



**Rappax Road
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November 2008

Dear Member

I am grateful to have this opportunity to write to you to thank you for the support I have received in the time since my election as your captain. There is such a wonderful spirit that permeates the whole Club, a vibrant atmosphere that is noticeable in every area of the Club.

We are indeed fortunate to be served by such excellent officers and staff. There are so many who give their time to running this Club, not just the elected officers but also the band of members who have been co-opted on to committees who all give their time willingly to ensure the smooth running of the Club.

Anne and Mac and their staff provide a standard of catering that cannot be surpassed and the course is maintained to a superb standard by Russell Lewis and his team. Despite the wet summer that we have had to endure, the greens are the envy of many local clubs.

We have also been fortunate to have had the services of Alec Bickerdike as our professional for the last ten years and we wish him well in his retirement. I was delighted with the magnificent turn-out that we had for the recent competition and lunch in his honour. The whole event was superbly organised by the Green Committee and by Anne and Mac and demonstrated very clearly the great regard all members have had for him.

What is particularly encouraging is that whilst many clubs locally are struggling to retain their membership we seem to have no difficulty in finding people eager to join us. We must, however, avoid any measure of complacency and strive to maintain the high standards that we currently enjoy to ensure that that situation continues.

Your Council has recently met to set the subscriptions for 2009 and, in setting the amounts, was conscious of the current economic climate and the effect any major increases might have on the membership. We are keen for members to maintain their playing membership for as long as they reasonably can and we would not wish to do anything that might force members to transfer to non-playing status before they were really ready to do so.

In these exceptional circumstances, Council has agreed to maintain subscriptions at the current levels in 2009. To achieve this, all officers have agreed to do everything possible to prune their budgets and I hope that members will support them in their efforts to maintain our very high standards.

Can I wish you all a very Happy Christmas and a prosperous New Year and I look forward to seeing you all at the many golfing and social activities that are planned over the coming months.

Yours sincerely

Barry Jefferies

Barry Jefferies

CHRISTMAS GRATUITIES 2008

It has become the tradition at Hale that members give a gratuity to show their appreciation of the hard work done by the greens and house staff during the year. The amount is a personal matter for each member but, for guidance, a contribution of £20 would seem appropriate. If you have been a frequent user of the Club's facilities, and benefited often from the services given by our staff, you may wish to offer more.

To make collection and distribution easier, please make your contribution by cheque made payable to Hale Golf Club and post it to the Club or through the Club office letter box in an envelope addressed to Roger da Forno, Assistant Treasurer. Please do not use cash. (If you really must use cash please do not post it in an envelope but give it to any member of Council.) Please do not hand a gratuity directly to a member of staff.

Thank you for your help.

Christopher Wood November 2008

NEWS FROM THE GREEN COMMITTEE, NOVEMBER 2008

Very few people can recall such a wet year although I am told that Oliver Harris had a similarly wet year when he was captain. The course has held up reasonably well and we have managed to run all of the competitions with the occasional re-arrangement. My apologies to members who went out and posted a score only to see the competition cancelled. These things happen and decisions to cancel are never taken lightly.

The Course

We have continued with the programme of aeration and top dressing of the greens. This is starting to produce a firmer surface with a higher percentage of the "right type" of grass. With the wet weather we have benefited from improved drainage but Russell feels we can improve further and produce a faster truer putting surface. It is our intention to continue with this programme and where possible increase the scope of this work.

The new 2nd Tee was finished early in the year. We also brought the new 12th tee into play. Further works have continued throughout the year on this area to produce a second level which will give additional scope for tee placement and the possibility of bringing the men's yellow tee onto the higher level. Should the ladies wish they could also have a tee up the hill.

The two bunkers set in the trees between the 5th and 6th fairways have been filled in. It was planned that two new bunkers would have been constructed on the fairway to replace them. This work has been delayed as the ground conditions have made getting the machinery in and

out of this area difficult. Rest assured, those of you who feel the course is diminished by the loss of bunkers, that we will address this.

The Council agreed that we should commission an outside contractor to put in a new drainage system for the practice ground. Estimates were sought and a contractor appointed. The work was to take three weeks starting at the end of September when ground conditions are usually favourable. The weather once again took its toll and, although a large part of the work has been completed, the contractor was unable to complete the project due to ground conditions. At this time we are waiting for an opportunity to complete this work.

In conjunction with the drainage of the practice ground our own staff are constructing a new practice chipping green at the top of this area. This has been substantially funded by Jimmy Hodson's legacy. In addition, a new flat teeing area immediately to your left as you come down the drive is being prepared. It was anticipated that this work would be much further on by this time. However, we have fallen foul of the weather and ground conditions again. Generally, the delay to these works has made this whole area look a mess for much longer than we would have wanted. Please bear with us - it will be worth it in the end.

There are no major projects planned for this winter. We will work to finish off the above projects and continue with the rolling programme of improving tees and bunkers as time and conditions allow. It is hoped that we can undertake a number of small scale drainage works in areas that have been particularly troublesome this summer. It is also planned that our own staff will replace/improve the main drain that takes water from the practice ground across the 1st and 9th fairways. This will involve some disruption to the fairways and will involve leaving some of this drainage as open ditches in the rough. The purpose of leaving these open is to allow further small drains to be easily laid running into the main channel. These areas will be marked GUR or, if left over next summer, possibly as a hazard.

We planted a good number of trees early in the year most of which have taken successfully. Where they have not survived, the nursery where we bought them will replace FOC for planting this winter.

We would like to continue planting more trees. However, there is no specific budget for this and most of the planting has been made possible by generous donations from Club members. If anyone would like to help us plant trees there are a number of areas and species that we would like to consider for planting. Please contact any member of the Green Committee if you would like to know more about what can be done with any particular donation.

The Professional

As I am sure you are all aware, Alec retired from his position effective 21st November. We held a farewell competition on the 1st November which was fully subscribed and many members who wished to play were unable to get on the list. The lunch held that day attracted 140 people which was a fantastic effort all round, particularly from the Macs who feed us without a grumble. The collection made on behalf of Alec came to a grand total of £3980.00 which he was absolutely delighted with. Alec has been given ongoing courtesy of the course and we hope that he will join us as his joints allow.

In addition, members seem to have been buying early for Christmas, which meant that Alec was able to reduce his stock to almost nothing. This was a great effort by the membership and took a great worry off Alec's shoulders, not to mention the Green Committee's who were not sure what we might be left with.

The process of appointing a new professional has begun. We have been approached by 20 professionals to date who have expressed an interest in the position. This is without the

position being advertised. We have written to all of these applicants outlining the good and bad points of the position and asking them to confirm their desire to be considered and to make their own proposals as to how they might approach the job.

From these replies and in conjunction with the individual CV's a shortlist will be produced and interviews conducted. It is hoped that we will be able to appoint early in the New Year with a start date at a mutually convenient time in March.

In the meantime, the shop will be shut and members will have to make arrangements for essential purchases before arrival at the club. Nick Ryan at Ringway has always been helpful in these matters and will continue to be so.

Al Kenney November 2008

NEWS FROM THE HOUSE COMMITTEE, NOVEMBER 2008

Social Events

The last few years have been characterised by stability and continuity in House Committee matters, with no major projects or disasters to contend with. The challenge has been to sustain and where possible to improve on the high standards which over the years have come to be expected by members of the Club. On the social front the ongoing challenge is to sustain the great traditions which are part of the fabric of the Club, whilst bringing in new ideas and adapting to the changing expectations of the new and younger members.

We are very interested in obtaining feedback from members on the social programme and, to provoke some discussion, the main social events held over the past year are listed below. Please note that not all of these were organized by the House Committee and that a number of informal events, and events organized by the Ladies, Greens or Seniors, are not listed.

<u>Event (and Frequency Years)</u>	<u>No of Attendees</u>	<u>New Event (Last 2 Years)</u>
		(* Events held in the past)
Burns Night (Last Year)	80	
Captain's Announcement	31	
Captain's Dinner	48	
Captain's Drive-in	60	
Captain's Lunch (10)	Ave 10	
Christmas Dance	90	
Christmas Family Lunch	140	
Club Bridge (10)	Ave 64	
Cocktail Party	90	
Dinner to the Captain	71	
Greens Rules Evening	About 80	(New Event)
Improvers' Bridge (5)	Ave 20	(New Event)
Investors' Dinner	98	
Jazz Supper	97	(New Event)*
Ladies Annual Dinner	92	
Ladies Bridge Lunch	100	
New Members' Lunch (Last Year)	44	(New Event)*
May Ball	70	
Mixed Dinner	63	(New Event)
Mixed Roll-up, Summer (5)	Ave 20	(New Event)

Mixed Roll-up, Winter (2)	Ave 18	(New Event)
Mothering Sunday	120	
New Year's Eve Dance (Last Year)	56	
Quiz Night (2)	50, 46	
Race Day	28	(New Event)
Rubber Bridge (2)	84, 88	
Senior's Dinner to Ladies	96	
St David's Day	78	(New Event)
Summer BBQ	About 80	
Sunday Carvery (About 40)	Ave 40	
TNC Dinner (About 45)	Ave 16	
VP Dinner (2)	55, 60	

In reviewing the list of events, and with some subjective assessment of attendee lists, a few thoughts arise:

- 1) Mixed events are growing in popularity.
- 2) Many events are not attracting younger and new members.
- 3) The Christmas Family Lunch attracts both young parents and grandparents and many people are turned away each year. It raises the question of whether more family events should be arranged.
- 4) Bridge functions are extremely popular.
- 5) As a percentage of eligible members, the Ladies' events are particularly well attended.
- 6) With the demise of the Conservative Club, snooker, which has a long tradition at the Club, now has no playing venue.

We would very much welcome comment from members on the social programme (including criticism!) and particularly suggestions or ideas for events which we could include in the programme.

Catering

Much of the success of the social programme is dependent on the work of the stewards and staff and we know that members very much appreciate their efforts.

Clubhouse

Unfortunately, the Clubhouse is reaching a stage in its life where an increasing amount of maintenance is needed and in the past year a number of sustenance projects were undertaken. These included re-decorating locker rooms and the stewards' cottage, external painting, re-covering of dining chairs and replacement of dishwashers and the electric oven. In addition, upgrading of lighting, security systems, computer and telephone systems were undertaken. The boiler and heating systems were also upgraded, and it is hoped that the increased efficiency of the new boilers and heating controls will help to offset the inevitable increase in gas and electricity rates.

The 200 Club kindly donated a new television which has been located in the small lounge, which now allows viewing without disruption of the bar.

There has been a significant change in the waste removal regulations which now require controlled disposal and recycling of waste, with the result that we now have three different types of bins, all emptied at different times, and, of course, at a significant cost. When, as has happened twice, errant parked cars obstruct access by the removal vehicle, chaos arises as bins overflow, the squirrels have a field day, and we are involved in a messy clean-up, and the cost of special removal trips. Please do not park in front of the bins!!

