



BUCKINGHAMSHIRE COUNTY LADIES GOLF ASSOCIATION

DELEGATES' MEETING MINUTES

BEACONSFIELD GOLF CLUB

Thursday 27th February 2020
12.00 - 13.30

PRESENT	Gail Sharp	Captain
	Janet Beal	Vice-Captain
	Maura Spencer	Hon Secretary
	Carolyn Rivett	Hon Treasurer
	Christine Bishop	Handicap Adviser
	Gilly Stimpson	Competitions Secretary
	Susanna Mitterer	Seniors' Captain
	Jackie Edwards	2nd Team Captain

	<u>Affiliated Club</u>	<u>Delegate/Representative</u>	<u>Additional Attendee</u>
1	Abbey Hill		
2	Beaconsfield	Jan Bradford	Gill Leach (Committee)
3	Buckingham	Liz Harris-Ulph	
4	Bletchley		
5	The Buckinghamshire		
6	Burnham Beeches	Jackie Maher	
7	Chartridge Park	Julie Cassin	
8	Chesham and Ley Hill		
9	Chiltern Forest	Margaret Pitman	
10	Datchet		
11	Denham	Dot Kelleher	
12	Ellesborough	Marilyn Plummer	
13	Farnham Park		
14	Flackwell Heath		
15	Gerrards Cross	Sue Hughes	Glenise Marfell
16	Harewood Downs	Tracy Searson	

17	Harleyford		
18	Hazlemere	Pat Elwell	Karen Scott LC
19	Hedsor		
20	Huntswood		
21	Iver		
22	Ivinghoe		
23	Lambourne	Norma Lee	Gay Clough
24	Magnolia Park		
25	Oakland Park	Carol Messenger	
26	Princes Risborough		
27	Richings Park		
28	South Buckinghamshire		
29	Stoke Park	Anne Worby	
30	Stowe		
31	Thorney Park		
32	Three Locks		
33	Weston Turville	Yvonne Black LVC	
34	Wexham Park	Rose Norey	Janette Marshall LC
35	Whiteleaf	Jenny Masterton-Smith	
36	Woburn		
37	Wycombe Heights		

Due to the bad weather and subsequent closure of practice facilities, the short game clinic had been cancelled.

Welcome Address

Gail Sharp, County Captain, extended a warm welcome to all club delegates, club representatives and new delegates for our first meeting of 2020. Gail introduced Matt Draper, England Golf Partnership Manager (Midlands East) and Sam Clapham, England Golf Club Support Officer (Midlands East) who were attending their first meeting.

1. APOLOGIES

Lynda Hilton	President
Gilly Brewer	Harewood Downs
Sally Anne Wright	Woburn
Dipika Joshi	Wycombe Heights
Caroline Bond	Thorney Park
Sandra Eland	Chesham & Ley Hill
Rowan Revell	Huntswood

2. DISCUSSION TOPIC ONE - HOW TO ATTRACT LADIES INTO GOLF AND INTO GOLF CLUB MEMBERSHIP

Tracy Searson - Harewood Downs

Three years ago I joined the Membership committee at Harewood. When I joined, we had just finished a year in which not one new lady had joined our club. The club could see that there was an urgency to address with declining numbers within the ladies section and ever increasing age demographic.

With this in mind, I started researching what was happening around the world in clubs to see what we could do to address this. This is when I found International Women's Golf Day.

Women's Golf Day, a global initiative, started in 2016, to encourage women of all ages to try out golf on one day in a fun and inclusive environment. Now over 50 countries are taking part in over 500 locations worldwide. Although it is in its infancy, it has had an impact on our exposure as a club and has exposed more ladies to the hobby of golf.

We all know the challenges that women face to take up a hobby like golf. Work and family commitments come first and personal time is of short supply. These things we need to keep in mind when we market golf to our new ladies.

