



Record Turn Out for AGM

New Subs Approved “With a heavy heart”

It was a case of “good news, bad news” at the club’s AGM on Monday, 22nd February. Retiring chairman Gordon Kenneth was able to review a year of considerable progress for the club and a sparkling record of golfing achievements. The sting in the tail was the not unexpected increase in annual subscriptions. Obviously no-one wanted to have to pay up to £50 more* for their golf, but the necessity to do so for the financial stability of the club was accepted and the new rates approved on a vote.



A packed AGM heard the good and not so good news

It fell to David Capel to present the accounts and explain the committee’s thinking in recommending the increases. Though our cash position showed only a modest deterioration over the year, this had been achieved by severely restricting capital expenditure. However, we would need to invest in our essential assets if standards were to be maintained and improved as members rightly expected.

The coming year would see the benefits of various measures already put in place: the catering contract, return of joining fees and savings on overhead costs. Even so, if our finances were to be returned to profit, an increase in subscriptions was unavoidable, though recommended “with something of a heavy heart”. David reminded us that we were still better value than our competitors, many of whom had big increases two years ago when we enjoyed a standstill on subs.

The suggested introduction of “afternoons only” membership would offer a cheaper alternative to those who were looking to keep costs down. It was hoped that it would also help alleviate occasional course congestion on busy Saturday and Sunday mornings. This gave rise to a number of questions from the floor about how this would operate and Gordon promised the meeting that the committee would review their comments and suggestions before finalising the arrangements for “PM Plus”.

In the end the motion to adopt the new subscription rates was approved by a sizeable majority. The mood of the meeting seemed to be that we love the club and if it was necessary to take the medicine in order to keep it healthy then so be it. Thanks to everyone who attended and contributed to the generally good natured atmosphere and lively debate.

** Note: 7-Day membership now £780, up from £730; 5-Day membership now £635, up from £595. Both include £12.50 affiliation fees which are not included in published prices of many clubs. Full list of all the new rates now on the website www.marlboroughgolfclub.co.uk - Ed*

One item received your unanimous support: Pete Sutton, who has been a member since 1950 when he joined as a junior at twelve years old, was granted honorary life membership. As well as being our longest serving active playing member, Pete won the Club Championship three times and the Gordon Richards trophy twice. A record that is unlikely to be beaten. **Enjoy your golf, Pete!**

THISTLE

Roger Takes the Helm as Gordon Bows Out

In stepping down after two very successful years, chairman Gordon Kenneth paid tribute to the man he recommended as his successor, Roger Hill. "I know the club will be in good hands" said Gordon.

Roger is the retired managing director and chairman of Intergraph Corporation, a computer company with headquarters in Swindon. He has lived in Aldbourne for ten years during most of which he has been a member of the club serving as Seniors chairman and chairman of the greens committee for four years during which time he has made a significant contribution to the improvement and development of the course.

Roger is also on the board of the Great Western Hospital and is a very keen sailor, the other interest he shares with golf. He is passionate about our club as anyone who knows him will attest and is both committed and well qualified to steer us through the year ahead.

Roger said "We owe a great deal to Gordon, not just for his chairmanship but for all the hard work he has put in for the club over the years. I am inheriting an excellent group of people on his committee who are well equipped and dedicated to managing the sometimes conflicting interests of the members and the longer term financial viability of the club. It is my honour to succeed him as chairman."



Roger Hill, MBA (Bridport)

"What's Going On? Nobody Tells Me Anything!"

Yes, you will recognise the cry of the nocturnal warbler ("I'm in the Dark!") which can frequently be heard around the clubhouse and course. It doesn't matter how hard we try, somebody still hasn't heard.

Looking to find out what's happening at the club? Then it's good news, it couldn't be easier ...

- Thistle, of course! Out every 2-3 weeks, copies emailed to members and printed versions in lobby
- Website, updated regularly with news and information, why not post your thoughts to Slogs Blog – it's on the Member's home page
- Desktop computer in the bar – if you can't access the internet at home you can always view the MGC website online at your convenience
- Notice boards in lobby includes copies of recent press coverage, information about events etc.
- Display screen in the lobby includes advertising from our sponsors and also key event information
- Magazine rack in lobby for golf related magazines
- Emails – sent to members promoting important news as well as latest social events
- Table top promo's in bar – if we could only stop them being vandalised we could have one on each table!

Jenny Swift, who chairs the marketing and communications committee, says "If you think we aren't covering enough bases in relation to communications for our members, please let Richard Pickles or me know anytime. I am on 07788 416938 or email swift@rivercalm.com. We are keen to ensure we are constantly improving our communications both into and out of the Club."

Look out for more communications initiatives from the committee. We want the nocturnal warbler to become a dying breed!

Questions, Questions - Prior to the AGM we asked you to post questions in the foyer ...

Over the next few issues of Thistle we will be publishing a selection of your questions and the answer given by the committee member most closely concerned.

In the next issue we will be looking at those concerning the development project - landscaping, tennis club and practice area - which should help to bring you up to date with the current situation and what it will mean to the club, both in financial benefit and disturbance during the construction period.