuart Green	The Worcestershire GC
Mark Romasiuk	EG Regional Manager
Adam Riddle	Blackwell Golf Club
Norman Bolton	Past President WUGC
Stuart Pritchard	Former WCG Ltd Director
Paul Newman	Former WUGC Executive
Anthony Hill	Golf Director
Denis Hayes	Honorary Life Member WCG Ltd & Past President WUGC
Colin Day	Former WUGC Executive
Matt Brookbanks	County Captain Designate
Mark Dunkley	2 nd Team Captain
Simon Green	2 nd Team Captain Designate

Absent

The Abbey Hotel Golf Club
Vale Golf & Country Club
Warley Woods Golf Club
Bewdley Pines Golf Club
Blackwell Golf Club
Cleobury Mortimer Golf Club
Cocks Moors Woods Golf Club
Dudley Golf Club
Evesham Golf Club
Rose Hill Golf Club
Sapey Golf & Country Club
Stourbridge Golf Club

1. **Appointment of Chairman of the Meeting:** The Governance Director advised that the Board had agreed that the President would chair the meeting.
2. **Apologies:** See above.
3. **Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 17 May 2023::** These had been circulated prior to the meeting and were to be taken as read, but will be confirmed as correct and signed by the Chairman at the next Annual General Meeting. The Chairman asked if there were any matters arising from these Minutes to be dealt with. There were none.
4. **County Captain's Report:** The Captain reported that the First Team had had a relatively successful year with excellent numbers at squad days, a great number of players from whom to pick a team and some strong talent coming through the Junior squads. The Captain went through the league matches played during the season resulting in two wins, two losses and one draw. The Captain commented on James Ilsley, one of the Junior Team members, playing for the First Team and representing Worcestershire at the Men's 6s Event. He further advised that Steven Lane had won the County Championship and the Men's Matchplay competition in the same season, something that had not been done for a number of years. Finally, the Captain thanked the Second Team Captain for his support over the past two years and said that he had done an

excellent job in developing the Juniors into the Men's Teams, He also thanked the Golf Director and all County officials for making his captaincy as easy as possible and a thoroughly enjoyable experience.

The President thanked the Captain on behalf of the Board for his two years' captaincy during which he had been well liked and had done a brilliant job.

5. **Second Team Captain's Report:** In the absence of the Second Team Captain, the County Secretary read out his report. The Second Team Captain began by saying that he had enjoyed every moment of his captaincy and that he hoped he had achieved his goal of changing the direction of the team so as not just being a group of mates of the Captain, but a group of players from across the County bonding together. He believed that he had also been successful in bringing the Juniors through into the Men's game. The Second Team Captain went on to thank Mark Hewlett for his help in identifying Juniors he felt were able to move into the Men's Teams. He felt sure that there were a number of Juniors who had played for him who would be playing even more games in future under the new Second Team Captain. The Second Team Captain touched briefly on the matches during the year and concluded by thanking the County for giving him the opportunity to Captain the Second Team, the clubs who gave up their courses so that matches could be played, Mark Hewlett and Paul Newman who supported the Second Team and all his players who had given 100% commitment.
6. **Senior Team Captain's Report:** In the Senior Team Captain's absence, the County Secretary read his report. The Senior Team Captain began by thanking all the clubs who had given up their courses that enabled the Seniors to play their events and matches through the year. He went on to comment on the friendly matches played in the early part of the year but advised that the league matches had been disappointing. He was hopeful that some new players would be coming through in 2024. The County 6 event was held at Sandwell Park Golf Club, with the home County winning the event. The Senior Team Captain congratulated Duncan MacPherson who individually finished 2nd and was then picked for the Midland Seniors Team. Finally, the Senior Team Captain reported that the Bolton Shield for most points won went to Phil Dyke of Bromsgrove Golf Club and the Rookie of the Year Trophy went to John Mangan of Hollywood Golf Club. The Senior Team Captain concluded by saying that it was an honour to Captain a County Team and that he looked forward to his final year in 2024.
7. **Junior Golf Report:** Mr Mark Hewlett reported that the Boys had had another highly successful year across all age groups. The Under 14s Team had won four out of the five matches played in the year, culminating in winning the MGU County 6s which was their greatest achievement. The Under 16s Team won their league, but were disappointed that due to poor conditions they were not able to play in the Under 16s County 6s, Mark Hewlett advised that the overall points winner for the year and winner of the Bill Thompson Trophy was Alex Perry of Gaudet Luce Golf Club. Turning to the Under 18s Team, Mark Hewlett reported that the Team had not managed to retain the league trophy by a very close margin. The Team had won the Under 18s County 6s, an event which Worcestershire had first won in 1986, followed by wins in 2007 and 2009 and finally 2023. Winning that event meant that the Team represented the ten Midlands Counties against counterparts in three other areas in the English Boys County Finals, the overall champions being Surrey. The overall points winner for the Under 18s and the winner of the Cunningham Trophy was Tom Blizzard of Droitwich Golf Club. Mark Hewlett said that all the Boys had been exceptional during the year and that everyone was very proud of them. He went on to thank all the volunteers who had given up their time over the year, naming in particular Kev Fee, the Under 16s Manager, Luke Perry, the Under 14s Manager and Mark Evans, the Assistant Manager. He also thanked the First and Second Team Captains for selecting some of the Juniors, giving those selected great confidence and driving others to perform so that they too could achieve this. Finally, Mark Hewlett thanked Simon Gabbitas, the County Boys Coach, all the Board for their support and the clubs who allowed the Boys to use their courses.