So, using International women's golf day as a springboard, we set about having two free golf taster sessions in June 2018. We attracted around 16 ladies to each one hour session and gave them some putting and range experience, followed by tea, cake and socializing. In that first year we attracted the attention of the BBC. We followed this up with similar sessions in the weeks after that and attracted around 6 to each session.

This gave us the opportunity to introduce some of the ladies to the Academy for golfers who don't have a handicap but are working on improving their skills.

We did the same sort of thing in 2019. In 2020 we are starting earlier with women's beginners golf lessons on the lead up to Women's Golf Day and will make June 2nd our major celebration of women in golf, following on with more free taster sessions in the months to follow.

Any club can join Women's Golf Day online at the cost of \$79. For this your club will be advertised as a venue hosting sessions on June 2nd and you will have access to their marketing material.

You can piggy back their social media material and retweet or repost on FB to gain more exposure.

Women's Golf Day won't do all the work for you but it's an opportunity to use it as a way of drawing attention to your club and to draw women in to your club to try out golf.

I am keen to see more clubs in the Shire use it as the more noise we have in Bucks, the better it will be for us all and for golf. Sharing ideas between our clubs will be beneficial for us all and I hope we can do more of this in the coming years.

Sue Hughes - Gerrards Cross Golf Academy

As an inexperienced but learning golfer, my journey to joining a golf club began where I was invited and then welcomed to an evening especially designed to encourage "newish" golfers looking to join a club. The ladies' captain and members of the club were present, and the structure of the academy system was explained to us. A few taster holes were organised, and we went out to play with the volunteers.

The whole year was a great experience and a wonderful learning curve, not only for the golf but getting to know existing members of the ladies section who were organised to take us out one day a week; with optional times at the weekend where, again, members who could only play at weekends gave up their time too, to take us out and encourage us on our journey. We had rules and etiquette sessions alongside 6 lessons with the pro. I interspersed my golfing experience at 9 hole golf courses near to where I live and went out with friends to play courses.

We were encouraged to put cards in and one year later I achieved a handicap and joined GXGC where I am addicted to the game of golf!

Three ladies were in the academy in the year I joined, and of course firm friendships have resulted from this.

The academy I was invited to was aimed at returning golfers or those with some experience perhaps close to obtaining a handicap of 36 or less.

The most recent academy intake has widened the range of skill and experience to include some who are nearer beginner status. As a result, the current number of ladies in our Academy is 13 (plus 5 men).

This wider version of the academy demonstrates its success and popularity, but it has also brought with it challenges that my year did not encounter. For example, players not always wanting to be escorted but to be able to go out on course alone; golfers with little to no experience of golf finding one year not enough to get them a handicap; the new higher handicapping of 54 leaving us to question how inclusive we are as a ladies section. This has challenged us and of course the existing competitions with their rules and "divisions" for playing games and matches.

Our success has meant we have a thriving academy with many ladies but the majority of whom have struggled get a handicap in the "normal" one year period. Members of the Ladies' Section have been amazing at taking them out on course, but supply and demand have been tested. We are trying various initiatives e.g. an Academy Plus for the academy lady with a handicap of 40 plus; another year to gain experience at academy rates and the opportunity to join the ladies on Tuesdays when we are playing fun competitions.

Our professional has been extremely proactive; not only has he managed the lessons for the ladies as individuals but has provided clinics for group lessons as added learning.

We are a work in progress, and we believe our current ladies will continue to help us shape what we as a club can offer inexperienced golfers in an academy setting on a journey to becoming a full member of a golf club.

One quote mentioned whilst speaking to everyone involved which I would like to share is "you only get out what you put in". Golf, as we all know, is not an easy game, it is technically and mentally challenging, your fitness is also questioned, it is a game made to look easy by those who have spent hours trying to perfect it. Whilst we are promoting the game to encourage membership, we must learn how to manage expectations of our new aspiring players and our integration of them into our "traditional" but hopefully

“changing” golf clubs.

