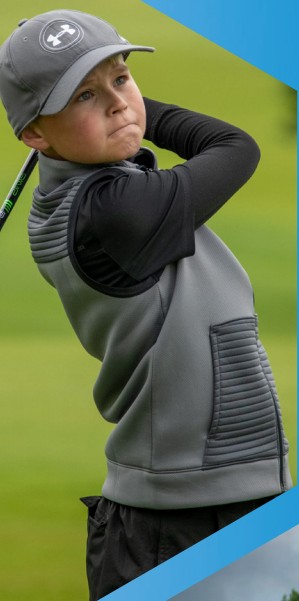




Scottish
Golf



Annual Review 2020





Scottish
Golf

Annual Review 2020

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A Year Of Challenge And Support



Welcome to the Scottish Golf 2020 Annual Review; an unprecedented year in the history of our organisation.

We are in unprecedented, remarkable times. Since March 2020 we have all been reminded how important the wonderful game of golf is in our lives. We have learnt how much we, as individuals, appreciate the golfing communities that we are part of, and how much the camaraderie offers us personally through good times and bad.

The past 12 months have been challenging and for many harrowing. To all our members and employees who have lost someone dear through these times, we offer our deepest sympathies.

At a time when businesses worldwide faced extraordinarily difficult circumstances, I am extremely proud of the speed at which the Scottish Golf team acted to reassess our financial position and reprioritise activity. The outcome of this review was being able to provide support to our affiliated clubs both financially, by rebating 25% of our affiliation fees, and practically, through regular COVID-19 updates to provide advice and up to the minute guidance based on the latest Government restrictions.

Throughout my time as Chair, we have been working on a variety of long-term growth initiatives which support the organisation's vision of Making Golf Scotland's Game For Everyone and 2020 was a big year of implementation as we saw a number of these plans come to life.

More golf clubs benefitted from early adoption of our Venue Management System (VMS), which offered clubs and their members a COVID-19-secure platform to deliver their business with integrated online tee-booking and mobile, contactless scoring. In time, this will also enable Scottish Golf to generate new

income streams that will be reinvested to support the growth of the game across the country.

In November, we implemented one of the largest changes to handicapping the game of golf has ever seen as we embraced the new World Handicap System (WHS), which will help us achieve a number of our goals.

The progress we have made as a sport is a testament to the work of everyone involved in our game. From club employees to committee volunteers, you have all risen to the challenges and tackled them head-on, working day and night to ensure that our great game was one of the first sports to resume following the lockdown.

Your commitment, passion and love for the game is unrivalled and as an industry in Scotland, we have been able to benefit from the playing of golf uninterrupted, since 29 May, throughout the easing of restrictions. For that, we are all truly grateful.

Being the Chair of Scottish Golf has been an immense privilege. As your inaugural Board we accepted the mandate to transform the health of the game of golf in Scotland.

You may recall that the backdrop to this was a game that had lost 5,000 members a year for the preceding 10 years and the impact that this had on club membership income. This was exacerbated by declining visitor income, fuelled mainly by the downward pressure on pricing from the tee-booking systems model.

Addressing these challenges has not been easy, and change has been tough, but each of the Board members since

amalgamation has been driven by the desire to build a strong, sustainable legacy for the future of the game.

I pay tribute to each of those directors, 15 in all, and I thank them for their courage and their unity of purpose. I have so enjoyed working with each of them individually and collectively as an utterly committed and united team.

Finally, I would also like to pay special thanks to the team at Scottish Golf, for their hard work and commitment throughout the past 6 years. I will always have very fond memories of the camaraderie that came, as it so often does, with the grit, determination and endeavour of a great team of exceptionally talented people, even in the most challenging of circumstances. I leave Scottish Golf under the excellent stewardship of Karin Sharp and Iain Forsyth.

It gives me great pleasure to know that Scottish Golf will be in safe hands as Martin Gilbert, one of Scotland's best-known business figures, is set to become Chair at this year's Annual General Meeting.

