

# PRESTWICH GOLF CLUB NEWS

May 2019



## WHAT AN INTENSIVE NINE MONTHS

It's difficult to believe that although the negotiations for the land sale started over three years ago, it is only nine months since the contracts were signed and the monies transferred to our account. It is testament to the hard work and forward planning of the Board that so much progress has been achieved in such a short period of time.

We have managed to:

- complete the course design
- Negotiate and let the Course contract
- Managed the physical course re configuration works to near completion
- Redecorated the Clubhouse
- Purchased & Installed new disabled stair lift
- Purchased and constructed new greens shed
- Constructed Greens Equipment compound
- Purchased and prepared site for new greens equipment wash
- Upgraded the C.C.T.V. and Alarm Systems.
- Installed new golf I.T System
- Implemented roof repairs
- Fitted new central heating system
- Purchased replacement tractors
- Re negotiated insurance cover following two substantial claims
- Launched a new web site
- Refurbished the locker rooms and showers
- Finalised design and contract for Function room toilets incorporating disabled toilets
- Prepared a Marketing Plan to increase membership and other forms of revenue.

All of this together with the day to day management of the club has all been achieved through the dedication of the Board working tirelessly on your behalf.

If you feel you would like to assist in shaping the future of YOUR club either as a Board Member or in any capacity please let us know we are always looking for volunteers to join the management team.

## THE A.G.M.

The A.G.M. was held on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2019 and although well publicised did not attract the attendance from members that the Board had anticipated.

The last two years has been an intensive period for the Board with hundreds of volunteer man hours being spent by them, developing a strategy for the club to ensure the capital injection from the land sale was not squandered as has happened at so many other clubs up and down the country and was invested in projects that would form the framework for a sustainable and profitable company.

initially board members all had their own grand visions of the projects they would like to see just like yourselves the members but each one had to be costed and evaluated against a list of priorities set out by the Board at the start of the process to ensure we did not fall into the trap laid for so many other clubs. Most of the items will be covered in this edition of the magazine together with any developments since the A.G.M.

## A NEW YEAR IN EVERY SENSE.

One announcement at the A.G.M was that the Club / Company financial year would be extended to cover 15 months moving the year end to 31<sup>st</sup> March instead of the traditional 31<sup>st</sup> December. This will mean that subscriptions will become due on 1<sup>st</sup> April, which it was considered a more palatable date than the Christmas / New Year period with its own associated spending commitments and at a date when the weather had improved and golf was looking a more attractive proposition. The Board are working on how the transition year from a 12 to a 15 month year will be achieved, hopefully delivering a bonus to the members who have stuck with the club over the current course reconfiguration period.

## C.A.S.C STATUS

The Clubs status as a Community Amateur Sports Club cannot be over emphasised, without it over the last few years the club would almost certainly been forced into liquidation. Without it a large proportion of the capital we received from the land sale will be taken for Capital Gains Tax. Every decision the Board takes has to be mindful of its impact on our Status as a C.A.S.C.

## **PRESTWICH CLUBHOUSE CATERING**

A new subsidiary company has been formed, "PRESTWICH CLUBHOUSE CATERING" which will manage all the clubs catering and functions activities.

The Company is wholly owned by the Golf Club (*PRESTWICH GOLF CLUB Ltd.*) with two of the existing Board members becoming Directors of the new company. Members should not notice any change, although obviously we are constantly trying to drive up service standards, but it allows the clubs finances to be channelled into separate accounts identifying profits and losses on each activity and maintaining income limits set by HMR&C for CASC's. This is a business decision which the Board, following advice from financial and legal consultants, considered essential.

## **DISABLED ACCESS**

High on the list of priorities for clubhouse improvements was the replacement of the disabled stair lifts which, although compliant with legislation were an embarrassment to the club and also members and visitors who had to utilise it.

Several options were investigated which included a bridge from the top car park to a new function room entrance near the fire door and a lift shaft to be sited in the front entrance foyer through to the landing at the top of the stairs. Each of the options were carefully costed.