Matt Draper, England Golf Partnership Manager

Matt Draper gave a presentation on the various initiatives and materials that were available from England Golf to support golf clubs. This is distributed with the minutes as a Powerpoint ‘Womens’ recruitment into golf’.

MS

Questions and comments following the presentations

Carol Messenger - Oakland Park

Oakland Park Ladies committee run a ‘Bunnies’ section for new ladies. One lesson per month with the pro, 9 holes played with lady members followed by a discussion in the clubhouse on various aspects of the game. This is proving to be very successful.

Marilyn Plummer - Ellesborough

Ellesborough started their academy in 2013, the pro is active in helping the academy. 13 new ladies joining the academy in 2020. Academy ladies are invited to join the lady captains lunch and other events.

Liz Harris-Ulph - Buckingham

New ladies are offered a package of lessons with transition to associate membership and access to course after 1pm. There is no time limit imposed on achieving a handicap, but she felt that it might be sensible to introduce this measure.

Sue Hughes - Gerrards Cross

The “normal” time to achieve a handicap for academy ladies is 1 year, but this can be extended to 2 years. This, however, is constantly assessed.

Anne Worby - Stoke Park

It would be helpful to create ambassadors to help new ladies integrate and avoid clicks forming.

Sue Hughes - Gerrards Cross

Communications via social media ie a ‘WhatsApp’ group could be very useful.

Gail Sharp - Gerrards Cross

There are some hurdles that need to be crossed to encourage new ladies to integrate into the game, acceptance by the male members being one. Established lady members could volunteer to help new members and there is a specific need to look at helping new weekend players.

Gail thanked Tracy and Sue for sharing their experiences and other club delegates for adding extra ideas. Matt confirmed that Sam and he would be very happy to discuss how England Golf could support any club that wanted to strengthen their female membership.

3. SAFEGOLF ACCREDITATION

Matt spoke briefly on the topic of SafeGolf Accreditation.

This is a new scheme which is being supported by all UK governing bodies that updates previous safeguarding initiatives and covers both juniors and vulnerable adults. It is mandatory for all golf clubs and County Associations to become Safegolf accredited from January 2021. England Golf have produced a wealth of materials to make the accreditation as easy to implement as possible, given the seriousness of the subject matter.

His presentation is distributed with the minutes and he stressed that he and Sam were available to give any assistance needed.

MS

4. **MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 5th 2019 MEETING** - Signed as a true record

MATTERS ARISING

Page 3: Business Plan - The priorities for 2020 have been agreed by the Executive Committee. The Plan will be lodged on the website shortly and emailed to all clubs. The June and September Delegates' meetings and October AGM will provide an opportunity for updates.

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Page 3: New Delegates Pack - this is work in progress

GLS

Page 3: New Par 3 Competition. Entries are now being accepted for this. All details and application forms are on the website

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<https://www.bclga.org.uk/page.aspx?pid=47831>

Page 4: Website. Gail, Janet and Anne Terry met in November and identified some end of year changes that needed to be made. The outcomes from the questionnaires were considered and some changes made to website layout as a result. In particular, the navigation and search facility has now been improved making it easier to access specific items. It was agreed that continuous website training is needed for Executives.

Page 4: Request for Tony's Tips. Following a request from some of the delegates, Tony has now made some video clips which we intend to upload to the website (either in full or via a link). Further information will be in the March newsletter.

GLS

5. **BUCKS CHALLENGE SHIELD 2020 - first round draw**

The first 12 clubs whose names were drawn out received a bye to the 2nd round and they are:

WHITELEAF; WOBURN; BUCKINGHAM; HUNTSWOOD;
HAZLEMERE; LAMBOURNE; WESTON TURVILLE; GERRARDS CROSS;
CHILTERN FOREST; ELLESBOROUGH; FLACKWELL HEATH; CHARTRIDGE PARK.