Bar

The bar continues to serve the needs of members, always attempting to satisfy the conflicting pressures of cost, revenue, wine and beer range, inventory costs, opening times and storage space.

We know that members always wish for lower bar prices but we try to ensure that bar margins cover a major part of running the bar and also contribute to the indirect cost of social events. We continually monitor benchmark wine and beer prices at other golf clubs and, with one or two exceptions, our prices are fully competitive.

With the full co-operation of the stewards, bar hours are being controlled within agreed limits. However, bar hours may have to be reduced due to the impact of regulations on holiday entitlements, maternity leave, sick leave and health and safety training.

House Committee

The new system of co-opting members to supplement the elected members of House Committee has worked extremely well and has brought new ideas and energy to the Committee.

KEL 28th November 2008



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November 2009

Dear Members,

I am delighted to have the opportunity to write this letter, as, first and foremost, it gives me the chance to thank everyone at Hale Golf Club for the support shown to me during these first eight months of captaincy. I have been quite overwhelmed by the generosity both I and Jill have received from so many of you.

Very soon after becoming captain, it became apparent to me that the Club is blessed with an exceptional group of Council members, and with a large number of members who assist them, who devote considerable time, effort, and no little skill, in managing the Club's affairs. We are also fortunate indeed to have Mac and Anne and their staff who, week in and week out, look after us in the clubhouse, and to have Russell Lewis (to whom we all offer many congratulations on the birth of Oliver) and the assistant greenkeepers, Dave Blyth, and Dave Taylor, who have consistently provided a course in immaculate condition, such that it must now be regarded as among the best nine-hole courses in the country. I have played in nearly all the team matches this year, and, without exception, visiting teams have expressed their admiration for the course, and its condition, as well as the excellence of the post-match meals.

It has been a real joy to welcome Richard Booth as our new Professional; we are delighted that Elizabeth and the twins are thriving, and wish them a long and happy time at Hale. The fact that, at the time this is being written, I have won more Captain's Challenges than I have lost owes rather more to Richard's golfing abilities than to mine.

The efforts of the Membership Committee under the chairmanship of Ian Goulty have ensured that we now have a full complement of playing members, and a list of applicants for membership, which is a state of affairs that no golf club can now take for granted. I have no doubt that we as a club cannot be complacent, and we all need to be aware of the need to be on the look out for possible members – any organisation needs new blood and Hale Golf Club is no exception.

Your Council has met to set the subscriptions for 2010, and has decided that it can manage with a modest increase of £10 to most subscriptions, making the subscription for a full playing member £855. After much detailed discussion, and consideration of a very impressive paper from the Membership Committee, it has been decided to bring forward a proposal to the 2010 AGM to simplify the categories of membership, for those under the age of 35, in order to assist in achieving the EGU's goal of encouraging more young golfers to play, and to retain those junior members we already have. The proposal will be to abolish the category of student membership, and to restrict junior membership to those under 18 years' old as at January 1st. Under its existing authority, Council is introducing graduated

subscriptions, and entrance fees, for those between the ages of 18 to 35 in anticipation of the rule changes. Details of all the 2010 subscriptions are set out in the list below.

Recognising that the current economic climate may well be causing difficulties in paying subscriptions in one lump sum, Council is now implementing a scheme for payment by instalments. Details of the scheme are enclosed, and if anyone needs any more explanation, please speak to the Honorary Secretary, or to Chris Adams, the Membership Officer.

I wish you and your families a very blessed and happy Christmas, and New Year, and thank you again for all your help and kindness; may Hale Golf Club go from strength to strength in 2010.

Yours sincerely,

John Gower-Jones

John Gower-Jones

Membership Category	2010 Subscription	2010 Entrance Fee
Junior (under 18)	£80	Nil
Junior (under 20y 6m)	£150	Nil
Student	£150	Nil
Country	£150	Nil
Full (under 21)	£150	Nil
Full (21-24)	£215	Nil
Full (25-29)	£430	£430
Full (30-34)	£855	£645
Full (over 35)	£855	£1245
Non-playing	£141	Nil

CHRISTMAS GRATUITIES 2009

It has become the tradition at Hale that members give a gratuity to show their appreciation of the hard work done by the greens and house staff during the year. The amount is a personal matter for each member but, for guidance, a contribution of £20 would seem appropriate. If you have been a frequent user of the Club's facilities, and benefited often from the services given by our staff, you may wish to offer more.

To make collection and distribution easier, please make your contribution by cheque made payable to Hale Golf Club and post it to the Club or through the Club office letter box in an envelope addressed to Roger da Forno, Assistant Treasurer. Please do not use cash. (If you really must use cash please do not post it in an envelope but give it to any member of Council.) Please do not hand a gratuity directly to a member of staff.

Thank you for your help.

Christopher Wood
Honorary Secretary
November 2009

PROFESSIONAL'S CHRISTMAS DRAW

The Professional's Christmas draw will be drawn at the cocktail party on Sunday 13th December and the 1st prize is a fantastic Powakaddy Freeway II with an ultra light weight lithium battery, which normally retails at £699. If you have not yet bought tickets for the draw and would like to participate, please see Richard in the shop. If you can't make it down to the club before the draw but would like to take part, please call Richard on 0161 904 0835 or email him at professional@halegolfclub.com so that he can make arrangements to get you involved.

Richard Booth
PGA Professional
November 2009

PAYMENT OF 2010 FULL SUBSCRIPTIONS BY INSTALMENTS

In difficult economic times the Club has looked for new ways to keep the Club's administration costs down and to help members wherever possible. As a result, the Club is pleased to announce that it is introducing the opportunity for Full (playing) members to pay their 2010 subscriptions by instalments.

The instalment scheme is operated by Fairway Credit which currently administers similar schemes at over 1,000 golf clubs in the UK. In return for a small administration fee, members will be able to spread their subscriptions by either ten equal instalments payable on the 1st of each month from January to October or four equal instalments payable on the 1st of each month from January to April. (The administration/interest fee is added to the subscription and the resulting amount divided by 10 or 4 as appropriate.)

The scheme minimises club administration and financial costs and, if a member wishes, the arrangement can be extended to future years without the member having to sign fresh documentation. (The club simply notifies Fairway Credit of the new subscription amount

when this has been set by Council.) In both cases the club will receive the full subscription in January from Fairway Credit and the scheme is therefore cost-neutral to members not choosing to pay their subscriptions by instalments.

Members choosing to pay by instalments should sign the appropriate credit form with a direct debit authorisation. Blank forms can be downloaded from the members-only section of the Club website (Instalment Application 10 (and 4)), or copies are available on the Secretarial Notice Board. Completed forms should be returned to the Membership Officer, Chris Adams, at the Club as soon as possible (preferably in early December). (The forms need to be signed so this cannot all be done online.) The forms will then be forwarded to Fairway Credit who will process the monthly direct debit transactions.

This instalment scheme gives members a third way to pay. Members may still pay by cheque or by direct bank transfer to the club's subscription account with Barclays. The latter method also reduces the costs incurred by the Club and saves members postage. Last year, the first time this option was offered, over a quarter of subscriptions were paid in this way.

Chris Adams, Membership Officer
Christopher Wood, Honorary Secretary
November 2009

NEWS FROM GREEN COMMITTEE, NOVEMBER 2009

Course

The start of 2009 saw the planting of 45 new trees in various positions but most prominently in between the first and 9th fairways. This provoked a mixed reaction but we hope that the membership can appreciate the reason for the planting and the rationale behind the spacing.

Ultimately, for golfing reasons and for safety reasons, it was felt that the 1st and 9th fairways should be separated as much as possible. This includes the drainage of the left hand rough on the ninth with a view to cutting the 9th fairway much further left. The new trees will eventually mark the outer right hand edge of the rough, and the fairway will run much further left than previously.

The new trees have been planted in such a way that the rough mower can get between them easily and so, although this will be rough, it will be easy to find a ball.

It has been suggested by some members that we might bunch the trees together more, leaving larger gaps between groups of trees. Ultimately this would mean that the trees would have to come further into the 9th fairway or be grouped more closely thus making the ground in between more difficult to maintain. It was felt that neither of these options was acceptable and that doing this would not make any real difference to the view from the clubhouse as had been suggested.

The drainage work to the left of the 9th fairway has now started and the trees that overhang this part of the course have been pruned. The ladies forward tee is being enlarged and we hope that all of these improvements will help golfers to play the 9th hole as it is intended.

There are no plans to plant more trees in this area for the time being however we would like to plant additional trees in the heavy rough to the right of the big mounds on the 1st. These would simply be to discourage the big hitters from deliberately playing down the 9th fairway from the 1st tee. This area is not in play from the 9th tee and for the average golfer is

effectively off the course.

As always there is no budget for trees and we gratefully acknowledge generous donations from Sam Logan and Paul Bramwell. We would be grateful if any members would like to donate towards further planting.

We have continued the programme of regular aeration and top dressing of the greens which is definitely beginning to pay dividends. Many members and guests have commented very positively on the condition of the greens and we intend to continue with this programme. This work takes a significant part of our budget. However, Russell our head green keeper insists that we can improve the greens even further and this is backed up by the independent consultants from the Sports Turf Research Institute.

We have where necessary put in new drains to the front of the 2nd and 8th greens and also across the middle of the 4th/7th green. Although this work is unsightly and reduces the quality of the surface in the short term it will pay huge dividends in the long term and we ask that members bear with us.

We had the opportunity to borrow a trenching machine from Knutsford GC in return for their use of our website template. We used this to put in a number of short drainage runs around the course. We also took the opportunity to put armoured cable from the Harris Hut around the back of the 1st tee to the area by the practice net where we plan to erect a covered practice bay (below).

This winter will see further drainage work where necessary and the continued up-grading of bunkers where possible. The mens' 18th tee will be refurbished along with the extension of the ladies' 18th tee. A hand rail will be put in on the path down to the lower level of the new 12th tee and remedial work on the footpath down from this tee will be undertaken.

Any member who does not feel comfortable going down this path should walk back up from the tee and go around the traditional route to the 3rd tee and fairway.

We have resculpted the right hand hump on the 3rd fairway and hope that this meets with general approval. There was much discussion about this and two definite opinions arose. One was to take the hump out altogether; the second was to leave it alone. As they say, you cannot please everyone all of the time.

Practice Ground

The drainage contract for the practice ground was finally finished in March. This project took much longer than anticipated but it was brought in below budget and the desired effect of a playable practice ground seems to have been fulfilled. We may need to do some additional remedial drainage but we would anticipate that this will be done in house.

The new practice green has been seeded and the resulting grass has already had its first cut. The associated practice bunkers are in the process of being finished and we hope that this facility will be in play by late spring 2010.

The new practice tees have been in play for some months. We expect to do additional work around this area as the retaining timbers have not proved substantial enough. The tees will remain in play for members to practice and for the pro to give lessons.

The new hawthorn hedge planted three years ago on our boundary with the Priory Hospital has come on extremely well. There are a few gaps which will be filled but as this becomes established it should give a much improved physical boundary and be visually pleasing.