Being mindful of the other projects under consideration the option of a single stair lift sweeping around the bends of the staircase and allowing access at the lower level on the ground floor below the first large step and around onto the top landing away from the stairs was the most economical solution.

Feedback from users since its installation has all been positive.

## **NEW HEATING SYSTEM**

The original boiler, which was 28 years old has been replaced with the latest condensing boiler system and the radiator controls are now controlled by a Wi-Fi valve system which allows greater control throughout various zones of the club directing heat only to the areas required at specific times of the week. Although there have been issues during the training periods on the programming, the system is proving efficient and showing financial savings.

## **COURSE RECONFIGURATION**

The course reconfiguration works are on target, both financially and physically.

Chris is heavily involved, together with the Course Architect to ensure that the works comply with the design and specifications and checking progress & quality standards before sanctioning the staged payments.

The contractors have benefitted from a good spell of weather since their return and the field adjacent to the clubhouse is completed and seeded. The works in the Hilton Park field are nearing completion and will soon be seeded and turfed. Then the final push over to the Singleton Brook field. It is anticipated that the works will be completed by the end of June and following a first cut by the contractors the new course will be handed back to Chris to develop and mature ready for the next season's golf.

Several issues were identified by Chris during the first stage including drainage on the 1<sup>st</sup> fairway, the contouring of the approach on the 1<sup>st</sup> and the 18<sup>th</sup> carry and approach to the green drainage, following discussions with Greasley's these were rectified prior to seeding.

There was a major issue with regards the excess top soil and spoil removed from the Building Contractors site and dumped on our land, the issue has been resolved but the building contractor has yet to remove some dumped soil before,

Members of the Board together with Chris have met Bury MBC Footpath Officers and agreed a strategy to install "A" Frame gates on the entrance to the footpaths running across the course, this should prevent Motor Cycles and Quad Bikes accessing the course and causing damage as they have in the past although it is recognised that whilst we have access for cars to the clubhouse there is always the opportunity for motor bikes etc. to use this access if they really try. All of this management of the course reconfiguration comes at a cost, both financially and in time resources. The Board Members give their time freely but the Course Architect whose design knowledge and vision of the finished course is accompanied by his hefty but essential fees, and of course the time spent by Chris comes at a cost of time spent away from his routine management of the course. He has performed brilliantly throughout the construction period and together with his team have managed to present a course over the winter period which has been the envy of other clubs around us.

**LATEST NEWS** -The problems anticipated with quad bikes and motor bikes has already arisen prior to us being in a position to fix "A" Frame gates which has resulted in vandalism to some of Greasley's equipment. This will now have to be transported back to the clubhouse each evening causing additional wear to the course which will have to be rectified on completion of the works.

## **NEW GREENS COMPOUND**

Members will all be aware of the thefts of tractors and the like from the greens sheds, the consequences of which was to develop a security plan for the area in order to secure our assets and maintain insurance cover at a realistic rate.

Temporary storage in the form of a ships container was hired to secure the equipment prior to the construction of new equipment building.

The bulk sand, top dressing, shale etc. bunkers had to be removed in order to create space for the new building leaving the greenkeeper's without an essential resource at a point in time when it was essential to maintain the course.

The equipment shed has now been purchased and constructed and the whole compound fenced off. Trees have been felled to create more space to locate an area to construct new bulk storage bunkers.

The equipment wash bay which recycles the water and traps the materials washed off the grounds maintenance equipment has been purchased and soon to be installed finally making this element of our operation compliant.

## **GOLF CHANGING & LOCKER ROOMS**

The dated locker/ changing rooms have been in need of refurbishment for a number of years, options ranging from simply retiling and decorating through to full refurbishment up to the highest quality were costed and the Board considered that as this was a key element of the golf clubs business they opted for the latter.

The ladies locker rooms are completed and the result is startling, a modern classy facility which the club can be proud of rather than embarrassed as we were in the past. The design has even allowed for the construction of additional storage area which the clubhouse was seriously short of.

The contractors are now moving on to the men's changing room which will receive the same treatment as the ladies, the locker room layout is to be redesigned to allow two tier storage creating more lockers. They are on order together with new lockers for the ladies locker room.

The refurbishment of these facilities was considered an essential element of the marketing strategy for the club is to attract new members and turn the current operating losses into profit, more on this will be discussed in the Marketing Report

## **CLUBHOUSE TOILETS & DISABLED FACILITIES**

It has always been a mystery why the disabled toilets were located on the ground floor whilst the main function facilities are located on the first floor requiring users to use the disabled access facilities over again. Even worse than that at the time of the original design there were no plans for disabled access between the two floors.

Architects have come up with a new design which allows the disabled toilet facilities to be located together with the main function room's facilities. This requires the doors between the function rooms to be widened, an element which should be included in updates in any case to facilitate disabled access throughout the first floor.

The quality will match that of the locker room refurbishment bringing the toilets up to that of any modern hotel facility.

We have however been a victim of our own success, we have managed to secure a lucrative contract with the NHS to provide training facilities for a three month period generating essential income for the club. The NHS users are already complaining, quite justifiably about the noise from the reconstruction of the locker rooms and it will not be possible to move onto the function room facilities which will require a shutdown for a short period until the contract with the NHS finishes in late August

## **MARKETING**

The club, in the same way as a number of clubs in the area has been operating at a loss for a number of years. It is no secret that without the land sale we would have been in serious trouble.

The overriding vision of the Board has been to invest the income from the land sale in the course and clubhouse facilities in order to attract more members and visitors and also retain a substantial sum for financial investment to secure the long term future of the club.

We have all seen local clubs spending a fortune on facilities for members without a strategy to increase revenue to sustain the business and are now suffering the consequences.

The design of the new course fits perfectly with ENGLAND GOLF Strategy to sustain golf into the next decade. A modern short course which is fun to play whilst retaining a golfing challenge which can be played in three to three and a half hours. A perfect product to fit in with the modern family lifestyle.

The Club has developed a marketing strategy based on ENGLAND GOLF strategies – *why re-invent the wheel when there is a product available developed by experts.*

The plan includes attracting more ladies into golf, involving families – the age profile of members has to decrease if we are to sustain into the future.

The marketing strategy runs into around forty pages and if a member would like a copy there will be one on display in the clubhouse but without members involvement it is just a worthless document.

We plan to introduce summer schools for children, involve parents with family days, taster sessions including prosecco evening for ladies, anything and everything to get prospective members through the doors to introduce them to golf.

**The board have spent endless hours developing the strategy and the facilities to achieve the marketing outcome, however they cannot sell it alone.**

**It is up to the members to assist in getting the word out there. Telling friends and associates of the stunning product we have developed, using your own social media to spread the word,** if each member were to introduce 4 people to look at the club's facilities and just 25% were to join the club we would double our membership to a sustainable level.

## SPONSORSHIP

Sponsorship not only reduces our capital outlay it opens the club's facilities to potential new customers. It's a "win win" situation where the sponsor receives a package which not only promotes their business it includes use of the course and clubhouse facilities for their business.

The current sponsorship package centres on TEE SIGN SPONSORSHIP.

The cost of quality tee signs is in the region of £6000, a sum which could easily just be added to the cost of the course reconstruction but this just reduces the capital remaining for investment and does nothing to promote the club.

Again the Board are promoting the Tee Signage sponsorship package but the assistance of members is crucial. If you have or know the owner of a local business who may be interested in sponsoring a Tee Sign please see a Board member who can provide all the marketing literature and discuss the proposal with the business owner.



## IT'S YOUR CLUB - HELP PROMOTE IT

It is in everyone's interest to ensure the club turns its operating income into profit

## CLUB HISTORY QUIZ

Test your knowledge of the Clubs' history with this fun quiz. (references to hole numbers relate to the current 9 hole course)

1. The Club originated in 1890 however it only became registered as a golf club in 1908. What was the name of the club prior to becoming Prestwich Golf Club?
2. Prior to becoming a golf course the land between Hilton Lane and the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> fairways used to be a rugby football pitch. Which team played there?
3. The plot of land that is being developed as the course extension was bought by the Club from a banking subsidiary of the Greyhound Bus Co. USA. Who were the original owners of the land?
4. Just beyond the fence of the new plot of land on Kersal Moor was the site of a historic Golf Course. What was it called and when was it formed?
5. In 1913 the club professional was Cyril Walker who left the Club and immigrated to the USA in 1914. Which Year did he win the US Open?
6. How many Professionals' has the club had since its formation?

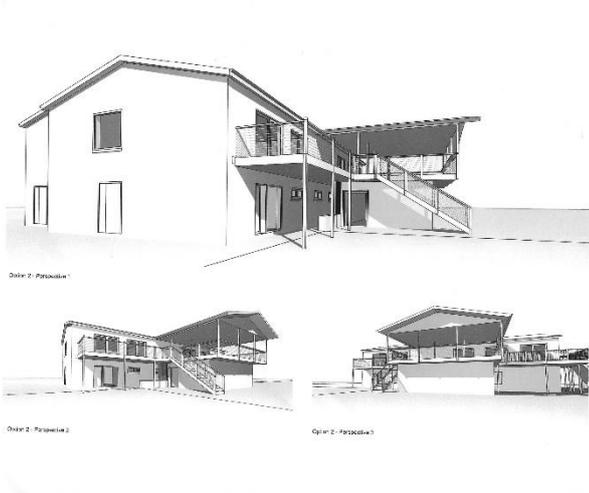
Answers Below

**Answers to the quiz.**

1. Manchester Gymkhana Club
2. Broughton RFC which was formed in 1869
3. John & Henry Bleakley
4. (Bleakleys Myrtle Grove Bleach & Dye Works), Manchester Golf Club 1818,
- The second oldest club in England.
- In 1890 the club was dissolved and The Manchester & St Andrews Club dropped the "St Andrews" from its name and club reformed in 1892 and discovered its name had been stolen it became Old Manchester Golf Club and is still in existence although it no longer has a course.
5. 1924
6. Fourteen.

Robert Grieg, Cyril Walker, H Spalding,  
 Vernon Greenhaigh, Robert Leather, David Willis,  
 Jim Wood, Paul Horridge, Jamie Waugh, Les Cain, Gary  
 Coope, Anthony Sproston, Simon Wakefield, Mark Pearson.

## BALCONY



*A vision of how the balcony could look*

The Balcony refurbishment / replacement is an emotive subject for members and indeed the Board. Everyone is in agreement that the current balcony is in a poor condition, reflects poorly on the club and on occasions too small.

What appears a simple solution would be to create designs for a new lavish balcony including a swing room below and simply replace it.

You may ask, why on earth haven't the Board just got on and done this?

The simple answer would be that we just can't afford it, but no one could actually know that until the projects considered by the Board as priority were fully costed and commissioned and taken from the value of the land sale and an allowance made for the financial sum the Board want to invest for the future of the club.

We are getting close to that situation but there are still items which are not finalised and contingencies have to be included for the any unforeseen additional items, but we are getting close to that time when a decision can be made.

So what has the Board done in preparation?

A sub group was formed to develop the balcony project.

An initial approach to the Planning consultant who submitted the plans for the building development confirmed that any replacement or extension to the balcony would require planning permission which involves a minimum of 12 weeks to process and of course this can't be initiated until we have plans for the project drawn.

Building regulations would not allow any balcony extension to protrude from the building further than the existing balcony at either end, but especially at the fire escape end because it would prevent borrowed / shadowed light to the flat below. This probably determined the width of the original balcony.

