

Final



Forrester Park Golf Club – AGM

Wednesday 28th September 2022 at 19:00

Attendees:

Maria Kelly – Secretary and Chair (MK)
Paul Kelly – Mens Captain (PK)
David Steel – Mens Vice Captain (DS)
Phil Yearling – Past Mens Captain (PY)
Steve Barraclough – VETS Section (SB)
Reg Brunt – Juniors Representative (RB)
Peter Waknell – Treasurer (PW)
David Gillespie – Greens Committee Liaison (DG)
Mike Manning – General Committee (MM)
Leo King – Forrester Park GC (LK)
Judy Podd – Ladies Captain (JP)
Nick Swanson – Greenkeeper (NS)
Kev Royan – Mens Handicap Secretary (KR)

1. Welcome and Introductions:

MK welcomed all committee members and attendees.

MK apologised for the oversight in not publishing in advance election of officers and committee and suggested this would be discussed during meeting and confirmed outside the AGM. MK confirmed she will be resigning from the committee as Club Secretary at the end of PK's tenure as Club Captain. MK said that with the difficulties of communication, be it only one way, and the necessity for the member's needs to be best represented she feels there should be someone with greater knowledge and experience who would serve the role better.

2. Apologies: Phil Prior – Competition Secretary (PP) Malcolm Harlow – Vets Captain (MH)

3. Mens Captain's Report:

Well, it's fair to say my Captaincy has not been as easy as it might have been, but it has nonetheless been enjoyable, and I have various people I want to thank for their unwavering support, and I will come on to that.

Our club is enduring the pains of change and we all remain hopeful that things will only get better **BUT** I feel it is important to stress that unless we hold tight as a membership all that we have

Final

enjoyed over the years will be lost but not necessarily through the new ownership but through our own self-perpetuated demise. If we want our club to survive, we need to continue to support events and the whole infrastructure that comes from being a club – things like our committees, competitions both internal and external, Captain's days and of course charity events.

It's not all bad and I have enjoyed several celebration days – my Guest Day was a resounding success and equally with the glorious sunshine I had a great and well-supported Captains Day. Sadly, the ball on Saturday was only attended by 47 people with less than half of these being members. It was such a shame as it was a great night - the food was exceptional and John Price's hugely talented niece, Jo sang throughout the evening, so thanks again to everyone that did support this event and to the Forrester Park staff.

You may remember my charity was chosen because I lost my dad in 2020 who suffered from kidney disease, and I am pleased to say we will have a nice cheque for £3,000 to give to Colchester Kidney Patients Association which I know will be a large donation for them and will be much appreciated.

So, to my thanks...

There are members on the section committees that have often performed their roles for many years and work so hard behind the scenes to make it possible for us all to enjoy our golf – handicap and competition secretaries, treasurers etc. and I can certainly say I have taken them for granted as I think we all do. So, I would like to give my heartfelt thanks to my committee who without their support I could not have managed to complete my year – they have shared their knowledge and always been willing to give their advice and help – so I thank you again – our unsung helpers...

Thanks to Nick and his team who continue to work so hard to keep the course in its' best possible condition – we are so lucky to be able to enjoy our golf year-round – long may it continue.

And to all the Forrester Park staff who without doubt have borne the brunt of unprecedented change and continue to serve us all with a smile – thank you.

My best wishes to David Steel for his year as Captain – please can I ask all members to think about how you can give your support – it really is more important now than ever that we embrace our club and join together to enjoy our much-loved sport.

4. Vets Captain's Report:

As Captain of the Vets I did not anticipate that the club would have a new owner. Myself, Steve Barraclough and Rob Morley attended a meeting with Robbie Cowling together with representatives of the other sections of the club.

Robbie outlined his aims for the club. He wants to build a Football training ground on the course. To this end he hopes to purchase adjoining land and if successful the course will remain eighteen holes if not then parts of the course will be made into a nine hole. He thinks that it could be at least two years before any major changes. In the meantime a list of improvements which the members would like to see happen have been sent to Robbie on the understanding that he would consider these and if viable and cost effective he would implement them. At the time of writing, I have no further updates.