Thanks to an extremely generous anonymous donation we have a budget to build a covered practice bay. This will be primarily for the professional to give lessons from during bad conditions. Johnty Fallows has provided design advice and we are currently getting prices for this work which we hope to get underway in the immediate future.

This project has been slightly delayed as we wish to ensure that the visual impact of any construction is both pleasing and unobtrusive.

Machinery

We took delivery of the two new fairway mowers early in the year and they have proved an excellent investment. The two machines look the same however one has 11 blades and is set to cut the fairways, the other has 8 blades and is set to cut the first fringe and light rough. This gives us much more flexibility in the course set up, and it has been pleasing that members have noticed the improved definition of the fairways.

As I have previously mentioned there are additional items of machinery that would allow us to accelerate the course improvements. However, we have no more storage space, and this is now the most pressing item on the greens agenda.

We must also keep an eye on the condition of our existing machinery all of which has a finite life. I mention this only to remind members when looking at the accounts to bear in mind that we have large items of expenditure that may be put off for a while but will ultimately have to be dealt with.

The Professional

Richard Booth started full time in May this year and I hope every member has been into the shop and introduced themselves. If you have not spoken to Richard yet please do: he is extremely approachable and keen to meet all of the membership, which includes the non-players.

So far Richard is extremely pleased with the member's reaction to the new regime. I am sure that there is a honeymoon period and undoubtedly the shorter days will slow things down. However, with the practice ground now in play all year round and the addition of a covered practice/teaching area we hope that he can continue improving members' golf technique throughout the winter.

The shop is stocked with good quality branded clothes and accessories and Richard can order almost anything golf-related with a short lead time. I would urge members to support Richard where possible and if you are making any golf-related purchases at least give him a chance to quote for your business. Don't forget that Christmas shopping can start at Hale GC.

Insurance

Cliff Wright has conducted, on the Club's behalf, a thorough survey of the Club's insurance needs and of the cover required. During these discussions I was reminded that the Club does not carry third party insurance for members who may be involved in an accident which results in the injury of another player. Although this is rare, we now live in an increasing litigious society and members should be aware that they remain personally liable in this event. There are various ways that you can insure yourself for this risk, including low cost golfer's policies, one of which is available by contacting the professional.

Alasdair Kenney

NEWS FROM HOUSE COMMITTEE, NOVEMBER 2009

Another year is drawing to a close, a new Captain has been nominated and the lists are up for Christmas and New Year events.

By most measures the Club is in good shape; the course is in great condition, income and expenditure are broadly in line with expectations, the employee complement is stable, and most importantly membership numbers are being sustained with a pipeline of new members.

From a House perspective, we feel privileged to be part of this favourable picture which is the product of numerous past and present contributors. However, we are not complacent, and recognize that we have not always got the balances right, and are always seeking ways of enhancing our contribution. We also need to consider whether the direction set in 2009 is sustainable in the medium and longer term.

Looking back over the year, although it is difficult to quantify, it is probably safe to assert that more Club functions have been held, and have been better attended than in recent years. This is particularly true of the mixed events such as the Mixed Dinner, Burns Night, Jazz Evening, Quiz Nights, Bridge Evenings, Mothering Sunday, May Ball, Midsummer Party, Race Day, Investors' Dinner, Night at the Oscars. Still to be held this year are the Children's Christmas Party, New Year's Eve Gourmet Dinner, Christmas Cocktails and Lunch and Christmas Eve Lunch. For some of these events we have needed to place a limit on numbers. We have also received strong member support for Friday evening mixed roll-ups, next year to be re-labelled "Club Nights" which will be held monthly, to foster informal golf followed by a casual evening meal.

Against this backdrop, we have faced some criticism for appearing to favour new and often mixed events over some of the traditional men-only events. This sentiment was very much provoked when, against falling attendance over recent years, we gave notice of our intention to cancel the October Vice-Presidents' Dinner. This caused an uproar, in the face of which we re-instated the event, and to prove how wrong we had been, the attendance was the highest we have seen for this event in recent years! Clearly we have not always got the balance right!

We have also been criticised for poor promotion of the Childrens' Christmas Party, which we will improve on next year.

Although the organised events are experiencing strong support, and there is growing demand for use of the club for private parties, it is notable that there are many evenings when the Clubhouse is empty, and the old tradition of dropping down for a drink after work or for a sun-downer has declined. This may be due to changing lifestyles, or perhaps because we have lost some of our "regulars", but it would be nice if we could feel that we could always drop down informally and meet friends for a drink and a chat.

The busiest night of the week for the Clubhouse is generally Friday as it seems to be the preferred night for golfing societies, Club social events, and it has traditionally been used for a number of inter-club matches. Over the past few years there has been a growing concern amongst some members particularly in the early summer months when people wish to make use of the warm weather and increased daylight to play some golf and to relax afterwards in the Clubhouse, that although the Course may be available, the main room in the Clubhouse has been occupied by other events.

A few years ago the House Committee introduced the concept of mixed roll-ups on a monthly basis in the summer months. The objective was to set an evening aside for members singly or in pairs or groups to relax after work on a summer's Friday evening to play a few holes of golf followed by an informal meal, without having to plan ahead or make up teams. To give it some structure a simple golf competition was arranged. A number of clubs have such an arrangement, often combined with the restriction of Fridays for the exclusive use of their members.

With the pressure on Club Fridays, some members thought that the roll-up format was restricting the playing of knock-outs and other friendly golf. For this reason, the concept of “Club Nights” has been introduced into the calendar for 2010 on the first Friday of each month from May to September. On Club Nights an informal meal will be available, either in the main dining room or the bar area, for golfers and non-golfers, the dress code being “smart casual.” The idea for golf on the Club Nights is that the tee will be available for members to play knock-outs or just roll-up for a friendly competition, but this will be developed in consultation with the Green Committee.

It is worth reminding members of the importance of sustaining our dress code without which we rapidly drop down the ranking of golf clubs. **It is the members’ responsibility to ensure their guests, including young adults, are properly dressed.** The code, extracted from the Club Regulations, is as follows:

“Dress Code

1. Dress code on the golf course:

- (a) Gentlemen - Jeans and collarless or sleeveless shirts (including T-shirts) are not allowed. Shorts are acceptable provided they are tailored and worn with long socks (of any colour) or white short socks (but not anklets).
- (b) Ladies - Jeans and sun-tops (with or without shoulder straps) are not allowed. Shorts are acceptable provided they are tailored.
- (c) Gentlemen and ladies must wear proper golf shoes either with spikes or with soft studs. Other kinds of footwear, such as training shoes, are not permitted.

2. Dress code in the Clubhouse and on the terrace:

- (a) Jeans and training shoes for ladies or gentlemen are not permitted at any time except for young children. Collarless or sleeveless shirts (including T-shirts) for gentlemen are not allowed.
- (b) Gentlemen must wear jackets and ties in the main dining room after 7.00 p.m. and at formal events before 7.00 p.m. (including TNC). At Sunday lunches, jackets and ties are preferred but are not essential. At other times, smart casual dress is acceptable. However, in hot weather, the requirement or preference for jackets and ties may be suspended on a particular day if so decided by the Captain, the Hon. Secretary, the Hon. Chair of House Committee or, in the case of a special event, the organiser of that event.
- (c) A different dress code for an official club event or a private party may be specified by the organiser of the event as long as the Club’s high standards are maintained.”

Note that derogation for Club Nights is provided under clause 2(c).

During the year we have supported the lead provided by the Treasurer to work within tight budgets resulting in part from our decision not to increase Club subscriptions. For this reason we postponed expenditure on a number of planned priorities such as replacement of patio furniture (tables were repaired with cable ties and the number of usable chairs is declining), repairs to the Clubhouse roof, replacement of hall carpets and interior decorating. We were also fortunate that we suffered no major costly disasters.

We have however been able to make some necessary improvements including renewal of crockery, cutlery, towels, cottage roof, exterior painting, and CCTV system and have added handrails and ramps to improve accessibility. Uniform shirts for staff have also been introduced.

Regulatory issues continue to impinge on our operations. Our efforts to bring our health and safety system into legal compliance have now stabilized. A fire audit recently confirmed that we are broadly in compliance with requirements. The licensing regime is working smoothly and we are meeting the payments required for Performing Rights. An audit by HMRC confirmed that our payroll systems were satisfactory, although some concerns were raised which the Treasurer very successfully dealt with. The rules covering waste disposal are steadily being tightened, and we are increasingly required to separate out different types of waste which are in turn collected separately. This is increasing our disposal costs and placing a burden on us to ensure that access is always clear for the waste removal vehicles which have different loading systems and come on different days. If access for waste removal is blocked

by parked cars, the removal is aborted for that week, our bins then overflow and the squirrels, birds and rats have a field day. In future, owners of cars parked outside the marked bays will be invited to join the party cleaning up the stinking mess!

Two aspects of the Bar are of great interest to most members, namely the wine list and the prices. Our wine and beer lists are limited by available fridge and storage space, so adding one brand triggers discard of another. For the same reason we cannot justify stocking slow-moving brands. Although it always looks tempting, we have found the logistics of buying supermarket specials to be impractical for reasons of logistics. We try to retain old favourites whilst adding new brands from time to time.

On the perennial issue of pricing, it is important to realize that without the bar revenues, subs would face a substantial increase. We are often asked to introduce a discount pricing system for members, but this would add significantly to the complexity of club management, and as happens at other clubs, the system would usually be bypassed by having members do the purchasing.

And what of the future?

Although the Club is currently very healthy, and theoretically could continue in its current shape for some years, a number of factors will inevitably change over time, and we need to consider them in the longer term.

Firstly, it is a certainty that a number of expensive renewals due to wear and tear will be required in future, although the exact timing is unpredictable. These include club roof, carpeting, dining furniture, kitchen appliances, patio furniture, sewage equipment, lockers and showers.

Secondly, although the clubhouse adequately meets our current needs, members' expectations will inevitably increase over time and to meet these rising expectations, and to remain competitive with other clubs, we will need higher standards of facilities and service. Visits to other quality clubs with a critical eye easily illustrate this point; the size of our kitchen and its equipment is at the limit of its capability, our showers and toilets are just adequate, bar storage and facilities limit our refreshment offering, and bar service and dining areas constrain the flexibility to host more than one event at a time.

Thirdly, regulatory and societal trends will demand changes which will raise challenges for the Club. These include increasing environmental restrictions and costs, concern for security, equality rights.

Most of these long-term issues have a cost implication, but if we put the effort into planning for the long-term, we can ensure that each change we make moves us closer to our long-term objective.

My sincere thanks to the House Committee members for their efforts over the past year: Roger O'Brien, Alan Dewhurst, Mike Kirchin, Ceri Hyde, and the Lady Captains past and future who have fully participated in the Committee; Win Heath, Margaret Sharp and Jane Perks. The Social Sub-committee, chaired by Ceri, together with Mike, Mandy Gilbert and Helen Allott has done a great job of bringing creativity and co-ordination to the social event calendar. Thanks also to Anne and Mac and the bar staff for whom "nothing is too much trouble!"