Martin has been a prominent supporter of golf in Scotland for over 20 years, firstly through Aberdeen Asset Management and latterly Aberdeen Standard Investments. This is a tremendous coup for golf in Scotland and the entire game should be delighted that Martin, whose passion and support for the sport are very widely known, has agreed to take on this role.

Eleanor Cannon

**Eleanor Cannon,
Chair, Scottish Golf**

2020: A Year Unlike Any Other



2020 was a year that none of us could have imagined, but one in which as an organisation I feel that we acted decisively to the challenges of COVID-19 to support our affiliated clubs, while also continuing our efforts to make golf Scotland's Game For Everyone.

When the people of Scotland were asked on 23 March 2020 to restrict their movement through a national lockdown, this saw dramatic changes to how we operated as an organisation, with our staff asked to work remotely with immediate effect.

As it became apparent that the national lockdown and restrictions would be with us for a prolonged period, we opted to use the Government's Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme with half of the staff team being placed on furlough between the months of April and November.

Whilst this undoubtedly placed a strain on those who remained working during this period, including adapting to new responsibilities, the commitment shown from all of the team was outstanding. Despite the challenges these changes created, I would like to thank each of the team for the way in which they accepted

the position and worked for the benefit of our membership.

With on-course events forced into a temporary pause, our attention turned to addressing the impact on our clubs and the communities in which they serve.

We took an early decision on 9 April to cancel all performance programmes and national events for the 2020 season and to channel the funds allocated to these activities to support our affiliated clubs through the pandemic. This was considered a bold move by many at the time. However with restrictions being something we all had to learn to live with for the remainder of the year, this did prove to be a wise decision.

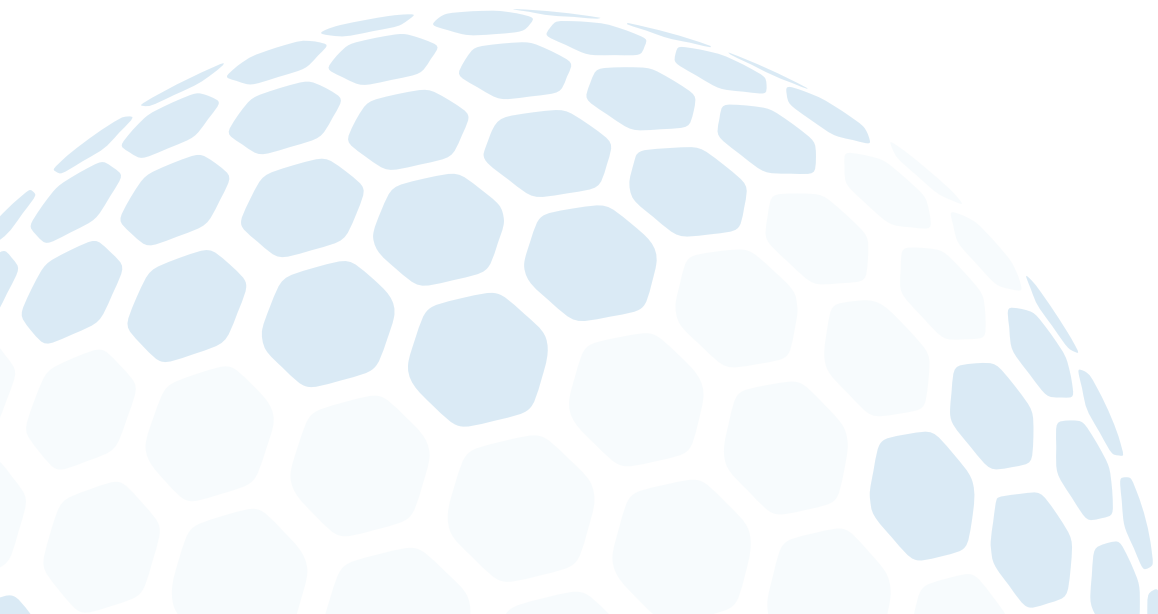
During 2020, we focussed on building stronger partnerships within the golf industry and across the sporting sector to ensure we cater to the needs of our

stakeholders at Area, County and Club level. I have been greatly encouraged by the engagement through zoom calls with our key members and industry colleagues, which provided regular and constructive dialogue on a wide range of topics.