My year has flown past, but it has been a successful one and one that I have thoroughly enjoyed. Thankfully, although still around Covid has lost some of its impact and we were able to complete all of our competitions and friendlies. With regard to the friendlies Gosfield and Burnham have cancelled for next year due to difficulty in raising teams. Gosfield is permanent and Burnham for one year.

Final

I get the feeling that interest in the friendlies is waning as I have struggled to raise a team for most of them. Likewise, the Guest Day in which only 40 players took part. A thank you to Rob Morley for all his hard work making the day a great success.

Thanks to your generosity my charity (St.Helena Hospice.Colchester) raised £2500.00.

Now to the committee. Where would the Vets be without you? I do not intend to name names as you have all been outstanding. The amount of hard work and time involved cannot be stressed enough.

Thank you all.

5. Ladies Captain's Report:

Well, what a year it has been. From assurance that the Club wasn't being sold at the last AGM, to the Club being sold and with little or no information, to what we have now – a new owner, a little bit of information but basically more of the same...

It has been a very difficult year, trying to keep positive and motivated, and trying to keep the ladies section moving forward. With rapidly dwindling numbers it has been a thankless task BUT for the hardcore of the ladies' section – about 25 and the support and effort has been magnificent. There have been two away trips – Thorpeness, and a charity day at London Beach in Kent (which turned into an overnighter and an "event") with between 20-25 people attending both. The team competitions (Harris Bowl & Bronze matches) have also taken up a lot of time, with the same 15 people or so playing or caddying week after week. Unfortunately, we didn't make any finals, but we acquitted ourselves very well. We have decided not to field a bronze team next year, as there just aren't enough people to enter the two competitions.

The ladies managed to field teams for all the inter club competitions. The Vets won the Pat Servis, but the ladies exacted their revenge by winning the Ball & Chain. Unfortunately, the Simms Bowl had to be cancelled, but the Sadlers Shield went ahead - the competition being won by the men, with the ladies coming a very close second – this being due to some severe banditry taking place!

My charity this year is the Essex & Herts Air Ambulance Trust and through the many fund-raising events this year – from London Beach, Charity Day, eggs, tomato plants, book sales etc - and the ubiquitous collection box being sent round every week – we have managed to raise more than £2360.00, which for such a small section is a truly impressive amount – I thank everyone for their support.

I have a few thanks to make – to my fellow Captains Paul & Malcolm for their support and encouragement throughout the year, to the Club Secretary Maria for all her hard work, to the two Mikes (Manning & Yore) for all their help on the big days selling raffle tickets and manning the half way hut, to all the ladies who helped with cakes and nibbles and decorating the hut on the big days, and for all the people who supplied donations for the charity.

We also said a sad goodbye to Muriel Loveridge this year, a long-time member of the Club and a stalwart of the ladies' section. We also have said goodbye to Val Cummins, Anona Straker & Elspeth Williams who have hung their golf shoes up. And, to Lorraine Wilson who has decided to move on. These were all people who contributed so much to the Club and will be missed.

I hand over to Dawn Marriott and wish her all the best for the next year, whatever that may bring.

Final

6. Juniors Representative's Report:

RB said there is good and bad news to report for the Juniors' Section – the good being there are some exceptional junior golfers with some playing for the County with lower than handicaps of 5 and it continues to be a pleasure for Reg to organise them. The bad news is 2 more juniors have left the club to pursue their greater love of rugby! RB was proud to say juniors were selected to support the Mens' section playing in the Thornton Cup this year.

7. Handicap Secretary's Report:

KR reported the new handicap system is up and running and seems to be working fine. KR noted a change of date for this year's Winter League moving the first round to 23rd October 2022. KR also proposed playing off ¾ handicap as opposed to the previously played 90%. He will converse with Phil Prior and aim to get this agreed and in place before the competition starts.

