

## **2020: PLAYED AS IT LIES**

As 2020 draws to close, it is somewhat ironic that the year ends with another enforced closure of our club. In a year which most will be only too glad to bid farewell, the Executive has had to take the extreme measures of enforcing a six-week period of tighter lockdown restrictions, which includes sporting facilities such as ours, in a bid to control a recent surge in the spread of Covid-19 cases.

Whilst this somewhat typifies the year which has just passed, the Club has been buoyed by the attitude and application of members over the course of the past twelve months. Although the season itself will be viewed by many as null and void, the asterisk which will accompany it does more to highlight the fact that it has been one of the most difficult on record, and as such any achievements which have been attained should be held in even higher reverence.

First and foremost, the example set by our membership as we adapted to the new conditions we found ourselves subject to upon the restart of golf was second to none. Changes of such a magnitude are never easy to acclimatise to, but the way that the members embraced the new requirements with a sense of gratitude to simply be allowed back on the course was heartening. This provided just verification of the strong case that was made by our governing bodies to the powers that be that golf could indeed restart in a safe and responsible manner. The resulting surge in interest in the game from new and returning members was unprecedented and helped us overcome some of the challenges laid in front of us.

Our greens staff worked tirelessly to present us with a track that did well to stand up to the rigours of this increased traffic, which regularly saw timesheets at the peak of daylight hours booked solid from dawn to dusk. Whilst the furlough of staff for significant periods has left us with some catching up to do in terms of course maintenance and planned upgrades, we should remain grateful that we were able to avail of the facilities at all. Note that work programmes for said maintenance and upgrades are constantly being developed and implemented, and it is Council's intention to keep members updated through more frequent communications going forward.

Our return to competitive action, only made possible through the efforts of our able Competition Secretary and his support team, were the envy of many clubs across the island, with combined male and female membership competing up to five days a week.

The majority of our sponsors also provided welcome support throughout the year, and hopefully an element of loyalty was displayed in return by our members in

reciprocating this support to help everyone through this together. We hope that those sponsors who were unfortunate enough to not be in a position to maintain our partnerships this year will be back on their feet and back on board in the not too distant future.

As if changes were not plentiful enough this year, we also had the introduction of the new World Handicap System. Whilst some of the new handicap indexes may have raised a few eyebrows and dissenting voices the efforts of the handicap & competition committee should not be forgotten for ensuring as smooth a transition as possible. Nor should it be forgotten that the system has been a work in progress for many years, combining the processes of no less than six handicapping authorities across the globe with one of the key principles being an aim to make the handicap system inclusive and accessible to all players, regardless of ability. Whilst our winter layout and lack of qualifying competitions until the new season have provided their own trials for this changeover, it is anticipated that the new system will quickly level itself out in the new season.

In the absence of listing names for fear of leaving someone out, commendation should go on record for the efforts of all staff and volunteers associated with the Club - Council, greens, office, catering, bar, house – without the efforts of these people our membership, who have also displayed admirable resolve and an ability to adapt throughout the season, would not have had the opportunity to do so.

Whilst the year was not without loss, the Club would like to again reiterate its condolences to the families of those who passed. In the absence of Club Notes in recent months through lack of reportable play the opportunity was not presented before now to mark the tragic passing of past captain and lifelong club man Mr Jimmy Roarty, may he rest in peace.

The AGM has also had to be postponed as the logistical issues with the intended virtual meeting are still being considered.

On the course, our Winter Cup and Phase 1 of the Thursday Club were reaching their climax and are hoped to resume if and when restrictions allow.

Any further updates regarding the potential return of our game which may arise from discussions between the Executive and our governing bodies will be circulated through internal communications and social media channels.

Whilst we look forward to getting back to the sport we love at some point in the coming months, the Club would like to wish a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to all. We hope to build on the inspiration witnessed in recent adversity, plead that better fortune comes our way in 2021, and pray that all our members stay safe and well in the interim and look forward to seeing you all again soon.