

**Notes from the meeting of the North Regional Forum held in
Murrayshall Hotel on Wednesday 3 March 2019**

<p><u>Present</u></p>		<p>Alan Cargill (AC), Les Durno (LD), David Fleming (DF), Neil Hampton (NH), Jillian Milne (JM), Nigel Spencer (NS), Alan Reid (AR), George Young (GY) Meg Sievwright (MS) – by video link (briefly joined by Ann Ramsay and Ann Smart but quality of audio was not strong enough to sustain their involvement remotely)</p>
<p><u>In attendance</u></p>	<p>1</p>	<p>Brendan Dick (BD), Mandy Martin (MM), Andrew McKinlay (AMc), Karin Sharp (KS),</p>
<p><u>Welcome & Introductions</u></p>		<p>BD welcomed everyone and advised he would be acting as Chair for this meeting. A round table introduction followed, with AC advising those present that this week he started employment with Scottish Golf in role of Project Manager, however for purpose of forum he continues to represent Club and Area. . Apologies were noted from Peter Abbott, Andrew McNicoll, Mike Timson, Iain Powell and Paul Manson (who also indicated that he would be standing down from group as he not yet been able to attend and doesn't see that changing).</p>
<p><u>Outputs from previous meeting</u></p>	<p>2</p>	<p>The follow up key themes document was noted as a good tool. LD enquired as to where the Regional Forum output was hosted on the website, as it wasn't easy to locate. KS advised it currently situated under Who We Are, however noted that for revamped website a more prominent location might be appropriate. NH enquired as to the progress with an e-leaflet to issue to golfers to explain what Scottish Golf do and allow them to share and shout about the services we provide at club membership renewal time.</p>
<p><u>Core Discussion Items</u></p>		
<p><u>Communication</u></p>	<p>3.1</p>	<p>AMc provided a brief summary from SG perspective: New website is underway, will be mobile friendly, slicker and easier to navigate. Is a real opportunity to cleanse and ensure information is easy to find. New club platform – interest has been significantly higher than anticipated. Within the platform & member app piece there will be opportunity for enhanced communication from clubs to members and between members in a whats app style approach. Team – we now have 2 new staff members appointed into roles of Marketing Manager and Communications Manager respectively. An internal comms plan has been drafted and currently going though a review process but key to the plan is regular dialogue with our members. In summary we have made progress with our approach to communication but still a way to go.</p>

<p><u>Club Support</u></p>	<p>DF commented that the website news stories move on quickly, so if you've missed a communication it not always easy to keep abreast of developments. Can often miss content via social channels and then it not easily found on the main website which for many members is the key go to place.</p> <p>LD referenced being signed up to Club and Golfer bulletins and at times it being difficult to establish whether the content is relevant for Club Committees or Members, could we attempt better clarity of topic.</p> <p>General discussion then ensued about the distribution lists, with a feeling that some Area and County representatives were still not seeing any regular ebulletins from Scottish Golf – KS to check with Comms team to check and revise if needed.</p> <p>AMc summary from SG perspective:</p> <p>3.2 As advised at conference, we have realigned the Development Team with 6 central roles and 7 regional roles now supporting our service delivery. The Annual Review document shared at AGM and available on website, has more detail on the team changes and also contains some good case studies for clubs to consider. Key priorities for the SG team are increased visibility and more focused support for clubs through improved/refreshed resource material.</p> <p>We in final stages of appointing a replacement for Willie McKay who will retire in May 2019 and an announcement will be made in due course.</p> <p>MM updated on the Solheim Ambassador programme which now has c100 individuals signed up. The Women In Golf Charter has seen slower uptake with around 10 clubs committed thus far – we looking at pulling together a case study to demonstrate to clubs some of the commitments the early adopters have made. The club requires to make a minimum of 3 commitments within the charter and many are using this to link to existing Get into Golf initiatives to relaunch or refresh activity.</p> <p>NS advised he has had a number of positive meetings around junior development with Martin Ritchie in the North East and will continue to seek support from MR to move forward activity within the 5 clubs affiliated to local authority courses.</p> <p>LD advised that their Academy programme continues to attract a number of female participants, with just this week 6 or 7 ladies being invited into full membership of the club as their academy membership comes towards the end of the 2 year commitment.</p> <p>This lead onto a more general conversation about club membership and joining fees where the following updates were noted:</p> <p>Strathmore – have a successful junior programme and are now actively targeting parents & grandparents with some success.</p> <p>GY advised his club have been running a weekly 9 hole competition through the winter, which has attracted regular</p>
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<p><u>Events</u></p>	<p>3.3</p>	<p>play from 6-10 ladies who would not normally play in the winter months. MS advised that Northern Counties are trying out 9 hole competitions in 2019. AR advised that Angus County Ladies are struggling to get engagement from clubs. KS suggested that contact with Martin Ritchie (RCDO) might be beneficial. Joining fees appear to be more prevalent in the North East than in Angus, North or Perth & Kinross. LD advised that Cruden Bay has a policy of a family joining fee, so only one joining fee per family would apply. DF advised that Portlethen are offering an incentive scheme of 20% discount for any existing member that introduces a new member to the club, with the new member receiving 20% discount for 2 years and ability to pay joining fee over 4 years.</p> <p>KS advised that whilst we still await formal decision on the Barclay Review of Business Rates, there is an indication that discretionary relief from Local Authorities might well be determined against key criteria, including but not limited to the matter of joining fees. As soon as there is more detail on this it will be shared with clubs.</p> <p>AMc provided a brief update: Area & County meeting held at end of January has now been summarized and circulated for feedback, particularly around team events. Boys Open Championship & Girls Open Championship closed earlier in week, with both events oversubscribed for entries. Both have entries from 14 countries, with the boys ballot falling provisionally at 3.6 and girls at 5.5 which is the lowest ever for the girls field. Events poster will be sent out to clubs in the next week or so and we would hope this will raise awareness of the different Club and National events that we offer. Particularly for clubs we keen to see engagement with the new Mens Regional Final event, the continuation of the 9 hole Championship and the PING mixed event.</p> <p>DF advised that Portlethen have a weekly competition entry of between 150-200 members. AR advised Murrayshall have on average 60 players in a Saturday competition from a membership of 380 (of whom 180 have active handicaps). LD advised Cruden Bay have between 80-100 play from multi-tees in all competitions and that adopting the multi-tee approach saw them increase those numbers to this level.</p>
<p><u>Volunteers</u></p>	<p>3.4</p>	<p>KS provided a brief update: SG have recruited a new post which will provide support for Safeguarding, Volunteer Management and Equality work. A key piece that will be looked at is the introduction of a Volunteer</p>