It was evident that several people who attended the AGM had little knowledge as to how the Men's Committee and Club Committee are supposed to work, and this led to some frustration. KR will share the documentation with the Committees and the wider membership to allow a better understanding as to how the committees work and how members can raise concerns and provide feedback that the committees can then feed to the club committee and from there to Forrester Park Management Team.

8. Treasurer's Report:

All links available via the Men's Section LINKS page <http://forresterparkmenssection.weebly.com/links.html>

The FINAL Account has been on the Website link since the beginning of this month. I thank Clive Walby for acting as Auditor again this year.

Finances continue to stay stable year on year

We paid £5775 to GOSH – Phil Yearling's Captain's Charity, during the year and hold a further £4106 (some raised by the Ladies and the Vets) for this year's Captain's Charity and for other Charities

Competition pay-out has continued at approximately 85% of income

Playing numbers have remained steady, although there was a period through June into early July where for various reasons, the weather, people going away in groups or on holiday generally, that the turnout was poor. The overall average of players was just more than 51 per week through the year.

We hold approaching £2500 of advance competition fees (CCA), Whilst I thank those who regularly stay in credit, I am continually frustrated by the fact that the many members never review their CCA – it takes a lot of my time to manually update this information on a virtual daily basis, yet many seem to be too lazy to check their balance (accessible via the website link). From the start of this financial year, I am listing all games over at least the last month or two rather than just the latest deduction. This all takes time to prepare and update, but I wonder just how many can be bothered to look at all!

I again request payments to be ample (£14 absolute minimum) rather than the small amounts that some insist on paying. I continue to emphasise that this money is safe and can always be returned on request.

I have been Treasurer now for some 8 years, and I would like very much to hand the responsibility of looking after the Section finances to somebody else. I urge someone to consider taking this over from me as I am thinking of ceasing playing on a Sunday.

Final

9. Competition Secretary's Report:

The captain's year commenced on the 3rd October 2021 with the customary Bees Trophy and drive in. With Captain Paul managing a very credible 220 yard drive.

On the 10th October 2021 came the start of the ever-popular Winter League competition. 70 golfers took part in the league and knockout matches, all eager to win – it concluded in September 2022 with eventual winners Paul Johnson and David Wright.

April saw the start of the Inter Club competitions with results as follows:

In the Thornton Cup, the team successfully reached the third round before losing to Burstead.

The Leslie Wood and Norman Plum teams were defeated in their first rounds to Rochford Hundred and Abridge respectively.

The Jubilee Cup team won 2 and lost 2 matches but further progress was unsuccessful due to a lower aggregate match points total.

All teams performed extremely well, and I would like to thank the team captains and players for their strong efforts.

Late Spring saw the start of the summer match play knockout competitions, with 32 golfers entering the singles and 26 golfers entering the pairs.

Both competitions are currently at the final stages: Singles - Paul Card v Jeff Atkinson. Pairs – David Gillespie & Dave Ratchford v Ian Bentham & David Southgate.

August saw the 36-hole Club Championship played off scratch. Paul Beckwith beating Ian Lacey on count back scoring gross 152.

This year has been a good one, returning to a full program of competitions and I would like to thank everyone for their support in achieving this.

I would also like to say a special thanks to David Gillespie for his help in the promotion of the men's website and for the communication of the competition details.

Finally, I would like to thank Captain Paul for all his hard work throughout the year.

10. Course Report:

After being here for well over a full year now I hope you have enjoyed the course and have seen improvements following the work and maintenance that we have carried out?

Our team is made up of me and Ian as the full-time staff and help part-time from Mervyn, Dave, and Charlie. Staffing levels have been a challenge, but we have tried our best to keep the course in the best condition as possible with as little disruption as possible. In the winter this was helped by having a drier than expected few months but then we were hit this summer by the extraordinary drought not recording a single millimetre of rain for 13 weeks which brought many different challenges.

