



# STRABANE GOLF CLUB

## Newsletter – May 2020



### FOREWORD

After a challenging period for all associated with Strabane Golf Club throughout unprecedented times, the likes of which none of us have experienced before, it is with great excitement, enthusiasm and anticipation that we would finally appear to have some rays of positivity breaking through the clouds.

The last two months have tested the resolve of us all to adhere as best we can to any governmental guidance which has been issued to us throughout all walks of life including the game that we all love, the game which provides us the opportunity to proudly call ourselves members of Strabane GC. It would appear that compliance with said guidance has proved effective as the Executive begin to consider the relaxation of lockdown restrictions via their Step by Step Plan.

We are delighted to hear that golf, a sport that provides immeasurable benefits to both physical and, perhaps more importantly in such times as these, mental wellbeing will be one of the activities included in Step 1. Despite the fluidity of the ongoing situation courses have now been given consent to reopen on Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> May, subject to a number of agreed conditions, and as such it would be in the best interests of we members to be fully prepared for when the light does turn green.

As a result, this newsletter hopes to provide some clarity around the process of our plans to get back out on the course.

### RETURNING TO GOLF

The GUI & ILGU have produced a very comprehensive **Return to Golf Protocol** and summary FAQs to help facilitate the sport's safe return in Northern Ireland which clubs must comply with, as agreed by the Executive.

The protocol is largely the same as the Republic of Ireland's and we are advised to be familiar with the requirements and conditions outlined within. The importance of complete adherence to these conditions cannot be stressed enough to ensure

that we maximise the potential for golf to continue in a safe manner. We all must consider this a duty of care and should strive to share the joint responsibility of this as a fundamental sign of respect to our fellow members.

One of the key things to note in the phased nature of the return Protocol is the eligibility of those looking to play. Please note, as per the guidance, the initial stages of the return will be restricted to members only and must be pre-booked through our online BRS booking system. This will initially be limited to three-balls at 14-minute intervals, as set out in the Protocol, with the potential for alterations and eventual reintroduction of visitors, guests and casual golfers being considered in later phases of the process. In the interests of potentially having to assist with contact tracing, tee-times must also be booked on a name by name basis only rather than golfers reserving spaces for others, regardless of membership status.

A link to the online source of the official Protocol on the GUI's Golfnet website is included below and posted on the Club's Facebook page. Please note that this is the only official guidance produced to date, reviewed and accepted by the relevant government departments and arms-length bodies, and as such is what we have agreed to follow. Any other sources of (mis)information should not be considered and the Club will keep members updated with any further revised iterations of the official Protocol if/when they are issued.

<https://www.golfnet.ie/news>

### COMPETITIONS

#### GUI Events

The GUI have informed clubs that some inter club competitions are still scheduled to take place this year. These currently include the Senior Cup, Junior Cup, Ulster Cup, Jimmy Bruen and Pierce Purcell.

#### Club Competitions

These will not be permitted until we enter Stage 2 of the Protocol. When we enter this stage, it is hoped that our competition software providers will



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have an online entry and score entry option available. More details to follow once available.

### FEES

The unfortunate timing of the implementation of lockdown and subsequent office closure just before the deadline for annual membership fees has potentially prevented many members from renewing their subscriptions. With the imminent reopening of the office the regular payment methods will be once again available. Please note that in the interests of risk minimisation contactless transactions would be preferable, such as card payment over the phone or via the App. Anyone looking to carry out a transaction in person is asked to ring ahead to make prior arrangements if possible.

Although Council would appeal to members to pay any outstanding fees as soon as possible, the decision has been taken to extend the deadline for full payment until the end of July. An alternative payment plan has been proposed given the inevitable financial impact some might experience from the ongoing pandemic which would entail splitting the outstanding balance over a maximum of three monthly payments to be made before the end of May, June and July respectively. Please note however, given that the different phases of return outlined in the Protocol are dependent on membership status, the minimum requirement for anyone looking to return to the course will be at least one third of their balance, before bookings will be permitted.

Council would like to urge any members experiencing such difficulty to simply contact the Club and would like to stress that the intention is to ensure retention of as many members as possible at this time when membership has never been more critical.

Members should note that Council are also considering a number of ways to reward the loyalty of the existing membership next season. The most significant of such plans is to offer a pro rata discount on subscription fees for next year based

on the number of weeks playing time lost to this enforced closure, but details of further incentives will be released in due course. In addition to this, insurance fees will be prepaid for the 2021 season for all who pay their fees this season and furthermore, anyone who used the BRS Finance Scheme this year will have the cost of their agreement fee credited to their club card once all BRS payments have been made.

### GREENKEEPING

It would be remiss of us not to take this opportunity to once again appreciate the unwavering efforts of our green staff throughout this recent period of confusion and uncertainty. Throughout this time the open green space of the course has been used, by many who would be unfamiliar with golf, as a site for permitted exercise. Whilst the overwhelming majority of these people did so with the best intentions to leave no trace it will have added somewhat to the workload for Paul, Rory and co., so we thank them for their effort...the immaculate conditions will be gratefully received!

### LOCKERS

Following the success of the recent locker room refurbishment members are politely reminded to please be careful when their golf equipment is being placed in or removed from their locker. As per previous, it is advised that wheels be removed before trollies are placed in the locker, and that locker doors are never opened or closed forcefully.

### AND FINALLY...

As we continue to navigate these uncharted waters as best we can, we hope that all members are staying safe, looking after themselves and others, and continuing to reassure themselves that *this too shall pass*.

As we all look forward to the ultimate goal of returning to some semblance of normality in the not too distant future, the best that we as members can do now is be fully prepared for when the opportunity is presented to us.

**#wewillbeready**