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Strategy that provides a consistent framework for the volunteers that support SG across categories such as rules, course rating, coaching, team captains and more.

GY enquired about number of volunteers and access to the data to share with clubs who might be looking for support. KS indicated that in the main we have a good pool of volunteers, although some geographic areas are light on Course Rating volunteers and this is an area we are actively reviewing.

AC confirmed that course rating volunteers was the biggest challenge facing P&K.

A more general conversation then ensued about committee volunteers, which can be challenging at times in areas such as safeguarding. Committee sizes in some instances are still too large and potentially not as productive as could be. Additionally most clubs still don't have a particularly mixed age profile where there potentially is limited representation by junior members but often not in a formal way.

The update circulated was an extract from recent report to Board. A new reporting system is being set-up and moving forward it would be our intention to provide a more dashboard style reporting format to add strategic context and measurement against targets to be displayed.

IT platform has had higher level of interest than anticipated. A project steering group has been formed with representatives from executive and Board overseeing the project. Currently in testing phase with 3 or 4 clubs, with an aspiration to roll out to 100 clubs by end of year. Communication of progress and understanding of timelines is critical to ensuring clubs remain engaged during the roll out of this platform, we have appointed 2 project managers who commence in post this week and will be the key liaison with the clubs to gather information and support transition in due course. Worth remembering that the investment in the platform equates to less than 5% of turnover. Other key meetings since the report was issued, was with European Golf Association on the World Handicapping System – still some aspects that are to be finalised and it our belief that it will be late 2020 before the changes are implemented. Key focus for SG will be supporting and delivering education to clubs to ensure readiness for switchover.

Junior Forums are proving popular with 168 clubs registered to attend the series of events taking place over next few weeks. Golf Sixes Leagues have been oversubscribed and we have successfully secured additional funding support to launch 16 leagues this year.

Affiliation/Membership numbers – this remains a cumbersome task where the “honesty box” approach is potentially being compromised by a small number of clubs not accurately reporting data. SG will be looking to change the approach for next set of data collation. LD suggested that an “audit” aspect

<p><u>Any Other Business</u></p>	<p>5</p>	<p>be added where clubs are asked to provide a signed excerpt from their membership database to back up the figures provided. This will be considered for the next financial year, as we need to improve the accuracy of this data.</p> <p>LD – there is concern amongst some clubs that introduction of a handicap category for non-members (pay per play golfers) will have a negative impact on club membership. AMc advised that the reality of such memberships already exists with options available in some clubs to take membership at a rate of £75 which includes entitlement to a handicap. The commercial operators previously took advantage of dominating the tee booking space and we already aware of some making legal challenge to what they deem is the monopoly on handicap provision within the game. SG wish to be ahead of the curve and in control on this piece so as not to lose further revenue to commercial operators. SG as a not for profit organization will invest any sums generated back into club support services. Key things for clubs to remember is that they will be in control of their green fees and which competitions they might chose to open up to any category of golfer. New Zealand offer a similar option (advertised prominently under the front page of their website) and they have not seen transition from traditional club membership as a result.</p> <p>NH – when will more detail on the platform be available and what support will be behind it? AMc advised that with 2 project managers now appointed, initial training was about to take place and then they would be actively engaging with clubs to increase communication and understanding. Support is a key part of what the Project Steering Group are challenging and will be monitoring and we are clear on how this needs to be at a high level to ensure confidence of clubs in adopting.</p> <p>AR – notice to current software providers might impact on when clubs can onboard. AMc confirmed that we were relying on that fact in terms of how we look to prioritise roll-out.</p> <p>AMc suggested that as we now have a year of these Forums completed that we take the opportunity to review the format and structure via a short feedback survey. KS will pull something together on completion of all of the regional events and circulate to participants to help shape the next set of meetings. It was also agreed that the make-up of the group be considered with representation from Angus clubs to be sought via Area/County reps and those individuals that have not yet participated in any meeting be removed from the distribution list.</p>
<p><u>Date of Next Meeting</u></p>	<p>6</p>	<p>Next dates for Regional Forums will be around June 2019 and a doodle poll will follow for potential dates.</p>

