

Members Liaison Committee

Meeting 22nd August 2022

7.00pm in the Clubhouse

1. Present

J. Murdoch, E. Raistrick, C. Lannin, I. Clark, D. Mennie, G. Dalziel, D. Scott, J. Porteous, M. Andrews, R. French

Apologies

J. Murdoch opened the meeting.

2. Comment from Management

In response to the report from the recent MLC Pre-Meeting D. Scott provided the group with a full update on the current operation at Craighelaw. He noted that there were several significant issues having an effect on various departments and the overall operation at the club:

Staffing – Retaining and recruiting staff throughout the year had proved very difficult with external pressures increasing staffing costs by around 20%. Staffing shortages, especially in the kitchen had resulted in the operation being curtailed and at certain points there had been potential for the department to temporarily close which would have had a significant impact on the rest of the business. Through the hard work of current staff D. Scott said he was pleased to say there had been minimal disruption, although shortages and issues remained.

Availability of Materials and product – Equipment, materials, ingredients, furniture etc had all been difficult to source, this was delaying planned projects and also impacting on day to day service. Whilst the operation had not gone short there were occasions where orders could not be fulfilled with usual suppliers and alternatives have had to be found.

Costs – D. Scott said that the costs of operating the business had risen sharply with fuel, energy, staffing and food/ingredient costs seeing the largest increases. Gas prices had gone up 3 fold. Every effort was being made to control the costs and lessen the impact on members and visitors but it was inevitable that some cost increases would have to be passed on.

Bookings – During the lockdown/restrictions period of the Covid-19 pandemic many golf and lodge bookings had been re-scheduled into 2022, this doubled with the fact member play had at some points been up as much as 60% had resulted in an unusually busy season with increased pressure on the tee, staffing and the facilities. D. Scott said that there were approx. 4 weeks left of this busy period and after this things would return to a more normal booking pattern.

D. Scott said that this season had been the most difficult he had seen in his 33 years of working in golf. He praised the staff and thanked the members for their patience.

3. Pre Meeting Report

D. Scott provided updates on the action points from the Pre Meeting Report, many points had previously been discussed at MLC meetings or were covered by D. Scott's opening comments but of note were the following points.

Course

Irrigation – throughout the extremely dry summer staff had had to hand water the greens which had impacted on other work that was planned. The hand watering was to supplement the automated irrigation programme that had been working throughout the summer. D Scott confirmed there was enough water supply from our boreholes. D Scott also confirmed that the software running the irrigation had been upgraded and an audit of sprinklers was underway with any amendments additions to be considered over the winter shutdown period.

17th – discussions were ongoing with the property owner at the back of the 17th green on how best to finish of the area where the large trees were removed. Final work planned prior to Spring 23.

11th – J Porteous said that contractors had finalised plans for the 11th hole with the ditch being filled in and a new drainage line running from the 12th to the pumps at the left side of the 11th fairway. New bunkering will also be created to provide some protection of the 11th green. Whilst the contractors are on site the pond at the 1st hole will be cleaned out as well as the ponds at the South Links. Contractors are scheduled for the beginning of October.

Signage – D Scott confirmed new signage was in place but said there were a few signs that had not arrived yet but would be installed when delivered. D Scott also said that as there were plans to change the design around the 1st tee, signage for this area would not be put in place until final designs were completed.

Course Toilets – D Scott said that the toilets at the 4th hole had been refurbished but noted Kilspindie had not confirmed if work was to be carried out on the toilet area at the back of the 11th green which Craigelaw have agreed to assist with costs.

Bunkers – J Porteous confirmed that the bunker renovation programme would continue in the winter months with a continued focus on shallowing the bunkers and even distribution of sand within the bunkers. Some teeing areas would also be worked on over the winter to flatten off some of the uneven teeing grounds.

Clubhouse

Furniture – New tables and chairs had been delivered with more deliveries expected in the winter although as previously noted availability of product had proved difficult.

Flooring – it was noted some of the carpeting in the clubhouse was in need of replacing. D Scott confirmed this was in hand logistically it was difficult to close areas off during the summer to have work carried out on the areas but once business quietened down this work would be booked in.

Scoring Terminal – J Porteous confirmed the new handicap scoring terminal was in place in the members lounge, usage was going well.

Club Championship – A request to make the qualifying medal fairer by making the event a draw was raised. After a lengthy discussion on all the aspects surrounding the request it was agreed to keep the qualifying medal as a normal bookable medal.

Behaviour on the course – In relation to a recent group of visitors that were drunk and unruly C. Lannin had asked for clarity on what the club could do to minimise this behaviour. D. Scott said he did not feel he could stop visitors bringing alcohol to the club, especially those visiting the lodge but drinking alcohol on the course was not permitted and new terms and conditions had been written to reinforce this. Recruitment of seasonal staff to allow for some marshalling on the course had not

been successful this year but it was hoped that staff could be found for the 2023 season. Issues had arisen mainly with groups staying for only one night and through the main 2023 season sales plans would not include those packages and the location packages were being sold would be changed. Groups visiting went through a booking process similar and perhaps more stringent than most clubs and it was almost impossible to gauge what a group would do on arrival at the club although the vast majority of visitors to the club are thankfully respectful of the facility, staff and members.

Members Bookings – Iain Clark raised an issue with block bookings in the diary over the coming weeks, noting there were several dates with little to no times available between certain hours. D Scott said that whilst there were some visitor bookings as discussed earlier in the meeting there were also regular member groups which had been allowed to block book weekday bookings in advance. D. Scott informed the group that these member groups had, prior to Covid pre booked times through the booking system and during Covid this allowance was stopped. Demand from member times had dropped and as such the groups had been allowed access to these times again, D. Scott added that the pro shop team had yet to add in extra times to these dates resulting in some times being made available. D. Scott said the company was taking a wider look at groups forming within the club and proposed additions to the club constitution would be circulated to the MLC in due course, these would have a bearing on access and control of pre booked times.

4. A.O.C.B.

E. Raistrick suggested that a bell at the 18th might be useful for people to hear from the tee. J. Porteous to look at this.

R. French suggested having a photograph taken with the County team and Lord Wemyss. M Andrews would speak to Lord Wemyss and try to advise when he may be available to coincide with team availability.

J. Murdoch closed the meeting.

Future meeting dates
Sat 5th Nov 1pm
AGM Sat Nov 5th 2pm