I am very proud with the way in which Scottish Golf has supported our members throughout the year both financially and practically, with a significantly increased level of communications to ensure all our affiliated clubs were best placed to get through the pandemic. A snapshot of these achievements are covered in the following pages.

Karin Sharp

Karin Sharp,
Chief Operating Officer, Scottish Golf





Making Golf Scotland's
Game For Everyone

Financial Review

Income

Total Income **2019-20**

£4,050,487

Surplus/(Loss)

Total Surplus/(Loss) **2019-20**

£(18,350)

Expenditure

Total Expenditure **2019-20**

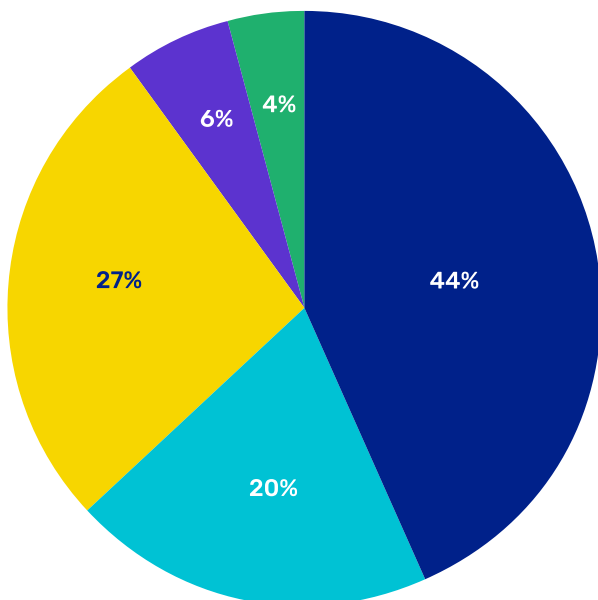
£4,068,837

Reserves

Total Reserves **2019-20**

£1,191,336

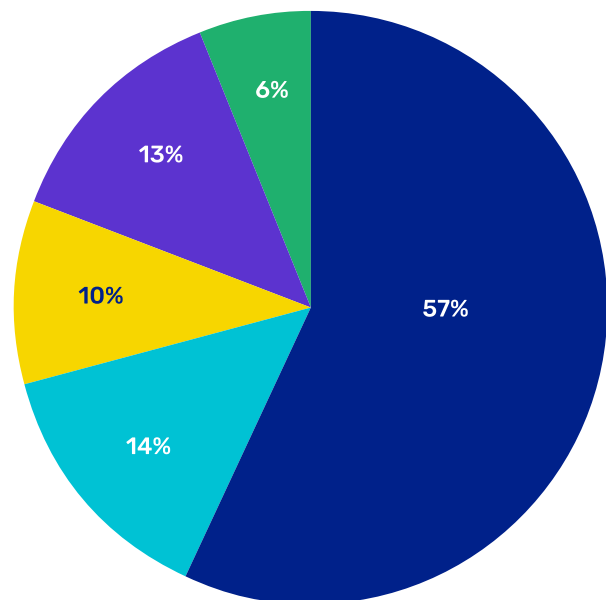
Income Breakdown



● Subscriptions ● Sportscotland ● Other ● Performance ● Commercial

- Subscriptions contribution down from 61% to 44% due to the 25% affiliation rebate for 2019-20.
- Other Income contribution rose from 7% to 27% due to the £685k grant from the R&A which was distributed to clubs, and the money received through the furlough grant.
- Events income was 0% due to early cancellation of the full events schedule.