In conclusion, Mark Hewlett had pleasure in announcing the three Captains for 2024:

Under 14s – Nicholas Campbell (Wharton Park Golf Club)
Under 16s – Oliver Badger (Hagley Golf Club)
Under 18s – Mark Hewlett Jnr (Gaudet Luce Golf Club)

The President, on behalf of the Board, thanked Mark Hewlett and all the other managers and helpers for their work with the Boys during the year. He believed that the County had some very special players.

8. Notice of Team Captain Appointments: The President confirmed the following appointments:

8.1. The County Captain: Mr Matt Brookbanks is confirmed as County Captain until October 2024.

8.2. The Second Team Captain: Mr Simon Green is confirmed as the Second Team Captain until October 2024.

8.3. The Senior Team Captain: Mr Anthony Hill is confirmed as the Senior Team Captain until October 2024.

9. Secretary's Report:

9.1. Forward Plan: The County Secretary reported that this appeared to be going well. He hoped to have information for 2025 out early in 2024 to give clubs time for consideration.

9.2. World Handicap System Update: The County Secretary advised that the World Handicap System would be revised every four years, starting 1 April 2024. Course Rating - Par will be included in the course handicap calculation which may lead to the need for clubs to have new 'look up' boards. England Golf have indicated that they may assist in the purchase of these if necessary, but this is yet to be confirmed. Better Ball scores are to be considered for handicap purposes from April 2024, but only for competitions. Additional detail will be provided for Annual Reviews. Player handicap percentages will not change. The County Secretary reported that a lot of information was now going out to clubs which will help them to understand what was happening. In response to a question on what would Better Ball competitions look like, the County Secretary said that he was not yet sure, but they would count for handicapping. The process would be included within the competition setup software at clubs.

9.3. Course Rating Update: The Governance Director reported on the course rating that had taken place in 2023. Three courses had been fully re-rated and 9 courses had been provided with additional ratings. He advised that in 2024 it was hoped to re-rate five courses. A provisional schedule of planned course rating is on the County website. The Governance Director advised that clubs would be contacted early in 2024 about re-rating but stressed that courses could not be rated unless they had a measurement certificate that was not more than 10 years old and had fixed tee markers. The Governance Director asked that a club should let the course rating team know if there were any changes to the course that might affect rating. He went briefly through the type of changes that would affect rating. In response to a question about how much change was made on re-rating a course, the Governance Director said that on the whole the changes were minimal and that there was a reasonable level of consistency. He concluded by thanking Tony Edwards and Alex Bishop for their help with course rating during the past year.

