

WELLINGBOROUGH GOLF



Club Magazine

DECEMBER 2020

Welcome Back... Again!



www.wellingboroughgolfclub.com

Guidelines need to be followed over coming months

AS we come to the end of the latest Lockdown, and into another, there seems to be more confusion than ever. What can we do? What tier are we in? Who and what are open or closed? And to top it all, how does this World Handicap System work?

If you want all the answers, you should look elsewhere (although there is a WHS recap on page 18).

The WHS came in at the start of this month and has thrown up a few anomalies. Congratulations to my predecessor on becoming a single figure golfer - well done George! Others have gone up a few shots, like my brothers. One is happy the other not. I'll let you work out which is which.

I'm sure the system will sort itself out over the next few months, although it looks like Wellingborough will suffer in county matches.

Lockdown ends next week so we will all be back to playing 'fastest finger first'. There are some slight changes to the system. The eight minute interval is being trialled on the Saturday/Sunday times to try and increase capacity in these winter months. We will see how that works out.

Unfortunately, being in Tier 2 the clubhouse will be closed. Although this will be reviewed on a weekly basis, it is not looking good for this side of Christmas.

Please note that car park and changing room drinking parties will NOT be allowed as this could get the entire club shut down. I cannot stress this enough, as the club has previously had unannounced visits from environmental health officers. If you want to carry on playing golf here, please observe this rule!

There will be a collection for bar staff that have recently left the club. Janet, Zoe and Sharon between them have nearly 70 years' loyal service to the club and it would be nice to commemorate that fact. There will be a collection pot in the Pro Shop, so please give generously.

The AGM looks set to be held on Zoom this year. We are currently running some tests to iron out the details but the finalized plans will be on the website in the next few weeks.

However, in all the confusion there is some good news... Spurs are top of the Premier League. COYS!

Dave Hawkins

2020 Club Captain.



Club considering a variety of options for latest AGM

WELLINGBOROUGH'S Committee are assessing how to hold the 2020 Annual General Meeting as the coronavirus social distancing restrictions continue to affect the running of the Golf Club.

With the AGM originally scheduled for November 27th, when the membership would have received information on how the Club had operated over the last 12 months, it had to be deferred due to COVID-19.

As part of the Club Constitution, there is a requirement for an AGM at the earliest opportunity, particularly with places on the Captain's Committee and Board of Directors up for nomination, so alternative arrangements for early next year are being put in place.

It is a similar situation with the Ladies AGM, which should have taken place on November 17th, but was also postponed. More details of both AGM's will be communicated to the membership very shortly.

By contrast, the Seniors section held their AGM in late October - although it wasn't conducted in person as Seniors Captain Chris Dickens explained: "Luckily, our procedures are not as complex or legally binding as the Club AGM, which allowed us to conduct it by correspondence.

"Each milestone was published on the website, and after issuing the agenda, comments were invited via email, these were individually responded to by the Secretary or myself.

"There was little that was contentious and with no candidates for Committee positions, the present incumbents will remain in post for 2021. This includes my role as Captain, after the Vice-Captain offered to delay his preferment a year. The Minutes of the AGM can be viewed on our Web Page."



Tap-Ins

SEVEN points was a stunning margin of victory for Kevin Larham, Darren Wilkins, Nick Metaxas and Will Bissaker (95) in the Men's Am-Am at the start of November.

MEL Ross, Karen James and Sarah Evans combined well in the Ladies 123 Waltz as they triumphed with an excellent total of 55 points.

HAL Robinson carded 22 points over nine holes to win the latest Junior Stableford by two from Harris Chacksfield, with Cameron Black in third on 17.

DENNIS Dickinson and Ted Carroll were successful in the last Club event before Lockdown as they topped the Seniors American Foursomes leaderboard by one from Alan Smith and Stefan Mycawka with 42 points.

WELLINGBOROUGH Golf Club lost three popular members last month as Janet Haynes, Trevor Sherrington and former Club Captain Jim Clarke all passed away.