Expenditure Breakdown



● Club Support ● Corporate Services ● Performance ● Commercial ● Events

- Club Support increased from 44% to 57% due to the R&A grant funding paid to clubs.
- Performance decreased from 21% to 10% due to cancellation of remaining performance activity.

Financial Review

COVID-19 Emergency Funding Support to Clubs

Total Financial Support
issued to our affiliated clubs

£1,265,145

Affiliation Fee Rebate

To support our affiliated clubs through the pandemic, on 7 May, Scottish Golf led the way in the UK and announced a 25% rebate on 2019/20 affiliation fees, representing a grant of £580,145. This support was immediately made available with the average processing time between the application and the payment to clubs being just two working days.

Scottish Golf would like to thank the 12 clubs of varying sizes that opted to donate their affiliation fee rebate to the Scottish Golf Club Relief Fund, enabling us to use those funds to support other clubs.

In addition, we offered extended payment terms to all golf clubs for payment of the annual affiliation invoice. This proved popular and we have continued this service into the current financial year.

R&A Club Relief Fund & COVID-19 Fixed Cost Grant

On 29 June, the R&A invested £685,000 to Scottish golf clubs through Scottish Golf which consisted of two elements – a £500 Fixed Cost grant and a Club Relief Fund.

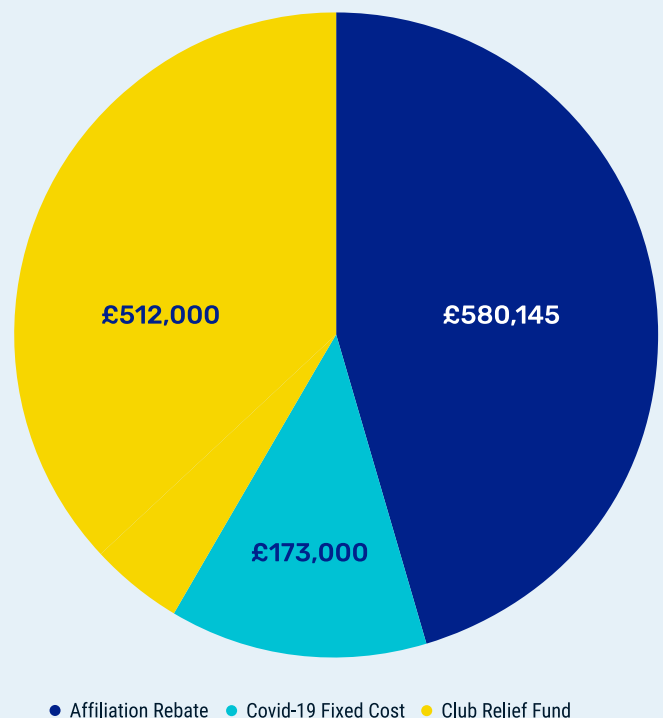
A total of 354 clubs applied for and received the £500 COVID-19 fixed cost grant totalling £173,340.

163 clubs were recipients of the Club Relief Fund receiving a total of £512,560 allocated. In total 370 of our affiliated clubs received funding from one or both of the R&A Club Relief Fund.

The deadline for applications was 24 July and once applications were approved, all grants were paid to the clubs within an average of four working days from receipt of bank details.

I would like to put on record my thanks to all the staff at Scottish Golf that worked tirelessly to process all the funding applications and payments in such a short space of time.

Funding Support Breakdown



Working With Government To Keep Playing Safe

The challenges posed by COVID-19 are complex and have impacted almost every part of our day-to-day lives, from health to the economy, to our mental and physical wellbeing. We know that our game spans all these areas in Scotland and contributes significantly to both the nation's health and the economy.

Throughout the year Scottish Golf has been in constant contact with our partners at sportscotland and the Scottish Government on the return to golf and keeping it safe for everyone.

This collaborative approach gave sportscotland, Active Scotland and the

Scottish Government confidence in our ability to ensure golf could be played safely. Despite the changes in national and local restrictions, Scotland are in the enviable position of being the only UK nation that has continued to enjoy playing golf since 29 May 2020.