9.4. England Golf Report: The County Secretary advised that Mr Mark Romasiuk was unable to be present at the meeting, but that he had sent in a report which was put on the screen for those present to read. Mr Romasiuk's report follows:

"England Golf continue to support clubs and counties in reviewing their Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion policy alongside Disciplinary procedures. This will continue to be England Golf's main driver moving forward for the foreseeable future. All counties have now been through the process

of this review and Worcestershire Union and Association were among the first across the country to complete.

Upon completion of the review each club will receive the Respect in Golf logo to display on their website and show commitment to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion within our sport. All counties have received this with many now displaying it on the website.

Across the country circa 300 clubs have completed the process with a further 800 working on the process. Within Worcestershire clubs are beginning to complete this review and at the time of writing there are 3 clubs complete with a further 5 working towards the goal. However, this progress has been hampered by the lack of a Club and County Support Officer in the area since Emma Morton left the organisation unexpectedly earlier in the year. However, England Golf are now recruiting a replacement and hope to have a CCSO in place early in the New Year to support clubs with their reviews of EDI and Disciplinary alongside any other support necessary.

Clubs also have an opportunity to run an EDI audit and The Worcestershire are the first club in the county who have begun to look at how they run operationally through the audit process, which is good to see. These audits will be available to clubs via the CCSO moving forward but if there are any questions in the meantime direct them to Mark Romasiuk – mark.romasiuk@englandgolf.org."

- 9.5. Midland Golf Union:** The County Secretary advised that the subscription payable remained at 32p per affiliated member, In reply to a question, the Finance Director estimated that there were in the region of 13,000 affiliated male members in the County. The County Secretary congratulated Mr Brian Peplow on being confirmed as a Director of The Midland Golf Union. He went on to explain that the role of Secretary had been split into Secretary (Neil Harris) and Tournament Chairman (Malcolm Eustace).
- 9.6. Woodhall Spa Land Holdings:** The County Secretary advised that he attended meetings and voted on behalf of the County. There has been a request by England Golf to change the ownership of Woodhall Spa, without which it would not build the new National Golf Centre. Woodhall Spa Land Holdings have been preparing Articles of Association to allow common ownership, but none of these have met with the requirements of England Golf. One requirement is that the National Association of Public Golf Courses is included in the arrangements. England Golf will not build the new National Golf Centre until the common ownership has been achieved and the County Secretary said that this was taking a long time.
- 9.7. Working with Worcestershire & Herefordshire Ladies County Golf Ltd ("the Ladies"):** The Governance Director reported that Worcestershire County Golf Ltd had continued to work with the Ladies to bring about a potential merger. He advised that the Ladies had now increased their affiliation fees to bring them in line with those for the Men. The policies that are mandated by England Golf have been aligned and there is a joint course rating team. In 2024 it was proposed that the Boys and Girls Championship would be held at the same venue on the same day. The Governance Director pointed out that there were practical issues which had not yet been resolved, mainly in connection with finance. He said that Worcestershire County Golf Ltd would need to be confident that a merger could be managed without putting too much pressure on their resources. The Governance Director went through the potential additional costs of covering administration, some £17,000 per annum, which could in part be covered by the increase in the Ladies' affiliation fees in the sum of £10,000/11,000, a difference of some £6,000/£7,000 which would need to be made up. He said that it was necessary to find a way of doing this initial work whilst minimising the risk. Finally, the Governance Director said that talks with the Ladies would continue about a merger and whether it was possible for the two organisations to work together.
- 9.8. Review of Golf Local Rules:** Mr Clive Werrett reported that he had carried out a review of local rules used by Worcestershire clubs and had found that there were aspects that did not gel together. He gave examples of various rules that were inconsistent in their wording, were

incorrectly quoted or worded or were not even permitted. He felt that the placing of local rules on scorecards was not always appropriate. Mr Werrett thought that some work was needed on local rules, perhaps to standardise the wording to achieve a level of consistency. He said that there were qualified referees who could work with clubs on this and that some sort of rules education programme may need to be put in place.