Ken Lodge

Chairman of House Committee

November 2009

NEWS FROM THE LADIES' SECTION, NOVEMBER 2009

The Ladies Section has had an active and rewarding year. Despite the poor summer only two competitions had to be re-scheduled and there have frequently been more than 50 ladies playing. It is good to see our new members joining in Thursday play and we hope more will be able to do so next season. We would like to encourage everyone to qualify and enter the major trophy competitions next year. The new EWGA Medal regulations introduced at the beginning of the year mean each competition is a separate one and is designed to assist the

life-style of women today. Nine hole competitions will be introduced next year for those who are unable to play in eighteen hole competitions.

The Bell Cup team have had another successful year, reaching the semi-finals which were played at Greenmount Golf Club on very soggy ground on a very wet day. They were beaten by the eventual winners, Haydock Park.

The Handicap, Plate, Friendly and Business Ladies teams have enjoyed their matches against other clubs with some notable successes. The Plate Team reached the semi finals of the East Cheshire Inter Club Shield.

Ingestre Park Golf Club was the venue for our 'Away Day' which was competently organised by Pat Jefferies and Ceri Hyde. The perfect weather and the beautiful parkland course made it a day to remember. In contrast our Exchange Day at Poulton Park began with thunder and heavy rain. However, after a delayed start a small field played 16 holes followed by a delicious buffet meal.

The Open Turkey Trot, now in its 10th year, attracted 43 teams with 23 teams already booked for next year. Well done Helen and Gwyneth.

Mixed teams played in the Open Charity Day raising over £1,000. This, together with other events and generous donations, means that £2,500 has already been paid to NSPCC Childline.

The prospect of using the new 12th tee was greeted by some with relish and some with apprehension. It has been used in non-qualifying competitions and will be played next season. The ladies would like to thank the greens staff for all their hard work in maintaining and improving the course.

The inter-club bridge matches are now underway, organised by Corinne Veitch and Barbara Grant. Thanks to Val Watson and Vanessa Veitch who run the ever popular Bridge Supper evenings and to Sue Holden and Barbara Grant who organise the Ladies Invitation Bridge.

Congratulations to Anne Hellowell on her success as Captain of Captains of Manchester and District Ladies Golf Association and to Win Heath on her appointment as Vice-Captain of Cheshire County Ladies' Golf Association.

The flowers in the clubhouse are admired by members and visitors. Our thanks to Gillian Brogden and all those members who take their turn at arranging, Gillian always welcomes new volunteers, please add your name to the rota.

Ceri Hyde has worked tirelessly on the Social sub-committee and has now been joined by Mandy Gilbert and Helen Allott. We look forward to further entertaining evenings.

Our enjoyment of golf, bridge and social events is due to so many who willingly give their time and energy to the club. To them we are all sincerely grateful.

Margaret Sharp
Lady Captain
November 2009



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November 2010

Dear Member

The Club continues to thrive under the excellent management of the Council, secretariat, treasury and various committees. You will agree, I'm sure, that the course is in superlative condition and that the leisure and social aspects of the Club go from strength to strength.

The membership stands at full complement, which is an enviable position considering the current economic climate and the burgeoning number of vacancies at many other clubs.

All in all, your Club is in very good shape. However, your Council is not complacent and is ever mindful of the need to monitor changing circumstances which may affect our wellbeing.

In setting next year's subscriptions, the Council has taken into account the increase in VAT and other anticipated price increases. The new rates are as below. Your account, payable on 1 January 2011, is appended and prompt settlement is requested.

I wish you and yours a very enjoyable festive season, and a prosperous 2011.

Yours sincerely

John Goodman

Membership Category	2011 Subscription	2011 Entrance Fee
Junior (under 18)	£80	Nil
Full (under 21)	£150	Nil
Full (21-24)	£220	Nil
Full (25-29)	£440	£440
Full (30-34)	£885	£665
Full (over 35)	£885	£1245
Country	£150	Nil
Non-playing	£145	Nil

DOOR CODE AND WEB-SITE PASSWORD

The number used to unlock the doors into the Clubhouse will be changed with effect from **10.00 a.m. on Wednesday 1st December 2010.**

This will only be the second change since the Clubhouse was built and, to improve security, the House Committee think it is time to change it again.

For obvious reasons, the new number – **2003** - will not be advertised widely and should not be disclosed to non-members.

The password for the members' section of the Club's web-site, which is the same as the door code, will be changed at the same time (the username continues to be 'clubmember').

Roger O'Brien
House Committee

CHRISTMAS GRATUITIES 2010

It has become the tradition at Hale that members give a gratuity to show their appreciation of the hard work done by the greens and house staff during the year. The amount is a personal matter for each member but, for guidance, a contribution of £20 would seem appropriate. If you have been a frequent user of the Club's facilities, and benefited often from the services given by our staff, you may wish to offer more.

To make collection and distribution easier, please make your contribution by **cheque** made payable to Hale Golf Club and post it to the Club or through the Secretary's office letter box in an envelope addressed to Roger da Forno. Please do **not** use cash, hand your gratuity directly to a member of staff or combine a gratuity with your subscription payment.

Christopher Wood, Honorary Secretary
Roger da Forno, Assistant Treasurer

PAYMENT OF 2011 FULL SUBSCRIPTIONS BY INSTALMENTS

The Club is continuing to offer the opportunity for Full (playing) members to pay their subscriptions by instalments.

The instalment scheme is operated by Fairway Credit which currently administers similar schemes at over 1,000 golf clubs in the UK. In return for a small administration fee, members are able to spread their subscriptions over either ten equal instalments payable on the 1st of each month from January to October or four equal instalments payable on the 1st of each month from January to April. (The administration/ interest fee is added to the subscription and the resulting amount divided by 10 or 4 as appropriate.)

The scheme minimises Club administration and financial costs and, if a member wishes, the arrangement can be extended to future years without having to sign fresh documentation. (The Club simply notifies Fairway Credit of the new subscription amount when this has been set by Council.) In both cases the club receives the full subscription in January from Fairway Credit and the scheme is therefore cost-neutral to members not choosing to pay their subscriptions by instalments.

Members choosing to pay by instalments for the first time should sign the appropriate credit form with a direct debit authorisation. Blank forms can be downloaded from the members-only section of the Club website (Instalment Application 10 (and 4)), or copies are available on the Secretarial Notice Board. Completed forms should be returned to the Membership Officer, Chris Adams, at the Club as soon as possible (preferably in early December). (The forms need to be signed so this cannot all be done online.) The forms will then be forwarded to Fairway Credit who will process the monthly direct debit transactions.

This instalment scheme gives members a third way to pay. Members may still pay by direct bank transfer to the club's subscription account with Barclays or by cheque. The former method also reduces the costs incurred by the Club and saves members postage. Last year over a third of subscriptions were paid in this way.

Chris Adams, Membership Officer
Christopher Wood, Honorary Secretary

NEWS FROM THE PROFESSIONAL

2010 has been my first full year at the Club and I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the members for their support and encouragement throughout my time here. I am really enjoying myself and Hale Golf Club is a fantastic place to work.

Mark Davin has been my assistant for over a year now and has maintained his amateur status. Oliver Pantoja started at the club in May and is currently embarking on the second year of his PGA training. Both of them do a great job and are an excellent asset to the Pro Shop and, I hope, ultimately to the Club.

We have been working hard with the junior section and hopefully thereby encouraging tomorrow's golfers (and potential Full members) as much as possible. We have been running two coaching sessions on a Saturday (morning and afternoon). In addition, Hale Prep. School students have been coming down for tuition on Wednesdays and Thursdays after school. Forest School has also had some group tuition on Wednesdays. On Tuesdays at 4pm during the season, we implemented a 'juniors on course' programme which acts as a bridge from the Saturday coaching to getting out on the golf course for the improving junior golfers.

The feedback I have received has been very positive about this new initiative. Consequently, because of the increasing numbers of participating juniors, we ran a very successful adult-junior competition in October, which was won by Mark and Samuel Furness beating Lizzy Kenney and myself into second place - I obviously have not spoken to Mark since!! We have five similar events in the diary already for next year so hopefully the junior section can grow from strength to strength. Oli has been hugely enthusiastic in making things happen with the juniors and so my thanks to him for all his hard work.

Finally, tickets are now available for the **Pro Shop Christmas Draw**. The first prize is a Powakaddy electric trolley and many other excellent items will also be won. If you have not yet bought tickets for the draw and would like to participate, please come to the shop. If you can't make it down to the Club before the draw (to be made at the Cocktail Party on Sunday 12 December) but would like to take part, please call me on 0161 904 0835 or email me at professional@halegolfclub.com so that I can make arrangements to get you involved.

Richard Booth
PGA Professional

NEWS FROM GREEN COMMITTEE

Course

The course speaks for itself in that we have had many plaudits and only a few complaints. Russell and his team have worked really hard to present the course in a way that is pleasant on the eye but, more importantly, that plays well. Our programme of aeration and top dressing has been aided by ideal weather early in the year followed by rain, just in time, in the middle of the summer. We have purchased the new tining machine and this has already proved to be a worthwhile investment that will enable us to continue to improve the playing qualities of the course and particularly the greens.

It would be unfair not to mention, in particular, the effort put in by Russell. He is the head green keeper and as such takes responsibility for all the major decisions which affect every aspect of the course. The Green Committee provides broad outlines of what we would like, and occasional specific requests where rough may be too long or fairways too short, but ultimately it is his diligent attention to detail, and his drive, that has given us such great improvements over the last few years.

Many people will point to the generous amounts of money the club has spent on machinery and materials. However, without someone who not only understands how to use these assets and, more importantly, when to use them, or not use them, we would not be in the position that we now find ourselves. We are pleased to report that we have been able to reward this effort through an improved salary package that will come into effect from 1st January 2011.

The Green Committee will continue to bring forward budget and capital expenditure requests, as appropriate, to ensure that we are in a position to produce a playing surface of high quality.

Insurance claim and security

The theft of the Kubota 4-wheel drive truck in March caused us to look carefully at our security and storage facilities. We have beefed up the physical security in and around the sheds and have purchased a second steel container that gives us more options. The alarm system in the sheds has been upgraded and the insurance company have insisted on this being monitored independently of the Clubhouse which means a substantial increase in monitoring costs.

The good news is that, thanks to some diligent work by Cliff Wright, we have agreed a settlement with the insurance company that will mean we can replace this machine, only having to pay the £250 excess.

Water supply

You may be aware that we suffered a major water leak from a breakage in our water pipe between the meter at the top of the road and the club house. The initial bill for this loss of metered water was £30,000. We found the leak and repaired it, and Alan Dewhurst tackled United Utilities and managed to negotiate the charge down to around £1000.

This is the second substantial leak we have suffered, the last one being about four years ago under the car park. The problem is that the pipe work pre-dates the new Clubhouse and is past its useful lifetime. Should we have another leak UU are not likely to be so generous, and we are unable to insure this risk with the current set-up.