FALLING at the first fence is something the Golf Club will want to avoid when they try to stop a repeat of last month's 'horse invasion' by putting extra protection up around the grounds. In other words, they don't want to have a mare!

HOME advantage will hopefully be crucial for our members in the 2021 County Seniors Championship as Wellingborough Golf Club hosts the tournament on Monday, July 19th.

THE Club's leading male golfers will attempt to find their best form in County events early next season as the Boys Championship takes place at Peterborough Milton on Sunday, May 23rd, followed by the Men's Championship at Whittlebury Park on Sunday, June 20th.

PROFESSIONAL James Whittemore was fortunate enough to escape the UK before Lockdown to play some golf in the UAE at Dubai Creek Golf & Yacht Club, Dubai Hills Golf Club and the Montgomery Golf Club.

ROBERT Rock Junior Golf Tour have announced their first venture into Northamptonshire when they hold an event at Wellingborough Golf Club on Thursday, April 8th, 2021. For more details visit www.robertrockjuniorgolftour.co.uk.

WITH pages to fill in the Wellingborough Club Magazine, there are plenty of opportunities to advertise during the year. Please contact the Club Office to get your message across to the members and visitors in 2021 and beyond.

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A year that has Zoomed by, but not how I expected it to

LADIES Captain Jenny Wilkinson said: "As the end of the second national Lockdown approaches, we are all eagerly awaiting the reopening of golf courses on December 2nd.

"These few weeks have given me time to reflect on the last 12 months. The Ladies AGM was scheduled for November 17th, when I should have handed over the reins of the ladies section to Sheena (Markham).

"Taking over the captaincy last year I had a rough idea of how I thought the year would pan out, competition dates in the diary, exchange days, two ladies holidays, as well as the golf social events.

"Needless to say very little of this has taken place. However the last year has been very busy in a way I had not anticipated, especially involving Zoom!

"I'd forgotten how wet last winter was, when Power trolleys were banned from early-November, fairway mats were optional from mid-November, before they became mandatory from January 10th.

"The course was closed for long sections of January and February due to wetness, as well as Storm Ciara and Storm Dennis.

"Then just as the course reopened in early March and the use of trolleys was allowed again, we were suddenly hit by a worldwide pandemic and the clubhouse and course had to close down.

"Since the course reopened in mid-May, we have all got

used to booked tee times, that Thursday evening 'fastest to the button'. We've tried Golf Genius and just as we were getting to grips with the new World Handicap System, golf ground to a halt again.

"However, I have never played so much golf as I have this Summer. I've enjoyed playing some mixed golf and I am looking forward to playing some more next year. I have a much greater understanding of how the golf club runs and all the work and decision making that goes on in the background.

"I am really pleased with our charity fundraising this year, we raised £4,700 in memory of Teena (Marshall) earlier in the year and I have been able to send £5,700 to my chosen charity, The Eve Appeal.

"I have decided to change my charity for next year and any money raised will be going to Cransley Hospice. Liz Waine is still busy sewing face masks, now Christmas themed, and she has already raised over £500 to start my charity funds for this coming year.

"The community spirit amongst the membership is very special. This is perfectly illustrated by four of our lady members, Ruth Bowe, Gill Snelson, Libby David and Judith Chapman, who are all members of the Wellingborough Community Gospel Choir.

"The pandemic has not defeated the Choir. They are involved in a Northants Sings Out 'live' virtual concert on Friday, December 18th at 7.30pm. For tickets, which are £7 per household, click the following link: www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/virtually-nso-tickets-128657196137?aff=ebdssbonlinesearch.

"It promises to be a great evening for all the family, there will be over 100 voices, a 'live' band and an opportunity to sing and dance along in the privacy of your own living room.

"Ruth is also singing in a 'virtual' choir for Cransley Tree of Life Service on December 6th, so well done.