This collaboration also resulted in us being able to issue timely updates to our COVID-19 guidelines for our affiliated clubs as the Government updated their restrictions and advice, thus ensuring clubs could stay open and keep their members safe.



While it has undoubtedly been a difficult time for everyone connected with Scottish sport, Scottish Golf has shown a real resilience in responding to the challenges presented by the pandemic. Thanks to its strong leadership and close partnerships with sportscotland and the Scottish Government, Scottish Golf has been at the forefront of the return to sport programme, working tirelessly to represent its members.

This approach has ensured that golf courses have remained open for much of the pandemic, helped in no small part by the patience and commitment of golfers and golf clubs across the country, who have played their part by continuing to adhere to the latest public health guidance. We still have some way to go before the pandemic is firmly behind us but by continuing to work collaboratively, Scottish Golf will ensure that its members continue to enjoy the sport they love.

Stewart Harris,
Chief Executive, sportscotland



Successful Launch Of The World Handicap System

In addition to the other challenges of 2020, we also successfully launched WHS, golf's new handicapping system which came into effect on 2 November 2020 in the UK.

For a number of years leading up to this date, Scottish Golf has worked tirelessly to prepare for the transition, with course rating activity delivered over a number of years to ensure that all our affiliated clubs had the appropriate ratings ready for WHS.

In early 2020 we switched the Central Database of Handicaps to a new platform, doing this before the main playing season commenced to minimise disruption for our member clubs.

A host of education support for golf clubs then continued through the year, with seminars, webinars, resource material sent to clubs, newsletters and other channels all well utilised across the year.

We are extremely proud that we were ready for the launch and our system was live at 4am on 2 November. Inevitably, with a transition of such magnitude between systems that had stored data in differing formats, there were some data challenges, but we worked tirelessly to ensure that club officials understood the reasons and were given the tools to correct data where necessary.

We are pleased to report that our WHS system is fully functional and working entirely as expected, with early volumes showing 30,000 scores processed in the first four weeks.

Enquiries Responded To

Social Media

1,655

Website

8,284

Hive WHS Section

Active Users

409

Card Views

24,500

Comments Since Launch (Aug 20)

3,700



30,000

scores processed in the first
four weeks after WHS launch

Using Technology

Scottish Golf started investing in technology in October 2018 and since then has seen the gradual introduction of our Venue Management System, Scottish Golf App and Hive learning platform.

Through 2020, we also started using Zoom to interact with our affiliated clubs, through webinars, meetings and, of course, the hosting of our Annual General Meeting.

Venue Management System

We have had a successful start to the roll out of VMS with almost 400 clubs presented to and 237 clubs configured on the system at various stages of deployment.

VMS enables clubs to manage every aspect of their business from memberships, tee sheets, door entry and online booking to handicaps, competitions and live scoring based around market leading software in the cloud.

VMS also provided the first digital scorecard to offer contactless scoring and submission that fully complies with the rules of golf and handicapping. Given the likelihood of a continuing need for contactless operations, this is a significant benefit.

Clubs already using VMS have expressed their satisfaction with the system, particularly with the integration between membership subscription and other office administration functions.

We have also been commended for managing the migration work and providing 24/7 support, thus making transfer from existing systems simple for the club administrators.

VMS allows the club to determine who sees information regarding their competitions, which is of particular benefit when clubs wish to promote open competitions to non-members.

Communicating With Zoom

As the pandemic progressed, we introduced Zoom Panel Call webinars for golf clubs to hear direct from experts on COVID-19 Advice, WHS, HR, Legal Advice, Social Marketing, Visitor Marketing, Retaining Members, Kickstart Scheme, VMS and the Scottish Golf App. Over 192 clubs engaged with the webinars with 2,154 attendees and over 13,000 views online post the event. Having proved so successful we intend to continue with this channel of communication in 2021.