Trying to keep the greens alive this summer was my main concern meaning other areas had to be left for days, sometimes weeks. I hope you agree the greens have remained in great condition throughout this year. A few problems with machinery have caused some damage when spiking recently, which I'm sure you are aware of, however tomorrow's seeding and top dressing should even out the surface and get things back to where they were.

Final

Greens

With this year's drought part of the aeration and fertilizer program had to be put on hold therefore not stressing them out too much to keep the grass in as healthy condition as possible. Instead, we had to use smaller liquid feeds to keep things boosted. But now a little rain has started to fall I can continue with each program to bring them back up to an excellent standard again. For example, following this week's renovations we will be putting down our Autumn fertilizer, not cheap but well worth doing.

Tees

With no automated irrigation on the tees, it has been a challenge to improve these as wished. Lack of water as well as constant rabbit damage has crippled us this year, therefore some returfing will need to happen in the coming months on the worst affected tees – 9,10 and 13, hopefully around November. Also, we now have a man dealing with the rabbits who has had some success, so fingers crossed for less damage moving forward.

Bunkers

The sand in the bunkers has been baked for weeks this summer and the wrong sand being in there originally hasn't helped meaning when rain has fallen it has turned many of them to concrete and somewhat unplayable no matter how much they are raked. I do understand that quite a few will need topping up but with the correct sand, edging will start soon, and this is a yearly process to keep the appearance pleasing to the eye.

I am keen to plan for major jobs, for example reconstructing the 12th tee, and will always listen to any suggestions anyone has. I'm assured Robbie does not want to neglect the upkeep and condition of the course and wants it to improve. It's still early days so we will need to work on an ongoing budget, but I know my team and I want to see the course thrive after all the hard work and effort that we have put in.

11. Proprietor's Report:

LK read out a report from Robbie Cowling – apart from the additional news about a new General Manager, Bill Chapman starting in November 2022 this report read like previous meeting minutes. **No copy supplied.**

12. Committee Members, Confirmation, and Appointments:

As previously noted, there are vacancies for both Men's Treasurer and Club Secretary. Since the AGM Phil Prior has also submitted his resignation and will leave after the drive in on 9th October 2022.

Although attended by few members some of those who did attend made the point that it seems communication is not getting through to FPMT, it was agreed this is most probably down to the lack of a General Manager and members remain hopeful, with the appointment of Bill Chapman, this may improve.

There was some frustration from members that communication seems disparate and broken down and it was agreed we need to consolidate and revisit the fundamental structure of how the individual section committees operate and how this feeds back and correlates with the overall Club Committee. It was also mooted that there remains a need for the Greens Committee that worked so effectively in the past.

Andy Young put himself forward as a spokesperson/members liaison officer to provide members with a reliable conduit for feedback to the Club Committee. This was not agreed upon, but it was evident there is keen interest for new members to join both the Men's Committee and Club Committee. It was also said

Final

there are other members keen to get involved with the potential of taking up the two vacant posts of Men's Treasurer and Club Secretary. No names were given but members were urged to come forward.

KR said he would provide records of the way in which the committees used to work. It was evident that both the Ladies and Vets sections are working well but the Men's Committee and Club Committee seemed to have merged into one.

It was noted and appreciated that the club has gone through unprecedented change – firstly TFM not being completely honest about the club sale at the last AGM, the overnight loss of our Golf Professional and kitchen staff, the impact from Covid, the going over to the digital booking system, and finally the plans from the new owner. This seemingly has left members lacking in their support with low morale and concerns about the club's future.

13. AOB

Ian Hughes spoke of his serious concerns about many people going out onto the course without payment for their round. It is felt that members are paying for the upkeep of the course and FPMT are letting people play on the back of members money! LK said Robbie is aware of this and is looking into a band style system for green fees.

Meeting closed.

14. Next Meeting Date TBA