The remaining teams were drawn to play off in the first round as follows:

BURNHAM BEECHES	V	HAREWOOD DOWNS
OAKLAND PARK	V	HARLEYFORD
BEACONSFIELD	V	STOKE PARK
DENHAM	V	WEXHAM PARK

1st Round home and away matches are to be played between 30th March and 10th May (NB matches home and away can be played in any order).

All information can be found on the website

<https://www.bclga.org.uk/page.aspx?pid=47997>

2nd round matches will be drawn at the Vice-Captains' Meeting on Wednesday 22nd April.

6. **EXECUTIVE AND OTHER VACANCIES**

Gail reminded the delegates that the Executive were all volunteers and the Association

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needs new people coming forward from a broad range of clubs to keep the organisation fresh with ideas and to spread the load.

Upcoming vacancies are for Assistant Handicap Advisor, County Junior Organiser, Honorary Secretary, Course Rating Assessors (Trainees), Competition Organisers and an Assistant Website Administrator.

A handout was distributed with brief details of the vacancies and will be distributed to these minutes.

Detailed 'Job Descriptions' for the Assistant Handicap Advisor and Course Rating Assessor Trainees were handed out and will be distributed with the minutes. We would like to recruit to these roles as soon as possible so would welcome interested individuals to come forward within the next few weeks. Christine and Phillipa would be happy to discuss with any interested individuals before they commit to an application.

Details of the remaining vacancies will be finalised at the March Exec meeting and sent out by email.

MS

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Exec/
MS

7. INFORMATION SUMMARY

The Exec reports were summarised and handed out prior to the meeting and will be distributed with the minutes.

MS

Gail highlighted a couple of items:

Item 8: Midlands South Region Competitions 2020

The Seniors' Championship date and venue are yet to be fixed by the County responsible for them this year.

Item 9: Financial Matters

- **County Grant** - There will no longer be a County Grant scheme available. The Exec will however consider special requests put forward by any delegate.
- **Competition Entry Fees** - there is a small increase in the 2020 entry fees.
- **Affiliation fee increase** - the Affiliation fee will increase from November 2020; this takes into account the loss of income from the sale of County cards but entitles most BCLGA members to a free County Card offering reduced green fee rates on a number of courses throughout the country.

Further information can be found on the following link

https://www.bbogolf.com/county_card_scheme

8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Jackie Maher, K/O's. There has been an encouraging increase in the number of entrants for the 2020 summer knockouts. However, there are still a number of clubs yet to enter their Club Champions.

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Christine Bishop, Handicap Advisor. Christine had communication with one delegate who was receiving a number of 3rd party marketing emails. On investigation it was found that the person had signed up to the Jot Form company as well as BCLGA, and the 3rd party marketing had come through them, not BCLGA.

Gilly Stimpson, Competitions Organiser. Please encourage your clubs to enter the Coronation Medals, the closing date is 1st March. Details on the website

<https://www.bclga.org.uk/page.aspx?pid=47831>

The new par 3 competition has a maximum of 72 players.

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Gail Sharp, County Captain.

Following the change of dates for the County Champs and Seniors Champs, the tri-fold will be reissued and available on the website. Gail expressed her thanks to Flackwell Heath for being so accommodating.

Gail also gave a special thanks to all clubs who have donated the 4 ball vouchers and raffle prizes for the forthcoming county lunch on Wednesday 4th March.

Advance bidding for the 4 ball vouchers is now available on the website

<https://www.bclga.org.uk/page.aspx?pid=47655>

Gail thanked everyone for attending the meeting and with special thanks to Matt Draper and Sam Clapham from England Golf and to Tracy Searson, Harewood Downs and Sue Hughes, Gerrards Cross for their very informative presentations on Women in Golf.

Gail wished everyone a safe journey home.

GLS/MS

9. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING: Wednesday 3rd June at Buckingham GC, Tingewick Road MK18 4AE**
Short game Clinic 13.00 to 14.00; coffee afterwards
Formal meeting to commence at 14.15

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Signed.....Date.....