In summary, our investment in technology is paying dividends. It has enabled clubs to streamline their administration processes, improved club marketing communications via the App and allowed our membership to communicate with each other. Technology has enabled us to engage directly with all our audiences and this will only continue in the future.

In any regular year the successful launch of a software platform for all golf clubs in Scotland would have been a major highlight. To have done this in the face of a national health crisis and the launch of a new handicapping system shows the efforts that have been made by the Scottish Golf team behind the scenes.

Hive Learning – A New Home For Scottish Golf Education

Hive, our new learning platform is the third element of our investment in technology. Hive is our central education platform for all affiliated clubs to access Scottish Golf resources and to interact with other clubs to share best practices. There are currently over 500 club officials registered on Hive and since it was launched on 10 August, there have been over 35,000 interactions, both peer to peer and with Scottish Golf staff. We will continue to develop Hive to become the central database for all our education and online support resources.



Using Technology

Scottish Golf App

The customer facing front end of VMS is delivered principally through the Scottish Golf App. This enables every club member in Scotland to view their handicap, submit General Play scores and get the latest news from Scottish Golf.

Our App is another success story with 148,000 registered users out of a total of 190,000 golf club members in Scotland. In the first four weeks after the WHS launch 6,000 General Play scores were processed through the Scottish Golf App, demonstrating an excellent early take up by golfers.

For clubs using VMS, the App also enables their members to receive Club News, book tee times, enter competitions, submit scores and book social events, all in a digital and socially distanced way.

148,000

registered users of the App to date

6,000

General Play scores processed in the first four weeks after app launch



Performance Player Pathway

We are delighted that Paul Lawrie and Catriona Matthew agreed to join our Performance Programme. With their help we are revising the operation of our performance programme and player pathway so we can further develop and improve our elite players and ensure resources are being allocated most effectively.

In 2021 players in the top tier of our performance programme will have exclusive access to Paul and Catriona who will help them prepare physically and mentally for competitive golf at the highest level. Very few people know what it is like standing over a three-foot putt to win a major Championship – but that experience and knowledge is part of what Paul and Catriona will bring as part of their role in our programme.

“

By working together and utilising all of the golfing experience we have in this country, we can help our talented young golfers achieve their goals. However, it is equally important to look to the longer term and ensure our best golfers continue to get the support that they need as the sport itself changes and develops.