We are therefore going to replace the pipe from the top of the drive all the way to the Clubhouse. This will be done, hopefully, before Christmas and will give us confidence in our

supply. The work will be done by a mixture of our own staff and contractors, and will involve some mess and unsightly trenches. We are confident that all damage will be made good in time for the spring when new growth will cover most of the damage.

Winter programme

The construction of the new 13th tee is well under way and may well be finished by the time you read this. The work has been funded by part of the legacy received from Max Sunderland, for which we are extremely grateful. We hope Cynthia is pleased with the result and that members will enjoy this additional facility when it comes into play around April 2011.

The greens staff are working through a long list of the usual winter jobs that revolve around re-working bunkers, levelling tees and improving drainage. We have proposed a number of improvements to the 8th hole, including removing the long rough to the right of the 8th fairway and in its place building three new bunkers. This work will be started just before or just after Christmas. In addition, we would like to have prepared an area to the left of the 8th green with a view to extending this green. However, at this time we have been unable to secure a budget for this work.

Trees

A great deal of work has been done on the trees around the course to improve the air circulation around tees and greens and to improve the golf course, or simply to return it to how it was before years of growth closed off certain shots. We will continue to look at areas where trees need to be cut back or indeed removed and balance this with a continued programme of planting.

On the subject of tree planting there are a number of areas we would like to plant with more trees. In particular, we would like to increase the planting on the hill between 5th and 6th holes, also increase the copse left of the 8th and when possible put in two large oak specimens in gaps along the line between the 1st and the practice ground. As usual, we have the begging bowl out for anyone who would like to donate some money towards this planting. We are grateful to Margaret Sharp who has already picked her specimens and where they are to be planted. If anyone else would like to donate a tree or two please contact me 'day or night'.

Machinery

The Green Committee is very aware that an additional machine has been purchased this year although this will be funded over five years by a decrease in the greens maintenance budget. Nevertheless, the on-going rolling replacement of machines must be considered.

We recently had a failure of the main greens mower which on the rolling plan is now overdue for replacement. This machine is at the stage where it will need substantial money spending on it if it is to continue to function at the necessary level. In addition, we must remember that it is this machine which provides the final finish to our greens. Members should bear in mind that a new machine is likely to cost in the region of £30-35K.

In addition, although we are in a very healthy position regarding machinery, there are always improvements that can be made. We had on trial a 'greens iron' at the end of last season which resulted in a significant improvement in the pace of the greens. This machine has a ticket price of around £7.5K and is, of course, on our wish list.

Buggy policy

This matter is now becoming urgent and we would like to have a firm proposal in place for the beginning of the summer 2011. We have consulted widely and wish to bring forward a robust and workable policy which will satisfy both the needs of disabled golfers and the needs of club members. It should also limit any liability that the club may incur, and of course be user-friendly in relation to the course. This policy is out for consultation before going to Council in January and we would hope to have options in place by April.

Al Kenney
Chairman of Green Committee

NEWS FROM HOUSE COMMITTEE NOVEMBER 2010

This has been another successful year all round for Hale Golf Club and in particular for the many and varied social events which have been held.

Due to the increasing popularity of these events, we often have to restrict numbers and work on a 'first come first served' basis. However, in order to be fair to all members, when booking places for events we are requesting members to indicate the names of **all** members/ guests who will be attending and not just 'block book' a table as this practice will not be acceptable in the future. To help with this we are now giving prior notice as to when lists for the most popular events will be posted on the notice board.

To produce these successful events takes a lot of thought, time and effort (not to mention strain!) and my thanks, on behalf of all members, go to Ceri Hyde and her social sub-committee - Mandy Gilbert, Helen Allott and Mike Kirchin - for their efforts, which I hope will continue for some time to come.

During the year we have introduced new draught and bottled beers and cider, which have proved to be very popular, and managed to squeeze another fridge into the bar area to ensure that the drinks are served at the correct temperature. My thanks to Roger O'Brien for continuing to look after the bar for us.

We have continued with our repairs/ renewals programme including the renewal of the cottage roof (delayed from last year due to bad weather), cleaning the carpets and chairs, replacing some of the lighting, fridges and dishwashers and decorating, to mention just a few.

Over the years we have tried to be prudent with our spending but the time is approaching when we will have to look seriously at replacing large items such as carpets, curtains, dining chairs and tables, lighting and the patio paving and furniture. These are all expensive and if any members feel able to make a contribution towards any of these items I would be pleased to hear from them.

During the last two weeks we have updated the sound system with bigger and better speakers, a new amplifier and more efficient microphones. This will be useful to all members particularly when listening to a speaker – e.g. Quiz Night, Investors' Dinner, Vice-presidents' Dinner, etc.

Most members will have seen the new dumb waiter/ cabinet and coffee machine in the main room and I hope everyone will enjoy this new facility. The sound system, cabinet and coffee machine have been donated by the '200 Club' and I would like to thank Paul Bramwell for its very generous donations.

It is very important that our dress, both on the course and in the Clubhouse, does not fall to

that of many other golf clubs. It is the responsibility of **all** members to ensure that, when inviting family members and guests, of any age, to our Club, they are informed of the dress code and are properly attired. Trainers, jeans and shirts not tucked into trousers are **not** allowed at any time. Members should be familiar with the dress code and for those who are not it is clearly displayed on the notice board and on the web-site.

Finally, my sincere thanks to all House Committee members for their continued time, effort and support during the year - Ceri Hyde, Roger O'Brien, Mike Kirchin, Lady Captain Jane Perks and Lady Captain-elect Pat Shenton. Thanks also to Anne and Mac, all our bar/cleaning staff together with the waitresses who help out at our larger functions.

Alan Dewhurst.
Chairman of House Committee

NEWS FROM THE LADIES SECTION

I begin with sadness, and must record the death of Elaine Rocca.

The Ladies Section is thriving with four new members bringing our playing total to 101 playing members. It is also good to see the new members joining in the new nine-hole qualifying competitions, a good stepping stone to the 18-hole competitions.

The Bell Cup team had a very good year but sadly lost to Sale in the final - well done to the team captained by Gillian Brogdon.

The Away Day was at Llangollen Golf Club, organised by Val Nelstrop and Sue Harrison. The weather was gorgeous and we had champagne on the terrace, followed by a lovely meal. The Exchange Day was held at Knutsford and again we were lucky with the weather.

We have got used to using the new 12th tee, though I think the Bollin has been the recipient of a few golf balls!!

Congratulations to Win Heath on her appointment as County Captain of Cheshire for 2010/2011.

We have started the inter-club bridge matches and so far are successful. Thanks to Robin and Sue Holden who run the Wednesday bridge evenings, which are great fun. Also, thanks to Val Watson and Vanessa Veitch who run the bridge supper evenings, and thanks to Barbara Grant and Sue Holden who run the ladies invitation bridge events.

Ceri Hyde and her team have organised some great entertainment and we look forward to the Gatsby Evening in December. Ceri has also been voted on to the Council for three years - well done Ceri.

The flowers in the Clubhouse always look stunning - thanks to Gillian Brogdon and those members who take their turn at arranging them.

The ladies all enjoy the golf, bridge and social events that result from the effort and time so many give to the Club - thank you all. Last, but not least, thank you to the Macs for all the delicious food they have served us over the summer. The last meal was the Ladies Dinner which was absolutely superb.

Jane Perks, Lady Captain



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December 2011

Dear Member

As I sit down to write this letter, it seems incredible that the world is in such turmoil and, yet, at Hale Golf Club all seems calm.

You are, I am sure, aware that matters within the Club are well looked after. Social functions are fully attended and we are well catered for by the Macs. The course is in great condition thanks to Russell and his team. Our Professional looks after us extremely well, even if he cannot improve all of our golf!

Due to the good stewardship of past Councils and, in particular, our past and present Treasurers, we are in a healthy financial position. However, for a whole host of reasons, we are certain to run a budget deficit this year. To those on Council last year, this will come as no surprise. The decisions taken over the last three years have been to limit the subscription increases and set a neutral budget in the knowledge that we have reasonable reserves. The hope was that the general financial climate would improve and we could then move ahead.

However, economic uncertainties remain much in evidence, whilst fuel and energy costs are still rising. Council together with the House and Green Committee are looking at costs closely and savings are being made, wherever possible.

Council has agreed and set the subscriptions for next year as outlined below. The non playing subscription has been raised more in percentage terms to reflect the actual costs of running the Clubhouse and I hope that this is felt to be fair. Your account will be e-mailed to you separately and is payable on 1 January 2012. Early settlement would be welcome.

In conclusion, I would like to thank all members for the many kind things said to and done for me this year and may I wish you and your families a Happy Christmas and a prosperous New Year.

Yours sincerely

Al Kenney

Captain

Membership Category	2012 Subscription	2012 Entrance Fee
Full Playing (over 35)	£925	£1245
Full Playing (30-34)	£925	£645
Full Playing (25-29)	£460	£430

Full Playing (21-24)	£230	
Full Playing (under 21)	£160	
Country	£160	
Junior (under 18)	£90	
Non Playing	£160 (inc VAT)	

Christmas Gratuities

It has been the tradition at Hale that members give a gratuity to show their appreciation of the hard work undertaken by the greens and house staff during the year. The amount is, of course, a personal matter but, for guidance, a contribution of £20 would seem to be appropriate. If you have been a frequent user of the Club's facilities, and often benefited from the services given by our staff, you may wish to offer more.

To make collection and distribution easier, please make your contribution **by cheque only**, made payable to Hale Golf Club, and post it to the Club or through the Secretary's office letter box in an envelope addressed to Roger Da Forno, Assistant Hon Treasurer. Please do not use cash, hand your gratuity direct to a member of staff or combine a gratuity with your subscription payment.

Cliff Wright
Hon Secretary

Payment of 2012 Full Subscriptions by Instalments

The Club will continue to offer Full (playing) members a scheme to pay their subscriptions by instalments operated by Fairway Credit.

In return for a small administration fee added to the subscription amount, members are able to spread the combined charge over either ten equal instalments, payable on the first of each month from January to October, or, four equal instalments, payable on the first of each month from January to April. The Club receives the full subscription in January from Fairway Credit and the scheme is, therefore, cost-neutral to other members.

Members wishing to pay by instalments for the first time should sign the appropriate credit form with a direct debit authorisation either downloaded from the members-only section of the Club website (Instalment Application 10 or 4), or from copies on the Secretarial Notice Board. Completed signed forms should be returned to the Membership Officer, Johnny Yates, at the Club as soon as possible and before 15 December. These will be forwarded to Fairway Credit who will process the monthly direct debit transactions. Members already using this method will be contacted individually to confirm renewal.

This instalment scheme gives members a third way to pay. Members may still pay by direct bank transfer (preferred method) to the Club's subscription account with Barclays or by cheque. Direct bank transfers reduce the costs incurred by the Club and saves postage.

Cliff Wright
Hon Secretary

News from Green Committee

Membership of the Greens Committee

There are 8 members of the committee including 3 ladies and 5 gentlemen.