"Finally, I would like to thank my Ladies Committee for all their help and support over the last year, always there when I run ideas past them. I am looking forward to working alongside Club Captain Dave (Hawkins) for a further 12 months."



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Let's take the positives from a difficult Seniors year

SENIORS Captain Chris Dickens said: "Having previously written about this year (the Seniors Captain's Report and Seniors Secretary's Report are published in the Senior Men, News and Views on the website) it is a good time to look at the positives and our ambitions for the future.

"Yes, we have missed the roll ups and the matches against other clubs but when the club has been open, we have probably played more golf than in previous years. The course has had more rounds played on it than at any other time and with limited visitors, this is down to the members.

"Participation in Seniors events has increased substantially with many competitions boasting over 100 players against a norm of about 60. Despite the restrictions we have been able to complete all of our major competitions and a number of fun events.

"However, unfortunately our match with the Ladies has once again been cancelled because of the second Lockdown – hopefully in the Spring!

"My congratulations go to all the winners and runners up and indeed to everybody who took part. As ever, my philosophy is for Seniors to enjoy their golf and I hope by being able to take part you have met this aim.

"Regrettably, we are unable to present the prizes as we have done previously but we hope to rectify this at a later date. In the meantime, the prize winners' list is published on the Results Page.

"Obviously, these events do not organise themselves and a big thankyou goes to the small but effective Seniors Committee for their diligence and fortitude in what has sometimes been trying times. But, ever resourceful, they are the reason we succeeded in getting these events completed.

"Also, to the Club Committees, Front Office and Ground staff for the organisation that has allowed the maximum number of members to play on our well-presented and excellent course.

"One society match that did take place was that of The Royal Air Force Golf Society. I serve on the Committee so have an interest and can report that the Society really enjoyed their day at Wellingborough.

"The RAFGS Secretary had very positive feedback from many of the players about the course, the catering and the service. This new venue for the society was highly rated and he has booked it for the next two years.

"Next year is the Society's Centenary, I hear many WGC members shouting: 'Get some in' Wellingborough being over quarter of a century older.

"But you must remember that the RAF is only 102 years old, so maybe their priorities were right in setting up the Society within three years of the RAF's formation!

"Finally, the news of the development of vaccines to combat COVID-19 is encouraging and we are hopeful that we can return to a more normal year in 2021.

"Roll-ups may yet return, as well as matches against other clubs, including the social gatherings we all enjoy. However, it is not over yet, so please observe the procedures and stay safe - patience now could pay dividends in the future."



Christmas event is start of bright future for juniors

WELLINGBOROUGH Golf Club's Junior Committee held a Zoom meeting last month to discuss how the next generation of members will be encouraged to play golf in future years.

With General Manager David Waite, the two Club Captains Dave Hawkins and Jenny Wilkinson and Junior Organiser Nigel Grimmitt amongst those in attendance, the Club have set out some exciting new plans for 2021 and beyond.

Grimmitt explained: "We are committed to ensure that all children have a fun, safe and positive experience when playing golf at Wellingborough.

"The aim of our junior policy is to give boy and girl golfers the opportunity to progress to their potential, and to equip them with golfing skills that can be used and enjoyed for the rest of their lives.

"Our junior coaching sessions will resume under the supervision of our new PGA junior coach Ryan Connolly on Saturday mornings once the situation becomes more clear with coronavirus rules etc.

Further details will be published on the club website.

"Before then, the youngsters have the opportunity to compete for the Junior Vets Cup on Monday, December 21st.

"This Christmas event will be played as a full handicap allowance stableford competition. Those juniors who only wish to play nine holes will play for prizes independently of the 18-hole competition.

"Please can all juniors book in on the club website in advance, with the first tee time being 11am. Those juniors only playing nine holes will follow immediately behind the 18-hole competitors.

"We will meet at 10:30am in the clubhouse, taking in COVID restrictions of course, for the players to collect their scorecards and confirm the order of play.