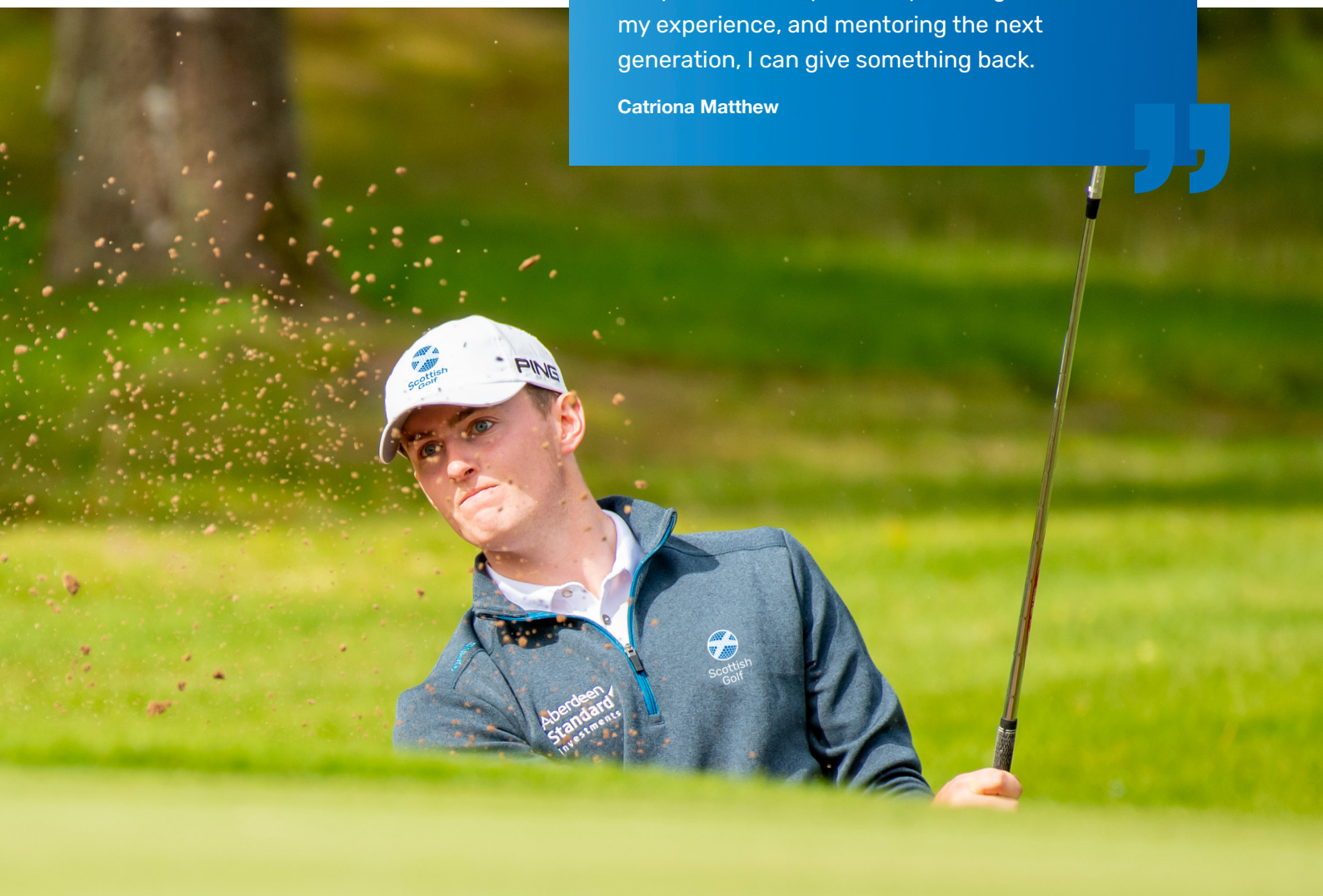
Paul Lawrie



“

The game has given me so much over the years and I hope that by sharing my experience, and mentoring the next generation, I can give something back.

Catriona Matthew



Golf Club Membership Grows

One of the positives to have emerged from the pandemic is that, for the first time since 2015, we have seen an increase in club membership. Our 568 affiliated clubs saw a 6.1% increase in playing members (adults and juniors) of 10,920, with total playing membership of 190,777. There were seven clubs reporting over 100% increase in playing membership from 2019-20.

This increase in club membership is great news for our affiliated clubs and we urge all our clubs to engage fully to ensure those members can be retained as we head into a prolonged period of economic uncertainty.

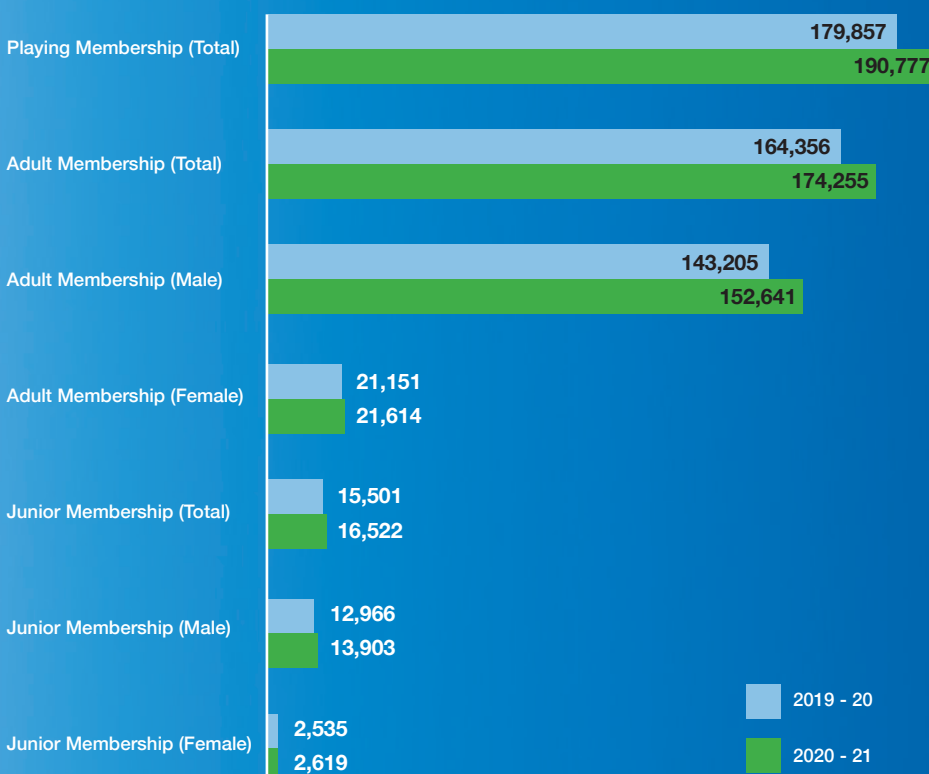
6.1%

increase in playing members in affiliate clubs

100%

increase in playing membership in seven clubs

Membership Breakdown





10,920 
increase in total number of playing
memberships (adults and juniors)

New Junior Golf Platform Drives The Future

During 2020 we developed a new platform which will be released in 2021. This new Junior Golf Platform, available to all affiliated clubs, will provide an extensive range of programmes, events, resources and opportunities from across junior golf in Scotland.

The platform will also host our new coaching programme, Learn to Golf. This will provide coaches and volunteers with innovative tools and resources to make planning their programmes quicker, easier and more enjoyable.

As part of the Junior Golf Platform, we also have some new and exciting junior events for clubs to get involved with. These include the National Junior Skills Challenge and the Scottish Junior Flag Championship, which will be delivered in partnership with the Paul Lawrie Foundation, the Stephen Gallacher Foundation and the Junior Flag Challenge.

We are also looking forward to rolling out the hugely popular GolfSixes Leagues in 2021.



Focusing On Our Members

Obviously, none of us know what 2021 holds and at this time we are simply grateful that golf is continuing to be played. We hope that the golfing year ahead will be one more recognisable to us all and we have planned for a full schedule of events and a return of performance activity from the spring.

Subject to COVID-19 restrictions, we shall review on a regular basis the likelihood of these events taking place and will ensure that we keep all stakeholders apprised of any changes or cancellations that we might require to make on a monthly basis to ensure we can comply with all government guidance.

My commitment for 2021 is that Scottish Golf will continue to do everything we can to support our membership. We will continue to develop our technology to ensure the maximum possible benefits that the new digital landscape has presented to us and we will continue to provide COVID-19 advice for as long as that is required.

Education will also continue to be an important part of our member services as we develop Hive further and we will keep the level of openness and communication high through Zoom webinars and newsletters to all members.

So, to summarise, 2020 was an incredibly tough year, but one in which we delivered significant improvements in our focused services to our members. 2021 will be about continuing to build on these improvements and to support our affiliated clubs no matter what happens.

On behalf of everyone at Scottish Golf, I would like to take this opportunity to express our sincere gratitude to everyone involved in our game. We have all faced one of the most challenging years in our lives, but the spirit shown across our wonderful game has been truly heartening to see. It is this spirit and integrity that will see our game continue to flourish in 2021 as we look to roll out several exciting new initiatives that will continue to progress the game of golf in its spiritual home.

Karin Sharp,
Chief Operating Officer, Scottish Golf

So, to summarise, 2020 was an incredibly tough year, but one in which we delivered significant improvements in our focused services to our members. 2021 will be about continuing to build on these improvements and to support our affiliated clubs no matter what happens.