Chair: Chris Davies; **Council members:** Mandy Gilbert, Paul Simpson and Robert Spark

Co-opted members: Barbara Spark [ladies competition secretary], Tiff Fielden, Dave Smith and Brian Greenbank.

We are also working closely with Ron Skilling and his conservation team.

Future Developments and Strategy

The course remains central to our role as we move forward into 2012. However, in the light of current thinking and issues of equality, the committee is seeking to represent all members of the club and integrate the use of the course and competitions under one organisation.

We are also looking more strategically with course developments, machinery plans, infrastructure and administration. Medium and long term planning are essential for both Greens and the rest of the club particularly in the current financial climate.

Finally, we are considering the role of conservation and environmental management in relation to future course changes.

The Course

Russell and his team have maintained the course in excellent condition and we continue to receive very positive comments from members. A testimony to their efforts is that we are still on the main greens in late November! We are fortunate to have Russell as our head green keeper and we should like to formally thank him and his team for their work this year.

Our main summer project was to repair the river bank beside the 5th Green. I am pleased to report that this was carried out successfully by our green staff for less than £6000, [between 25% and 50% of the cost of various external quotes]. We are now working to stabilise the riverbank further with suitable vegetation.

In the light of the current financial situation we have not embarked on any major projects for this winter's greens program. We have sought to consolidate the course improvements and make interim changes to the bunkers on the 8th and the area around the green. General repairs will be made and Russell will be working with our conservation team.

Early next year we shall engage the services of a course architect who will produce a report of the whole course. This will help plan future developments and shall be available to the membership.

Machinery

The main greens mower was replaced this year at a cost of £26K. Our machinery stock is now relatively new and in good condition although the rough mower is likely to need replacement in 2013.

We hope to purchase a "greens iron" early in 2012. This has been trialed on a number of occasions. Although this will improve the speed of the greens, the main benefits are reduced top dressing requirements, reduce wear on the greens mower and smoother greens after tining and top dressing.

Buggies

We are pleased to inform members that the club has purchased a single seater buggy that can

be hired out for 9 or 18 holes. Initially, due to logistical problems with storage, the buggy has only been available between 8am and 3pm Monday to Fridays. However, we shall shortly take delivery of a metal shipping container that will be used solely for buggy storage. This will be sited near the bin area adjacent to the compressed air cleaner.

The buggy is intended for those members who struggle to play 9 or more holes due to a temporary or permanent disability. It has already been used regularly by a member who has provided very positive feedback.

Members are invited to write to the Chairman of Greens with evidence of why they might need the use of a buggy. A buggy protocol and associated documents are available from the Professional Shop and will shortly be published on the club website. Members wishing to use a buggy in club competitions will need the club disability certificate signed by their GP.

Conservation and Environmental Matters

I am pleased to report that one of our newer members, Ron Skilling, has produced an excellent discussion document on the “Conservation and Environmental Management” of Hale Golf Course. This has been uploaded to the “News from Greens” in the members section of the club website. He has considered the management of invasive plant species on the course including Himalayan Balsam, Rhododendron, Rosebay Willow Herb and Giant Hogweed. He has also discussed the management of the river banks including the recently repaired area on the 5th. He believes that further course developments should also consider habitat diversity with water or wetland features and areas of wild flower meadow. Finally, the club should consider initiatives to conserve and capture water, compost waste from the course and the club kitchens and increase the use of renewable energy.

Ron has already worked with Peter Twist our expert bird member and Don Watson who has constructed 12 bird boxes. These have been placed around the course in the last few weeks.

Ron has also met with representatives from the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers and Redrose Community Forest [the woodland beside the Bollin is apparently part of it]. We should be able to receive help and potentially some grants for future work.

He is assembling a team of volunteers who will work with Russell and the green staff on projects that have been agreed by the Greens Committee. They have already started on a partial clearance of the rhododendrons beside the 3rd tee. This will allow natural regeneration of the native woodland. I should like to encourage other members to get involved by contacting Ron.

Competitions

The Greens Committee is working with the Ladies Section to integrate ladies’, men’s and mixed competitions under the auspices of the committee. This will then be delegated to the respective ladies’ and men’s competition secretaries. We believe this will lead to closer cooperation and coordination of all competitions and a more efficient use of the course.

We are particularly keen to develop Finals Day in September. We should like to encourage the involvement of more club members by having a member’s 9-hole competition in the morning followed by lunch and the finals of **all** the knockout competitions in the afternoon.

Communication to Members

I have welcomed the opportunity to report back to members on the activities of the Greens Committee. It is important that members are aware of course developments and initiatives. We have placed regular “News from Greens” bulletins on the Course notice board although I

understand from members that this is the best place for notices **not** to be read! I should welcome feedback from members on this matter and in the meantime we shall place more information in the members section of the club website.

Chris Davies
Chairman of Greens

News from House Committee

We have had another successful year all round at Hale Golf Club. Most members will have seen that we have redecorated the dining room which has made it much brighter and lighter.

It is our intention to decorate the lounge bar, TV/card room and also behind the bar area in January. This will take place from Monday 16th to Friday 27th of January, during which time both rooms will be CLOSED to all members. Although the dining room and bar will be open as usual for these two weeks, there will be some inconvenience to all members and guests as it will not be possible to move between the cloakrooms and the dining room without going outside. Notices to this effect will be clearly posted during these two weeks.

Also in January, we will be installing a new EPOS system - (new tills to you and me!). This will mean that, when buying drinks, food etc, you will receive a detailed receipt showing what has been ordered and the cost of each item. It will also be possible to run a "tab", which can then be settled either by cash, as at present, or by Debit Card. Please note that CREDIT CARDS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.

The system will also provide financial information for the Treasurer, help with stock control, detail staff hours worked etc. and a lot more besides. Once the new tills are installed, there will have to be some staff training and it is hoped that the system will go 'live' on or about 30th January.

Adam Hyde, who has been co-opted onto the House Committee, has put in a tremendous amount of work on this new system and will oversee the installation and then continue to monitor it and look to add extra function in due course. On behalf of all members, I would like to thank him for all his hard work so far and welcome him to the Committee.

On the social side, we have had another year of splendid events which have all been well attended and, in some cases, have been over-subscribed, resulting in reserve or waiting lists. This is a sign of a healthy Golf Club and also points to our very good social committee, under Ceri Hyde, who organise the events and do a tremendous job on our behalf. I would like to thank Ceri and her committee for their hard work.

As I mentioned last year, we are reaching the point where we need to replace large items such as carpets and dining chairs and the patio and furniture, as well as install low energy lighting. I hope that next year we will be able to undertake at least one of these jobs.

I have to mention again the Hale Golf Club dress code. It is very important that our dress code, both on the course and in the Club House, does not fall to that of many other Clubs. It is the responsibility of ALL members to ensure that, when inviting family members and friends of all ages to our Club, they are informed of the dress code and to see they are properly attired before entering the premises.

Trainers, jeans and shirts not tucked into trousers are NOT allowed at any time. Members should be familiar with the dress code and, if in any doubt, there is a copy clearly displayed

on the notice board.

Finally, my sincere thanks to all House Committee members for their continued time, effort and support over the year - Ceri Hyde and her social committee, Roger O'Brien for looking after the bar, Mike Kirchin and Lady Captain Pat Shenton. Thanks also to Anne and Mac and all our staff for their hard work during the year.

Alan Dewhurst.
Chairman of House Committee

News from the Ladies Section

So far, the 2011/12 Golf season for Hale Ladies has been a very interesting, active and enjoyable one, largely backed up by glorious weather conditions with a full field of players for each of the competitions and quite a good response to the Lady Captain's Challenge to reduce handicaps during the season! There is no doubt in my mind that the Ladies of Hale demonstrate a vibrancy and enthusiasm for golf and related activities that is unique to this Club.

In March, at the start of the season, the 'Drive In' was a very special event with both Mr Captain and Lady Captain 'driving off' followed by a very enjoyable lunch with members of the Club in attendance.

During the early part of the season the Ladies Section Committee made great efforts to define their roles and responsibilities and a 'New Members' Handbook was designed to keep ladies up to date with the structure and management of all aspects of the Golf Club.

We were very proud to support Win Heath as Cheshire Captain for 2011 and also in her role as Chair of the Cheshire Partnership Academy. Unfortunately as a 9 Hole Course, Hale was not able to host the Cheshire County Ladies Championships but assisted Ringway Golf Club in supporting this event in April. Participants had a glorious week with good results from which they were able to choose their County Team for the Northern Tournament, which took place in Lytham St Anne's early in June. We were very proud of the fact that Tiffany Fielden entered the competition this year; hopefully there may be others who can join her next year.

Hale was able to host the Cheshire Girls' Junior Championships early on in June. It was another glorious day and a number of Hale Ladies attended and helped out with the day's activities and were subsequently treated to some exceptional golf by 15 to 18 year olds. The day also provided opportunities for our own Junior Girls who did not yet have a handicap, to participate in a Competition. It was a very successful day, firmly acknowledged by the President and Captain of Cheshire.

With regard to team match events, a significant number of matches have been played by the Handicap, Ladies Plate, Friendly, Liz Wilson Shield, Business Ladies and Scratch Teams. The cycle of Handicap matches has now come to an end and unfortunately, despite some very successful competitions with other Cheshire Clubs, Hale did not qualify for the quarter finals – missing out by half a point. Hale came 3rd in the Scratch League; reaching the quarter finals but losing to Stockport in the Business Ladies competition and were knocked out of the Liz Wilson Scratch Tournament in the second round. Members of all teams are looking forward to competing again next year.

Unfortunately, this year, Hale lost 4 and 3 to Haydock Park in the first round of the Bell Cup in April. As the very first match of the season it was closely fought against a significant

number of their players off 5/6/7 Handicaps. 3 pairs played down the 19th! However, towards the end of the playing season in September, Tessa Day and Barbara Spark achieved a fantastic win at Delamere by claiming the Cheshire Doris Chamber Cup, which was especially gratifying as it was achieved during Win Heath's year as Captain.

By tradition, Hale Ladies support one Charity a year. This year it has been 'Guide Dogs for the Blind'. We have had a number of visits from Carly (a fully trained dog) and Shadow (a puppy). A number of events have taken place including the 'Royal Hale County Dog Show and Lady Captain's Charity Golf Tournament' ably led by Sue Holden and Janice Moss respectively and including husbands and many volunteers – a great success! Also, two Lady Captain Bridge Drives (even though LC does not play bridge!) have been managed and led by Sue Holden and Barbara Grant with generous contributions towards the Charity Fund.

In April, Richard Booth, Janice Moss and Lady Captain ran a very successful rules and etiquette session for Ladies who had joined the Club over the last 2 years.

Three Bank Holiday Frolics took place in April, May and August managed by Win Heath, Corinne and Andy Veitch, Joyce Fisher and Di Done. All the events very well attended and produced some interesting scores!