"It's been a difficult year for everyone, but hopefully this event is the start of a wonderful period for junior golfers at Harrowden Hall. We look forward to seeing you all then."



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Work has continued at Harrowden Hall during Lockdown

THE second COVID-19 Lockdown of the year has meant that no golf and no social events have taken place at Wellingborough Golf Club throughout the vast majority of November. But that doesn't mean Harrowden Hall has not been active during the last four weeks, as Club Magazine editor Steve Jackson discovered whilst talking with General Manager David Waite.

How did the November Lockdown affect the workings of Wellingborough Golf Club?

At the start of Lockdown, some of the staff went onto Furlough, including the bar and catering staff, whilst others continued to work.

Although we're heading into winter, it's still a busy period of the year with end-of-year accounts and concluding the membership subscription renewal process.

The gardener is continuing to do his job. He has some additional work to do in readiness for some refurbishment on the garden wall opposite the greenhouses. That's part of the plan.

All the green staff have also continued to work because there are lots of jobs they can get done.

What work has taken place on the course?

Obviously the greenkeepers can work more efficiently when there is no-one playing golf, which is a very small consolation of Lockdown.

We're changing the sand in our bunkers, over the winter months, hopefully in good time for the summer season.

So the staff have been working on the third, fourth, fifth and sixth holes, plus the practice area (pictured below), to change the bunkers to china clay sand.

We trialled it on the 10th and 18th holes and found that it was much more suited to drier periods especially - it doesn't go all powdery and it stays where it is.

After two very warm summers, the previous sand, which initially seemed to work very well, has proven to be not as good in those conditions.

By contrast, the new sand doesn't wash out and is a more compact material that requires a slightly different golf shot when you go in it, but in the long term it seems to be the way forward.

The sand that was in the bunkers isn't just going to be thrown away though - we will reuse it to top dress the surrounds on tees and similar areas.

In recent weeks, it has been a case of keeping on top of the course because you can't leave it, otherwise you could end up with all sorts of problems. There are also a few trees that have needed to come down, so they've been busy.



How has the Lockdown affected other areas of the Club?

The weddings we had booked for this year have rebooked for next year.

In some instances they might have a ceremony for the maximum amount, perhaps 30 people, and then look to have their celebration later on in the year.

We've actually booked three more weddings during the Lockdown, just small occasions, where people are keen to get married - hopefully the earlier ones will go ahead, but no-one knows at this stage.

What are the plans for the festive period?

Christmas Parties or Christmas Lunches for organisations won't be happening.

We are hoping the clubhouse and bar can re-open, and play some golf, but that will depend on what we can and can't do.

We just don't know - but we're not alone, we're all in the same position.

If golf is allowed, will it be tee time bookings again?

In the short term, the tee time booking system will have to continue because it makes sure that we maintain social distancing and avoid gathering on the car park or on the tees.



Are tee bookings likely to be permanent?

I'm not sure if we will continue. It's a bit like the Brexit vote, if you went out there and asked the membership, it might be 51% think one thing, and 49% think the other.

So there could be an almost even split of happy and unhappy people, so it's up to the Committee to come up with a solution to that.

What are the alternative points of view?

For keeping bookings, there are people who think it's great that they don't have to come down here and wait around to find out if they can play golf on a Saturday.

They also like it that they don't have to tee off in front of an audience, who are queueing up.

The counter argument is that if your job involves some form of travelling, when it's very easy to get delayed, you run the risk of missing your tee time and not being able to play because its fully booked from then onwards.

You can't arrive early because you can't be waiting around. But if someone doesn't bother turning up for their tee time, the other members don't get the opportunity to play. This doesn't go down too well, and I can totally understand that.

How did membership renewals go?

Our renewals went out in early September, with the new membership year starting on October 1st. We had all the money in by mid-October.

We had a very good percentage of renewals, so much so that we remain at full membership

Therefore we can't allow any new members to join until the spring, so those on the waiting list will need to be patient for the time being. We are in a better position than this time last year.

How has social membership been affected?

A lot of people join the club so they can use the swimming pool in the summer, which they couldn't do this year.

So they are probably waiting to see how that goes, and then will re-join in April or May.

It's similar with quite a few of our social members, who were previous playing members, but can't play anymore.

They tend to be older and therefore are shielding, but they still want to be part of the club, and we would love them to re-join too.

Duo strike while the irons are hot in Arabian desert

CLUB professionals Meghan MacLaren and Charley Hull both recorded their best finishes of the season on the Ladies European Tour as they found hot form in the middle east last month.

Competing in the unique floodlit Omega Dubai Moonlight Classic at Emirates GC towards the start of November, MacLaren tied for sixth position.

With all 56 ladies having to play one of their opening two rounds in the evening, the Wellingborough pro finished just two shots off the pace after shooting scores of 69 and 65, before adding a final round 72 under the floodlights.

Although MacLaren decided not to compete in the next two competitions in Saudi Arabia, due to her views on the Arab country's human rights record, Hull accepted the invitation to take part in the events a week later.

In the Aramco Saudi Ladies International, which was played at Royal Greens GC, Hull (pictured below) grabbed a share of sixth prize as she compiled rounds of 74 and 71 to make the cut, before surging up the leaderboard with scores of 68 and 69.

The 24-year-old continued her excellent run into the Saudi Ladies Team International two days later as she went one better to secure fifth place at the same coastal course near Jeddah.

Hull, who is competing in the Volunteers of America Classic, the US Open and the CME Group Tour Championship in December, carded six birdies in an opening 70, before bagging half a dozen more birdies on her way to a 69 on day two.

The four-time Solheim Cup team member left her best until last, and particularly on the short and long holes, as she birdied a trio of par three holes and covered the quartet of par five holes in four-under-par in a closing 68, which helped her team finish ninth.

While Hull turns her attention to the LPGA Tour this month, MacLaren returned to action at the end of November as she teed it up for the final time on the 2020 Ladies European Tour in the Costa Del Sol Open at Real Guadalmina GC, near Andalulia in Spain.

Competing on the South course for the biggest Euro prize fund of a disrupted year, the 26-year-old secured 14th place with rounds of 75, 68, 72 and 71 to move up to 23rd spot in the end-of-season rankings.



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Results

Seniors American Foursomes (November 4th):

1 Dennis Dickinson & Ted Carroll (42 points), 2 Alan Smith & Stefan Mycawka (41), 3 Ron Page & Alan Henson (40), 4 Roger Macklin & Graham Thompson (39).

Ladies 123 Waltz (November 3rd):

1 Mel Ross, Karen James & Sarah Evans (55 points), 2 Miriam Johnson, Liz Rees & Di Dickinson (51), 3 Lema Townsend, Ruth Bowe & Caroline Anstee (48), 4 Kirsty Critchley, Gill Snelson & Sue Butler (46).

Men's Am-Am (November 1st):

1 Kevin Larham, Darren Wilkins, Nick Metaxas & Will Bissaker (95 points), 2 Richard Munns, Steven Munns, Ed Bilson & Alan Stokes (88), 3 Carl White, Steve Hammond, Mark Headley & Paul Saunders (87), 4 Chris Smith, Tom Houghton, David Castle & Chris Dicks (86).

Junior October Stableford (October 29th):

1 Hal Robinson (22 points), 2 Harris Chacksfield (20), 3 Cameron Black (17).

Men's 2020 Order of Merit:

1 Sam Waite, pictured below, (425 points), 2 Kevin Larham (309), Adam Folwell (286).

Seniors 2020 Competitions:

Veterans Cup Series:

Challenge Cup: 1 Robin Butler, 2 Nigel Thompson, 3 Chris Otterwell.

Over 70's:

Veterans Cup: 1 David Birkett, 2 Roger Mudd, 3 John Nicholas.