- 9.9. Courtesies for Clubs when hosting County Events:** The County Secretary reported that he had been asked to co-ordinate courtesies and that he would continue to do this, although some clubs made their own arrangements. There followed a discussion about the problems arising over courtesies at some clubs, with members complaining that they were unable to get courtesies having given up the use of their course for a County event. The County Secretary explained the process in more detail and said that there were rules under which clubs were asked to provide courtesies. Forms are sent to club managers or secretaries asking for tee times, but although a form had been sent to every club in the County in 2023, the County Secretary had only received five replies. He said that the system only worked if everyone engaged in the process and that he would continue to try to make this work. The President felt that the response from clubs was poor and that we all needed to get a grip on the whole system. A representative from Worcester Golf & Country Club suggested that the best way to simplify the system was to get the club managers/secretaries to deal with courtesies. It was argued that they contacted each other and that this made a huge difference. It was stressed that this needed to be done early in the year and that it was preferable that the managers were members of GCMA. It was also suggested that when requests concerning courtesies were sent out they should ask for a definitive reply – yes or no. The County Secretary said that he would do this in future and that he would chase managers/secretaries for replies. He hoped to be in a position to send out courtesy requests early in 2024.

- 10. Affiliation Fees for Worcestershire County Golf Limited:** The Finance Director advised that for 2024 the affiliation fees would remain unchanged. However, a small increase might be necessary in 2025. The Finance Director proposed that the affiliation fees for 2024 should be:

Men aged 18 and over on 1 January 2024 - £11.25
Boys aged under 18 on 1 January 2024 - £5.75

This proposal was unanimously agreed by those present.

- 11. Affiliation Fees for England Golf:** The Finance Director advised that he would continue to collect all England Golf affiliation fees for both men and women members of affiliated clubs as follows:

For the year 2024 the affiliation fee payable to England Golf for members (over and under 18 years of age) will be £10.50, an increase of £1.

The Finance Director was asked what his view was of this increase which he said he found disappointing. The County Secretary said that although a number of Counties had voted against this increase, they were in the minority and that there was nothing that could be done about it. There was a short discussion on the position with regard to iGolfers and it was established that the County had received approximately £2,500 from iGolf. The subscription per annum for iGolfers is currently £44 per annum, possibly rising to £48. The County Secretary explained the conditions for the use of iGolfers' handicaps.

The Finance Director explained the system used to calculate the number of members at each club in order to establish how many affiliation fees needed to be paid. Fees are paid in two tranches and the clubs provide the numbers.

- 12. Any Other Business:**

- 12.1.** Mr Gordon Clark of Kings Norton Golf Club raised the issue of two teams from his club not being able to enter the Droitwich Shield competition because they missed the entry date by a day. He complained that there had been no follow up by way of a reminder about this, although in the past this had happened. He said that although Kings Norton Golf Club had appealed, they were not able to enter the competition. He asked that a formal email should be sent out the week before the closing date in future, reminding clubs about the date for entry. Mr Clark advised that his Board were extremely disappointed by the way they had been treated by the County Board and Secretary and that he knew that there had been follow up prior to the closing date in the past. The President explained that over the past two years or so the Board had had issues with people missing closing dates which in itself caused issues. The Board had made a decision to stick rigidly to closing dates. However, he said that the point about reminders was valid and that in future this will be done. He felt that lessons needed to be learnt on both sides and that the problem itself did not rest with the County Board. Mr Clark asked who had reviewed which clubs had entered that particular competition prior to the 4 September deadline and noticed that an entry from Kings Norton Golf Club was missing.? The County Secretary advised that he sees who has entered and if no entry has been made, he assumes that no entry is required. In response Mr Clark said that the Board would find that Kings Norton Golf Club in 2024 were not prepared to support County events in any form. The President said that this was very disappointing and that he, personally, felt that this was wrong. The County Secretary said that he took Mr Clark's point about reminders.
- 12.2.** The County Secretary expressed his thanks to all the volunteers who had helped him over the year and his thanks to the Board. He thanked Bromsgrove Golf Club for hosting the meeting.
- 13. Date of Next Meeting:** The time, date and venue of the AGM will be notified to all clubs in due course.

There being no further business to be discussed, the Chairman thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting.