



BUCKINGHAMSHIRE COUNTY LADIES GOLF ASSOCIATION

County Captain's Report 2019

My first year as your County Captain has been an interesting experience to say the least.

What stands out for me is the extraordinary workload that goes on behind the scenes to organise the County programme and to liaise and communicate with clubs, ladies' captains, delegates and members.

Our primary task is to support, nurture and promote successful women's and girls' golf at all levels, from the complete beginner to our first team players at national level. Coupled with this, we have a responsibility to ensure the governance of the sport appropriately through correct application of handicaps, rules and course ratings.

I am fortunate to have inherited a hardworking Executive with a breadth of talent and experience. So I will start my report by thanking them all for the support they have given me during this past year.

However, the work is not only done by the Executive Committee. We have a number of members who are prepared to offer some of their time in support roles, whether it is running specific competitions, supporting us with the website, organising the County lunch, being House Mum at County Match weeks etc. I would like to thank Jackie Maher, Glenise Marfell, Delyth Barnett, Cecilia Williams, Katherine Milburn, Anne Terry and Helen Mines publically for their contribution to the County this past year. We could not function successfully without this practical support.

The Executive have all prepared reports for you to read in advance on their areas of responsibility and these have been loaded onto the website. I therefore do not intend to spend a lot of time repeating the details that they have set out for you. I will concentrate in this report on other areas.

Delegates Meetings - we have held four of these since the last AGM. Our aim is to make these enjoyable and informative events for all those attending, using the sessions to discuss one or two topics in some detail, plus any time-relevant business like the Bucks Shield Draw, relegating general updates to written information handouts. We have looked at priorities for a County Business plan, how we might change the Spring and Autumn meetings to attract a larger entry, whether to introduce a Par 3 competition, what would be sensible to have in a new delegates induction pack and feedback on further website developments that would be helpful. As a result, there will be several changes made to our operational activities.

Tony, our County Coach, continues to attend all bar the December meeting, to give delegates a coaching session for an hour before the meeting. From feedback, this clearly adds value to the sessions.

Vice-Captains' Meeting - the format for this year's event was changed to something akin to a parent's evening; different aspects of Executive activity was promoted on different tables and the Vice-Captains' could circulate and spend as much or as little time as they needed at each information point according to their prior knowledge of County matters. This will be repeated in 2020.

County Match Week at Frilford Heath - we had a clean sweep at County Match Week in June, beating all the other 5 counties to score the maximum 10 match points. However, there were several nail-biting finishes as two of our wins were 3:2 and could have gone the other way. Full results are on the website. Lily Robinson was awarded her first team county colours at the end of the week.

National Finals at Delamere Forest GC - my full report is already on the website, but in summary - it was an extremely tough course as befits the National Finals, we had the largest and youngest team, we started slowly but had some excellent victories, beating the eventual winners (Glos) and second place county (Lincs), drawing with Surrey and losing to the fifth and sixth placed teams, ending up 4th on games won. It was an exhausting week but we are all very proud of our team, and aspire to do even better next time. Amelia Curtis and Rosie Bee Kim were awarded their first team colours at the end of the Nationals.

County Champions - I am delighted that Alice Kozlowski (County Champion), Susanna Mitterer (County Seniors Champion) and Grace Rigby-Walden (County Junior Champion) all played in the England Golf Champion of Champions tournaments held at Woodhall Spa over the weekend 6th to 8th September, and all were honourably placed.

Gala Day - it was a new idea to hold a Golf Gala Day, intended to be a fun day, specifically aimed at the "standard" female club golfer. The planning team of Sally Harborne, Susanna Mitterer, Janet Beal, Janette Psyllides (whose original idea it was) and I met several times to tease out what we should have on offer, who to book, where to locate everyone, how we could schedule all the sessions that we wanted to hold, how to promote the event, how to handle the ticketing etc. We are immensely grateful to Gerrards Cross for allowing us the use of the clubhouse and all the practice facilities for the whole day, and to the members who volunteered in a range of on-the-day support roles. The weather was fine, everyone turned up and everyone seemed to have a good time. We were inundated with thank you emails after the event.

Grants - we have been running the grants scheme for two seasons now and so far we have allocated 10 grants, two to adults (for equipment) and eight to juniors (for coaching, entrance fees and travel & subsistence). Up to now we have operated the grants scheme by allocating up to £5k per annum from our reserves. However as Carolyn has indicated in her Finance report, we are looking to review this scheme going forward, with a view to funding future applications from discretionary charitable income, rather than our core funding.

County Lunch - the 2019 County lunch was held at Gerrards Cross on March 27th and attracted some 80 ladies. We had a lovely lunch, a very successful auction of donated four balls, a magnificent raffle table of plants and prosecco (mainly the latter), an interesting talk about Workaid, one of my two charities, and a small quiz based on tasting different types of chocolate bars. I'd like to thank all the clubs who donated fourball vouchers and raffle prizes; it is really appreciated!

Website - the new website was launched in December 2018, so has been operating for ten months now. It has taken us a while to get to grips with how to upload information onto the site without sending it all to Anne Terry, our website administrator, but she has to help some of us more often than others. We are having a review meeting on 31st October, to identify a development plan for over the winter months. Feedback from recent questionnaires through the delegates will assist this process. One particular disappointment to me is that I had personally hoped to make more use of the Newsletter facility for all members who have "opted-in". It will be my New Year's resolution to send out a News Update every month next year.

My two charities - Workaid and Thames Valley Air Ambulance - thank you all for supporting me through the various fundraising activities that occur during the year, mainly raffles at our various events. I have the latest newsletters from the two charities at the AGM. I would like to draw your attention to the Workaid article which clarifies what donated items they can accept (it is much wider than you might expect) and their address/opening hours in Chesham. A Thames Valley Air Ambulance crew were able to attend the Gala Day for half an hour to demonstrate the range of equipment they carry in their road ambulance cars. My speaker for the 2020 County lunch will be from TVAA.

Collaboration with BB&O and the Berkshire and Oxfordshire Ladies Associations - you will be aware that discussions have taken place in the past to explore the appetite for merging into one organisation. There have been no new discussions on this topic in 2019. However, we are developing some joint working arrangements where it is practical to do so; for example, the BB&O Secretary will be handling our DBS checks in future, there is a joint programme for rolling out WHS seminars, we have used the BB&O offices in Thame for meetings on occasion and we will be promoting a new joint competition for the Under 25s in June next year.

Operational Changes made by the Executive during 2019 -

- change of format of Seniors' Spring and Autumn meetings to have two separate but concurrent team competitions (Seniors 50-64s and Vets 65+) and no individual trophy
- change to insurance policies to amalgamate 3 policies into one
- summary of key points of Exec meetings now placed on website
- pop up banners purchased to enhance our visibility when attending different venues
- transportation policy documents have been updated
- Champion of champions knockout - where an individual player belongs to more than one Bucks club and wins both their club championships, she will in future represent both clubs in this competition. The club at which her "home handicap" is registered

should be the one to pay the entry fee and the one at which "home matches" are played

- venue for Bucks Shield Finals - a venue for this event will continue to be booked in advance of the first round being played, so it is potentially possible that the finalists might have a home advantage; however it has been agreed to trial the home and away fixture arrangement for the semi-finals round
- changes have been made to the walkover/player or pairs substitution rules in county knock-out competitions: a beaten individual or pair from a previous round can be reinstated subject to certain timescale rules.
- a Par 3 competition for adult players is being investigated to be held at Wycombe Heights

Club Closures - it is with regret that I confirm that Wavendon and Aylesbury Park Golf Clubs closed during the year, and the membership dispersed to other clubs. This affected over 60 affiliated Bucks ladies.

I started with some thanks and I would like to end with some thanks:

- to all the clubs that give us the use of their courses and their facilities whether for Executive or Delegates meetings, training sessions, an individual match or a large competition and to the Ladies' Captains who support our events on their premises and provide starters and ball spotters; special mention to Harleyford for again hosting our AGM.

- to Tony who is a fantastic County coach, equally happy coaching the younger intermediate golfers, the (generally) older delegates, and the main County teams, and for his support during County and National Finals week in particular

- to all the parents, friends and members who provide transport, caddy for daughters or friends, attend prize-givings and generally support our members

- to you the BCLGA members who come to our meetings, support our competitions and our teams: (they really appreciate the good luck cards).

Gail Sharp BCLGA County Captain
AGM October 2019