At this stage it was considered that an extension to mid-section of the existing balcony would probably be the most economic solution providing the condition of the balcony justified this solution. A specialist building timber consultant was engaged to conduct a detailed survey of the existing balcony, which concluded that parts of the balcony were in poor condition mainly due to bad maintenance and modification choices but overall the timber was the best available construction hardwood and would be sound for a considerable period if their advised repair and restoration works were completed.

The next stage was to appoint an architect to develop concept designs based on the aspirations of the group. The brief was to be imaginative but also be aware that any designs would have to be capable of being staged to fit the finances available. They should allow:

- Extension of the centre section of the balcony to substantially increase the floor space
- Have the potential to build a swing room below the extended portion at some point.
- Have the ability to section off the new centre section to allow / deny access for function users or members.
- Provide a staircase from the balcony to the area around the pro shop.

Three plans have been produced which all meet the specifications and are currently being considered and costed by the group prior to submission to the board and ultimately the members.

The planning consultant may be requested to have an informal meeting with the Planning Authority to ascertain which of the plans is more likely to gain planning approval.



*An example of how the first stage could look if we take that approach*

## CLUB CAPTAIN

Mike Fitzpatrick was nominated and elected as Club Captain at the A.G.M. and in view of the limited course and activities throughout the current year the appointment is for the current season and the 2020 / 21 season.

A large crowd cheered Mike on as he made his Drive In on the Saturday following the A.G.M.

## CLUB PRESIDENT

Barbara Elliott was nominated and elected Club President at the A.G.M.

This is the first appointment of a lady member to represent the whole club and clearly demonstrates the clubs commitment to diversity.

## NEW GREENS STAFF

From the onset of the course reconfiguration Chris has always made it clear that additional staff would be required throughout the initial build process and particularly in the 12 months or so growing period when the new course was handed over to the club.

However as mentioned earlier the club, based on income from members, visitors and functions is operating at a loss and additional staff just could not be afforded.

However the board conceded that the staffing is essential and have approved the employment of an apprentice funded through the capital generated from the land sale. It is hoped that at the end of the two year contract that the new course and facilities will have attracted sufficient new members to make the post permanent.

The decision to fill the post by an apprentice was influenced in no small part by the valuable contributions made by Sam our last apprentice who has now become a key member of the greens team.

We are confident that in two years' time income will be generated from increased membership to fund the post out of revenue but in the meantime a young lad will be learning a trade and gaining essential qualifications as well as the unique experience of assisting in the development of a new course.

After a lengthy selection process we are pleased to introduce the new member of staff to the members.



He is Joshua Berry a seventeen year old who lives in Whitefield and attended Castle Brooke High School

I am sure you join the Board in wishing Josh all the best in his new career.

## CURRENT CONDITION OF THE COURSE

Those of you who know Chris will know that he is fully aware of the current condition of the course and I can assure you he is apologetic and taking full responsibility for the situation.

Has he taken his eye off the ball – probably, with all the other tasks piled on him through the contract management and alterations to the Greens sheds etc. but he isn't blaming that – he shoulders all responsibility and will rectify the situation.

However in his defence :-

- Our course is still in better condition than others in the area.
- Following the spiking of the greens we had an unseasonable dry, hot spell
- Because of the removal of the bulk storage bunkers there was no top dressing to re-dress the greens.
- The irrigation company have not managed the installation and integration of the two systems properly which means irrigation to some of the existing greens has not been available.
- Some of the greens have experienced a particularly heavy infestation of leatherjackets. The traditional chemicals used to treat the problem have been banned and the replacement products are not as effective.
- The need for additional staff was highlighted by Chris and has only just been rectified

However Chris is confident that within a short period the course and particularly the greens will be restored to the immaculate conditions we enjoyed last year and more importantly the high standards he sets himself.

## NINE HOLE COURSE

The nine hole course has been operational for a few months and although there are a few teething problems it is beginning to sort itself out as members get used to the new format. We cannot stress the requirement to ensure the pace of each game is maintained, one slow group holds up the rest of the course and causes congestion on the first / tenth tee.