The Mixed Foursomes in April, managed by Janice Moss, was a great success. The flowers and 'exceedingly good cakes' were provided by Mr Captain's wife – a real treat! For the Visitors' Day in May the Club House was full of Ladies from other Clubs who thoroughly enjoyed good weather, good golf and the usual exceptional food! At the end of May, the Victory Cup went ahead with the Ladies outshining the gentlemen on this occasion!

The Away Day in June managed by Win Heath and Corinne Veitch took us to Abergele and turned out to be an excellent venue for golf and a magnificent opportunity to take in the sea air! A first for the ladies was a 3 day visit to Stratford to play golf at the 'Welcome Hotel' managed by Trina Walsh and Val Nelstrop... definitely a follow up next season! The month was rounded off with a successful exchange day with Withington.

Mr Captain's day was a huge success on and off the field and we were again provided with 'very special cakes' for tea! Lady Captain's day was also treated to a wonderful sunny day, a good 'turn out' from the lady members and the opportunity to enjoy a leisurely afternoon tea.

Ceri Hyde and her team of ladies have kept us well entertained with a host of social activities including Drama/supper with Martin Oldfield performing 'Pierpoint'; Nine and Dine'; Mixed Club Night Party featuring 'Elvis Presley' + disco; Summer Meeting Barbeque Hoe Down' with live music & BBQ, Investors Dinner; Guest speaker/Dinner - Sheila Dibnah; Race Day at Bangor on Dee (Led by Alan) – and still more events to follow!

I would also like to thank Judy Anderson for leading a large team of helpers in running a very successful Open Turkey Trot Competition in October which has now become one of the most popular events in the region. There is already a waiting list for the competition in September 2012.

During September, Hale Ladies decided to support the proposed merger between The English Golf Union and The English Women's Golf Association to create a single National Governing Body for amateur golf in England, called England Golf. This decision has now been verified and will come into force in January 2012. This development and the knock-on effect of the Equality Act should provide us with some interesting opportunities for discussion relating to our own development at Hale during 2012 and beyond!

In November, Win completed her year as Cheshire Captain and is now Cheshire's Immediate Past Captain for which there is still a tremendous amount of work to accomplish. Along with

her role as Chair of the Cheshire Academy Partnership we all wish her the best for 2012.

Sadly, the death of two leading characters in the Golf Club has taken place during the season. Anne Hellowell will be remembered for her invaluable contribution as Secretary and Lady Captain to Hale Golf Club and President to Manchester and District Golf Association. Sylvia Fish, aged 94, was the oldest playing member at Hale Golf Club and was Lady Captain in 1981. She was such an example to us all, both on and off the golf course. Both are greatly missed by all lady members.

Finally, my thanks to a very supportive and dedicated Ladies Committee who give a great deal of their time and effort to ensuring that the Ladies of Hale are enjoying the various competitions and activities that are part of the fabric of Hale Golf Club. I wish all Club members a very Happy Christmas and a very healthy and prosperous golfing season for 2012.

Patricia Shenton, Lady Captain

News from the Professional

Well I have been at the club for over 2½ years now and my daughters are nearly the same age – time is flying! Thank you again to all the members for their support and encouragement over the past 12 months and for making Hale Golf Club such a great place to work.

My assistants, Oliver and Mark are doing well. Over the winter they will be doing less hours as things quieten down. Mark remains an amateur and plays his golf at Ashton on Mersey GC. Oliver passed his second year PGA exams over the summer (just one more year to go) and also won the Sue Wright Memorial Assistants competition in July so congratulations on both counts.

The junior section is still growing strongly. We ran 4 adult junior competitions this year (sadly the last one was cancelled due to some lousy weather) and Lizzie Kenney won the Order of Merit for consistency over the season. Well done Lizzie – good to see you playing far better golf than your father during his captaincy year! We continued the midweek lessons for Forest School and Hale Prep, coaching approximately 35 children from Hale Prep alone per week over the autumn term. Many thanks to Anne Webster for all her fantastic work organising this. Junior coaching on a Saturday and some on-course, after school sessions on Tuesdays continue to be well supported. Finally, congratulations to Lucy Daynes, Adam Laitt and James Scott for getting their first handicaps this year. They have come through the junior programme so we are delighted with their progress.

The club ran a Pro-Am this year in June which was a great success. Everyone who took part really enjoyed it and we were lucky with the weather. The Professional course record was broken with a 64 by Freddy Valenti from Pryors Hayes GC (I can only assume it was the chairman of greens helping him out by reading his putts for him!!). On the subject of course records, Tom Griffiths broke the amateur course record in the summer meeting with a 65 which included a hole in one. Many congratulations Tom. Both scorecards are on display by the Secretary's Office should anyone want to compare and contrast with their own rounds!

My golf this year has been steady with some decent finishes but no wins. I came 2nd in the Manchester Alliance Pro-Am in May but really shone when I recruited a decent partner, namely Tiff Fielden. We came 2nd in the Hancock Trophy run by the Manchester Alliance at Sale GC in October. We had 37 points playing mixed foursomes, which was very respectable. So we'll try again next year in a similar competition held next February.

The teaching hut is now in full working order and will enable coaching to continue through the cold, wet winter. I have video equipment in there now so there really is no excuse for not taking lessons and starting that journey of improvement! On the subject of touting for business, the Christmas Draw is now up and running so please pop into the shop and get your numbers when you are next at the club. Also there are lots of Christmas present ideas in the shop for your loved ones. If you are struggling for inspiration, how about a voucher which could be spent on lessons, merchandise or both!! Finally, Mac, Anne and myself are running a 9 hole shotgun competition teeing off at 10am on Christmas Eve with bacon butties and Pimms before you play and prizes for the winners afterwards. Please see me to sign up.

So it just remains for me to wish you all a wonderful Christmas and good golfing for 2012.

Richard



December 2012

Dear Hale Golf Club Member,

As I look out of the window of the golf club across the 9th/18th green towards the oak tree and the view beyond on, for once, a bright sunny morning, I am reminded again how lucky I am to be a member of this great golf club.

It has been the wettest year for 100 years and yet we have been able to play the course virtually without interruption all year. Our thanks for this must go to Russell and the green staff for their efforts throughout 2012. The compliments, like the rain, keep pouring in from guests and visitors and I believe that the course has never been better!

Richard Booth is a great asset to Hale Golf Club. His cheery disposition is always welcome when I arrive at the club as he helps me effortlessly move from work stress to golf heaven (place not ability!!).

Things in the clubhouse are also buoyant. Social functions continue to be oversubscribed and the Macs play a large part in making our time at the club so special. Their efforts, along with the entire bar and catering staff, are greatly appreciated.

I said at the start of my year that this would be a year of austerity at HGC. This has been the case and I have seen many examples of cost savings from both House and Greens. The Treasurer with Council's approval has constructed a budget for 2013 which is robust and carries this theme forward. The subscriptions are outlined in the table below. Your account will be e-mailed to you separately and is payable on 1 January 2013. Early settlement would be welcome.

During what has been an Olympic year for me in more ways than one, I would like to thank everyone for the kind words and deeds that have made 2012 a truly memorable year. As the festive season approaches, I would like to wish you all a happy Christmas and a peaceful and prosperous New Year.

Kind regards,

Mike Kirchin.

Captain

Membership Category	2013 Subscription	2013 Entrance Fee
Full Playing (over 35)	£945	£1245
Full Playing (30-34)	£945	£645
Full Playing (25-29)	£470	£430
Full Playing (21-24)	£235	
Full Playing (under 21)	£170	
Country	£170	
Junior (under 18)	£90	
Non Playing	£170 (inc VAT)	

LADIES SECTION SEASON 2012

In spite of inclement weather for the whole of the season, the Ladies Section managed to complete their competitions successfully. For some reason Thursdays seemed to be rain free, but obviously conditions had a negative effect on the scores. The competition scratch rarely moved above 73 and, as a consequence, there were few reductions in Handicap.

The Bell Cup team managed to get to the quarter finals of the competition but sadly met strong opposition from Ashton under Lyne and the run ended there. We are very grateful to the team for the dedication and commitment they have given us through the season. Many of them are Business Ladies but are always ready to take part. Win Heath won the prestigious Margaret Sangster Salver (Silver Division). Congratulations all round.

We had a successful exchange with Portal and enjoyed the change of scene and the challenging course. The Away Day to Vale Royal was on one of the few hot days of the year and again very challenging.

The Open Turkey Trot took place on October 12th. It was full with 45 teams competing. It is always a sell-out, thanks in part to the organisational skills of Judy Anderson and her team and the catering of Anne and Mac. Next year's fixture is also fully subscribed. The monies collected are spent on prizes and expenses, the remainder going into the Ladies' funds. £260 was also collected for the charity raffle.

The charity this year is Help for Heroes. We have so far raised over £2,000 with one more event to come. The support and generosity has been overwhelming. A visit from Group Captain Andrew Monaghan shed light on the medical care offered in Afghanistan and the remarkable recovery made by injured troops who come to his hospital. Help for Heroes concentrates on after care and rehabilitation and is a very worthwhile cause. I am delighted to be able to send such a large cheque from the Ladies Section.

We look forward to a relaxed winter programme trying out the new stroke indices and tee positions. I have to congratulate the Greens staff for their efforts in keeping the course open. So many of our visitors have commented on the perfect greens and the course generally, and we do appreciate their hard work.

The outcome of the Sub-committee's report on Equality is awaited with interest. Hale Golf Club has always been egalitarian and there is a strong rapport between the two sections. With our healthy membership and sense of friendship we can anticipate a bright future.

**TRINA WALSH
LADY CAPTAIN**

GREENS COMMITTEE REPORT TO MEMBERSHIP

Membership of the Greens Committee

There are 8 members of the committee including 3 ladies and 5 gentlemen.

Chair: Chris Davies; **Council members:** Mandy Gilbert, Paul Simpson and Andy Gething

Co-opted members: Tessa Day [Ladies competition secretary], Tiff Fielden, Dave Smith and Stuart Lang.

We are also working with the conservation team.

Future Developments and Strategy

The Greens committee have recently produced an analysis of course usage that was presented to council at the end of November. This has demonstrated that the course is used less than 30% of the time available for competitions, matches and roll ups. This leaves more than 70% time for social golf and for knockouts. The Secretariat and Greens have developed a new Google calendar that will detail time available on the course and also include social events. This will be available on-line, as a paper copy in the club house and also electronically to members individually in the New Year.

We now have a course architect's report and have developed a rolling programme of course developments and improvements based on his recommendations. We also have a strategy document that details the present, medium and long term planning for the course and surrounds. Greens are working to their budget and have made savings that have enabled us to proceed with our winter programme.

Finally, we are continuing to work with the conservation group on the environmental management of the course and the club land.

The Course

Russell and his team have maintained the course in excellent condition despite the dreadfully wet conditions that have prevailed this year. We continue to receive very positive comments from members and guests although the rain has encouraged luxuriant and thick rough during the summer! Despite the conditions, we are still on the main greens in late November! We are fortunate to have Russell as our head green keeper and we should again like to formally thank him and his team for their work this year.