Over 75's:

Veterans Salver: Winner: Roger Macklin, runner-up: Peter Linnitt.

Over 80's:

Over 80's Trophy: Winner: Ged Eady.

Lonsdale Cup:

Lonsdale Trophy: 1 Les Hillman, 2 Kevin Meagher, 3 Kevin Larham, 4 Stephen Maycock.

2019/20 Winter Singles:

Winter Knockout Cup: Winner: Brian Summers, runner-up: Ted Carroll.

Winter Pairs:

Redgwell Plate: Winners: Chris Dickens & Bob Lewis, runners-up: David Birkett & Roy Tomlin.

Seniors Medal Championship:

O'Neill Vase: 1 Chris Dickens, 2 Paul Leeson, 3 Steve Bason, 4 Kevin Larham.





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New handicap system - what does it mean for you?

ALL members, who have a registered email address with Wellingborough Golf Club, received an email on November 2nd, 2020 from England Golf about the new World Handicap System, which came into force. With very little golf being played since then, below is another recap of the 'Guide to the WHS', and how it works. For more details, visit www.Englandgolf.org or www.randa.org.

What is a Handicap Index?

- A portable measure of your playing ability that is consistent with all golfers around the world.
- It can be used to track your progress and to play in a casual or a competitive round with other golfers.
- All golfers are encouraged to establish and maintain a Handicap Index.

How do I get a Handicap Index?

By joining Wellingborough Golf Club, who can manage and maintain your handicap record. You can then play and submit scores from all individual formats of stroke play (competition and recreational). These are acceptable for handicap purposes, provided you:

- Ensure another person is present during round.
- Play to the Rules of Golf.
- Your score is attested.

Once scores from a total of 54 holes, made up of 9 or 18-hole scores, are submitted you will be allocated an initial Handicap Index.

Maximum Handicap Index

With a maximum Handicap Index of 54.0, the WHS is designed to be inclusive of all golfers, regardless of age, gender or ability.

Competition fixtures and Terms of the Competition will be set up by the Wellingborough Handicap or Competition Committee.

Your Handicap Index is the portable number you take with you from course to course.

Before Your Round

You need to convert your Handicap Index into a Course Handicap, which depends on the tees used and the course difficulty. This gives you the number of handicap strokes for your round.

Course Handicap = Handicap Index x Slope Rating.

The conversion process is easy, and can be done by using a look-up table (right) located near the first tee, your Club software or a mobile app.

Handicap = Course Handicap x Handicap Allowance.

For example, the recommended handicap allowance for individual Stroke Play events is 95%, which means a player could have a Course Handicap of 15 and a Playing Handicap of 14.

During Your Round

To find out the holes where you get your strokes, use the Stroke Indexes on the course scorecard.

For Stableford formats, a maximum score on a hole is a net double bogey.

If you did not play a hole for a valid reason, a score of net par will be recorded.

Valid reasons for not playing a hole include failing light or bad weather, player injury or illness, or a hole being declared out of play by the Committee for maintenance or reconstruction purposes.

An incomplete round will be acceptable for handicap purposes if you play at least 9 holes for a 9-hole score or 10 holes for an 18-hole score.

SLOPE RATING			Con 198-181820		
MEN		MEN		LADIES	
Handicap Index	Course Handicap	Handicap Index	Course Handicap	Handicap Index	Course Handicap
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1	1	1	1	1	1
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3	3	3	3	3	3
4	4	4	4	4	4
5	5	5	5	5	5
6	6	6	6	6	6
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41	41	41	41	41	41
42	42	42	42	42	42
43	43	43	43	43	43
44	44	44	44	44	44
45	45	45	45	45	45
46	46	46	46	46	46
47	47	47	47	47	47
48	48	48	48	48	48
49	49	49	49	49	49
50	50	50	50	50	50
51	51	51	51	51	51
52	52	52	52	52	52
53	53	53	53	53	53
54	54	54	54	54	54



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