This year's winter programme is concentrated on the completion of the 8th hole and bunker changes to the 4th and 7th holes. We shall also be building a new 6th tee for ladies in the New Year.

Following settlement, the new part of the 8th green has already been re-laid and the humps to the left of the green entrance have been refashioned and extended to the left of the new section of green. The recent natural pond to the left front of the 8th will be drained and the associated drains unblocked. A bunker will be built in this area and bunker repairs and refashioning will be carried out on several of the other existing bunkers.

Bunker changes will also be carried out on the 4th. In particular, the right front green bunker will be moved to the right making the approach from shorter distance much fairer.

Subject to time and finances, work will also be carried out on the front bunkers of the 7th. We also hope to drop the approach to the dip to improve the natural vista of the hole.

Signage on the Course

Now that we have a clear strategy for the development of the course, Greens are keen to resolve the issue of stroke indices for both the ladies and the men. However, this will require the replacement of the tee signage and could ultimately mean the replacement of up to 36 signs in the long term. We are actively considering all options including the controversial option of subtle sponsorship as the cost of replacement could be between £5,000 and £10,000 pounds.

We have also purchased some marker discs to be placed at 100 and 200 yards on the relevant holes on the course. These will appear in the spring.

Machinery

The Greens Iron arrived from Canada at the beginning of the year and Russell has been very pleased with its capabilities. Despite the weather, it has improved the speed of the greens,

reduced top dressing requirements, reduced use of the greens mower and resulted in smoother greens after tining and top dressing.

The rough mower is soon due for replacement at a cost of around £35K. However, Russell hopes that our current machine will remain reliable for another year. We are however not complacent and have already identified a suitable replacement, if necessary and have been looking at competitive quotes from our suppliers.

Conservation and Environmental Matters

The conservation group has gone from strength to strength. Their volunteer group is working regularly on the course on a number of projects. The vast majority of the rhododendron to the left of the 3rd has been cleared. The 12th tee bank is being cleared and prepared for planting. A wild flower meadow has been trialed on the 8th and the 6th although was adversely affected by the weather and the bird life. Willow has also been planted in different ways on the banks of the Bollen on the 3rd to try and protect the banks.

However, by far the greatest efforts of the conservation group have been directed at the Himalayan Balsam in an attempt to prevent further spread of this invasive plant. The Balsam grows rapidly each summer at the expense of other natural indigenous plants leading to loss of fauna and damage to the riverbanks and local environment.

The conservation group plans to send out a Christmas newsletter that will provide more details of their activities. Greens would like to extend their gratitude for the great efforts of the group and their volunteers throughout this last year.

Competitions

The Greens Committee has integrated Ladies', Men's and Mixed competitions under the auspices of the committee. Ladies' and Men's competitions have then been delegated to the respective Ladies' and Men's competition secretaries. Mixed competitions are being coordinated by Mandy Gilbert. This has led to closer cooperation and coordination of all competitions and ultimately a more efficient use of the course.

Despite the weather and the postponement of the fun competition, Finals Day in September proved a success and more members supported the finalists. The day was finished off in style with the Ryder Cup success. We plan to repeat the same Finals Day concept next year and, hopefully, the weather will be kinder allowing a fun competition in the morning and the finals in the afternoon!

Buggies

The club buggy has been successfully used by a number of members over the year. Unfortunately, its use has been restricted, on health and safety grounds, because of the wet state of the course. The buggy is intended for those members who struggle to play 9 or more holes due to a temporary or permanent disability. Information is available from the Professional Shop.

Communication to Members

I have again welcomed the opportunity to report back to members on the activities of the Greens Committee. It is important that members are aware of course developments and initiatives. We shall continue to place regular "News from Greens" bulletins on the Course notice board and I hope the new calendar will be useful for members.

CHRIS DAVIES
CHAIRMAN OF GREENS

NEWS FROM THE PROFESSIONAL

What a year we've had.... Bradley Wiggins becoming the first ever British winner of the Tour de France, a fantastically run Olympic games, with a record medal tally for team GB, Andy Murray winning the US Open tennis, the rain that just refused to go away and Roger Sheen winning Bogey 1 – it's hard to choose which was the most extraordinary event!!

My assistants, Oli and Alex, are doing well. They look after the shop when I'm not around and help with junior coaching. Oli is now a fully qualified PGA Professional having passed his exams and coursework this summer, which both he and I are very proud of. Alex has not played much this year but he has other career options on the horizon which will hopefully work out well. I want to take this opportunity to thank them for all their hard work and wish them all the best with their future careers.

The Junior section continues to thrive. Saturday coaching averages about 25 pupils over the two sessions during the season. Some then become members as a result of this, which is very satisfying for us coaches. The Hale Prep coaching on a Wednesday and Thursday has continued to flourish with 35 children participating. Yet again, Anne Webster deserves lots of thanks for her part in making this happen. The Adult-Junior Competitions ran again over the course of the season – one per month from May to September inclusive. We had 16 teams playing in the September competition which was a superb turn out. We have a winner on the day and an overall Order of Merit winner (I guess you could call it the Race to Altrincham!?) This year the OoM winner was Curtis Ritchie who is just 8 years old. Congratulations Curtis and also to proud Dad, Ian.

The Pro-Am was another great success this year – or at least second time around it was! The dreadful weather reared its ugly head again, making it a wash-out for the original date of June. It was re-scheduled for September and thankfully the weather was great. The scoring wasn't quite as good this year thanks to some fiendish pin positions and enthusiastic ironing of the greens from the greenkeepers! Yet again, the course was in immaculate condition and practically all of the visitors (pros and amateurs alike) said as much. 67 was the best pro score and the winning team was the President, Nigel Taylor & Paul Hilton. Second place was the Captain's team. 4th place was Al Kenney's team (last year's captain) and 5th place was Barry Jefferies' team (captain in 2008/9) – so it's nice to keep the prizes close to home!

The individual coaching is still going well and the covered teaching studio has been heaven sent this year with all the lousy weather. I would like to take the opportunity to thank all my students who allow me to help them with their games. Congratulations to the following pupils (please forgive me if I have made any glaring omissions!):

- Tarik Rashid for winning the Owen men's Matchplay final and the Seniors Stableford Final,
- Louise Gerald and Al Kenney for winning the Mixed Knockout and
- Paul Simpson for winning the Bentley.

The Christmas Draw is now up and running so please pop along to the Pro Shop and get your numbers when you are next at the club.

Finally, thanks again to the whole membership for the huge help and support you continue to give me. I wish you all a very Merry Christmas and the golf of your dreams for 2013!

Best wishes
Richard

NEWS FROM HOUSE

It has been another good year at the Club, with the enduring feature being the atmosphere of warmth, good friendship and hospitality that is the envy of many clubs. Our clubhouse, bar and catering facilities are of a very high standard, are very well used and host many social events. This doesn't happen without the commitment and hard work of a team of people who work on our behalf.

Behind the scenes, we continue to maintain the Clubhouse in good repair. Changes in the kitchen with new ovens, a more efficient ventilation system and an extended work area have brought about significant improvements which have raised our food hygiene standard to the highest level 5. Our efforts to reduce our energy consumption through the installation of an LED lighting system and enhanced insulation will reward us with reduced costs. Particular thanks go to Ray Briggs for facilitating the lighting installation. We continue with our policy to bring the cottage in line with standards in the Clubhouse - improvements have been achieved through the installation of new PVC windows and ground work repairs to surrounding paths (Nov/Dec) to improve access and safety around the cottage. A concrete store will be erected at the rear, to provide additional storage for the Club and stewards. I would like to thank Robert Spark for his assistance and good humour in dealing with all matters 'maintenance'.

We have recently carried out a fire risk assessment and will be amending our fire safety procedures. An alarm and detection system will shortly be installed in the Clubhouse and the cottage. Staff training on evacuation procedures will be undertaken and practice drills will be necessary!! Further Health and Safety regulations require us to provide a disabled parking space which will be undertaken shortly.

On the social side we have had another year of splendid events, with well established favourites such as the 'Classical Dinner' in February and the 'Investors Dinner' in November. New events such as the 'Comedy Night' and the wine tasting 'Call my Bluff' were very well attended and often oversubscribed. This is a sign of a healthy club and also points to a very good social committee who are ably led by Jan Ravenscroft, I would like to thank them on your behalf. I would like to draw to members attention the Club rule which permits 'Visitors' to enjoy the facilities of the Club up to six times a year and I would encourage Non Playing Membership as a means of using the Club on a more frequent basis. Would members please be mindful that Non Members should be signed into the 'Visitors' book at the bar.

We are working with Majestic Wines to produce an interesting wine list and whilst retaining some old favourites, have introduced several new wines to the list. The list is under regular review and feedback from members is very welcome. We will shortly be stocking a Semillion Sauvignon Blanc from WA and an Argentinian Shiraz. In addition, prices have been reduced on some middle to top end wines to make them more affordable.

Finally, my sincere thanks to all my committee members and particularly to Anne and Mac for all their efforts and I wish you all a merry time over the festive period at HGC.

**CERI HYDE
CHAIR OF HOUSE**

CHRISTMAS GRATUITIES

It has been the tradition at Hale that members give a gratuity to show their appreciation of the hard work undertaken by the greens and house staff during the year. The amount is, of course, a personal matter but, for guidance, a contribution of £25 would seem to be appropriate. If you have been a frequent user of the Club's facilities, and often benefited from the services given by our staff, you may wish to offer more.

To make collection and distribution easier, please make your contribution **by cheque only**, made payable to Hale Golf Club, and post it to the Club or through the Secretary's office letter box in an envelope addressed to Jay White, Assistant Hon Treasurer. Please do not use cash, hand your gratuity directly to a member of staff or combine a gratuity with your subscription payment.

Cliff Wright
Hon Secretary

PAYMENT OF 2013 FULL SUBSCRIPTIONS BY INSTALMENTS

The Club will continue to offer Full (playing) members a scheme to pay their subscriptions by instalments operated by Fairway Credit.

In return for a small administration fee added to the subscription amount, members are able to spread the combined charge over either ten equal instalments, payable on the first of each month from January to October, or, four equal instalments, payable on the first of each month from January to April. The Club receives the full subscription in January from Fairway Credit and the scheme is, therefore, cost-neutral to other members.

Members wishing to pay by instalments for the first time should sign the appropriate credit form with a direct debit authorisation which can be downloaded from the members-only section of the Club website (Instalment Application 10 or 4) or from the Membership Officer, Johnny Yates, to whom completed signed forms should be returned at the Club as soon as possible and before 19 December. These will be forwarded to Fairway Credit who will process the monthly direct debit transactions. Members already using this method will be contacted individually to confirm renewal.

This instalment scheme gives members a third way to pay. Members may still pay by direct bank transfer (preferred method) to the Club's subscription account with Barclays or by cheque. Direct bank transfers reduce the costs incurred by the Club and save postage.

Cliff Wright
Hon Secretary